

Crisis in Christendom? Heresy, Dissent, and Crusade in 12th and 13th century Languedoc

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ABSTRACT

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Medieval ecclesiastics in the 12th and 13th centuries considered the evolution of heresy throughout Christian history as being a continuous, unbroken line from the earliest days of Christianity until their time, displaying notions of intolerance and prejudice when confronted with divergent beliefs, far removed from the openness and pluralism of thought and expression that some early Christian writers possessed. The so-called “Cathar” heresy possessed possible historical links with past heresies, mainly Manichaeism and Bogomilism; however, tracing these links is a task that has eluded many modern historians, mainly because of the lack of textual evidence on the part of the heretical party that can identify these links, as well as the time-gap that is prevalent between the appearances of these sects. The political and religious climate of the 12th century spurred anti-clerical movements within parts of the laity that stressed the return to a purer faith, identifying the simplicity of the *vita apostolica* as the ideal model for Christian life. These anti-clerical movements accentuated a fear in the ecclesiastical class, and its members perceived these movements as revivals of ancient heresies, whereupon the polemical literature that was produced by ecclesiastics in response to these movements “amplified” the existence of heresy within Christendom, especially that of “Catharism” in the Languedoc. The Church, needing to eradicate the spread of this “poison” used tools like preaching, crusade, and inquisition, the latter being the most successful. Inquisitorial sources, just like the medieval polemical literature that preceded them, did not display a lived reality of heresy due to the lack of evidence on the part of the heretical party.

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“All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us” is a quote from J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, made famous by Gandalf. I must confess, that the “time that was given” to me over the past three years dedicated to this degree has been extremely challenging and noteworthy for many reasons: it has fueled my passion for medieval history to the point of obsession and has given me the opportunity to broaden my horizons in the field of Theological studies, something I never thought I would have done.

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Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to focus on the development of the so-called “Cathar” heresy in the Languedoc from c. 1150 to c. 1260, as well as the reasoning behind its vehement suppression, both in terms of the political and military actions undertaken by the secular authorities, as well as the various religious actions launched by the Papacy.¹ The pejorative historical information that is extant about “Cathars” and “Catharism” came largely from medieval contemporary chroniclers who perceived them as a continuation or a revival of past heresies, and, in modern times, from late 19th and early 20th century scholars who seemingly adopted the views of their medieval predecessors. However, in more recent times, mainly in the last 40 to 50 years, the existence of the “Cathars” has been contested by revisionist historians who, despite attempting to deviate from the bias of 19th and early 20th century scholarship, have not come to a consensus about their beliefs, influences, and initial appearance in the Languedoc. The pursuit of either connecting “Catharism” to ancient heresies like Manichaeism and Bogomilism or giving it a native western European point of origin, has left scholars studying multiple avenues that may provide the most plausible answers to a hotly contested historical topic. The overarching themes that determine the questions posed about the existence of the “Cathars” are crucial for contextualizing heresy with the developing ideas and events of the time. Firstly, the issues that “Cathars” had with religious authorities by believing in “unorthodox” doctrine and the reaction of the Church to non-conformist groups. Secondly, the semi-independent status of the County of Toulouse and its fragmentation caused by decades of blood-feuding due to the economic poverty of the lesser nobility, as well as the County’s propensity for supporting suspected heretics, indicative of its native cultural practices that were seen as foreign and derivative from eastern traditions. Thirdly, the construction of “Catharism” as an evil, satanically derived cult by religious intellectuals in the late 12th century, and the legacy of this construction that was adopted by inquisitors in the Languedoc between the 1230s and 1260s. As such, whether right or wrong, what historians call “Catharism” was supposedly a heretical dualistic doctrine that comprised in the belief of two co-eternal principles, one good and one evil, existing at odds with each other from the beginning of time. The “good” principle, abundantly available in the realm of the “good God”, was interpreted by adherents as being spiritual and incorruptible, and this realm was the final resting place of souls. Whereas, the material world, where everyone lived in, was believed to be evil and sinful because it was created by the “evil God” and, everything that was associated with matter, whether it was related to food, relationships, and sometimes objects, was undesirable. Adherents were at a constant spiritual struggle between the temptations of the material world, and the maintaining of their beliefs which were teleological in nature: the releasing of their souls to dwell in the realm of the “good God”. As such, the only way this was possible was to be initiated in a spiritual baptism called the *consolamentum*; a sort of imitation of the “laying of the hands” ritual found in the Bible that invoked the Holy Spirit. Once initiated, one had to live a severely austere life where the hope was to not be corrupted by the material world and its offerings, and to meet a “good end”. Their search for perfection in an imperfect world ensued a lifestyle based on self-denial,

¹ Readers will notice the inclusion of the terms “Cathars” and “Catharism” in quotation marks throughout the thesis, due to the highly contested nature of these terms within the heresiological milieu. For those who are not aware, the veracity of these terms remains a topic of intense historical debate, and a consensus among scholars has not yet been reached about whether their usage is historically valid or not. For the sake of academic integrity, and in order to remain as neutral as possible, these terms will be written in this manner.

discipline, embracing the reclusiveness of monks while also adhering to apostolic principles found in the New Testament.

According to medieval chroniclers, the region of the Languedoc, in modern-day southern France, was the area mostly affected by this heresy which became noticeable sometime around the 1160s. The more notorious events, which have made historical headway since the 12th and 13th centuries, were recorded mainly in the County of Toulouse, a political entity known for its appearance of several anti-clerical preachers in previous decades, mostly notably Henry of Lausanne in the 1130s-40s. The harsh Church reforms that were promulgated by Pope Gregory VII in the late 11th century caused a wave of anti-clerical sentiment that was present mostly throughout the 12th century, but evidence of similar movements pre-date the reforms by some 30-40 years. As such, criticism of the church and its officials came in various ways, but the main grievances of these movements were against the wealth of bishops, their lack of pastoral care, and the doubts about the sincerity of priests who administered the Eucharist, the most important sacrament of Christianity. Issues concerning the conduct of priests was to become serious bone of contention with the laity, who believed that the administration of the Eucharist, as well as other sacraments that were performed by a priest, became invalid if it came from a morally unsound person. Because of the seriousness of the office, positioning the priest as mediator between the human and divine, lay people believed that the clergy needed to uphold a high degree of moral standards in order for the divine power of the sacrament to have any value, echoing a revived, late antique view of Donatism in the 12th century. This idea was re-established and pursued by Pope Gregory VII in his reforming efforts throughout the second half of the 11th century. It would return in a more militant scale in the early 12th century with various apostolic movements that contained elements of anti-clericalism, some more serious than others depending on the geographical location. Therefore, the push towards a search for the *vita apostolica* and the life of simplicity and self-denial espoused by the early followers of Christ, as well as the early Christian martyrs, was the product of an immense spiritual questioning of the time. Due to increased literacy rates which allowed the laity to have access to certain translated passages of the Bible in their respective vernacular language, lay people believed that they were also worthy of following in Jesus's footsteps, a privilege that the ecclesiastical class reserved only for ordained members of the clerical *ordo*.

Coinciding with these movements, warfare in Europe was drastically altered with the advent of the First Crusade. The Papacy managed to convince blood-stained warriors that travelling to the East and liberating Jerusalem, was enough to guarantee them the salvation of their souls. For the purposes of this thesis, the ideology behind crusading warfare, and the reward it offered, was enough to make it transferrable from one enemy to the other. Once an enraged Pope Innocent III finalized the meticulous details of offering the crusade indulgence in the wake of Pierre de Castelnau's murder in early 1208, the enemy was no longer the infidel, Muslim or Jewish, but the Christian heretic. A conflict which historians called the Albigensian Crusade, pilgrims armed with the cross and immunity given to them by the Papacy entered the Languedoc to destroy heresy with the sword. However, were the atrocities they committed in areas like Béziers justified? Was the crusade in its entirety a just conflict, and one that avenged a wrong?

Ultimately, the Albigensian crusade failed in what it had initially set out to do. The eradication of something that was believed to be inherently evil could not be done with armed conflicts; it required a process more meticulous in nature. In order to understand the true underpinnings of "Catharism", how it worked and thrived in the deep communities of the Languedoc, a position

had to be created whose holders possessed the guile, intellect, and determination to investigate people and their localities thoroughly. The formal establishment of the office of inquisitor by Pope Gregory IX in the 1230s addressed the issues that previous “inquisitions” had not, which were geared more towards preaching and attempted conversions rather than systematic investigations of suspected heretics and their network. Thus, the episcopal inquisitions of the late 12th century failed mainly due to a lack of aid by the secular powers, who, in the Languedoc, may have been part of a larger network of heretical connectivity that was present in local communities. As such, the work of inquisitors was tireless, as they needed to collect as much relevant data as possible, sometimes by initial confessions of people who knew heretics outright, and other times by hearsay, or by local fame (*fama*) of someone who may have been connected. While the earliest initial inquisitorial tribunals dealt harsh and sometime arbitrary punishments, it was always the prerogative of the secular powers to execute unrepentant and relapsing heretics, as the Church was not allowed to shed blood. Adhering to heretical ideas had been, since at least the 5th century, a crime against the state, as well as a spiritual and religious error, as stipulated in the Theodosian code of 438. Instead, to correct these errors, inquisitors assigned less severe punishments that were more penitential in nature, but still exemplary, in order to ensure that heresy could be suppressed and eventually destroyed. By the second half of the 13th century, however, a greater degree of systematization and categorization began to take hold with inquisitorial interrogations, whereas deponents were ceased to be viewed as objects of knowledge and had now transitioned to a more important role; subjects *within* knowledge.² Inquisitors now looked to represent the “micro” view of heresy, and while placing specific deponents as important factors within this view, it allowed them to construct an idea of heresy through the categorization of key individuals from a specific community, as well as to attempt at connecting them with other distant communities. This, in a way, would give them a loose understanding of heretical activity in the region.

The beginning of this thesis research was geared towards the answering of one question: **Does “Catharism” belong to a long tradition of religious dissent, is it a revival of ancient heresies, or was it simply “fabricated” to justify the religious and political expansion taking place during the 12th and 13th centuries?** Upon the realization that a definitive answer to this question might never be attained, the scope of the research was altered in order to focus on the religious and military justification for the calling of the Albigensian Crusade, while still being able to study past heresies like Manichaeism, Bogomilism, as well as other sectarian examples from the 11th and 12th centuries, and how they are related, or unrelated, to “Catharism”. The question of “Catharism” being potentially “fabricated” came off the back of reading certain scholarly works, mainly those of Mark Pegg and Jean-Louis Biget, who claimed that the Church completely misunderstood the customs and traditions of Languedoc. But those conclusions are their own, and in no way do they reflect a skewed analysis toward their views, but rather, they enhance the critical thought process by providing an alternate perspective. In this regard, perhaps the better word to use instead of “fabricated” would be “exaggerated” or “amplified”, because, although there are examples of potential continuity between these heresies, it would be important to note if they, and in particular “Catharism”, were as serious as medieval churchmen believed. Prior to reading the works of Pegg and Biget, the reading of the “Provençal Ritual”, dated to 1250-1280 but possibly written much earlier, found in Wakefield and Evans’s *Heresies of the*

² John H. Arnold, *Inquisition and Power: Catharism and the Confessing Subject in Medieval Languedoc* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 50.

High Middle Ages, proved to have certain apostolic elements in the wording of the text.³ Whereupon Manichaeans had the “elect”, “Cathars” have an “elder”, who was in charge of the ministrations of the *consolamentum*.⁴ While such “similarities” might not mean anything at all, definitive connections between the sects remain scarce, elusive, and inconclusive.

The **historical/integral method** was the method used to formulate the ideas proposed throughout the main body of this thesis. This method encompasses the studying of the central ideas of Christianity and incorporated some of the main doctrines of the Church, along with the counterarguments to the efficacy of those doctrines by dissenting groups. Through the historical/integral method, this thesis analyzed and compared historical documentation through various spheres, mainly the religious, political, and social spheres. The first two chapters of this thesis analyzed the appearance of heresy and its possible continuity through a historical-theological lens, while the third and fourth chapters deduced events from a predominantly historical perspective.⁵ A second method that can be identified in this study is **Form Criticism**, mainly because of the manner in which some primary sources are written, in the form of polemics, legal tracts, and clauses from councils, where the overall comprehension of the content of these writings is vital.

The methodological procedure was dominated by the use of primary source material, which, in a paper that is more historically inclined, is essential. Contemporary sources like William of Tudela’s *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, and Peter les Vaux-de-Cernay’s *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, are pivotal and authoritative, and written by people who witnessed some of the events they chronicle. Wakefield and Evans’s *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* is also valued, mainly because it contains an English translation of a piece called the “Provençal Ritual”, an important document outlining the Cathar rite of the *consolamentum*. Also, Wakefield and Evans’ work contains excerpts from Alan of Lille’s *De Fide Catholica*, an important source that provided insight to the “two worlds” that the “Cathars” believed in. Similarly, R. I. Moore’s *The Birth of Popular Heresy* has combined various chapters taken from Eckbert of Schönau’s *Liber Contra Hereses Katarorum*, as well as the crucial letters written by both Peter of St. Chrysogonus and Henry de Mary, abbot of Clairvaux. These sources provided important evidence to the writings and experiences of medieval polemicists, and how they perceived heresy in their respective time periods and regions. In addition, an amalgamation of inquisitorial documents from the Bibliothèque municipale de Toulouse were essential for studying the depositions from the “Great Inquisition”, which encompassed many towns and villages in the Lauragais, conducted in 1245-46. Similarly, important secondary literature in the form of monographs, edited volumes, and articles by authorities in the field have been scrutinized and used intently in this paper. Many historians share contrasting views, and their scholarly knowledge was vital for this thesis, which helped formulate the final assessment.

This thesis contains a detailed introduction, four main parts, and a conclusion. Contents of these sections are described below:

³ *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, trans. Walter K. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 483.

⁴ *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 487; see also “St. Augustine: On Manichaeism,” in *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe: Documents in Translation*, ed. Edward Peters (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 37.

The first chapter will attempt to define heresy, and understand its appearance and purpose in Christian history, and by extension, in medieval Christian societies in the late 12th and 13th centuries. In order to properly define heresy, it must be juxtaposed with the idea of an opposing view, the “orthodox” view. It would be important to explain what constituted the notion of one “right” belief from early on in Christian history, and how, over many centuries, leading up to the harsh legislation proposed in the conciliar meetings of the late 12th and early 13th centuries, this notion developed strict criteria that did not accept any deviance from this “right” belief. Giving heresy a concrete definition that will aid in the complete comprehension of the term has been a quite difficult and daunting task. However, in *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe*, the volume of primary sources edited by Edward Peters, there are two “descriptions” of heresy. Descriptions is the better word to use in this context, rather than “definitions”, because these are taken from the perspective of two different people, who lived almost 800 years apart, but who still shared similar ideas concerning heresy. The first, reported by French medievalist Christine Thouzellier who was summarizing the ideas of Isidore of Seville, described a heretic as “...neither abnormal nor neurotic: he is rather a man seeking after the truth, and whom, always in the view of Christianity, the dogmas of revealed truths no longer satisfy”.⁶ Similarly, some of the language could have been taken from Robert Grosseteste’s early 13th century description that, “Heresy is an opinion chosen by human faculties, contrary to holy Scripture, openly taught, and pertinaciously defended. *Haeresis* in Greek, *electio* in Latin”.⁷ Thouzellier highlights that adhering to heresy was a choice people made; however, by the 13th century, the Church was no longer accepting disparity in canonical belief as it was in early years of Christianity. This was partly due to the development and deployment of exclusionary rhetoric within the Christian intellectual sphere, alluding to and creating a pan-European Christian community with shared values and religion, fearful of outsiders. This fear of outsiders and “others” was defined in the persecutive tactics the Church began to develop in late 12th century conciliar pronouncements, which would be legitimized by inquisitors in the mid-13th century. In addition, the legislative work of Gratian is very important to mention when trying to define heresy, specifically for the period of the mid-12th century, when canon law was moving towards a more mature stage. Causa 23 from his *Decretum* proceeded to mention the strict proprietary sanctions that awaited all those guilty of the “sin” of heresy. Heretics had no “just claim” to property and could have it confiscated by Catholic authorities. Gratian’s legal developments defended the Church’s integrity, for being a victim of heretical corruption that attempted to besmirch its doctrine. Although the *Decretum* is unfortunately not fully translated in English, Frederick Russell’s work on Just war in the Middle Ages is valuable and will be used extensively.⁸

The second chapter will examine the possible links between Manichaeism, Bogomilism, and “Catharism”. Knowledge of these heresies is passed down to us through contemporary polemics, which are valuable historical sources even though they are heavily biased. For Manichaeism, the authoritative text comes from Augustine, who had once been an adherent (auditor) of the Manichaean sect for nine years. The section of his treatise *On the Heresies*, dedicated to Manichaeism is crucial because it discusses the beliefs and practices of Manichaeans and mentions the use of a religious hierarchy, which is similar to what “Catharism” supposedly adopted during its time. An attempt will also be made to uncover links between Bogomilism and

⁶ For the full quote by Thouzellier, see “Introduction: Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe,” in *Heresy and Authority*, 4.

⁷ “Introduction,” in *Heresy and Authority*, 4.

⁸ Frederick Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 74-75.

“Catharism”, as the two heresies have always been closely compared. Where Manichaeism dissipates in the comparison between the other two is the initiation process one performed to enter the sect, or, more specifically, something that the “Cathars” called the *consolamentum*. Information about this ritual comes from a contemporary document, “The Provençal Ritual”, and it outlines the process the initiate must go through to be inducted successfully.

The third chapter will discuss the religious justification for the calling of the Albigensian Crusade in the Languedoc. This section will be more historical in nature, attempting to link Catharism with the anti-clerical movements of the 12th century that came out of the stringent Church reforms promulgated in the last quarter of the 11th century. It will also discuss the heresies that sprung up in and around the year 1000, and how these were understood by witnesses and later writers who analyzed these events. As such, it would be important to elaborate on the thought process behind these movements that stressed the return to a simpler doctrine and spirituality within the Church, in emulation of the simplicity espoused by the Apostles and the Church Fathers after Christ’s death and resurrection up until the 4th century AD respectively. Therefore, the quest for the *vita apostolica*, religious poverty, and the failure on the part of the Church to enact reforms that were attainable, left the laity questioning the spiritual efficacy of the ecclesiastical caste. In addition, an investigation must be conducted to understand if medieval European society had been repressive prior to and including the time when the first inquisitors were formally announced in the 1230s, as well as the inquisitorial period in the Languedoc until the 1260s. For the purposes of this paper, the majority of the research conducted in this section will include studying daily aspects of religious devotion and doctrine, as well as elaborating on aspects related to religious policy concerning dissent or sectarianism prior to the inquisitorial period, which was conducted and promulgated by the Papacy.

A study as comprehensive as this allows one to tackle it from different viewpoints. As most of the events and movements that came to prominence in the 12th century were reactionary, a section in this body paragraph must include a close study of the preaching campaigns that were conducted in the Languedoc by the Cistercian order from the mid-1140s onward. The preaching campaigns in the early stages of the appearance of “Catharism”, especially during Bernard of Clairvaux’s visit in 1145, but also the missions in 1178 by Peter of St. Chrysogonus and Abbot Henry de Marcy, were not successful. Until the incident at Lombers in 1165 when heretics and Catholic preachers openly debated on doctrine and beliefs, and the letter written by Count Raymond V of Toulouse to the Cistercian general chapter in 1177, there were no concrete examples of heresy, only assumptions of the spreading of errors from leaders of supposed anti-clerical movements like Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne. The debate at Lombers in 1165, and the letter of Count Raymond V in 1177 were watershed moments; at Lombers, Catholic churchmen got a glimpse of what they perceived as stubborn heretics who were too clever to succumb to Catholic spiritual advances, and in 1177 Count Raymond openly claimed that heretics were present in his realm.⁹ Evidence of “open preaching” of beliefs outside the established religion were now showcased, and, to return to what Grosseteste had mentioned, “...pertinaciously defended”.¹⁰ The Church now understood that eradication of this “disease” would be more difficult than initially thought.

⁹ Jonathan Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), 23.

¹⁰ “Introduction,” *Heresy and Authority*, 4.

In addition to examining the preaching missions conveyed in the mid-12th century, one must study the other reactionary measure put forth by the Papacy in order to stop the spread of heresy: inquisitions. This section of the paper will proceed in a different route. It is understandable that a certain degree of analysis must be given to the aspects that made up the *inquisitio*, but its analysis will not be the bulk of the section. Parts of the inquisitorial procedure will be examined, as well as the issues that were encountered by both inquisitors and deponents related to punishment, the veracity of confessions, and certain psychological elements that inquisitors manipulated to their advantage. The *MS 609* manuscript from the Bibliothèque municipale de Toulouse provides important insight to the various inquisitorial tribunals conducted around the Toulousain by Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre between 1245 and 1246.¹¹ The evidence extracted from the various depositions of the *MS 609*, will help to understand if heresy was a *lived reality*, or if it was *perceived* as such by inquisitors. In addition, engagement with these inquisitorial sources will help shed light on whether they are valid historical documents that provide evidence of heresy, while pointing out certain issues such as confusing language and contradictions, which might prove to be detrimental rather than helpful.

Lastly, the fourth chapter will examine the crucial period of 1177 to 1181, and how the religious, political, and legislative developments in those years were formative models for the promulgation of the Albigensian crusade in 1208/09. Beginning with the possibly forged letter of Raymond V of Toulouse to the Cistercians in 1177, whereupon he asked the Church for aid in defeating heresy in his realm. This was followed by the preaching missions of legate Peter of St. Chrysogonus and Henry de Marcy, abbot of Clairvaux in 1178, which were commissioned by the Pope to aid Raymond, resulting in both churchmen “uncovering” supposed heretics in Toulouse. These revelations led the pope to convene the Third Lateran Council in 1179, which formalized and ratified the proposition for armed conflict against the heretics in Raymond’s lands, as well as the transference and justification of the crusade indulgence from Muslim infidels to heretics. With these legislative apparatuses in place, a small “crusade” was called in 1181 where abbot Henry de Marcy was placed as its leader. This event set a precedent in what was to come via the Albigensian crusade, as well as the memory of certain individuals and places involved, mainly the “stain” of heresy on the future leaders of the Trencavel dynasty, and the memory of the stronghold of Lavaur as a place of resistance.

Also, within this framework of analyzing the transference of the crusade indulgence, it would be important to outline the speech of Urban II at Clermont and how the indulgence was first formed. The ideas that motivated the First Crusade were similar for the Albigensian crusade, only this time the enemy was no longer the Muslim infidel, but the heretic. Crusaders who willingly embarked on campaigns in the Languedoc were indirectly continuing the legacy of those that had gone to the Holy Land: in the defence of Christendom from an unwanted enemy. Additionally, the “just war” theory will be used in conjunction with the legal advancements at Lateran III and to outline why armed conflict against heretics was lawful. For this section, Russell’s scholarly analysis of Gratian’s vital 12th century canon law tract the *Decretum*, in his work *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, is important for contextualizing the political and religious events of Gratian’s time, as well his systematic analysis of what Saint Augustine had previously written about “just

¹¹ Jean-Paul Rehr, *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-26: Edition and Translation of Bibliothèque municipale de Toulouse MS 609* <http://medieval-inquisition.huma-num.fr/> – This link provides access to the manuscript MS 609, where most of the historical evidence of inquisitorial tribunals can be found. From this point on, when referring to these texts, it will be indicated at MS 609 followed by the number it is classified under.

war” in the late 4th – early 5th century. To supplement this idea, a brief study of the sack of Béziers in 1209 will be conducted, to establish if its harsh treatment by crusaders had been justified.

Scholars have attempted to deconstruct the name given to these heretics, that of “Cathars”, “Good Men”, “Good Christians”, “Albigensians” and possibly, but not always, relating their heretical tendencies with their profession like *publicani*, *rustici*, and *textores*, among others. Contemporary medieval writers, who attempted to understand why religious dissent showcased itself in their time, were convinced that many of these heresies were a continuation or a revival of one another, so they ascribed to them names of ancient heresies that had appeared in the past like “Arians” or “Manichaeans/Manichees”. At a later period, when inquisitors were holding tribunals in the Languedoc, the name “Good Men” was used, often trying to differentiate the initiated members of the sect, like “elders” or *perfecti*, with the simple believers, “auditors” or *credentes*. However, the inquisitorial manuals which chronicled the depositions of the people questioned were often not clear, and may have, at times, manipulated the depositions in order to best suit their interests. As such, it would be important to emphasize and scrutinize the names given to these heretics. While the heresies that appeared near the year 1000 in western Europe (even though they were given the generic name “Manichaeans”) would be an important place to start, however, the crucial period to focus on is the mid-1160s, when Eckbert of Schönau gave the name *catharoi* to heretics that appeared in the Rhineland, which was the first time this term was recorded. Therefore, scrutinizing the nomenclature of this sect will be an important aspect of this thesis, as will the work of scholars who have studied and written about it.

Part 1: What is Heresy and How Can it be Understood Within a Medieval Context?

1.1 – A Beginning: Conceptualizing and Defining Heresy as an Irreligious and Immoral Construct

In the modern world, religious expression is not so much a privilege, but a right. With time passing by remarkably quickly, this right can sometimes be taken for granted. Rewind roughly 800 years, religious freedom did not exist, let alone openly displayed for people to choose. However, for the earliest Christians, the ones who witnessed Jesus's death, resurrection, and listened to the teachings of his apostles, little did they know that this event would raise serious theological and spiritual questions in the following centuries. Examples from Scripture are clear and explicit; in 1 Corinthians 11:19, when the Apostle Paul denoted that "...there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine", this meant that contradictions and denunciations would be present in congregations that gathered to discuss Christ's teachings.¹² But what exactly did these factions discuss, and why did these discussions garner much attention many centuries after Jesus's resurrection? How did their beliefs deviate from Jesus's original message, supported by the tireless work of his apostles? How did their doctrine differ from what was to become "orthodoxy"? Interpreting "right" from "wrong" belief in the early years of Christian history was not easy. As Peters mentions, early Christians had a "choice" (*hairesein/haeresis*), to believe in various schools of religious thought and expression, brought forth by a pluralism of ideas reminiscent of the ancient Greek schools of philosophy.¹³ As Christianity developed, a variety of perceptions of Jesus helped define a coherent doctrine concerning his nature, which became "orthodoxy" over the course of time. This can be supported by the idea that the plurality of thought still extant in the 2nd century, as it had been in the earliest years of Christianity was seen in a negative way, described as an affront to God for dividing the faithful with beliefs that did not constitute those of the majority.¹⁴ Still, no coherent, canonical doctrine existed yet, and people had the "choice" to believe in what they perceived as the correct faith, without being reprimanded. However, as the Pauline Epistles have shown, the period of the late 1st century, up until the beginning of the 4th century, some communities began to stray away from what was believed to be the original message of Christ's teaching, and these people needed to be reminded of their errors.¹⁵ In relation to this, it would be important to note that by at least the 3rd century, the old notion of the existing "factions", began to take a less severe tone than that of *haeresis*; the latter became related to beliefs that countered Christian truth, based on the authority of Scripture and the Church.¹⁶ The Church Fathers studied the Scriptures tirelessly, in order to refine certain nuanced aspects of Christ's teaching; a meticulous and tedious work which was passed down through generations and eventually made its way to the most learned and

¹² *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version: Catholic Edition, Anglicized Text* (Nashville: Catholic Bible Press, 1995), 1204.

¹³ "The Heretics of Old": The Definition of Orthodoxy and Heresy in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," in *Heresy and Authority*, 14, 15. Readers who would like to learn more on this topic should inquire about the work of Alain Le Boulluec, *The Notion of Heresy in Greek Literature in the Second and Third Centuries*, eds. David Lincicum and Nicholas Moore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Original, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque, IIe-IIIe siècles*, t. 1: *De Justin à Irénée*; t. 2: *Clément d'Alexandrie et Origène* [Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1985]).

¹⁴ "The Heretics of Old," *Heresy and Authority*, 14-15.

¹⁵ "The Heretics of Old," *Heresy and Authority*, 17.

¹⁶ "The Heretics of Old," *Heresy and Authority*, 17.

experienced theologians of the Middle Ages.¹⁷ However, even the most learned minds of the early Christian period had difficulty establishing a case for the authority of Scripture, against what most people knew as traditional cultural practices that differed from place to place, which, by the early 4th century, clashed with the growing doctrine of the Church. There can be beyond any doubt that the 4th and 5th centuries were the periods in which the Church began to develop a more elaborate doctrine, and to propose stricter punishments for deviants of the faith by way of ecumenical councils, the first one being at the city of Nicaea in 325. This council was convened as a response to Arius, a priest from Egypt, whose alleged false claims of Jesus being created and not co-eternal with God the Father caused a massive controversy in the Church. The importance of Nicaea, as well as the subsequent ecumenical councils that followed, created the first known set of “right” beliefs, and tackled the issues created by dissenting individuals and communities who did not want to conform to these spiritual and doctrinal changes. By the late 4th century, when the late Roman empire had been predominantly converted to Christianity, and it was illegal to adhere to, and practice pagan and deviant beliefs, the initial ideas of Christian universality began to take hold in conciliar pronouncements. One should mention the importance of the council of Carthage in 397 which created a scriptural canon, and designated certain literary texts as apocryphal, which did not bode well for certain communities that still considered these texts as authoritative.¹⁸ Members of the Christian “community” were to follow texts that were approved by an articulated ecclesiastical organization, excluding all other literary works that could lead to division, and placing an emphasis on the growing idea of one, universal, “orthodox” belief. As a concept, Christian universality would reach the height of its popularity towards the mid-12th century, however, early examples of this, and the jurisprudential developments of the late Roman state, set the precedent for the harsher and more exclusionary rhetoric in the high Middle Ages. With the creation of the *Theodosian Code* in 438, the expanding Christian community of the late Roman state instituted a corpus of previous legislative pronouncements that devalued deviant views, as well as denounced, and restricted heretics from preaching their “demented and insane” beliefs.¹⁹ With the advent of the *Code*, a change in ideology was imminent: what had begun in the 2nd and 3rd centuries concerning a shift in the meaning of the word *haereseis* from “choice” to “error” was now ratified in the 5th century.²⁰ Heretics were now considered disruptors of the social order, and in their error (false belief) they destabilized the evolution of authority and governance of the state at both the secular and religious levels. To stop the spreading of false belief, a system of coercion was put in place to remove the societal “privileges” of any religious deviants.²¹ Furthermore, and probably the most important element of the *Code*, is the benevolence of the church, which looked to correct heretical belief, and accept guilty confessors back to the community of the faithful.²² By expounding such harsh legal punishments, the church and the state worked together in order to combat political, social, and religious instability, which was undoubtedly caused by the dissenting beliefs of people initially believed to be part of the Christian “community”. With religious dissent showcasing itself, it needed to be differentiated with the correct, “orthodox” belief that was adhered to by the majority. By the early medieval

¹⁷ “The Heretics of Old,” *Heresy and Authority*, 3, 18.

¹⁸ “The Heretics of Old,” *Heresy and Authority*, 19.

¹⁹ “*Compelle Intrare*: The Coercion of Heretics in the *Theodosian Code*, 438,” in *Heresy and Authority*, 45.

²⁰ Alain Le Boulluec, Jean-Michel Roessli *et alii*, “Hérésie,” *Dictionnaire des faits religieux*, 2nd edition, eds. Régine Azria (†) and Danièle Hervieu-Léger (Paris: Presses universitaires de France/Humensis, 2019), 507.

²¹ “The Coercion of Heretics in the *Theodosian Code*,” *Heresy and Authority*, 45; Le Boulluec and Roessli, “Hérésie,” 507.

²² “The Coercion of Heretics in the *Theodosian Code*,” *Heresy and Authority*, 46.

period, specifically the 6th and 7th centuries, past experiences in dealing with religious dissent were not forgotten, and the literary works of learned minds still defended the integrity of the church, denouncing religious dissent by attempting to make distinctions between heretical beliefs and orthodoxy. Therefore, the ideas purported by Isidore of Seville are important in this respect. His *Etymologies* is an encyclopedic work that contains a variety of definitions that were surely used by later medieval theologians and intellectuals to warn people of the evil of heresy, and to provide general knowledge and information about past sects. Isidore, in the section “On heresy and schism”, reiterates the definition of *haeresis* as a choice one makes to believe in something of their own free will.²³ He refutes this decision, claiming that the tireless work of the Apostles in professing the divine truth which they learned from Christ, dictated the proper set of beliefs one should adhere to, and not something based off free will.²⁴ Another important example, which was surely used by medieval churchmen between the 11th and mid-13th centuries to understand the rise of certain sectarian beliefs, was the idea that it was “with one name that they conspire against the Church of God”.²⁵ This is quite interesting, partly due to what Isidore says in the previous line, that they were “divided by many errors”.²⁶ This unfortunately betrays what is known about the rhetoric of medieval churchmen, and distinctions between past heretical sects were not always easy to come by, sometimes not all. Modern readers are likely to be aware of these divisions in order to avoid lumping all heresies together, giving them generic names like “Arians” or “Manichees”; but the same cannot be said for medieval writers. More specifically, in the 12th century, when the idea of Christian universality was being discussed in many intellectual spheres, theologians who claimed to witness religious dissent believed in the uniformity of heretical belief. To them, all heresies were a continuation of one another, whose main goal was to destroy the church with false claims of enlightenment. While Isidore’s ideas were partly true, the notion of sects being “divided by many errors” was not always comprehended. By 1200, with Christianity previously experiencing various degrees of sectarianism such as Gnosticism, Arianism, and Manicheism, the idea of religious dissent had become so serious, it was considered treasonous toward God and adhering to anything outside the sacred teachings of the Church meant the eternal damnation of one’s soul.²⁷ Wakefield and Evans understand it to be a “deadly contamination” and heretical believers stubbornly defended their falsified doctrines against the Church.²⁸

A fundamental issue regarding the detection of heretical beliefs is the efficacy of judgement possessed by the person doing the detecting. While judgement is usually subjective, falsely judging someone of an offence occurred quite often, especially when the offence was deviation from religious norms. Unless the offence is clear-cut, it is always quite hard to judge initially if a person is a dissenter and/or a heretic. James K. A. Smith examines something called the “phenomenology of judgement”, based around the comparison of tolerance and intolerance. Smith explains that religious cohesion is displayed by an understanding within a community of faithful, who all share similar beliefs; however, this community can also decide, by their interpretation and perception, that certain members are not sharing similar beliefs with the

²³ “The Coercion of Heretics in the *Theodosian Code*,” *Heresy and Authority*, 49.

²⁴ “The Coercion of Heretics in the *Theodosian Code*,” *Heresy and Authority*, 49.

²⁵ “The Coercion of Heretics in the *Theodosian Code*,” *Heresy and Authority*, 50.

²⁶ “The Coercion of Heretics in the *Theodosian Code*,” *Heresy and Authority*, 50.

²⁷ “Introduction: A Historical Sketch of the Medieval Popular Heresies,” *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 1-2.

²⁸ “Introduction: A Historical Sketch of the Medieval Popular Heresies,” *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 2.

norm.²⁹ As such, the judgement of the community as a whole, would be to label these people as heretics and have them forfeit their right to be identified as Christians.³⁰ How Smith's idea of the "phenomenology of judgement" comes into play is quite interesting: what criteria of belief are these dissenters judged on, and how does their judgement by certain individuals determine correct or incorrect belief?³¹ An inherent bias lives within all humans, where the "idea" of someone, usually based on perception and interpretation, rather than actuality, at times produces a falsified judgement of character. Additionally, this can then lead to an intolerance of said character, because their ideas do not coincide with the tolerated ideas of the community. As such, a heretic is the label given to someone whose ideas and beliefs are not tolerated, because of a difference in interpretation of either the basic Christian tenets, or Scriptural passages.³²

Related in this interpretation are the complexities that surround the idea of *belief*, an important concept that makes the proposition of a judgement, either legitimate or confounded. In both cases – legitimate and confounded judgements – it would be inherently difficult to analyze the sentiment one feels about their personal beliefs. Equally difficult is attempting to comprehend the thought process behind any assumption that stated one person's beliefs were wrong because they did not adhere to those of an authority. What makes studying medieval religious belief so difficult is the fact that it is not linear, belonging to a time period that was not a "straightforward 'age of faith'".³³ The lack of straightforwardness in medieval religion was partly due to the inherently personal feeling that came with believing in something, as well as the safety one might feel while clinging on to these beliefs, even if someone told them that they were categorically wrong. In times of either political and social uncertainty, one's beliefs might help get through such difficulties, while surrendering life's future outcomes to God and all things Christian based, which in the 12th century, was the natural order of religious life. However, this is only true if you believed in *all* the doctrinal tenets of Christianity as they were professed by learned churchmen in the Middle Ages. One person's belief might be another person's *unbelief*, as John Arnold has labelled it, which created a dichotomy of right or wrong, either by perception or by reality.³⁴ Although the idea of *unbelief* might be slightly pejorative, it should not be viewed in such a negative way as would be when contrasting *heresy* with *orthodoxy*, for example.³⁵ It is a normal human trait to doubt, especially when it concerns aspects that are considered "certainties," such as the doctrine of the Catholic Church, which claimed apostolic inheritance and salvation only through participation of its tenets. Arnold also argues that a someone's *unbelief* might possibly stem from their geographic location, as well as their social and cultural background, and because certain beliefs are formed, acted, and expressed within these settings, doctrinal tenets that are considered essential to some, might not be as important to others.³⁶ Conducive to the social and cultural contexts lies a key factor: the frequency in which people participated in religious life. For instance, a person from location "A" might question the intercessory powers of the saints, because of a "negative" experience he or she had when they prayed to the saint to intercede on their behalf. This person might have heard stories of saints' lives and was possibly taught of their

²⁹ James K. A. Smith, "Fire from Heaven: The Hermeneutics of Heresy," *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa* 20, no. 1 (1996), 15.

³⁰ Smith, "Fire from Heaven," 15-16.

³¹ Smith, "Fire from Heaven," 16.

³² Smith, "Fire from Heaven," 18.

³³ John H. Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief in Medieval Europe* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), 3.

³⁴ Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief*, 4.

³⁵ Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief*, 3.

³⁶ Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief*, 5-6.

miraculous tendencies and importance to Christian spirituality by a learned churchman, but when it came time to putting this knowledge into practice, the result they were hoping for did not materialize (i.e., their prayer was not sincere and not answered). Whereas a person from location “B” possibly received the same knowledge as the person from location “A,” but his understanding might have differed slightly. It is possible that through regular ecclesiastical participation and a very minimal knowledge of Scripture, this person knew that commitment to devotional actions like praying and venerating the saint with a pure heart, a certain degree of comprehension might penetrate the soul and mind to understand that these acts were spiritually beneficial. Therefore, it was their perception that a sincere prayer would have surely been answered. Related in this assessment, Arthur Stephen McGrade has elaborated slightly on the idea of religious *belief*; its non-linear nature, which allows the “freedom” of some skepticism, but also, the very personal and private sentiments that accentuate *belief* place it in a “grey” category rather than black or white. Describing one’s belief “in” something is hard to define, which leads to complex theological questions of how religion “should” be practiced by the laity and the clergy, how it could be corrected if not practiced properly, and the details of how certain Christian tenets are the way they are, never to be questioned and always respected.³⁷ Returning briefly to the examples of the people from location “A” and “B” and their different levels of understanding of the saints, McGrade has placed the emphasis on wording, denoting the subtle but important differences between the terms “belief in” and “believing that”.³⁸ By believing *in* the saints, it confirms the idea that they once existed in history, and through their devotion to Christ the position they obtained was merited. Both people from location “A” and “B” begin on similar footing, but where their understanding differs is whether they both believed *that* the saints had intercessory powers, or how those intercessory powers worked to perform miracles.³⁹ However, even if examples like these might represent two very real scenarios, knowing the exactitude of lay devotion without a wealth of evidence from source materials is always difficult, and a proper conclusion cannot always be attained about the religious life of medieval people without making inaccurate assumptions that betray historical reality.

As such, it is the important aspects of *perception* and *lived reality* that make the task of analyzing medieval heresy so difficult, especially regarding “Catharism”, but also for other alleged anti-clerical and non-conformist movements that sprung up in the first half of the 12th century. Also, a certain degree of emphasis must be placed upon the different modes of *interpretation* that both the ecclesiastical class and the laity possessed in the 12th and 13th centuries, which defined terms of literacy, religious conviction, devotion, and spirituality. In fact, it is no farfetched statement to deduce that if the idea of heresy can be considered a *lived reality*, then, can differing degrees of *perception* and *interpretation* be the root causes of its appearance in medieval society? Can they be its only causes? It is also important to note that the presence of various cultural practices and traditions throughout many regions across Europe were considered, by the 12th century, and even more so in the 13th, inferior when compared to the religious legacy of the Church. The Church’s pursuit for doctrinal supremacy over strange regional practices led to a negative *perception* of said practices, culminating in the labelling of heresy and the denouncement of certain apostolic movements that did not agree with the Church’s push for

³⁷ Arthur Stephen McGrade, “The Medieval Idea of Heresy,” in *The Medieval Church: Universities, Heresy, and the Religious Life: Essays in Honour of Gordon Leff*, eds. Peter Biller and Barrie Dobson (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999), 117.

³⁸ McGrade, “The Medieval Idea of Heresy,” 117.

³⁹ McGrade, “The Medieval Idea of Heresy,” 118.

religious and spiritual hegemony.⁴⁰ This is where *perception* and *interpretation* become key factors when examining heresy: the church's *perception* of the appearance, belief, and defence of these movements pointed towards a disregard for the authority that they worked for centuries to build, while the movements that belonged to the heretical point-of-view saw their beliefs as a return to a purer form of Christianity, one representative of the tireless work of Christ's apostles. The Church's *perception* did not equate to *lived reality*, as the people who had been labelled "heretics," especially the "Cathars," surely thought that their beliefs were genuine, even if they went against something that the Church had deemed orthodox. In this regard, Grado Merlo has provided a worthy assessment of what historians should need to look out for when analyzing medieval heresy: it is too easy to believe in an idea that is considered an absolute certainty, when it comes from the perspective of a person, an institution, or even an entity, placed in a position of authority.⁴¹ Although this task may seem simple, it is nothing of the sort; too often are historical events, ideas, and patterns taken at face value because of literary evidence written by a person in power: a churchman, a royal chancellor/advisor, etc. As people of the intellectual class, churchmen and chancellors/royal advisors claimed that their education gifted them a certain authority over the common populace, often seen as illiterate or simple. Through their knowledge of Scripture and the writings of Church Fathers, the intellectual class argued that heresy was a living, breathing *reality*, which defied the teachings of Christ and the doctrines of the Church. It is their *perception* of historical events that historians of heresy must watch out for: their rhetorical analysis of heretical reality as a continuous threat to Christian society, and the Church's governance of that society, as well as the inherent bias which dictated that heresy spread primarily among illiterates and *rustici* (rustics) was a consequence of their intellectual authority.⁴² Regrettably, this intellectual bias made the church seem inflexible to "change" and at times, even unwilling to have a conversation with representatives of these movements. On the rare occasion that debates between the two parties ensued, the "heresy card" was quickly thrown into the equation, especially towards the mid-to-late 12th century, when events in the Languedoc formed a pattern of connecting it with an area that was continuously riddled with heresy. However, it is possible that these movements indirectly aided the Church in proceeding to define its doctrinal tenets in a more elaborate way. Anti-clerical and non-conformist movements were born from the confusion and skepticism of its participants regarding elements that, again, made up "certainties" in Christianity (i.e., salvation through ecclesiastical participation such as confession and Eucharist; aspects concerning eschatology, salvation, etc.), and it is possible that these movements created a sense of anxiety that reverberated throughout the Church and all its institutions. Even by 1200, the Church was still in the process of developing a concrete definition of its tenets, as well as the procedural elements that defined "proper" Christian spirituality. As such, Le Boulluec, Roessli et alii mention that religious crises in Europe tended to spring up throughout history in order for the re-evaluation of criteria regarding canonical doctrines and dogmas, allowing a reassessment of religious beliefs that can either become more or less accepting of deviation.⁴³ This can be said of the Mendicant orders, especially the followers of Francis of Assisi who were initially perceived as a threat to religious authority, but through a strict analysis of the profound spiritual message Francis was attempting to convey, they were

⁴⁰ Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief*, 10.

⁴¹ Grado Giovanni Merlo, "Christian Experiences of Religious Non-Conformism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity*, ed. John H. Arnold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 436, 437.

⁴² Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief*, 11.

⁴³ Le Boulluec and Roessli, "Hérésie," 505.

legitimized by the Church and St. Francis was formally canonized not long after his death.⁴⁴ However, with “Catharism” this idea is quite different. The extreme uncertainty of its origins and how it was perceived by the Church, as well as the complex feudal system dominant in the Languedoc which worked to the detriment of the religious authorities who attempted to track “Catharism”, the potential of creating a “Cathar order” was not even a thought in the mind of the members of the ecclesiastical class.

It is therefore imperative to understand the medieval Church’s position in the fight against the “Cathar” heresy, their reaction to its appearance, as well as the reaction to the appearance of other non-conformist movements: was it simply a question of these movements’ disregard for the religious authority of the Church and not wanting to conform to religious standards, or was it that medieval churchmen truly *believed* that the history of heresy and religious deviation stemmed from the Devil?⁴⁵ This perspective is quite interesting, and it is worth briefly analyzing below. Considering the idea that religious authority was divinely ordained and stemming from God, the source of ultimate good, the only possibility to justify any deviation from this religious ideal was to try to understand and question where it came from; the Devil was the only “plausible” explanation that medieval churchmen believed this evil could derive from. Therefore, people, institutions, political entities, and even literary evidence that embraced what was perceived as “religious error” were refuted, vehemently demonized, and labelled heretical by ecclesiastical officials who *believed* that the ancient heresies combatted by the Church Fathers were simply resurfacing, and that their existence threatened the development of religious governance the Church was attempting to enhance in the 12th century.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ McGrade, “The Medieval Idea of Heresy,” 129.

⁴⁵ Le Boulluec and Roessli, “Hérésie,” 505.

⁴⁶ Beverly Maine Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229: Preaching in the Lord’s Vineyard* (York: York Medieval Press, 2001), 11, 12; see also Le Boulluec and Roessli, “Hérésie,” 507, 509.

Part 2: A Long Tradition of Religious Error? “Catharism”: Beliefs and Possible Influences

2.1 – Beliefs

Before analyzing the contemporary sources that describe the beliefs and practices of the “Cathars”, it is imperative that several elements must be pointed out in order to properly comprehend the rhetoric used in these sources. All of the extant material available that describes, refutes, and demonizes both the “Cathars” of the Rhineland and Languedoc comes from their religious adversaries. Any dialogue ascribed to them is ascribed by the orthodox chronicler, which may betray the understanding of their beliefs, because it does not come from them, but from those who oppose them. From their initial appearance, recorded with much trepidation in a letter by Eberwin of Steinfeld, a Premonstratensian prior in Rhineland during the 1140s, followed several years later by the much appreciated, but somewhat misleading *Liber Contra Hereses Katarorum* by Eckbert, abbot of Schönau in the mid-1160s, this form of religious dissent, described by both Eberwin and Eckbert as a heresy, was said to have antecedents in Greece and the East, pointing towards possible continuity with past sects like Manichaeism.⁴⁷ While Eberwin describes the appearance of two different sects with divergent beliefs, Eckbert seems to have fused them together in his description, while adding aspects of dualism. However, those interpreting the source that describes Eberwin’s first group might also notice certain passages that hint at the potential of dualist belief, but this is not conclusive. It is possible that Eckbert was informed of Eberwin’s text, as both individuals discuss events that happen near Cologne, not many years apart. Also, although the majority of this study will be concentrated on the Languedoc, the appearance of “Cathars” in the Rhineland is crucial to the narrative, even though links between them, and the much more elusive “Cathars” of the Languedoc, are uncertain.

The situation in the Languedoc was slightly different and harder to assess. There was evidence of dissenting activity in the region during the late 1120s, 30s, and 40s, in the form of Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne (sometimes given the epithet of “Le Mans”) which attracted the attention of Bernard of Clairvaux and showcased in a relatively well-documented preaching mission in 1145. Accordingly, there does not seem to be any evidence of dualism in the south during Bernard’s mission. However, in the subsequent events that took place in the region after Bernard’s visit, the arbitration at Lombers in 1165 might be the only piece of extant evidence of *potential* adherence to dualistic belief. Even the much scholarly maligned, heavily controversial, and possibly “mythic” “Cathar council” of Saint-Félix-de-Caraman in 1167, which mentions a reorganization of the dissenting Languedocian “church” – another controversial aspect – as well as the imposition of a new spiritual rite, does not discuss any dualistic belief. Interestingly enough, the events of late 1178 to 1181, chronicled in the form of letters to the papacy by legate Peter of St. Chrysogonus and Henry of Marcy, abbot of Clairvaux, do not make any mention of the Saint-Félix council in their correspondences, neither do the historians of Henry II of England, who was very invested in Toulousain political and religious activity.⁴⁸ It is quite possible that

⁴⁷ “Everinus of Steinfeld: Letter to St. Bernard, 1143,” in *Heresy and Authority*, 94; R. I. Moore, “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” in *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (Frome and London: Edward Arnold, 1975), 93.

⁴⁸ Jean-Louis Biget, “Un phénomène occidental,” in *Hérésie et inquisition dans le Midi de la France* (Paris: Picard, 2007), 78. Biget mentions that the likes of Gervase of Canterbury, Roger of Howden, and Benedict of Peterborough all fail to refer to the Saint-Félix council in their histories.

Alan of Lille may have been the catalyst for identifying the dualistic belief of the “Cathars”, and since his *De fide Catholica*, written towards the very end of the 12th century, many important contemporary works of the early 13th century, like those of Peter Vaux-de-Cernay and Durand of Huesca, followed suit in ascribing dualism as a key facet of “Cathar” belief.⁴⁹ Therefore, a vital question must be asked that pertains to understanding the fundamental elements of this section: was dualism a legitimate religious belief, or is it an intellectual construct created by medieval polemicists?

What follows is a description of the beliefs and practices of the “Cathars” beginning with the examples from the Rhineland, followed by those in Languedoc. The reasoning behind these beliefs, and the analysis of what they could mean for the historical and religious narrative of the time will be examined in a later section.

a – First Appearances, Rejection of the Sacraments, the spiritual rite of the *consolamentum*, and Dualism

Eberwin of Steinfeld (sometimes latinized in certain sources as “Everinus”), a Premonstratensian prior, was informed of some troubling news about “new heretics” that were discovered near Cologne. His letter to Bernard of Clairvaux in 1143/44 forms the basis of the information available of two different sects with several juxtaposing ideas, but still described as followers of the “apostolic life”.⁵⁰ In order to properly understand why these “heretics” have not stopped spreading their false ideas, he asked Bernard to refute their beliefs with his Biblical knowledge.⁵¹ The first sect, openly preached near the city of Cologne for three days, and while attempting to defend their beliefs with the help of “skilled men”, were violently taken by an angry mob of zealots, and thrown into a fire.⁵² They were described as the “...poor of Christ, who have no certain abode”, probably roaming from town to town, through many different regions, leading a life of strict “fasting and abstinence”, which included the prohibition of consuming any foods made from coition, like dairy products and meat.⁵³ Eberwin continues by stating that all their meals and drinks are consecrated “according to the form of Christ and his apostles”, in order to partake in what they believed was a form of Eucharistic ritual.⁵⁴ They also performed a baptismal rite which has its origins in the Acts of the Apostles, whereupon water is not used by the “elect” to incorporate others into the sect, but instead, by “imposition of the hands” which transferred the Holy Spirit onto the initiate, which Eberwin called an “auditor”.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ “Alan of Lille: A Scholar’s Attack on Heretics,” in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 214. The official name of Alan of Lille’s polemic is *Quadripartita editio contra hereticos, Waldenses, Judeos, et paganos*; see also, “Durand of Huesca, *The Book Against the Manichees*,” in *Heresy and Inquisition in France, 1200-1300*, eds. John H. Arnold and Peter Biller (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 20.

⁵⁰ “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 92.

⁵¹ “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 92; see also “An Appeal from Eberwin of Steinfeld Against Heretics at Cologne,” in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 126, 128.

⁵² “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 91.

⁵³ “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 92; “An Appeal from Eberwin,” *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 129. Some might have some reservations about what this meant. Did meat, especially that from cows, pigs, or any other mammal not come from coition?

⁵⁴ “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 92.

⁵⁵ “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 92-93.

The second set of “heretics” recorded by Eberwin seem to have slightly different beliefs than the first group, but although similarities can be attested, their differences are also immensely crucial and should not be taken for granted. We may wonder if their views concerning the denial “...that the body of Christ is made on the altar”, somewhat reflects the Eucharistic controversy that took place during the mid-11th century. Briefly, Berengar of Tours, a prominent French theologian advocated that the bread and wine used for the Eucharistic ritual was not physically transformed into the body and blood of Christ upon consecration on the altar, but only spiritually.⁵⁶ With the aid of works written by Augustine, Berengar claimed that the bread and wine transformed into the body and blood of Christ in “one’s thought” and not in actuality.⁵⁷ It was a symbolic transformation, because the bread and wine kept their original taste, flavour, and physical attributes.⁵⁸ Based on these ideas, adherents who were spiritually pure transformed the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ in their mind, in order to feel in unison with their redeemer and to fully partake in the sacrament. Berengar’s views can possibly be traced back to those of Ratramnus of Corbie, a 9th century Carolingian monk who opposed Paschasius Radbertus’s idea that the bread and wine consumed during the Eucharistic ritual was the physical, historical body and blood of Christ, transformed by God’s grace through the Holy Spirit upon consecration.⁵⁹ While sacramental theology in the 11th century was in its developmental phase, it still had not yet fully matured by the 1140s. It is impossible to know if Eberwin’s “heretics” had any prior knowledge about the Eucharistic debates of the previous century, or if literate people among them – if any, for that matter – knew about the works of Berengar or about that controversy. It is also important to note that, the Eucharistic debate was still a bone of contention between theologians at least up until the Fourth Lateran council of 1215, which tried to settle the debate with the ratification of the doctrine of transubstantiation. In addition, the second group of “heretics” also might echo certain Donatist elements, referring to a movement which began in North Africa in the 4th century with Donatus, a priest who claimed that the worthiness of priests was vital in the performance of the Eucharistic ritual, and because of their involvement in worldly affairs, the body and blood of Christ became corrupted.⁶⁰ As a Premonstratensian canon, Eberwin would have surely read about Donatus’ heresy, one of the biggest issues the Church and Augustine of Hippo had to deal with in the late 4th – early 5th century. The “heretics” claimed that the office of the priest and the respect it garnered became invalid, and Eberwin denotes that all other sacraments that involved a priest were rendered void except for baptism, but this did not include infant baptism; marriage, only considered legitimate between two virgins, male and female, was as an act of fornication.⁶¹

Eberwin’s alarmist tone is interesting and somewhat understandable, because as a Catholic prior he may have not been experienced in handling dissent in an area that should have been predominantly respecting of the church’s authority, and he immediately attempts to link their appearance with what Paul said about the end times, where people would “renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1).⁶² In his letter, he

⁵⁶ Charles Radding and Francis Newton, *Theology, Rhetoric, and Politics in the Eucharistic Controversy, 1078-1079* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 11.

⁵⁷ Radding and Newton, *Theology, Rhetoric, and Politics in the Eucharistic Controversy*, 13.

⁵⁸ Radding and Newton, *Theology, Rhetoric, and Politics in the Eucharistic Controversy*, 4.

⁵⁹ Radding and Newton, *Theology, Rhetoric, and Politics in the Eucharistic Controversy*, 3-4.

⁶⁰ “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 93.

⁶¹ “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 93.

⁶² “An Appeal from Eberwin,” *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 128. For the complete Biblical passage, see *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1246.

outlines their beliefs, their appeal to apostolic traditions like the “laying on of hands”, and the dietary restrictions that form a part of their spirituality.⁶³ More importantly, and this is something to consider for later on, some of the individuals who belonged to the first group of “heretics”, the ones that were forcefully burnt, claimed to have “...great numbers...of our clergy and monks...” within the sect, and that it lay “...concealed from the time of the martyrs until these times...in Greece and some other countries”.⁶⁴ This last statement has gathered much attention, and has been scrutinized by historians studying possible links between the first group Eberwin describes, and past heresies. Did Eberwin’s first group belong to an ancient religious sect that survived the test of time by clandestinely adapting their beliefs, and changing their name in order to avoid continuous persecution? By taking Eberwin’s statement as a factual representation of the history of heresy, then, the events during Eckbert of Schönau’s time some 20 years later are relevant to this idea of continuation. In order to properly understand if these groups are connected, an analysis of Eckbert’s work must be conducted to point out if similarities and differences exist.

Eckbert of Schönau’s *Liber Contra Hereses Katarorum* was written in the mid-1160s and is immensely important for many different reasons. Firstly, Eckbert is credited as the one who gave these “heretics” their infamous name – the “Cathars” – causing much debate among modern historians.⁶⁵ Secondly, it is slightly more valuable than Eberwin’s letter because of his supposed contact with “these people” while he was a canon at the church of Bonn sometime in the 1150s, as evidence of this is showcased in Eckbert’s letter to Rainald, archbishop of Cologne, written as a recollection of past events.⁶⁶ By comparison, the beliefs concerning marriage as fornication, the avoidance of foods produced by coition, the “baptism by fire and the Holy Spirit”, as well as the ability to consecrate their own foods, proclaiming them as the body and blood of Jesus are similar in both letters.⁶⁷ Where the accounts differ, is the way in which Eberwin separates the beliefs of two distinct groups, whereas Eckbert seems to think that all of these beliefs belong to one, unified sect. The denial of infant baptism, and the contempt for the priesthood were all aspects that Eberwin connected to the second group in his letter.⁶⁸ Where things get interesting and slightly more complicated is when Eckbert mentions certain “new” elements in the beliefs of the sect he is describing, ones that did not come across in Eberwin’s letter, mainly, that flesh was considered evil, that Christ was not born of a Virgin, nor did he take human flesh but “simulated flesh”, and that souls were expelled from heaven at the creation of the world.⁶⁹ As such, it would seem that these new sets of beliefs did not coincide with normative Christianity, and perhaps this was evidence of some external influence, possibly a transference of beliefs from past sects not indigenous to western Europe.

Did both Eberwin and Eckbert’s letters show the appearance of dualism in the west? Also, did both churchmen work together in order to spread the word of this heresy in the Rhineland,

⁶³ “An Appeal from Eberwin,” *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 129-130.

⁶⁴ “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 94.

⁶⁵ “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 90.

⁶⁶ “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 89. See also Uwe Brunn, *Des Contestataires aux “Cathares” : Discours de réforme et propagande antihérétique dans les pays du Rhin et de la Meuse avant l’Inquisition* (Paris: Institut d’Études Augustiniennes, 2006), 213, 214.

⁶⁷ “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 91, 92; see also “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 92, 93.

⁶⁸ “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 91; “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 93.

⁶⁹ “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 91, 92.

contributing to its persecution at the trial of several of its members in Cologne in 1163? Could the events of 1163 be considered a watershed moment, where this persecution caused some of its members to flee south, to France, and possibly to the Languedoc? The first two questions can be analyzed together, while the last one will be examined separately.

There are instances in Eberwin's letter to Bernard of Clairvaux that can possibly lead one to thinking there was an infiltration of foreign beliefs, but it is not enough to defend this stance completely. For example, the passage where Eberwin describes the ascetic practices of the first group that pertained to strict fasting and abstinence, records them claiming that they were "...not of the world".⁷⁰ This is possibly in reference to how they conducted themselves on a daily basis, mentioning how they performed "...prayers and labours" throughout all hours of the day, as well as sustaining themselves only with "...what is necessary".⁷¹ Their statement explaining that they were "not of the world" could be examined in two ways. First, it might point towards the fact that the "heretics" were not attached to worldly possessions, meaning that they were worthy proponents of the apostolic life, which stressed simplicity, poverty, abstinence in both physical and spiritual matters. They refuted the validity of the Church as the successor of Christ and the apostles because it was filled with "lovers of the world" and "false apostles" whose prerogative was only concerned with "...seeking the things of this world".⁷² The second way in which the statement "not of the world" could be examined was from a dualistic perspective, and one that would become synonymous with the "Cathars" of Languedoc mostly from the late 12th century onwards. In Eckbert's *Sermons*, he devoted a section to describing the origins of the "Cathars", surely according to the interactions he had with them. Reviewing the "new" elements of belief that he had "added" on to the "heretics" first described by Eberwin, mainly the evil nature of flesh, the denial of the humanity of Christ who was not born of the Virgin Mary, as well as the interpretation that souls were expelled from heaven during the creation of the world, he proceeded to ascribe to them a profession of faith which taught that "...there were two creators, one good and one evil: God and the prince of darkness".⁷³ Could these statements mean there was any sort of correlation to the "heretics" from Eberwin's letter that claimed they were "not of the world"? Is it possible to make the distinction between the beliefs attributed to Eckbert's group and with the other statements made by Eberwin's first sect, that the members of the hierarchical church were "lovers of the world" because they came from the "evil" world, created from the "prince of darkness"?⁷⁴ To this, Eckbert denoted that these beliefs were credited to the "...heresiarch Mani", alluding to a well known heresy from the past because of the writings of St. Augustine, who was part of the sect.⁷⁵ The legacy of Manichaeism as a great heresy, and as a potential influence on the "Cathars" will be scrutinized in a later section. Concerning the similarities in both Eberwin and Eckbert's text, it is highly likely that these were the same "heretics" and that some survived from Eberwin's time, possibly hiding in secrecy within certain areas of the city, until they were found again by the ecclesiastical authorities of Cologne, only to be condemned and sent to the flames by the secular authorities in 1163.⁷⁶ Uwe Brunn is adamant

⁷⁰ "Everinus of Steinfeld: Letter to St. Bernard, 1144," *Heresy and Authority*, 92.

⁷¹ "Everinus of Steinfeld: Letter to St. Bernard, 1144," *Heresy and Authority*, 92.

⁷² "Everinus of Steinfeld: Letter to St. Bernard, 1144," *Heresy and Authority*, 92.

⁷³ "Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars," *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 91-93.

⁷⁴ "Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars," *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 93; "Everinus of Steinfeld," *Heresy and Authority*, 92.

⁷⁵ "Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars," *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 93.

⁷⁶ Brunn, *Des Contestataires aux "Cathares,"* 215; see also Malcolm Barber, *The Cathars: Dualist Heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages* (London and New York: Routledge), 25.

that Eberwin and Eckbert worked together in order to expand the beliefs of these “heretics”, by using similar rhetoric, legitimizing their error by giving them a name – something that Eberwin did not do – and possibly linking them to an ancient heresy in order to demonize and refute their beliefs more easily.⁷⁷ Additionally, both Eberwin and Eckbert mention “heretics” that “...escaped the snares of the devil” and returned to the church; but could it be possible that some escaped while others were caught and executed, and made their way into France and the Languedoc?⁷⁸ It cannot be said for sure, but, one thing that can be said with certainty is, upon the examination of Eckbert’s assessment of the “Cathars” in 1163, it shows that he truly believed an organized and literate “counter-church” existed among this sect, with a developed theology that went against Christian doctrine, and corrupted the common people, mostly those who worked remedial jobs like weavers.⁷⁹ This is a fear that most churchmen in the 12th century would have: but were Eckbert’s fears a sign of heretical reality? Was heresy a lived religion for the people of the Rhineland, which, if left unchecked, might spread its error throughout all of Christendom? It is hard to establish concretely if the “Cathars” of the Rhineland are the same as the ones mentioned some years later in the Languedoc, but in order to get as close as possible to an answer, contemporary sources that discuss the beliefs and practices of Languedocian “Cathars” must be scrutinized.

Walter Wakefield claims that the “Cathars” of the Rhineland spread west to cities like Liège, and then around the 1150s, continued southward until they reached the Languedoc.⁸⁰ Quite a bit of evidence of dissenting activity is known prior to 1150, showcased by the appearance of “heresiarchs” Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne in the 1120s and 1130s, as well as in the 1140s when Bernard of Clairvaux experienced some issues in the town of Verfeil, located slightly west of Toulouse. However, towards the mid-1160s, a heightened awareness was prevalent in ecclesiastical rhetoric, especially in the Languedoc after the religious issues concerning Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne appeared. As one of the main threats to the Church was the perceived spread of heresy which, according to medieval churchmen, countered the authority of both Scripture and the doctrines developed by the hierarchical church over centuries, the years of 1163-65 are important for the identification of both a perceived heretical “enemy” and, a heretical “doctrine”, in the form of dualism.⁸¹ As such, it would be important to analyze sources that discuss certain dualistic beliefs, as well as to pin-point when they might have first been identified.

The ecclesiastical officials who were present at the council of Tours in 1163 expressed their concerns about the spread of heresy in southern France, identifying the “Albigensians”, and the cities surrounding them as the main proponents of this heresy.⁸² However, although legislation may have pointed towards a specific city center as the cause of heresy, there was no mention of

⁷⁷ Brunn, *Des Contestataires aux “Cathares,”* 214.

⁷⁸ “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars, *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 89; “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 94.

⁷⁹ “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 90. Eckbert gives the names of the “heretics” from various geographical regions who were considered similar to the “Cathars” because of their profession as weavers. They were respectively known as “Piphiles” in Flanders and “Tisserands” in France.

⁸⁰ Walter Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition in Southern France, 1100-1300* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 30.

⁸¹ Jean-Louis Biget, “Les Albigeois’: Remarques sur une dénomination,” in *Inventer l’herésie? Discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l’Inquisition*, ed. Monique Zerner (Nice: Centre d’Études Médiévales, 1998), 232-233.

⁸² Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 24.

dualism. This would change quite rapidly and, judging by the details of the meeting at Lombers in 1165, between churchmen and “Good men”, it seems as though this might be the first time “some” evidence of dualistic belief was showcased in the Languedoc.⁸³ It is relatively unclear as to who chronicled the meeting at Lombers, but what is known is that Jocelin, the bishop of Lodève was the one who conducted the questions asked to the “Good men”. Explicitly outlined in the extant source, they were asked if they “...received the law of Moses, and the Prophets, or the Psalms, and the Old Testament”, to which they answered that they did not accept those texts and the spirituality surrounding them, and that they only believed the texts that were found in the New Testament.⁸⁴ Upon being asked a series of questions concerning marriage, the baptism of children – which they refused to comment on – they were asked about the ritual of the Eucharist and who was able to consecrate it and receive it: to this they answered that those “...who received it worthily would be saved, and those who received it unworthily procured themselves for damnation”, while concluding on that point that the body and blood of Christ could be consecrated by “...every good man, whether an ecclesiastic or layman”.⁸⁵ In addition, they explained that they confessed their sins to one another, and that it was unlawful, as a Christian, to swear an oath.⁸⁶ What Eckbert wrote about in 1163 regarding the two creators, one good and the other evil, is correlated to the rejection of the Old Testament by the “Good men”, and it is important to tie these two aspects together. Did they reject the Old Testament because they believed that God’s presence in the history of Israel, or even the world, was evil, and considered him the “prince of darkness”? Also, in the manner of materiality, did they also believe that flesh was evil and made by the Devil, and, was their association with the creation of this evil with the God of the Old Testament, who they might have believed was the Devil?⁸⁷ Wakefield believes that this aspect of their spirituality had some eastern origins, but this is difficult to prove.⁸⁸ Essentially, belief in two distinct worlds that juxtaposed good and evil elements went against basic Christian tenets, and ones that were debated on for centuries after Christ’s death, and ratified as legitimate doctrines by several succeeding ecumenical councils. The first, and arguably the most important one, held in 325 A.D. in the eastern city of Nicaea, looked to formally end the Arian controversy that denied Christ’s co-substantiality with God the Father, making him a created and subordinate being not from the same essence.⁸⁹ What ensued was the recording of a declaration of faith, the Nicene Creed, which began with “We believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things, visible and invisible,” as well as the theological aspects that delineated Christ’s two natures, where he was “...made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary”, and the fact that he was “...of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made”.⁹⁰ It is difficult to know if the “Good men” of Lombers actually believed in the creation of the two worlds, because when asked about their beliefs, they either refused to elaborate on them, or later on in the meeting, proceeded to give a very orthodox

⁸³ “A Standoff at Lombers, 1165,” in *Heresy and Authority*, 117-121.

⁸⁴ “A Standoff at Lombers, 1165,” *Heresy and Authority*, 117.

⁸⁵ “A Standoff at Lombers, 1165,” *Heresy and Authority*, 118.

⁸⁶ “A Standoff at Lombers, 1165,” *Heresy and Authority*, 118.

⁸⁷ “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars, *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 91.

⁸⁸ Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition*, 28. Wakefield believes that Bogomil traditions entailed a belief in the Old Testament God as being the creator of the world, the “evil” God. Another hotly contested topic which will be elaborated on extensively in the “Influences” section of this paper.

⁸⁹ The Greek translation of the crucial aspect of the debate, Christ’s co-substantiality with God the Father, is *homoousion*.

⁹⁰ “The Creed of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381),” in *Heresy and Authority*, 41.

statement that somewhat canceled out their previous rejection of the Old Testament.⁹¹ Returning briefly to Eckbert's work, and if we were to take his letter to the archbishop of Cologne as a factual representation of the beliefs of the "Cathars", then additional contemporary sources should be used to support his argument, especially those that discuss any relation between the "Cathars" of the Rhineland, and the ones native to the Languedoc.

For a critical assessment of the "two worlds", the contemporary works from Alan of Lille and Durand of Huesca from the late 12th and early 13th century respectively, analyze this aspect of the "Cathars's" belief quite well.⁹² Alan's work, popularly known as the *De fide Catholica* is indicative of the scholastic approach, where he makes no attempt to try and understand what the "heretics" believed in, but only states their beliefs to be wrong, as well as to refute their knowledge of Scripture. Wakefield and Evans denote that he taught at Paris and at Montpellier, which might limit his knowledge and experiences with "Cathars" to possibly only hearing stories or rumours about them.⁹³ Still, his work is valuable and when examined accordingly, is heavily influenced by Augustine's *On Manichaeism*.⁹⁴ He begins his work with "The heretics of our time say that there are two principles of things, the principle of light and the principle of darkness", and that God comes from the principle of light, creator of "spiritual things" while Lucifer comes from that of darkness, and "...from whom are temporal things".⁹⁵ Most importantly, Alan juxtaposes his knowledge of Scripture with the supposed "Cathar" interpretation of the creation of the world, denoted in the passage from Genesis 1: 1-2 which reads: "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep...".⁹⁶ Alan attributed to the "Cathars" a belief in the idea that because the world had its origins in the "darkness", that it was the creation of the "evil" principle.⁹⁷ It was impossible for God to be creator of the world because God was inherently good, and everything that emanated from him was also good. Durand of Huesca says something similar in his *Book Against the Manichees*; he mentions, however, that the "Cathars" changed the demonstrative pronoun in a passage from St. Paul which read, "God, who made the world" to "God who made *this* world" and "all the things that are in it".⁹⁸ Is it possible that Durand had some experience with "Cathar" texts? In the introductory section of the source, Peter Biller and John Arnold mention that he had some knowledge of their texts because of the time he spent as a Waldensian, whereupon he left the sect in 1207, and returned to the Catholic faith after hearing a debate and a sermon from Diego, bishop of Osma in Pamiers.⁹⁹ Pamiers, geographically located at the foothills of the Pyrenees, was an important administrative center for the County of Foix, which was ruled independently from other major political entities in the Languedoc. Durand's time at Pamiers

⁹¹ "A Standoff at Lombers, 1165," *Heresy and Authority*, 120.

⁹² "Alan of Lille," *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 214-220. See also "Durand of Huesca, 'Against the Manichees,'" *Heresy and Inquisition in France, 1200-1300*, 20-28.

⁹³ "Alan of Lille," *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 214. His teaching experience at Montpellier might have given him the opportunity to meet with some of these "heretics", or even to preach and give sermons to affected areas like Wakefield and Evans think was a possibility, but it is not a certainty.

⁹⁴ Another important source which may have influenced the understanding of "Cathar" origins. It will be discussed in detail in the section "Manichaeism."

⁹⁵ "Alan of Lille," *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 215.

⁹⁶ *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1.

⁹⁷ "Alan of Lille," *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 216.

⁹⁸ "Durand of Huesca, 'Against the Manichees,'" *Heresy and Inquisition in France, 1200-1300*, 23.

⁹⁹ "Durand of Huesca, 'Against the Manichees,'" *Heresy and Inquisition in France, 1200-3000*, 20; Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay, *The History of the Albigensian Crusade*, trans. W. A. Sibly and M. D. Sibly (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 27.

may have been filled with, or possibly witness to, debates between Waldensians, Catholics, and “Cathars”, and its importance as a potential “Cathar center” is indicative of the fact that it was a target of the bishop of Osma’s preaching mission, where he was accompanied by Dominic of Guzman, the future founder of the Dominican order. Additionally, the work of St. Paul was also extremely important in understanding both sides, the orthodox and the heretical point of view. In the Scriptural passage taken mostly from Galatians 5: 16-17, Alan attributed Paul’s restrictions of the flesh as a possible element of “Cathar” belief and indicated what the apostle wrote concerning these matters: “Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh...”.¹⁰⁰ Because the flesh is “visible”, it is corruptible, whereas the spirit is “invisible”, and good, and always tries to combat the corruptibility of the flesh. Therefore, these ideas of the “visible”, material, world being evil led to the “Cathars” rejecting aspects of Christian doctrine, which enhanced nominal spiritual piety. Marriage and the Eucharist were all things denounced as they coincided with the material world.¹⁰¹ This dualism led to “Cathars” believing that Christ’s humanity, suffering, death, and resurrection were an impossibility, as these were all characteristics that dealt with the material, evil world; instead, they believed in a Docetic form of Christianity, where Jesus did all those things only in appearance, and not in actuality.¹⁰² This all emanates from the work of Eckbert of Schönau, but whether his work was known to Alan of Lille cannot be proven.

While the “Cathars” rejected almost all the Church sacraments, they did, however, believe in an “adapted” version of one: Baptism, or in their words, the *consolamentum*. Literary evidence of the *consolamentum* comes from many sources, but its first appearance mentioned with that label comes from the mid-12th century document that describes the much maligned and extremely controversial “council” of Saint-Félix-de-Caraman, where an obscure eastern bishop called Papa Nicetas came to the west to administer the *consolamentum* to bishops in northern Italy, the Kingdom of France (northern France), and the Languedoc (southern France).¹⁰³ It would be important to mention that Eckbert of Schönau wrote of something similar in his 1163 letter. He claimed that “They will cross sea and desert, so I am told, to win a Cathar, and stain all religious life with impious slander, saying that nobody can be saved without joining them”.¹⁰⁴ While this might be an important statement to analyze how these “heretics” conducted their “missionary” activity, if any, it can also denote a presence of “heretics” in the areas where there were rumours of their appearance, “concealed through the ages”, as Eckbert had warned.¹⁰⁵ If we were to take the document that describes the Saint-Félix council at face value, then it clearly delineates a structured heretical church organization and hierarchy. The question is, were these structures established at the council of Saint-Félix, or were they present beforehand as Eckbert may have possibly alluded to? Catherine Léglu et alii, seem to mention that the hierarchy of the “Cathar church” in Toulouse and Albi was established at Saint-Félix, and this might be confirmed by the Saint-Félix document which declared that “...the men of the church of Toulouse wished to have a

¹⁰⁰ “Alan of Lille,” *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 216; *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1222.

¹⁰¹ “Historical Introduction,” in *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade: A Sourcebook*, eds. Catherine Léglu et al (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 5.

¹⁰² “Historical Introduction,” *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade*, 4.

¹⁰³ “The Cathar Council at Saint-Félix-de-Caraman, 1167,” in *Heresy and Authority*, 121; “Historical Introduction,” *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade*, 6.

¹⁰⁴ “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 92.

¹⁰⁵ “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 90.

bishop, and they elected Bernard Raymond".¹⁰⁶ It cannot be said for sure if the ecclesiastical "structures" that were created in the Languedoc survived past 1167, for there is no other document that discusses the "heretical church" of the south other than by polemicists, or by those who were once part of the sect, then returned to the Catholic faith. Peter, a Cistercian monk from Vaux-de-Cernay, writing around 1212/13, explicitly mentions the "deacons" and "bishops" of the heretical church, and the evidence he had of this might come from his uncle Guy of Vaux-de-Cernay, who became bishop of Carcassonne in 1212.¹⁰⁷ Peter might also have had access to the letters of legate Peter St. Chrysogonus and Henry de Marcy, abbot of Clairvaux, and of the details of their missions to the Languedoc in 1178 when they met, what they believed, were "heresiarchs" Raymond de Baimac, Bernard Raymond, and Pierre Maurand.¹⁰⁸ Were these men the "deacons" and "bishops" that Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay was referring to? As these examples are known to us only by "Cathar" opponents, it is always difficult to take their assessments as historically factual. However, Peter's source is as close as one can come without travelling too far outside the region. While Wakefield, Léglu et alii, as well as Barber discuss the hierarchy of the "Cathar" church much further, by mentioning "elder sons" and "younger" sons, who were promoted in this hierarchy once the other died, eventually becoming "bishops", it is quite possible that this structure was only observed in northern Italy, as these scholars derive this information from the work of Rainier Sacconi, an Italian ex-"Cathar" active in the mid-13th century, many years after the decline of "Catharism" in the Languedoc had commenced.¹⁰⁹

Additionally, a document from the mid-13th century called the "Provençal Ritual", indicated the Biblical and apostolic connections that the "Cathars" wished to pursue. It also demonstrated the perceived hierarchy within the "Cathar" church. At the end of the ritual, when all the formalities and important Biblical passages were read, the Elders, addressing the believer, proceeded to "... give him the *consolamentum*. Let the elder take the Book and place it on the believers' head, and the other Good Men place each his right hand on him".¹¹⁰ Upon which the Elders prayed so that the initiate would be received in "righteousness", and in hopes that God would "bestow Thy grace and Thy Holy Spirit upon him".¹¹¹ The symbolic gesture, placing the right hand on the initiate, is probably taken from Scriptural passage in Acts 8:17, when the Apostles Peter and John "laid their hands" on the people of Samaria, who were rewarded with the gift of the Holy Spirit after accepting the word of God.¹¹² With these examples, it is interesting to see how the baptism with water could have been rejected as a creation of the material world, and why "Cathars" opted for a "baptism of the spirit," recalling similarities between that and the gift of the Holy Spirit which Christ had given to his disciples upon his ascension into Heaven.¹¹³ The dualistic aspect of the ritual, if any, can be denoted just prior to the initiate receiving the

¹⁰⁶ "The Cathar Council at Saint-Félix-de-Caraman, 1167," *Heresy and Authority*, 121.

¹⁰⁷ *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 13.

¹⁰⁸ Raymond de Baimac and Bernard Raymond are mentioned in legate Peter's letter, and Pierre Maurand in abbot Henry's letter. For a deeper analysis of both these sources, see "Legation in the Languedoc: Peter of St. Chrysogonus" and "Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux" found in *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 113, 116.

¹⁰⁹ Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition*, 32; "Historical Introduction," *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade*, 6; Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 74, 76.

¹¹⁰ "Catharist Rituals (Part A)," *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 490-491.

¹¹¹ "Catharist Rituals (Part A)," *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 491.

¹¹² *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1158.

¹¹³ Hamilton, *Medieval Inquisition*, 22.

consolamentum, where he was required to “...hate this world and the works of this world”.¹¹⁴ This can be interpreted in many ways, and is similar to the “heretics” that called the churchmen of Cologne “lovers of the world” in Eberwin of Steinfeld’s letter to Bernard of Clairvaux in 1143. Also, this was not the only time a baptism of the “spirit” was mentioned in Scripture, upon which provided the “Cathars” some evidence as to why this was preferred to baptism by water: “...he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:8-9).¹¹⁵ The passage from Luke’s Gospel is slightly different, as John says that “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Luke 3:16).¹¹⁶ These words proclaimed by John the Baptist were most likely used by the “Cathars” to legitimize the use of the spiritual baptism, because although Jesus came “after” John the Baptist, he was “more powerful” than him (Mark 1:7).¹¹⁷ Because Jesus came after John, the spiritual baptism is greater than the material (water) baptism. Although this process is described in detail by an anonymous source, credit must be given to Eckbert of Schönau for being somewhat of a precursive figure into the world of the “Cathars”. Even though his work is contested and does not necessarily portray a real “Catharism”, but mostly signaling pockets of anti-clericalism in Cologne, and by extension, their successors in the “Cathars” of Languedoc, it is still extremely important for the narrative of this study. Eckbert mentions their beliefs, and although the details were brief, they coincide with what was mentioned in the “Provençal Ritual”, especially concerning the denial of the material baptism – i.e., water – and replacing it with the Holy Spirit. In this case, even though Eckbert’s work is valuable, it must still be analyzed with caution.

What was the spiritual significance of the *consolamentum*, and why was it the defining element of the “Cathars’s” beliefs? As has been attested in the “Provençal Ritual”, the ceremony was the final step of the whole initiation process. Prior to the initiate’s reception of the *consolamentum*, they had to understand that a life of strict chastity and abstinence awaited, avoiding sexual practice and foods that were made of coition like meat, eggs, and cheese.¹¹⁸ It should be remembered that these restrictions were first reported by Eberwin of Steinfeld in 1143, and elaborated in greater detail by Eckbert of Schönau some 20 years later. Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay mentions that some of the members had become “perfected heretics,” and it is important to understand the spiritual journey that needed to be undertaken in order to receive the label of “perfect”.¹¹⁹ The *credens* – *credentes* in the plural – was someone who “believed” and understood the abstinence that was needed in order to become an initiate, or *perfectus*, and they listened to the preaching of the *perfecti*, and often supported them with money or with food, but had not yet decided to make that final step to become “perfected”.¹²⁰ Acceptance into the sect, ending with the ministration of the *consolamentum* after a long ritual, was only possible for the *credentes* after making the extremely tough physical, mental, and spiritual decision, where they vowed to renounce all worldly possessions, refrained from eating all the prohibited foods, choosing a sinless life which forbade them to lie, steal, kill, fornicate, and devoted themselves to

¹¹⁴ “Catharist Rituals (Part A),” *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 490. Passage taken from 1 John 2: 15.

¹¹⁵ *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1070.

¹¹⁶ *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1095.

¹¹⁷ *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1070.

¹¹⁸ *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 12; “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 90, 91.

¹¹⁹ *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 12.

¹²⁰ “Historical Introduction,” *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade*, 6; Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition*, 32.

works of Christian charity.¹²¹ Malcolm Lambert discusses the strict ascetic practices that a fully initiated member, or *perfectus*, must observe in order to maintain their status in the sect. Weekly fasting especially on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, was limited to the sole consummation of bread and water, all while respecting the dietary restriction of avoiding products made of coition.¹²² Most importantly, the *consolamentum* would be administered twice during the life of the “Cathar”: the first, when they vowed to uphold the strict ascetic practices; the second, upon their deathbed.¹²³ Thus, Léglu et alii, claim that “what mattered was not how you lived but how you died”, which is an interesting and strange element of their belief.¹²⁴ Therefore, “believers” could live their life as they pleased, and once they were on the verge of death, they permitted the *perfecti* to administer the *consolamentum* to them. Hamilton, Lambert, and Léglu et alii, discuss what happened to the souls of the *perfecti* after their death. There was an understanding that upon death, the ending of the *metempsychosis* (transmigration) of souls of fully initiated members gave them a purposeful existence and a hopeful afterlife if their principles and beliefs were upheld. Eckbert of Schönau was possibly the first to have mentioned this in his letter from 1163, where “Cathars” or those who might have been considered *perfecti*, upon death would cease to travel from one body to another if properly consoled.¹²⁵ Thus, the trapped souls would return and join the “apostate spirits” that were left in heaven when the world was created by the “evil God”, rather than reincarnate into the body of another, and restart the process all over again, which was the case for the *credentes* who were not yet full members of the sect.¹²⁶ For the *perfecti* that were alive and who were leaders in the sect, or perhaps those that were “believers” once, fell ill, received the *consolamentum*, and ended up recovering, there was an obligation to now obey the ascetic practices, and to be careful to commit the least amount of sins. By sticking to their rigorous ascetic and spiritual mission, adherents who received the *consolamentum* prior to death would come to what was known as a “good end”, equivalent to a sinless death.¹²⁷ If minor sins were committed, like lying, they would have been able to confess them during a monthly ceremony called the *apparellamentum*, where reconciliation and redemption were offered to those that may have slipped up slightly.¹²⁸ In addition, and in a much more serious context, if a *perfect* had breached the code of conduct, and committed a “mortal sin” like eating prohibited foods, killing, or was rumoured to have had sexual relations, this would result in the revocation of the *consolamentum*, and all those whom he consoled would have to be readministered.¹²⁹ Important in this regard was the part about sexual relations, because it might have ensued procreation, leading to more trapped souls, which was something that most “Cathars” wanted to avoid. The entire basis for administering the *consolamentum* was to release the trapped soul, not create another via sexual relations.

¹²¹ Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition*, 32; Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 3rd edition, 2002), 117.

¹²² Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements*, 117.

¹²³ Hamilton, *Medieval Inquisition*, 22.

¹²⁴ “Historical Introduction,” *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade*, 6.

¹²⁵ “Historical Introduction,” *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade*, 6; “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 92.

¹²⁶ “Historical Introduction,” *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade*, 5, 6; “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 92.

¹²⁷ Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements*, 119.

¹²⁸ Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements*, 117.

¹²⁹ Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements*, 117.

Something must be mentioned about many important elements that affect the understanding, perception, and interpretation of the material for the following section: the relative obscurity of Papa Nicetas as an eastern dualist bishop who travelled to the Languedoc to reorganize western “Catharism” and its “bishoprics”, and the stand-alone document of the Saint-Félix “council” that showcases this reorganization, are very difficult to assess as historically valid aspects of “Cathar” existence. There are many reasons for its contested nature as well as the skepticism of its veracity. First, the time of the date prescribed to the event, 1167, and the date that the document was recopied by Pierre Polhan, 1232, were separated by 65 years. Between these dates, there was the Albigensian crusade that began in 1209 and ended in 1229, which caused much devastation in certain localities that contained “known” adherents of “Catharism”. For this document to have survived through war and invasion, it must have been kept hidden from people who may have wanted to destroy it, because it contains “evidence” of “Cathar bishops/bishoprics”, as well as notable people in the “Cathar church” who, if found, and depending on the situation, would surely be rounded up for questioning or possibly executed. Also, from the date of its recopying in 1232, to the date attested by scholars of the most recent version of the document by a 17th century French writer called Guillaume Besse, who in 1660, wrote a history of the dukes and counts of Narbonne and included the Saint-Félix document in his work, 428 years had elapsed.¹³⁰ It is quite possible that the document could have been redacted by Pierre Polhan in order to remind some of the “Cathars” of the territorial divisions that may have been forgotten due to fear and instability brought on Languedocian society by the crusade, as well as to make it seem as if such a council took place, and, in the case of Besse, to amplify the socio-religious fears that were felt during the political timeframe of the later 17th century.¹³¹

Secondly, the lack of contemporary scholarly attestation of this “council’s” existence is quite problematic. If one were to look at the “council” as a defining moment in the history of “Catharism”, this cannot be stressed enough. Upon the marriage of Henry II of England to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152, the southern French principalities had been in the sights of Henry, more-so the County of Toulouse due to his wife’s claim through her great-grandfather, Count William IV of Toulouse. In the late 1160s, when tensions had increased between Louis VII of France and Henry II following certain conflicts in Normandy, Henry’s alliance with the kingdom of Aragon (formerly the Counts of Barcelona in the 1150s), remained cordial in order to apply constant pressure Toulouse in hopes of a forceful submission.¹³² As such, Benedict of Peterborough, Gervase of Canterbury, and Roger of Howden were important chroniclers during Henry II’s reign, and recorded crucial events that directly impacted the king’s lands in England and on the continent, his legal developments, and all other important matters concerning ruling and administration. Based on this information, it would seem highly unlikely that a clandestine heretical council would have taken place during a crucial time where many political power players were vying for territorial control of certain areas of the Languedoc, and no one knew

¹³⁰ “The Cathar Council at Saint-Félix-de-Caraman, 1167,” *Heresy and Authority*, 123; Biget “Un phénomène occidental,” 79.

¹³¹ Biget, “Un phénomène occidental,” 80. Biget claims that Besse, as well as the people who gave him the “copy” of the “council’s” proceedings, had forged it, with the contents derived from individual sources concerning previous names of Languedocian ecclesiastics, councils, and possibly charters from the 13th century that may have been used to create the Saint-Félix document. Thus, the document seems to be an amalgamation of previous documents. Biget also denotes that there is a possibility of Besse projecting his fears and presuppositions about “Catharism” where he related it to the issues during his own time, as the French Wars of Religion were in the not-so-distant past, and his perception of the “Cathars” rebellion against the authority of the Church reminded him of the Protestant Huguenots.

¹³² Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade*, 23.

about it.¹³³ Also, it is incorrect to assume that this “council” would have remained secretly out of the scope of Henry’s chroniclers, tucked away in the confines of a small town house, or possibly in a wooded area of the Lauragais. After the meeting at Lombers between the hierarchical church and the “Good men” in 1165, there would have surely been a collective focus on the Languedoc as a potential hotbed of heresy, and even though debates and open discussion of theological material and spirituality were prevalent between churchmen and skeptics (dissenters, even “heretics”), it would have been quite impossible to assume that such a grand “council”, where many important “heresiarchs” would have been conferred with the *consolamentum*, would not have caught the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities.¹³⁴

Lastly, scholarly interpretation has led to an understanding over which “type” of dualism was present in the Languedoc, where two distinct forms can be attested: “moderate” dualism and “absolute” dualism, the former shifting towards the latter once Papa Nicetas had consoled the Languedocian bishops. When analyzing the document, it is clear that there are no specific examples that determine a change in dualistic belief, but scholars like Léglu et alii, Sumption, Wakefield, Barber, and Lambert believe that this event was the catalyst for the shift that occurred from “moderate” to “absolute” dualism.¹³⁵ What was the difference between the two? “Moderate” dualists believed in a good God who had somehow been tricked into letting his eldest son – usually identified as Lucifer – create the world of man, which became inherently evil. A drastic difference can be seen in the beliefs of “absolute” dualists, who claimed that the “two principles” of good and evil, many times referred to not as “principles” but as “good” and “evil” gods, were co-eternal and at odds with one another from the beginning of time, displaying the notion that the world of matter, a visible reality, was evil, whereas the “invisible” world, generally made of spirit and housed spiritual beings, was good.¹³⁶ As has been previously mentioned, contemporary polemicists like Alan of Lille and Durand of Huesca, and even the likes of Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay, had provided an important synthesis of these beliefs, especially for those found in the Languedoc, but their understanding of dualism, which probably extended to heresy in general, was perceived to have come from somewhere, an idea from the past that had survived centuries, and was transferred, albeit with certain differences, to their own time period. Specifically, Alan of Lille likens heresy to the head of a hydra, when one head was destroyed, in reference to earlier heresies in Christian history, many “sprouted anew”.¹³⁷ Therefore, a thorough analysis of past heresies must be undertaken, mainly those of Manichaeism and Bogomilism, in order to identify if they shared any similarities, or differences, with “Catharism”.

¹³³ Biget, “Un phénomène occidental,” 78.

¹³⁴ The meeting at Lombers took place 2 years before the supposed “council” of Saint-Félix, and although debates between dissenters and Catholics continued into the early 13th century, as is suggested by the reintegration into the church by Durand of Huesca after being present at the debate between the two parties at Pamiers in 1207, it is difficult to believe that the grandiose nature of this “council” was not picked up by church authorities.

¹³⁵ “Historical Introduction,” *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade*, 6; Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade*, 35-37; Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition*, 31; Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 7; Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 46-48.

¹³⁶ Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay simplifies the difference between the two “types” of dualism in his *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 11; “Historical Introduction,” *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade*, 6; Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade*, 32.

¹³⁷ “Alan of Lille,” *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 215.

2.2 – Influences

Although it is possible that the “Cathars” had more than two influences, the sects that closely resemble their beliefs were those of Manichaeism, and Bogomilism. Crucial in the development that traced the link between these two sects and “Catharism” is the work of late 19th and early-to-mid 20th century scholars, many of whom believed that these heresies were a continuation of one another, an issue that the Church needed to constantly deal with as it pressed its spiritual and religious authority over non-conforming groups/movements. In more recent times, the content of these works might be considered as outdated, especially the ones from Charles Schmidt and Ignace von Döllinger in the mid-to-late 19th century, even so, they remain vital because they marked the beginning of modern heresiology, spearheaded by a group of German intellectuals that made up the so-called *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, the “religious-historical” school.¹³⁸ The interest in this field of study follows a paradigm of intellectual activity that surely stemmed from the Middle Ages: Mark Pegg denotes that the scholarly interpretation of proponents from the “religious-historical” school considered heretical doctrine as a form of coherent theology, supported by textual evidence and diffused to adherents by certain heretical leaders.¹³⁹ Support for this train of thought can be traced back to medieval scholars who studied heresy in the 12th century like Eckbert of Schönau and Alan of Lille, and their written works implement an understanding that heretics, or certain heretical leaders, might have been educated in Scripture and possessed texts, or parts of texts, that were interpreted in a way that supported their beliefs.¹⁴⁰ Also, from the point of view of these scholars, here showcased by Pegg, “Catharism” displayed signs of “foreignness” in its theological material, deriving certain aspects of its spirituality from eastern origins, making it a dangerous adversary to western Christianity.¹⁴¹

Slightly more disparity in thought was exhibited when historians like Jean Guiraud, Dimitri Obolensky, Steven Runciman, Arno Borst, Fr. Antoine Dondaine, Raffaello Morghen, and Herbert Grundmann began scrutinizing the primary source material concerning Manichaean, Bogomil, and “Cathar” beliefs in the first half of the 20th century, even well into the 1960s and 70s.¹⁴² It was not until the 1980s and 90s where a serious investigation of “Catharism” and its envelopment in a fairly widespread campaign of persecution and repression in medieval Europe, was conducted expertly by R. I. Moore, followed by a colloquium of French scholars notably Monique Zerner, and Jean-Louis Biget, who examined the issues surrounding the name given to the “heretics” of the Languedoc, the “Cathars”, labelled as such by medieval polemicists who attempted to trace their history with great heresies of the past. These rigorous studies produced interesting debates about the nature of heresy; the potential links between dissenting groups throughout many centuries of historical activity; issues concerning the availability of literature attributed to certain dissenting groups; certain doctrinal similarities and differences, and whether the identification of any such differences encouraged the notion of heretical continuity or a break

¹³⁸ Mark Gregory Pegg, “The Paradigm of Catharism; or, the Historians’ Illusion,” in *Cathars in Question*, ed. Antonio Sennis (York: York Medieval Press, 2016), 22; also, for a very good summary of the works of these scholars, as well as their successors in the first half of the 20th century, see Pilar Jimenez-Sanchez, *Les Catharismes: Modèles dissidents du christianisme médiéval (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008), 26-27.

¹³⁹ Pegg, “The Paradigm of Catharism,” 21-22.

¹⁴⁰ “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 89; “Alan of Lille,” *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 215.

¹⁴¹ Pegg, “The Paradigm of Catharism,” 24.

¹⁴² Jimenez-Sanchez, *Les Catharismes*, 28-37.

in historical patterns; descriptions of the socio-political, and religious developments in medieval Languedoc that gave rise to dissenting ideas, especially concerning “Catharism,”; and whether any of these were the *éléments déclencheurs* which led to the events that transpired in the 13th century (crusade and inquisition). Pegg has recently deduced that the issues surrounding the scholarship conducted on “Catharism” are primarily due to misinterpretations of source material by late 19th and early 20th century historians, some of whom adopted the view of contemporary polemicists, who “saw what they wanted to see” when analyzing the literature, failing to produce a coherent argument that heresy was a *lived reality* and not a political/religious construct.¹⁴³ While the ideas provided by these historians is crucial, they will not be analyzed extensively in this study, only briefly summarized to coincide with certain contemporary sources on Manichaeism and Bogomilism, with the help of Pilar Jimenez-Sanchez and to a lesser extent, Mark Pegg. Both scholars have synthesized their work, but Jimenez-Sanchez has taken it upon herself to arrange their ideas by their relevance to the notion of heretical continuity between the sects, and whether they supported or denied this claim.

a – Manicheism

It is very hard to find conclusive evidence that ties the belief system of Manichaeism with that of “Catharism”. If there are some similarities, they are faintly distinguishable, but to entirely agree with Eckbert of Schönau’s statement that the “heretics” he debated with in Cologne in the 1150s and 1160s doubtless owed their origins “...to the heresiarch Mani”, would be a flawed way at analyzing historical evidence, only looking at one avenue of possibility.¹⁴⁴ Eckbert was, quite possibly, too emotionally invested in preserving the church’s dignity that he was disinterested in understanding why the “Cathars” of the Rhineland believed what they believed, or even how they derived to this type of faith, and his main prerogative was to substantiate them as fundamentally false. One of the only ways to do this was to attempt at linking the “Cathars” with a great heresy of the past, and with the aid of St. Augustine’s work that refutes Manichaeism, Eckbert sought to be an important figure that the Church could turn to when in need of spiritual support, against an enemy that was resurfacing once again, but with a different name.

In this regard, it would be important to analyze St. Augustine’s *On Manichaeism*, a section from a larger volume called *Concerning Heresies*. This source demonstrates the theologian’s knowledge of Manichaeism due to his participation in the sect for many years before his conversion to Catholicism. From the perspective of 12th and 13th century medieval polemicists who referred to Augustine’s work, the terminology used might have propelled them to believe that there were links between Manichaeism and “Catharism”. It is difficult to say whether this version of the source was original and untouched because some of the language is quite close to what was written about Manichaeism in the Middle Ages, especially by Eckert of Schönau, who relied heavily on Augustine. If it was redacted in the early 11th century, or even sometime between the mid-12th to early 13th centuries, it was possibly done by someone who had some knowledge of heresy and had witnessed its appearance at the local level, or possibly on a much

¹⁴³ Pegg, “The Paradigm of Catharism,” 28, 29. Here, Pegg calls this a “self-fulfilling method”, and targets specifically the work of German scholar Arno Borst from 1953, who misused contemporary evidence by pointing out that Borst believed any references to “Manichaeans,” “Arians,” or “heretics” in the inquisitorial records was surely an allusion to “Cathars.”

¹⁴⁴ “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 93.

wider scale. Nonetheless, Peters does not mention anything in this regard, so it is safe to assume that this version was probably the original written by Augustine. It remains, however, important to examine with caution.

Although the origins of dualistic belief in the Christian world appeared during the 1st century from Gnosticism, it was Mani, a Persian “martyr” active in the Zoroastrian Sassanid state of the 3rd century who developed the sectarian ideas that seemed faintly Christian or Judeo-Christian in origin.¹⁴⁵ The dualistic beliefs of Mani and his followers, the Manichaeans, developed the understanding that two “principles” existed from the beginning of time, and these principles shared in the creation of two distinct worlds, one good and one evil. These principles were celestial beings of Light and Darkness, distinct in nature, which at one point came together to clash in a cosmic struggle.¹⁴⁶ Darkness captured particles of Light, and imprisoned them; God, angry at this sort of behaviour, sent “evocations” to create a world where the forces of Darkness were imprisoned; Light and Darkness came together in a world, and Darkness wreaked havoc, creating man, and demons, which were meant to keep the Light at bay.¹⁴⁷ God then sent Jesus as a divine “evocation” whose message of the separation of Light and Darkness was passed down to Mani.¹⁴⁸ Mani was the last “evocation”, and can be compared to prophetic type figure, who was martyred for his deviant religious beliefs.¹⁴⁹ Medieval contemporaries like Alan of Lille and Eckbert of Schönau, and even the chronicles of 13th century historians like Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay, have adapted their beliefs into full-scale denunciations, using elements from Augustine’s work in order to understand heresy in their own time. The use of terms like “principles of light and darkness”, as well as the understanding that the particles of Light return to their “own proper abode” once completely purified, could be somewhat related to the *metempsychosis* that the souls of “perfected Cathars” went through if they lived a life according to their strict beliefs and ascetic practices, where they would stop travelling from one body to another in search of the “good end”.¹⁵⁰ As such, the realm of God, or the “good God”, as it was known to the “Cathars” as well, was the one who had created the particles of Light, and these particles of Light were to be understood as the soul, which laboured through an existence only to free itself from the world of the “evil God”, creator of the particles of Darkness, whom they associated with the God of the Old Testament.¹⁵¹ To the particles of Darkness, or “princes” as Augustine mentions at times, they attribute all flesh and material corruption, which caused them avoid marriage and procreation.¹⁵² Therefore, the figure of Jesus as a divine being that was sent to the world to profess these beliefs was extremely important, however, because the material world he was sent to dwell in was corrupt, the form in which he appeared was angelic and spiritual. In Mani, Jesus’s message of striving towards spiritual purification against the lustful temptations of the flesh was deemed fulfilled, but he met his demise at the hands of the intolerant Zoroastrian religious officials of Sassanid Persia.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁵ Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 10.

¹⁴⁶ Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 10.

¹⁴⁷ Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 10.

¹⁴⁸ Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 10; “St. Augustine: On Manichaeism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 37.

¹⁴⁹ Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade*, 34.

¹⁵⁰ “Alan of Lille,” *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 215, 217; “Eckbert of Schönau: Sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 92, 93; *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 11, 12.

¹⁵¹ “St. Augustine: On Manichaeism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 37.

¹⁵² “St. Augustine: On Manichaeism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 37, 38.

¹⁵³ “St. Augustine: On Manichaeism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 37, 38.

Another element which might possibly relate Manichaeism with “Catharism” is Augustine’s suggestion that the sect possessed two classes of adherents, the Elect and the Auditors.¹⁵⁴ Within the Elect, there existed a hierarchy, where 12 individuals were selected as “masters” who diffused information about the sect and its practices to “bishops”, as well as to deacons, who were positioned directly under bishops.¹⁵⁵ This aspect is important because “Catharism” also categorized their believers into a system of classes that closely resembles this structure, as has been attested by the work of Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay. The Elect of Manichaeism were considered the ideal examples of perfection and conducted themselves in a manner which would make sinning less of a possibility. Also, remedial tasks and laborious works would not have been performed by the Elect, instead choosing to delegate these to the Auditors. In this regard, they differed from the “Cathars” that Eckbert described in his sermon, who had to work for their wages in order to survive in everyday life, as well as to afford the food they consumed.¹⁵⁶

Assuming an absolute correlation between Manichaeism and “Catharism” would be inherently wrong without looking concretely at the largest dividing principle between the two sects: time. Mani was supposedly executed in 276 A.D., while the first “Cathars” of the Rhineland seemed to have appeared in the 1140s, which meant that the two sects were separated by almost 900 years. Throughout this time, were doctrinal tenets developed profoundly enough for the sect to survive without a supposed “leader”? Was there any survival of written material and literary works that outlined these tenets (excluding the works of polemics like that of Augustine)? If written materials were extant, were there individuals who were literate enough to understand these, or were their beliefs passed down orally? Of course, certain ideas, beliefs, practices, changed and evolved over time, usually depending on the socio-political situation of the area or region the sect was located in. With that being said, can there still be any continuity in heretical traditions? It would also help by analyzing the works of some pioneering historians of heresy in order to see if their ideas pointed towards continuity, or away from it. For this, we can use what Pilar Jimenez-Sanchez has said about certain early 20th century historians like Dimitri Obolensky and Steven Runciman. Even Malcolm Barber has commented on the work of these scholars, and along with Jimenez-Sanchez, concluded that both Obolensky and Runciman believed that various forms of dualistic heresy survived in an unbroken line since the 2nd century AD.¹⁵⁷ In actuality, Runciman believed that “Catharism” did not belong to the “absolute” dualist tradition, but was a continuation of the “moderate” dualism of the Messalians, who then passed it down to the Bogomils.¹⁵⁸ The “absolute” dualism of the Manichaeans was taken up by the Paulicians, but they did not garner much influence to persuade future Bogomils, which is contrary to what Obolensky believed.¹⁵⁹ A historian who specialized on Bogomilism, Obolensky also believed in the two strands of dualism, but, the “absolute” dualism that the “Cathars” would drastically adopt after the Saint-Félix council was of Paulician heritage, that managed to survive since the 8th century, incorporating itself clandestinely into the lives of elite Byzantine aristocrats by the late

¹⁵⁴ “St. Augustine: On Manichaeism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 34.

¹⁵⁵ “St. Augustine: On Manichaeism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 37.

¹⁵⁶ “St. Augustine: On Manichaeism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 36; “Eckbert of Schönau: sermon against the Cathars,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 90. Heresy being associated with weaving – the use of the hands and the secluded work environment – automatically assumed that a lower class of individuals were more attuned to heretical beliefs because of the nature of this type of work, and because the secrecy and general loneliness aspects would provide better changes of preserving this belief.

¹⁵⁷ Jimenez-Sanchez, *Les Catharismes*, 28, 29; Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 11.

¹⁵⁸ Jimenez-Sanchez, *Les Catharismes*, 28.

¹⁵⁹ Jimenez-Sanchez, *Les Catharismes*, 28.

11th century.¹⁶⁰ The man who supposedly brought “absolute” dualism to the West in the late 1160s, Papa Nicetas, was a Byzantine bishop and possibly highly placed in the Bogomil sect as well. Essentially, if Papa Nicetas came west to reform dualism there, when did the shift from “moderate” to “absolute” dualism happen in the east, and can it be attributed to Obolensky’s theory of connection with the Paulician tradition? In reality, pin-pointing the exact date and time of the shift is rather impossible, and the only information we have of this event is from the Saint-Félix charter itself, as well as the source from Durand of Huesca many years later, in which he mentions the “discord” between “Cathars” in Albi, Toulouse, and Carcassonne.¹⁶¹ Although, it is generally known that violent discord between differing “Cathar” ideas was present in Northern Italy rather than in the Languedoc, it cannot be said if the same degree of intensity was felt with discordant ideas in the southern French region, mainly due to a lack of sources available that discuss this matter. But if there was friction, was it caused from the understanding of the dualistic shift that took place in the east, thanks to the Paulicians, prior to Nicetas’s voyage west? It is difficult to give an answer to this question, let alone attempting to trace all sectarian traditions that adhered to dualistic beliefs with success. In addition, it is more difficult to trace a correlation and continuity between Manichaean → “Cathar” beliefs, let alone a Manichaean → Bogomil → “Cathar” relationship. It would be a virtually impossible task to prove that a Gnostic → Manichaean → Messalian → Paulician → Bogomil → “Cathar” trajectory existed without the proper source material from the heretical point-of-view of all these traditions, which are unfortunately missing for some. The most one can do is attempt to discover if a Bogomil → “Cathar” correlation existed, because it is the relationship that makes the most sense based off the extant source material available.

b – Bogomilism

Out of all the dualist heresies that resemble what the “Cathars” of Languedoc believed, Bogomilism might well be the closest. While it cannot be said with absolute certainty that Bogomilism influenced “Catharism” in the second half of the 12th century, or that Papa Nicetas was a legitimate historical figure, there are many similarities between the two sects, and it has caused intense debate among scholars, some who agree with the views and ideas of the late 19th and early 20th century “religious-historical” school, that heretical continuity was a genuine possibility.¹⁶² It must also not be forgotten that Eberwin of Steinfeld’s subtle allusion to Greece and the east as a land of heretical wickedness, claiming that “heretics” from there had supposedly penetrated western church hierarchy and western monastic orders, accentuated the idea that appearances of dualism in the west were of an eastern construct. Accordingly, Bogomilism was first identified by a priest named Cosmas, who was possibly a bishop in the Bulgarian Church, in the reign of Bulgarian Tsar Peter I (927-69), whereupon some years later, probably around the year 970, Cosmas recorded his encounter with the followers of “Bogomil” (“beloved of God”, or in some cases, “worthy of the pity of God”) in a polemical work called *Discourse or Treatise*

¹⁶⁰ Jimenez-Sanchez, *Les Catharismes*, 29.

¹⁶¹ “Durand of Huesca: ‘Against the Manichees,’” *Heresy and Inquisition in France, 1200-1300*, 25-26.

¹⁶² Bernard Hamilton, “Bogomil Influences on Western Heresy,” in *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages: Essays on the Work of R.I. Moore*, ed. Michael Frassetto (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 93. Hamilton writes: “I have become more convinced that Western Catharism was a branch of Balkan and Byzantine dualism...”.

against the Bogomils.¹⁶³ Although tracing Paulician transference to its north-eastern neighbours cannot be proved with absolute certainty, as has been previously mentioned, it is possible that Paulician remnants were detected prior to the information written down by Cosmas. Penetration of heretical ideas that may have “turned into” Bogomilism in the mid-10th century were detected in the 860s by Pope Nicholas I when he wrote to Boris, the Bulgarian khan at the time, warning him of Greek and Armenian missionaries roaming free inside his lands.¹⁶⁴ Because Cosmas’s polemic was written shortly after the time where Bogomilism supposedly appeared in Bulgaria, his work is crucial.

Both groups of “heretics” that were described by Eberwin of Steinfeld in the 1140s felt contempt towards the church and its hierarchy, claiming that it had strayed away from its original apostolic message, and was too concerned with wealth and worldly matters. Examples of this can be reiterated in areas such as when Eberwin describes the first group of “heretics” as being the true remnants of the apostolic tradition, asserting that they and their fathers, “...being born apostles, have continued in the grace of Christ”, in opposition to the Church which was filled with “...false apostles, who adulterate the world...” and who “...misled you and your forefathers...”.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, the second group denied “that the body of Christ is made on the altar, because all the priests of the Church are not consecrated...” suggesting that they forfeited their “...apostolic dignity...” once they began to involve themselves in worldly affairs.¹⁶⁶ In this regard, part of Cosmas’s polemic stresses the defence of the church hierarchy when attacked by the “heretics”, who did not believe the offices of the bishops, deacons, and priests to be blessed by the grace of God. While both parties use Paul as a scriptural authority in defence of their views, they nonetheless interpret his words differently. The orthodox party, claimed that evidence of the deliverance of grace and blessing by God onto the offices of the hierarchical church came from Saint Paul’s letter to the Philippians in which he blessed the “...bishops and deacons” with “grace...and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ”.¹⁶⁷ To counter this, Bogomils also used Paul, but this time excerpts from his letters to Timothy which explicitly mention that a bishop “...must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, orderly, of good behaviour...” and proceeded to list similar virtues that a deacon must possess as well.¹⁶⁸ Proper conduct of spiritual leaders was extremely important, because if they are attempting to pass on a message of how to lead a proper Christian life, but their actions displayed the opposite, then they will not be taken seriously by their congregation and religious dissent might likely occur.

An attempt to understand evil in the world was embraced with the idea that God was not the creator of the physical world because the advent of destruction, plague, famine, wars, and violence were not events that a benevolent God would allow to happen to the people he created and loved. Therefore, in the minds of Bogomils, surely another being was responsible: the Devil. As such, a dualistic view of Christianity might, to some degree, offer an answer to adherents who searched to understand why evil existed in the world. To this, Cosmas wrote in his sermon that they “...called the devil the creator of mankind and of all God’s creatures...”, as well as that

¹⁶³ “The Sermon of Cosmas the Priest against Bogomilism,” in *Heresy and Authority*, 108, 109; Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 12; Lambert, *The Cathars*, 23.

¹⁶⁴ Steven Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 65.

¹⁶⁵ “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 92.

¹⁶⁶ “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 92.

¹⁶⁷ “The Sermon of Cosmas the Priest against Bogomilism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 111.

¹⁶⁸ “The Sermon of Cosmas the Priest against Bogomilism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 111.

“...everything exists by the will of the devil: the sky, sun, stars, air, earth, man, churches, crosses: everything which emanates from God they ascribe to the devil”.¹⁶⁹ They also denied the authority of “David and the Prophets” and admit to not living by the standards of “...the law of Moses, but according to the law given through the apostles”.¹⁷⁰ Looking at the trajectory of Cosmas’s writing, it can surely be deduced that their rejection of the law of Moses (Ten Commandments) was because it was passed down to him by an “evil God”, and, therefore, the commandments that were stipulated had no spiritual value to the Bogomils. From what was previously stated about “Cathar” beliefs, there can be some similarities in the belief that the creation of the physical world was evil; Satan, or the Prince of darkness, is undoubtedly evil, but it is not clear if the “Cathars” ascribe the dominion of the world to him, like it is stated in Matthew 4:9, when God spoke to the Devil saying “All these I will give you, if you fall down and worship me”.¹⁷¹ A very slight allusion to dualism by Eberwin’s first group of “heretics” can be showcased by their “we are not of the world” statement, but whether this was a mere expression that they were not materialistic and cared about worldly possessions, or, to display that they viewed themselves as deriving from the world of the “good God” is hard to say.¹⁷² In addition, Eckbert’s work specifically mentions the “Cathars” of the Rhineland and their belief in two gods and two worlds, ascribing the “evil” world to the Devil. Also, the meeting at Lomers between the party of the bishop of Lodève, and the “Good men” did not convincingly display the heresy the “Good men” believed while they were being interrogated, even if there was some allusion to dualism when they claimed that they did not believe in the God of the Old Testament or the Law of Moses.¹⁷³ Whether their unbelief in the authority of the Old Testament had anything to do with them thinking an “evil god” was behind the creation of the world, as seen in the Book of Genesis, remains to be seen. Other beliefs that can be ascribed to them are the revilement of the cross, which they justified by claiming that the instrument used for Christ’s torture and death should not be venerated and adored, as well as doubting the spiritual efficacy of churches and saint’s relics.¹⁷⁴ This is somewhat related to what Barber has claimed, that Bogomilism was a sect without any organization while still relying on the spiritual message of certain wandering preachers learned in the Gospel. Cosmas talks about how they “...reject all holy days and do not revere the memory of saints, martyrs, and fathers”, upon which they viewed these as not derivative from apostolic tradition but constructed by “men” (probably in reference to men of the Church and the clerical class).¹⁷⁵ By contesting these religious aspects which are controlled by the spiritual authority, they are, in essence, not necessarily stating their unbelief in these aspects, but openly defying the spiritual authority. Also, was their dualistic belief an answer to understanding the presence of evil in the world, or was it simply another way in undermining the hierarchical church by claiming that it was an evil institution and possessed no spiritual authority,

¹⁶⁹ “The Sermon of Cosmas the Priest against Bogomilism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 113-114; see also Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 13. Specifically, Cosmas had made this reply to someone who mentioned the persecution of heretics being very harsh. The entire first part of the quote reads, “How can they deserve any compassion, even if a host of them suffer, when they claim the devil as creator of mankind and all the divine creation?” It is also possible that Cosmas was discussing not only the persecution of Bogomils by the Orthodox church, but also the Slav peasantry to which most of them belonged to, viewed most likely, as a steady encroachment by the Byzantine church which had now enveloped its influence over most of the Bulgarian kingdom.

¹⁷⁰ “The Sermon of Cosmas the Priest against Bogomilism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 112.

¹⁷¹ Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 13. Barber quotes the Gospel of Matthew.

¹⁷² “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 92.

¹⁷³ “A Standoff at Lomers, 1165,” *Heresy and Authority*, 117.

¹⁷⁴ “The Sermon of Cosmas the Priest against Bogomilism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 109, 110, 112.

¹⁷⁵ “The Sermon of Cosmas the Priest against Bogomilism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 115; Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 14.

because it was created in the world that belonged to the Devil? While Cosmas's source is important because we have a first-hand account at our disposal, his statement outlining Bogomil beliefs would have been much more valid had an extant account of what the "leader" of the sect, Bogomil, had interpreted from Scripture that made him believe in these specific tenets. Because Cosmas's sermon is the only contemporary source from the 10th century that describes Bogomil beliefs and practices, the information contained in it must be analyzed carefully.

Ascribing the visible world to the Devil meant that the Bogomils adhered to a dualistic form of Christianity that was influenced by past heresies like Manichaeism and Paulicianism. However, for Bogomilism to have any ties to the heretical developments of western Europe in the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, it would be important to identify what "type" of dualism Bogomils adhered to. Cosmas's source only tells us so much, and it would be the prerogative of later Byzantine historians to provide vital information about the type of dualism 10th century Bogomils adhered to, claiming that the heresy was active even until their time. Historians like Euthymios Zigabenos, a late-11th and early 12th century monk from the Peribleptos monastery, located in eastern Constantinople, wrote about how Bogomilism was identified by agents of Emperor Alexios I Comnenos around the year 1100.¹⁷⁶ According to Zigabenos, the Bogomils adhered to "moderate dualism" which saw God as the ruler of a spiritual realm and whose authority was tested by the Devil, who led a rebellion against Him, consequentially being cast out of heaven.¹⁷⁷ As a result of his banishment, the Devil created the Earth and everything within it. The survival of Bogomilism up until Zigabenos's time may have come from Emperor Basil II the Bulgar-slayer's decisive expansionary campaigns against the First Bulgarian Empire at the end of the 10th century, and over time, Bogomilism was supposed to have secretly infiltrated the upper echelons of the Byzantine church and imperial court.¹⁷⁸ Lambert claims that the development of heretical tendencies and ideas were spreading through the sophisticated circles of Byzantine society because these aristocrats no longer believed in the efficacy and leadership of the monarchy and Church, which lost significant support after the defeat at Manzikert in 1071.¹⁷⁹ Anatolia was now in the hands of the Seljuk Turks, leading to future attacks and threats on the empire. For heresy to spread within the aristocratic class, there must have been someone responsible for feeding into the religious and political insecurities of elite Byzantines, maybe even going as far as saying that God had abandoned them and the monarchy, a consequence of all this instability. Putting the blame on one man is never an easy thing to do, especially if this man had accomplices in spreading these false beliefs. However, according to Zigabenos, this was just the case; a doctor named Basil was supposedly responsible for spreading Bogomilism to Byzantine aristocrats whom he treated, aspiring to eventually convert emperor Alexios to the sect.¹⁸⁰ The sect and its beliefs were unmasked when the emperor invited Basil to the royal palace, engaging in conversation with Basil and leading him to believe that he was interested in joining the sect, all while Zigabenos hid behind a curtain, recording the entire conversation.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ Lambert, *The Cathars*, 24.

¹⁷⁷ Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, 74-75.

¹⁷⁸ Lambert, *The Cathars*, 24.

¹⁷⁹ Lambert, *The Cathars*, 24.

¹⁸⁰ Lambert, *The Cathars*, 24.

¹⁸¹ Lambert, *The Cathars*, 24; Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, 70; Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 18. In actuality, it is unclear if Zigabenos was the one behind the palace curtain, recording everything that Basil was describing to Alexios. Both Lambert and Runciman claim that a "stenographer" or "secretary" was present during this meeting, but Zigabenos's knowledge of the Bogomils's beliefs and practices point toward him being the man behind the curtain. Barber believes that Zigabenos's presence at this meeting is irrefutable, because Anna Comnena's *Alexiad*, a

Alexios's attempted persecution of the Bogomils was somewhat successful, expelling many adherents from the capital and from Philippopolis, in mainland Greece; however, Runciman believes that some still clandestinely remained at Peribleptos monastery, a place where Zigabenos had uncovered some Bogomils prior to the confrontation with Basil, while others fled west from Philippopolis, a major heretical "center" according to Anna Comnena, in order to avoid the emperor's capital punishment.¹⁸²

If Byzantine Bogomils adhered to "moderate dualism" well into the 12th century, when did the shift to "absolute dualism" occur? When Emperor Alexios I used persecutive tactics against the Bogomils in Constantinople and Philippopolis in the early 12th century, some were executed, and some fled towards other areas west and north-west of those centers. Papa Nicetas supposedly brought "absolute dualism" to the Languedoc in either 1167, or in the early 1170s, because he had been ordained in the new beliefs of the Dragovitsan order, which did not agree with the previous degree of dualism adhered to by the Bogomils in the southern Balkans, and even those who Durand of Huesca called "Greek Manichees" in the early 13th century.¹⁸³ Who the "Greek Manichees" were is hard to say, but it may have been in reference to Byzantine Bogomils, or those at Philippopolis. Also, even though Durand's work was written at a later time, it is not anachronistic because as a Waldensian heretic himself, he was in the Languedoc listening to debates about religious beliefs and scriptural interpretation between Catholics and "Cathars".¹⁸⁴ Therefore, it is quite possible that the Bogomils of Dragovitsa were remnants of the initial Bulgarian Bogomils of the 10th century, who somehow changed their belief system to "absolute dualism", and when the Bogomils of Constantinople and Philippopolis were fleeing persecution, they settled there. Over time, they might have had debates about the nature of the world and how it was created, leading to clashing interpretations of dualistic Christian belief. Also, Runciman describes that after 1143, during the reign of Emperor Manuel I, new scandals arose in Constantinople about some bishops who were believed to be Bogomils.¹⁸⁵ If "moderate dualism" was still being professed and taught in certain Byzantine milieus in the 1140s, and Papa Nicetas made his way west between either 1167 or 1171/72, then there is a period of approximately 25 years where Bogomilism was said to have shifted from "moderate" to "absolute dualism". However, a specific date cannot be ascribed to this event, and the Saint-Félix document does not give any details of a shift in dualistic beliefs, nor does it display any religious tenets that can be ascribed to dualists. Also, there is another issue: the lack of relative literary material from Byzantine or eastern sources that describe this shift of dualism. Related to this, Jimenez-Sanchez mentions that the proposition of Bogomil transportation from east to west was first challenged by Henri-Charles Puech, a notable French historian and expert on Gnosticism and Manichaeism, active from the early 1950s to the late 1970s, whose research severely questioned the idea of a

panegyric of her father's reign, provides an excerpt of Basil's testimony which is only found in Zigabenos's work. While this cannot be proven for certain, it is a possibility.

¹⁸² Lambert, *The Cathars*, 25; Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, 71; Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 17. Lambert claims that through the cover of monasticism, Bogomilism found a home at the Peribleptos monastery, where it was discovered by Euthymios Zigabenos in the second half of the 11th century.

¹⁸³ "Durand of Huesca: 'Against the Manichees,'" *Heresy and Inquisition in France, 1200-1300*, 25-26. The modern-day equivalent of Dragovitsa is surely in reference to Dragovitia, in south-eastern Serbia, which shares a border with western Bulgaria.

¹⁸⁴ Famously at Pamiers in 1207 when he heard the sermons of Diego of Osma and Dominic Guzman, causing him to return to the Catholic church.

¹⁸⁵ Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, 71.

shift from “moderate” to “absolute dualism”.¹⁸⁶ Only western contemporary sources like Durand of Huesca make any sort of reference to the “Dragovitsan” church, and even so, this came at a later date.¹⁸⁷ If only western sources mention this important shift, which formed the basis of, supposedly, one of the largest heretical “councils” like the one at Saint-Félix-de-Caraman in either 1167 or 1171/72, then how can this event be considered a historical reality? This surely changes the perception that most had about Orthodox Christians, who had been considered “heretics” and schismatics by many western thinkers and theologians long before the Great Schism of 1054. The fact that no eastern sources mention the break in Bogomil dualism betrays the notion that Papa Nicetas’ visit west was necessary, and, in the larger scheme of heretical existence, makes one question whether “Catharism” in the Languedoc was an actual *lived reality*, or an “invention”.

As the Devil was considered the creator of the visible, material world, “Cathars” and Bogomils placed no spiritual emphasis on possibly the most important Christian sacrament, baptism. Mainly, the denial of materiality and the “evil” aspect attached to it, meant that the traditional Christian initiatory ritual of baptism with water introduced by Saint John the Baptist was not accepted by both Bogomils and “Cathars”.¹⁸⁸ The Orthodox Church in Byzantine lands and the Catholic Church in the Languedoc, in both cases, had been accused of betraying their apostolic heritage, involving themselves in worldly events and garnering large amounts of wealth. In turn, the spiritual baptism was posited as the only authentic ritual that an initiate needed to perform for acceptance in the sect.

Bernard Hamilton has claimed that no initiation rite that evoked the Holy Spirit through the imposition of the hands can be identified in western Europe before the “Cathars” appeared, and he ascribes their rite as being a direct importation of the rite used by Byzantine Bogomils.¹⁸⁹ However, there were slight differences between the initiation ceremonies of the Bogomils and “Cathars” in terms of the frequency of rituals performed. For example, “Cathar” *perfecti* would have only been initiated, or given the *consolamentum*, once, maybe twice in their lifetime: the first, after understanding the strict ascetic practices one needed to observe once initiated, and the second, upon their deathbed. Escaping the worldly corruption that matters of the flesh entailed, living a sinless life gave the *perfecti* an opportunity to unite with the souls they left behind. But this severe deprivation of the body was not easy for some, and many who respected the beliefs of the sect even if they did not have the discipline to live according to its rules, at times only accepted the *consolamentum* on the brink of death, so that their chances of sinning were less possible. According to Lambert, who derives his information from Euthymios Zigabenos, the Byzantine Bogomil version of the *perfecti* were called *theotokoi*, who were given this name after completing a double initiation ceremony.¹⁹⁰ Etymologically, it is unclear as to why the Bogomils chose such a name to describe their elite members. One can only think of, possibly, equating themselves with the Virgin Mary, whose pure nature and incorruptibility was the reason why she was chosen to be the mother of God. With this understanding, the Bogomils believed that through their illumination they understood Scripture better than any other sect.¹⁹¹ Therefore, by

¹⁸⁶ Jimenez-Sanchez, *Les Catharismes*, 62.

¹⁸⁷ “Durand of Huesca: ‘Against the Manichees,’” *Heresy and Inquisition in France, 1200-1300*, 25-26.

¹⁸⁸ Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, 78.

¹⁸⁹ Hamilton, “Bogomil Influences on Western Heresy,” 106.

¹⁹⁰ Lambert, *The Cathars*, 27.

¹⁹¹ Lambert, *The Cathars*, 24.

completing the grueling double initiation ceremony, *theotokoi* would, possibly, be seen as models of the Virgin Mary, gaining respect and reverence within the sect. The first instance where the Holy Spirit was invoked on the initiate, by the placement of the Gospel of John on their head, was after a period of mental and physical preparation, prayer, contemplation, which was forced upon future initiates in order for them to understand the life they were choosing and what they were giving up.¹⁹² Following the first time, another period of prayer and contemplation was proposed for new initiates, where they were examined, most probably by the *theotokoi*, to ensure that they had done enough to merit a place in the sect; if approved, a final ceremony ensued, and the Gospel of John was placed on the head of the initiate a second time, rendering him a member of the sect.¹⁹³ Whereas “Cathars” proposed a “deathbed” baptism to ensure a maximization of salvific qualities the ritual proposed, the Bogomils did not have a “last rite”, as it can be described. The assurances that Bogomil initiates had given to full members during the examination period, seemed slightly stricter than what “Cathar” *perfecti* demanded of their believers, or *credentes*.

Other differences between “Catharism” and Bogomilism were more easily distinguishable. For instance, the hierarchical system that encompassed bishops and deacons in “Catharism” did not exist in Bogomilism. The elites, *perfecti* in “Catharism” and *theotokoi* in Bogomilism, took charge of initiation rituals and made sure religious practices were strictly enforced. However, the *theotokoi* were not hierarchically divided, but preferred a more equal distribution of tasks that would help accentuate the faith and provide members with a sense of community and purpose.¹⁹⁴ Also, while “Catharism” allowed its *perfecti* to drink wine, the use of it, in terms of ritualistic purposes, remains unclear, the Bogomils denied the use of wine to its *theotokoi*.¹⁹⁵ In addition, one of the biggest differences between Bogomils and “Cathars” was their soteriology. The “Cathars” believed that their inclusion in the sect after receiving the *consolamentum* virtually guaranteed them a return to the world of spirit, where they would be reunited with their souls; Bogomils did not believe in this phenomenon.¹⁹⁶

The examples above show that similarities between Bogomilism and “Catharism” are possible, but not probable. Just as “time” was the greatest issue that concerned the correlation between “Catharism” and Manichaeism, so too is it concerning “Cathar” and Bogomil relations. Bogomilism first appeared in the late 970s, while Papa Nicetas supposedly travelled west to reform dualism in the Languedoc in the late 1160s or early 1170s. A startling 200-year gap separates its appearance with its transference west, a lengthy and inconsistent disparity to provide a conclusive answer on its survival and transmission to a region far from its “inception”. The only thing that might bridge the gap between the “Catharism” of the later 12th century and the Bogomilism of the late 10th century, are the heresies that appeared around the year 1000 (see below). Even so, Biget claimed that these heresies provide more of an anti-clerical tone to their movement rather than a direct transference of dualistic belief, which only showcased itself in the Languedoc around 1165 during the meeting between the clergy and the “Good men” at

¹⁹² Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, 78; Lambert, *The Cathars*, 27.

¹⁹³ Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, 78; Lambert, *The Cathars*, 27.

¹⁹⁴ Lambert, *The Cathars*, 34.

¹⁹⁵ “The Sermon of Cosmas the Priest Against Bogomilism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 114; Biget, “Un phénomène occidental,” 74.

¹⁹⁶ Biget, “Un phénomène occidental,” 74.

Lomers.¹⁹⁷ Thus, the events that transpired around the year 1000 were sporadic, and did not root themselves to a specific region, which would have been much easier to trace.

2.3 – Bogomilism and the Heresies of the Year 1000: New Clergy-Laity Relations and Possible Heretical Transference to Western Europe

It is very difficult to reconstruct an acceptable overview of “possible” heretical transference from eastern to western Europe without conclusive evidence in the form of historical accounts that describe potential dates, times, and areas of contact. Mere speculation, no matter how decent the evidence, and no matter how close certain sects might resemble in doctrinal, and sometimes, but very rarely, cultural aspects, is almost always not good enough in painting a broader picture of historical reality. While pockets of evidence and examples exist, a micro-view is sometimes harder to analyze than a macro-view because of shifting trends, and potential one-off examples of heretical activity which never return a second time around. Aside from the appearance of “heretics” in Aquitaine around the year 1000, and their supposedly returning as “Cathars” during the latter half of the twelfth century, this is the case for some of the heresies that appeared in western Europe (mainly in what is today northern France).¹⁹⁸ Attempting to trace a correlation between Bogomilism and heresies that appeared in Châlons-sur-Marne, Arras-Cambrai, Aquitaine, and Orléans would be easier, if, according to Lambert, there was evidence of their supposed missionary activity.¹⁹⁹ Because of this lack of evidence, even though the events that transpired at the turn of the millennium seemed to have a precedent, it cannot be said with certainty that a correlation exists. Also, in a previous mindset, this topic seemed to be somewhat far-removed from the core of the work conducted in this thesis, and the heresies that appeared after the year 1000 would have been no more than minor details in this larger body of work. Now, more attention must be given to these events, mostly because of the similarities between their beliefs and practices resembled many of the doctrinal tenets of Bogomilism, as well as because they can help form an argument as to if, and how these heresies were related to the anti-clerical movements that appeared and were recorded throughout the 12th century.

What do the heresies of the early 11th century have in common with Bogomilism? Some of the most controversial beliefs that Bogomils adhered to were the denial of the Cross as an instrument of worship; the denial of the baptism of water in preference of a spiritual baptism by the imposition of the hands; the prohibition of consuming foods that came from coition; and the disdain for the church hierarchy, claiming it had no spiritual efficacy. These were some serious claims, among many others, and yet, nothing is mentioned about a supposed dualistic belief, which would be the only concrete relation to Bogomilism. Firstly, the incident reported by a monk called Rodolphus Glaber, concerned a man named Leutard who was stung by “holy bees” in the small village of Vertus, reveals some similarities to Bogomil elements: the breaking of the Cross in a local church.²⁰⁰ Secondly, Adémar of Chabanne’s report, which was not an eyewitness account but a report of local hearsay, describes “Manichaeans” in Aquitaine that denied baptism,

¹⁹⁷ Biget, “Un phénomène occidental,” 75.

¹⁹⁸ Claire Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France: Dualism in Aquitaine and the Agenais, 1000-1249* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), 141.

¹⁹⁹ Lambert, *The Cathars*, 34.

²⁰⁰ “Leutard and the Bees,” *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 72.

dismissed the Cross, and abstained from certain foods.²⁰¹ Thirdly, while Adémar reports on the infamous incident in Orléans in 1022, he was not present while it unfolded. Instead, the report from Paul, a monk from Chartres is more credible, even though in 1078 he recopied the report of a monk named Aréfast, who was a key figure in the incident.²⁰² Paul reported that the “heretics” who were uncovered at Orléans claimed that Christ was not born of a Virgin, and that he did not die on the Cross nor resurrect after three days.²⁰³ Lastly, in 1025, bishop Gerard of Arras-Cambrai reported that certain “heretics” in his diocese were rounded up for questioning; after a synod on Easter day, the bishop understood that these “heretics” denied baptism, spurned marriage, made fun of the Cross, and opposed the church hierarchy, etc.²⁰⁴ Although all of these elements might point towards a weak correlation with Bogomilism, pin-pointing one or two similarities does not give an overall picture of how it was able to survive persecution in the late 10th century, and spread west. Related to this aspect, is an interesting assessment proposed by Hamilton. He claims that the sporadic identification of “heretics” in the early 11th century, like the ones reported by various chroniclers, were probably Bogomil dualists.²⁰⁵ His ideas resembled those of Malcolm Lambert in his usage of Euthymios Zigabenos and his supposed discovery of heretical monks in the Peribleptos monastery.²⁰⁶ One cannot exclude the possibility, that these Manichees described by Adémar were Bogomil monks either from Peribleptos, or from other Orthodox monasteries that contained Bogomil adherents who made their way west in the early 11th century.²⁰⁷ These monks may have been missionaries disguised as Orthodox monks, who looked to spread their teachings to the monasteries they visited, or even councils they attended, if any. This is also the reason why, if these monks were Bogomils in disguise, there might not have been any evidence of their teaching or preaching. They possibly only visited certain monasteries and under the guise of monasticism, it is possible that heretical ideas were confined, and secretly kept until after the strict reforms of the church had run their initial course in the late 11th and early 12th centuries. When “wandering preachers” like Robert Arbrissel, Peter of Bruys, and Henry of Lausanne, for example, began their preaching campaigns in the early 12th century, it is possible that these ideas, which had been sheltered in secret for more than a century, but also, the political and religious situation accentuated the need for these secrets to be shared. Of course, a speculative scenario such as this one does not display historical reality, but merely an idealized situation that would give answers to some questions, but not all.

The heresies reported by Radolphus Glaber, Adémar of Chabannes, Paul the Monk of Chartres, and even that of Gerard of Cambrai, outline a series of religious issues that might suggest a failing relationship between the Church and the laity, which heightened the awareness of a potential destabilization of civil order.²⁰⁸ However, was this destabilization due to the appearance of several heresies at the turn of the millennium, or was this perceived as such by contemporaries, or even by modern scholars analyzing these events? While heresy had been considered a crime linked to political and religious disobedience since late antiquity, societal aspects dictated the

²⁰¹ ““Manichaeans”” in Aquitaine,” in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 73-74.

²⁰² “Heresy at Orléans,” in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 74; see also R. I. Moore, *The War on Heresy* (Cambridge (Mass): Belknap Press, 2012), 21. Aréfast supposedly infiltrated a group of “heretics” that were found in Orléans in order to get information about their beliefs.

²⁰³ “The Narrative of Paul, a Monk from Chartres,” in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 78, 80.

²⁰⁴ “The Conversion of Heretics by the bishop of Arras-Cambrai,” in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 83, 84.

²⁰⁵ Bernard Hamilton, “Bogomil Influences on Western Heresy,” 95.

²⁰⁶ Hamilton, “Bogomil Influences on Western Heresy,” 96.

²⁰⁷ Hamilton, “Bogomil Influences on Western Heresy,” 96.

²⁰⁸ “Early Appearances of the Heresies in Western Europe,” in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 71-89.

relationship between the clergy and the laity. Endemic warfare and blood-feuding unfortunately spilled over to the ecclesiastical sphere, and territories were sought for whatever resources they had, even if holy sites were located on them. This is accentuated by the socio-religious movement in the late 10th century known as the Peace of God. This movement was born out of the fear and insecurity that the Church felt during this time of constant violence, and it looked not only to strengthen and secure its position in a warring society, but also to ensure the safety of common citizens who might get caught in the middle.²⁰⁹ The plundering of churches was forbidden by Christians, and in order to save the souls of the people responsible for these acts, the church proposed this relationship with the nobility and other members of the citizen body to ensure they were on the correct path towards redemption, reconciliation, and eventually, salvation.²¹⁰

It is interesting to note, that the clashing assessments of historians R. I. Moore and Richard Landes on this topic are quite thought-provoking and informative. The clergy-laity relations that were established, then disestablished, and the correlation of this relationship to the supposed appearances of heresy in certain regions in western Europe is a fascinating point of view. Moore's claims seem to point to the direction that a sudden shift in religious ideology came from the laity's distaste of the growing feudal economy that developed in the second half of the 10th century, supported by the ideas of 20th century scholar Raffaello Morghen.²¹¹ Also, Georges Duby's influence on Moore cannot be taken from granted, as he believed that the feudal revolution that was well under way at the end of the 10th century, only appeared because of the disintegration of some of the Carolingian judicial institutions that had still been around.²¹² Therefore, it might be suggested that Moore leaned towards what Duby had said, whereupon the rise of religious dissent and fervour, showcased by the appearance of heresies after the year 1000, was due to the shifting of society spearheaded by both the ecclesiastical and lay nobilities, to create a feudal, seigneurial system, of which the common laity did not approve.²¹³ It could also mean that the contemporary works of Adémar, Radolphus Glaber, and others who chronicled these heresies, according to Moore, do not display millennial tendencies, and were not situations of "lived" or "real" heresy, but were written in a rhetorical manner.²¹⁴ For example, what would have made Adémar's account about "Manichaeans" in Aquitaine more credible, was if he had made contact with one, or many of these supposed heretics and even debate with them, or interrogate them on their beliefs. But this is unfortunately not the case.²¹⁵ Also, an analysis of the successes and failures of the Peace of God movement which barely make the cut in Moore's essay, is a focal point in Richard Landes's response to Moore, all while heavily reliant on claims that the heresies that sprung up after the year 1000, and the literary language that the reports of these heresies were written in, displayed an apocalyptic tone which possibly linked them to the notion that the second coming of Christ was imminent.²¹⁶ Landes claims that Moore dismisses

²⁰⁹ Ernst-Dieter Hehl, "War, peace and the Christian order," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History: c. 1024-c. 1198, Part 1*, eds. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 191.

²¹⁰ Hehl, "War, peace and the Christian order," 190, 191.

²¹¹ R. I. Moore, "The Birth of Popular Heresy: A Millennial Phenomenon?" *Journal of Religious History* 24, no. 1 (2000), 11. Morghen's views challenged the works of Antoine Dondaine and Steven Runciman, who believed in heretical continuity, where dualist belief spread from eastern Europe to the west in the form of Bogomilism.

²¹² Moore, "The Birth of Popular Heresy: A Millennial Phenomenon?," 13-14.

²¹³ Moore, "The Birth of Popular Heresy: A Millennial Phenomenon?," 18, 19.

²¹⁴ Moore, "The Birth of Popular Heresy: A Millennial Phenomenon?," 20.

²¹⁵ Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 59.

²¹⁶ Richard Landes, "The Birth of Heresy: A Millennial Phenomenon? A Response to Moore," *Journal of Religious History* 24, no. 1 (2000).

the millennial aspects of these heresies too easily, which are crucial to understanding the behaviour of commoners and elites.²¹⁷ This is displayed by Landes emphasizing the relationship between the Peace of God movement and millennialism, which gave rise to the heresies around the year 1000. As the Peace of God movement looked to establish a relationship between the importance of keeping church lands away from the warring nobles who sought to occupy them, and the process of charging either lay people or clerics with heresy, Landes suggests a strained relationship between the nobility and commoners.²¹⁸ This strained relationship is evident in the later years of the Peace of God movement, which began with much promise and hope, but did not end on a positive note. In a movement that was supposed to bring people who shared a common system of religious beliefs together, turned out to be more of a feeling of resentment towards the ecclesiastical class rather than unity with it. When the Peace of God meetings suddenly ended towards the turn of millennium, certain lay people and clerics felt abandoned, and they turned their attention to the established church which was responsible for the Peace movement's promulgation. What Glaber, Adémar, Paul the Monk, and Gerard describe in their writings, should be taken as an indication that the fear of the apocalypse was a constant mindset, especially for the first three decades of the 1000s.²¹⁹ Thus, the failure of the Peace movement, along with the "social contract" it had created between commoner and noble, both lay and ecclesiastical, was now over; this caused many to see the hierarchical Church negatively, which gave rise to the heresies present after the year 1000.²²⁰

Whatever fear the appearance of these heresies caused to medieval contemporaries who reported on them, this was the beginning of an issue that would return many years later. The great reforms of the church that were issued by Pope Gregory VII at the latter half of the 11th century, would only reach success in the first half of the 12th century. While they had succeeded in reforming some important aspects, they failed in the overall message they attempted to convey: a chasm between clergy and laity would be created, giving rise to the appearance of alleged anti-clerical and non-conformist movements that pushed for a purer, more simple form of Christianity, reminiscent of the faith Christ's earliest apostles adhered to. Unfortunately, the proposition of such an idea clashed with the hierarchical church, which was unwavering and militant in several attempts that questioned its authority and power over the well-being of Christian souls.

²¹⁷ Landes, "The Birth of Heresy: A Millennial Phenomenon? A Response to Moore," 28.

²¹⁸ Landes, "The Birth of Heresy: A Millennial Phenomenon? A Response to Moore," 32.

²¹⁹ Landes, "The Birth of Heresy: A Millennial Phenomenon? A Response to Moore," 38.

²²⁰ Landes, "The Birth of Heresy: A Millennial Phenomenon? A Response to Moore," 41, 42, 43.

Part 3: Saved by the Book? Religious Justification for the Albigensian Crusade: Anti-clericalism as a Response to Reform

The lull in heretical activity that can be seen from the 1050s until the early years of the 12th century was possibly due to a consequence of the Church's attempt to stamp out certain irregularities among its clergy, as well as an attempt to analyze its institutions and values internally, while trying to understand the precarious position it found itself in. If the assessment by Richard Landes is correct, and the Church severed the relationship it had created with the laity by their shared participation in religious and social events with the Peace of God movement, leading to the appearances of heresies around the year 1000, then the great moralizing campaign the Church embarked on in the later half of the 11th century to reform behavioural imperfections would alienate its flock rather than bring it closer to them. In addition, the unattainable pedestal that the Church created with the implementing of these strict reforms, gave rise to a more pertinent issue: the establishment of the Church's religious hegemony in 12th century Europe, sometimes described as a monarchy, paved the way for the identification of an "enemy" or "enemies". These were presented in the form of anti-clerical movements, who, ironically, espoused elements of simplicity and apostolicism which were ideas that had been directly passed down from the earliest Christians. These non-conformist movements were difficult to grasp: they were identified as "road-blocks" in the progressive task of reforming religious malpractices within the ecclesiastical class, while at the same time, their appearance in denouncing certain clerical immoralities that strove to return to a purer form of Christianity put the Church in, quite possibly, one of the most difficult positions it had even been in.²²¹ As Grado Merlo has explained, the Church's religious expansion lay at the crossroads of two ideological trends which made their extremely hard task even harder: attempting to restore religious order after the appearance of heresies and immoral practices that had no place in religious governance, and by extension, society, versus the complete comprehension of the message exemplified by Christ and his apostles.²²² However, the apostolic message that the heresies of the year 1000 attempted to convey, subsequently continued by the anti-clerical and non-conformist movements of the early-to-mid 12th century, "Catharism" included, accentuated a fear among the ecclesiastical class that their influence on the spiritual life of the laity was waning, and the appearance of lay preachers who had some knowledge of Scripture and dared to expose the clergy for their mishaps confirmed this fear. For example, the appearance of heresy in Arras-Cambrai in 1025 detected by its bishop, Gerard, typifies the spiritual ideology that the non-conformist movements of the early 11th century expressed, which would be revived in the 12th century in a much more intense and fervent way. In addition, the event outlines the allusion to an itinerant preacher spreading knowledge of the Scriptures outside the clerical *ordo*, which, according to the rhetorical writings of ecclesiastical intellectuals during the 12th century, was a way in which heresy was likely to spread. R. I. Moore mentions that a certain Gundolfo was the man who the "heretics" of Arras-Cambrai had attributed to their knowledge of Scripture, who either taught them personally, or passed down apostolic values and ideas through others.²²³ On the grounds of maintaining their apostolic dignity, as well as remaining true to the "Scripture" that they understood – which R.I. Moore mentions might only be amalgamation of New Testament verses compiled by Gundolfo, which coincided with their ideology – these "heretics" professed the Donatist view that unworthy priests were unable to properly administer the sacrament of baptism because of their multiple,

²²¹ Merlo, "Christian Experiences of Religious Non-conformism," 438, 439.

²²² Merlo, "Christian Experiences of Religious Non-conformism," 439.

²²³ R. I. Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 46.

hidden vices.²²⁴ The denial of baptism was ultimately a denial of God's grace, because they did not believe that the power of God nullified human sin; however, seen from a more temporal ecclesiastical perspective, it meant that a lack of faith was felt towards the Church as an institution because it put its trust in a corrupt priesthood that offered nothing for the spiritual edification of its flock.²²⁵ The "Cathars" of Languedoc would adopt certain views that the "heretics" of Arras-Cambrai had professed, mainly that of baptismal denial and their hatred for the Church and its clergy, but their seclusion from society and their perceived association with the Bogomils made their movement appear more sinister than the ones that preceded them.

The purpose of providing an example of the appearance of heresy in Arras-Cambrai in 1025 is to understand how the Church reacted to non-conformist sects. Whether the council in which bishop Gerard interrogated the "heretics" actually existed – Moore says that it might be a fabrication, a product of rhetorical literature – the fears that were accentuated because of these heretics, as well as the other heretical movements that would arise in the 12th century centered around the issues of authority, and by extension, the comprehension of apostolic authority.²²⁶ Therefore the task of contextualizing these non-conformist movements and seeing how they were perceived as heresies within the ecclesiastical class is an important step in understanding why, and how the Church reacted to these movements. With the appearance of these movements, a crucial question posed in a previous section must be reiterated: was heresy a *lived reality* or was it simply the Church's *perception* that this reality was coming to fruition?

3.1 – Religious Life in the 12th Century and its Earlier Background

a – Dissent or Heresy? The *Vita Apostolica* and the Church's Reaction to Non-conformity

The religious issues that the reforming papacy faced in the late 11th century were aspects that strictly concerned the ecclesiastical class at first, then, by the beginning of the 12th century, they intended to extend these to the laity. Simony was the primary issue that the church needed to reform, and Pope Leo IX sought to curb the unacceptable act which diminished the position of bishop due to many attempting to purchase the office.²²⁷ Germany and England had been areas of concern, whose monarchs and many from the nobility practiced lay investiture in order to place loyal prelates that would safeguard their political and religious interests.²²⁸ Concern for the well-being and integrity of the church was probably non-existent, and these monarchs and nobles only wanted someone who would support them in times of strife and at times, against political rivals. Also, certain prelates had betrayed their vows of celibacy, by secretly wedding, or possessing concubines while in office.²²⁹ As such, it would seem that during Pope Leo IX's pontificate, a certain frame of mind began to emerge within the papacy: the immoral acts committed by certain members of the hierarchical church tarnished the name of a supposed moral, and ethical institution. Its spiritual efficacy began to be judged not by how well it diffused knowledge of the Scriptures, nor by the involvement of the laity in upholding its doctrinal tenets in everyday life,

²²⁴ R. I. Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 47, 49.

²²⁵ R. I. Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 50.

²²⁶ R. I. Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 49.

²²⁷ Joseph H. Lynch and Philip C. Adamo, *The Medieval Church: A Brief History*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2nd edition, 2014), 157.

²²⁸ Lynch and Adamo, *The Medieval Church*, 157.

²²⁹ Lynch and Adamo, *The Medieval Church*, 158.

but by the comportment of the local priests and bishops that made up the ecclesiastical class. Drastic reform was needed, for how can the church be respected if its clergy submitted to their vices, while still preaching to its congregants about maintaining a life of morality and sinlessness? Hildebrand, who became Pope Gregory VII in 1073, continued Pope Leo XI's initial steps toward reform, only in a much more radical way. The strict reforms that Gregory would implement, and the criterion that formed the basis of judging the behaviour of local parish priests or bishops, would eventually lead to severe issues in the 12th century: the sacrality of the Eucharist and the deep spiritual connection it created with God to any Christian that partook in this ritual gave the laity the power to refuse its ministrations by clergymen who they believed were unworthy.²³⁰ Gregory VII also pursued, much more militantly than previous popes, for all members of the ecclesiastical class to remain celibate, as this was the only way to properly live the faith, encapsulating a spiritually pure life and leading by example to adherents. The hierarchical church had spent centuries establishing itself as an institution founded by Christ, and eventually perceiving itself as the inheritors of Christ's message, further developed by his apostles, who closely followed his life and message. As such, the role of the priest became immensely important for the salvific aspirations of lay people, because he acted as a mediator between the human and the divine while conferring the Eucharist to believers. Additionally, an important aspect of early 12th century reforms, is the development of the diocesan model of ecclesiastical organization, which also gave birth to the parish system. This allowed for the diffusion of religious knowledge to be more readily available, as well as regular exposure to mass for those who lived close to a church.²³¹ However, even if lay people lived near a parish church, it does not mean that they had continuous exposure to mass, nor did they regularly participate in weekly ritualistic activities like the Eucharist and other sacraments. In fact, while historical evidence that calculates the frequency of attendance to mass, ritual participation, as well as other devotional religious practices is readily available for members of the nobility who were many times great benefactors to religious institutions, this is not the case for the laity. Therefore, the general Christian worldview that most of medieval European society adhered to, or was "supposed" to adhere to, should not be taken for granted. Not everyone had access to the Scriptures or the knowledge that learned clergymen possessed to explain biblical passages to regular lay people, and Hamilton claims that some lay people who grew up in areas located far from a parish church would have been taught basic Christian tenets and values from their parents, whose knowledge of the faith, or how to "properly" put these values into practice was also limited.²³² Also, how frequently were lay people asking priests about the eschatological, or soteriological elements of Christianity? Continuing Hamilton's deduction about clerical education, if lay people were curious about learning more about their faith and had questions about why they performed certain Christian rituals and why they were spiritually beneficial, would the parish priest be the right individual to answer these questions?²³³ Most would assume that he was not, because of the complex nature of these questions, and the limited knowledge the priest possessed. Parish priests were on the lower scale of ecclesiastical positions, and popular European cathedral schools tended to produce popes, bishops, as well as clergy that would

²³⁰ Lynch and Adamo, *The Medieval Church*, 160; see also Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Steven Rowan (Notre-Dame: University of Notre-Dame Press, 2005. Original, *Religöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter*, Berlin, 1935), 7.

²³¹ Bernard Hamilton, "Religion and the Laity," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History: c. 1024- c. 1198, Part 1*, eds. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 499, 500.

²³² Hamilton, "Religion and the Laity," 500.

²³³ Hamilton, "Religion and the Laity," 500.

sometimes assume royal positions like chancellors.²³⁴ It would be perfectly understandable if a parish priest who had received a limited amount of education, was not qualified enough to make an intellectual decision about certain tendencies witnessed among the laity, and if these tendencies, also dependant on particular situations within the local community, could potentially lead to non-conformism and heresy. The Church during this reforming period became somewhat of a police-force, delegating investigative work to bishops and other learned clergymen to ensure that parish priests were in good standing with their communities, as well as to reinforce priests with the tools to perform their basic functions (baptize new-born children, offer mass at least every Sunday, as well as fulfilling funerary rituals for deceased members of the community).²³⁵ A good reputation within the community was extremely important, and this needed to be visibly present by the members of the Church, especially at the parochial level, because of the various capacities in which they interacted with lay people on a daily basis. As such, the process taken up by the Church for the practice of proper conduct in ecclesiastical positions needed to be strictly upheld, mainly for the laity to not feel disillusioned with religious institutions. A sense of disillusionment is what may have caused the appearance of the heresies around the year 1000. Although reforming bishops and popes stressed these strict changes were implemented to curb certain malpractices that were present among its clergy, it may have also been a reaction to the “threat” these heresies posed. The church looked to reconstruct the strained relationship it had with the laity by attempting to propose and implement reforms that would draw people closer to the Church, and incentivize regular attendance and ritual participation, but at the same time, maintaining a certain moral standard that all members of the ecclesiastical class needed to uphold, in order for the laity to remain fully confident in the Church and its members.

Simultaneously being conducted with the reforms of the hierarchical church were the reforms of certain monastic orders. While the Cluniac order spearheaded a reform of the Benedictine order in the early 10th century, the spiritual awakening that took place in the 12th century, especially within the Cistercian order, made the monastic ideals of simplicity, hard work, community, chastity, and voluntary poverty the ideal virtues for many who looked to remove themselves from worldly affairs, and focus on their salvation.²³⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux made these virtues clear when he wrote a letter to the monks of St-Jean d’Aulps, a monastery located in the French Alps which was associated with Cîteaux, the Cistercian mother house: “Our order is abjection; it is humility; it is voluntary poverty, obedience, and peace...”²³⁷ In fact, the reasoning behind why the monastery became a beacon of hope for the salvation of many lay people in the 12th century, came from the development of new economic capabilities, which caused a societal shift from rural to urban life. The wisdom and spiritual perfection that certain monks had accrued over their self-denial, soberness, and commitment to Christian salvation, gave them the opportunity to become spiritual advisors to kings and princes, all while maintaining a certain monastic standard of reclusiveness, and, some more than others, a distance from worldly involvement.²³⁸ These were values instilled by Christ’s apostles and idealized as a code of

²³⁴ Hamilton, “Religion and the Laity,” 500.

²³⁵ Hamilton, “Religion and the Laity,” 509. Hamilton explains that in order for these functions to be performed at maximum capacity, priests needed to perfect their use of Latin, an element which came to be scrutinized by higher clergymen who examined parish priests as part of their reforming duties.

²³⁶ Hamilton, “Religion and the Laity,” 502; see also Kienzle, “Religious poverty and the search for perfection,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Christianity in Western Europe c. 1100-c. 1500*, eds. Miri Rubin and Walter Simons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 39, 41.

²³⁷ Kienzle, “Religious poverty and the search for perfection,” 39.

²³⁸ Hamilton, “Religion and the Laity,” 502.

Christian ethics for whoever wished to “...deny themselves and take up their cross and follow” the teachings and life of Jesus as close as possible.²³⁹ However, the growing nature of the city posed many problems for Christians who looked to enhance their spiritual life: better job opportunities were present, but also a large degree of urban poverty, involvement in civic politics and every-day civic life, the growing mercantile elite and their expanding economic fluidity, the exchange of money and currency for daily purchases and important commodities, and many other aspects which to the eyes of a Christian who attempted to live a reformed faith and follow monastic values, was not the ideal setting.²⁴⁰ The monastic orders in the early 12th century came under the direct influence of the rapidly growing papacy, and they stressed that the only way to escape the temptations of the earthly world was to leave it behind; abandon the pursuit of wealth, status, and all other temporal things that can distract Christians from what should be their collective spiritual goal: salvation and entrance into God’s heavenly kingdom.²⁴¹ The monastic orders concluded that, in order for Christians to live spiritually fulfilling lives, their involvement in earthly affairs had to be as limited as possible, perhaps even non-existent. However, this ideology was very unrealistic for every-day people in medieval localities who had to work and perform various daily activities in order to sustain themselves and their families in a drastically changing time.

To say that the 12th century was a time of great change is an understatement. The idea of reforming certain immoral practices in the ecclesiastical class was a good idea, but the result was not what its proponents had hoped for. By attempting to bring lay people closer to the church, the strict police-like measures alienated them from religious institutions and created a gap between the clergy and the laity.²⁴² Ecclesiastical positions came with a certain amount of authority and respect, but also, a level of proper comportment that created distinctions between clergy and laity. If, for example, parish priests were behaving poorly, it is somewhat logical that religious institutions would attempt to distance themselves from these individuals or force them to reform their lives without smearing the reputation of the entire Church. Therefore, the reforms of the late 11th century changed not only the perception of the Church as the ultimate religious authority, but they also ordered society. Priests and other clerics who acted as laymen lacked respect for their position and left themselves open to criticism from their congregants who perceived them as incapable of performing the duties associated to their position. This, in turn, might cause the congregants to distance themselves from the Church because of the behaviour of certain immoral individuals. These distinctions that were accentuated by the reforms, both hierarchical and monastic, gave the Church the leverage it needed to develop, what Grundmann believes, was the idea that salvation was only possible through ordination and regular participation in the sacraments that were administered by its ordinates.²⁴³ However, not everyone had the opportunity, or the calling to devote their lives to the Church and its institutions. With developments in literacy and the growth of vernacular literature, two immensely important elements of 12th century religious and intellectual life, a small population of literate lay people around western Europe – outside of the confines of the literacy learned by members of the clerical class – were now given the opportunity to access information regarding religious and

²³⁹ *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1054. Taken from Matthew 16:24.

²⁴⁰ Lynch and Adamo, *The Medieval Church*, 208; see also Andrew P. Roach, *The Devil’s World: Heresy and Society, 1100-1300* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 35, 36.

²⁴¹ Kienzle, “Religious poverty and the search for perfection,” 39.

²⁴² Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 29.

²⁴³ Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, 7.

spiritual literature (i.e., the New Testament and many *vitae* of saints that were written in previous centuries).²⁴⁴ These literate lay people, some of whom had possibly received a clerical education but never advanced within ecclesiastical institutions, were responsible for one of the most important religious movements in the Middle Ages, the quest for the *vita apostolica*. Armed with vernacular translations of various passages from the Gospels and other New Testament books such as the Acts of the Apostles, proponents of these movements caused a problem for the church hierarchy because of their disdain for wealth and lavishness, deeming these elements inherently unnecessary to people in religious positions that claimed apostolic inheritance. They advocated for poverty, penance, and simplicity which were all key aspects to living a proper Christian life, evidenced in the passages written by some of Christ's earliest followers, especially St. Paul.²⁴⁵ In his first letter to Timothy, Paul berates people who live their lives in pursuit of wealth because "...those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction".²⁴⁶ Although Paul may have been referring to those who strove for wealth in general terms, this can be applied to custodians of the faith like bishops, who were morally obliged to teach by example. In fact, the development of city life in the 12th century accentuated the idea that wealth was undesirable, showcased by the building of great cathedrals which became seats of power for many bishops. Also, because of the busy nature of towns, bishops were much more visible to the faithful, and if they were unable to perform their ecclesiastical duties or their reputation in the town was tarnished for whatever reason, it might have roused some forms of anti-clerical sentiments among the laity, creating a disheartened view of religious institutions from their overall perspective.²⁴⁷

If the movements that espoused apostolic sentiments were devoted to seeking purer spiritual elements to the faith, enhanced by the legitimacy of certain Scriptural passages, how did these movements, eventually, become labelled as anti-clerical or even heretical by the ecclesiastical authorities? Arriving towards an answer for this question can lead to analyzing two important aspects that were discussed previously, mainly *interpretation* and *perception*. Due to many unsanctioned books from the Bible now translated in the vernacular, which became available to literate people who were also proponents in these apostolic movements, Scriptural passages were interpreted in a way that fit their spiritual agenda, and resonated with people who wanted to test the strength of their faith against the socio-economic changes that took place during the 12th century.²⁴⁸ Mary Dove mentions that the "Cathars" had a particular affinity with the Gospel of John, which held immense importance as it was used in their *consolamentum* rite.²⁴⁹ Initially, the search for religious poverty had been solely the prerogative of the monastic orders, who called

²⁴⁴ Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 7; Lynch and Adamo, *The Medieval Church*, 208; Hamilton, "Religion and the Laity," 511. Although hagiography would cement itself as a serious discipline in the 13th century, there were many *vitae* that could be accessible to semi-literate lay people in the 12th century. There was also vernacular poetic literature that contained hagiographical elements, such as the *Life of St. Alexius*, written in French, which exposed lay people to holy men from previous centuries, adding to the notion that a life of simplicity and adherence to a purer form of Christianity was desirable in a drastically changing time.

²⁴⁵ Kienzle, "Religious poverty and the search for perfection," 40, 41

²⁴⁶ *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1247. Passage taken from 1 Timothy 6:9

²⁴⁷ Roach, *The Devil's World*, 40. Roach has rightfully stated that the building of cathedrals should not be perceived as a negative correlation for the pursuit of revenues and opulence by bishops, for most of them came from landed noble families who were wealthy by hereditary right.

²⁴⁸ Kienzle, "Religious poverty and the search for perfection," 41.

²⁴⁹ Mary Dove, "Scripture and reform," in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From 600 to 1450*, eds. Richard Marsden and E. Ann Matter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 582

for a renunciation of the world and all its temporal temptations, advocating hard work, austerity, and simplicity, claiming that these ideals were the only way in which Christians would ever get closer to God.²⁵⁰ These ideals were difficult to attain for many lay people, who were not willing to take the risk of abandoning the world, and entering the monastic cloister. Because of the rise in literacy, many lay people as well as clerics who agreed with what the apostolic movements attempted to convey, brought these ideals to life in the cities they worked or lived in. Some were accepted, others were not. As such, “preachers” like Robert of Arbrissel, Peter of Bruys, and Henry of Lausanne (to name a few), regarded themselves as faithful Christians because they were not only upholding the idealized Christian life as was described in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, but they saw themselves as reformers who also tried to rid the church of immorality, false piety, and above all, inadequate custodians of the faith.²⁵¹ Robert of Arbrissel was the only one out of the three “itinerant” preachers mentioned above, that received some vindication prior to his death in 1116. His actions – preaching while barefoot and dressed in ragged clothes – perceived as odd to the ecclesiastical authorities who witnessed this, helped cement his legacy as a man of faith who preached simplicity, austerity, and poverty as essential spiritual components to practicing Christians. The founding of Fontevraud abbey in 1101 was a positive consequence of his preaching methods, which resonated with lay people who wished to live an apostolic life and as close to the Scriptures as possible.²⁵²

While Robert of Arbrissel was quite peaceful in his “evangelical” approach, the same cannot be said for Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne, both whom, according to Grado Merlo, were demonized for inciting radicalism but on much different scales, which led their movements to increasingly different outcomes.²⁵³ Peter of Bruys was a parish priest from Provence who turned to itinerant preaching in the early 1110s and whose views were reminiscent of either Paulician or Bogomil heritage: he denied the efficacy of the Eucharistic ritual, claimed that infant baptism did not offer any salvific elements to the initiate, and expressed that the Cross should not be venerated because it was the instrument of Christ’s torture and death.²⁵⁴ Additionally, he reviled the use of churches as places of worship, and he denied the Old Testament as Scriptural canon.²⁵⁵ The seriousness of Peter’s views as well as his accusations of immorality on the part of the Catholic clergy put him in the firing line of Peter the Venerable, who in the 1130s, was possibly the most important cleric in medieval Europe. Peter’s exclusionary literature established him as the pioneering intellectual of the concept of “Christendom” – pertaining to Christian universality – which aimed at marginalizing and excluding Jews, Muslims, and later on, heretics, from participating in all aspects of Christian society.²⁵⁶ While the concept of exclusion is much too

²⁵⁰ Kienzle, “Religious poverty and the search for perfection,” 39, 41.

²⁵¹ Mary Dove, “Scripture and reform,” 581.

²⁵² Kienzle, “Religious poverty and the search for perfection,” 40; see also Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 125. Fontevraud’s status as a building of religious significance is showcased by it being chosen as a place of burial for high profile figures like Eleanor of Aquitaine, Raymond VII of Toulouse, as well as successive Angevin monarchs like Henry II and Richard I, all of whom were most likely great benefactors of the abbey.

²⁵³ Merlo, “Christian Experiences of Religious Non-conformism,” 439.

²⁵⁴ Hamilton, “Religion and the Laity,” 518; Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 126; Jean-Louis Biget, “À la source, un anticléricalisme et un évangélisme,” in *Hérésie et inquisition dans le Midi de la France* (Paris: Picard, 2007), 42.

²⁵⁵ Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 128; see also Merlo, “Christian Experiences of Religious Non-conformism,” 439. For the links between Peter of Bruys and possible Bogomil tendencies, see “The Sermon of Cosmas the Priest against Bogomilism,” *Heresy and Authority*, 109-115.

²⁵⁶ Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam (1000-1150)*, trans. Graham Robert Edwards (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002. Original, *Ordonner et*

broad to fully discuss here, there are some crucial elements that can be briefly mentioned. In consequence of hearing about these dissenting views, Peter the Venerable chose to combat Peter of Bruys with the pen rather than with the sword: his *Contra Petrobrusianos*, described as an *epistola disputans*, diminished Peter of Bruys's beliefs, professed in a literary method used by medieval scholastics that aimed at outlining the erroneous teachings of an individual, assembling them in the form of a debate between the reader and the writer.²⁵⁷ In short, Peter the Venerable did not care about Peter of Bruys's views, and this is evident in his style of writing: the point of the *Contra* was to outline his beliefs, and refute them by the use of Scriptural and Patristic authorities. Later Christian intellectuals would refer to Peter the Venerable's writing method and style, producing similar literary refutations on the topic of heresy.²⁵⁸ Peter of Bruys's views attacked the Sacramental authority possessed by the priesthood and important Christians tenets that most people in the 12th century did not question. Of the three doctrinal elements mentioned above that were refuted by Peter as being ineffective, two dealt with the capabilities of the priest and his involvement in the performance of these rituals. In fact, Taylor mentions Moore's *Origins of European Dissent* in which Moore states that Peter, along with Henry of Lausanne wanted to have the clergy definitively removed from ecclesiastical institutions because of their unworthiness and their clinging to material possessions, wealth, and status garnered by their position.²⁵⁹ Tying these elements with the intellectual changes that were developing in the 12th century, for example, the building of grandiose cathedrals as places of worship, elaborate pilgrimage sites, and seats of episcopal power, Peter targeted the clergy because of the distance created between themselves and the laity, advocating for a purer faith but clearly not using the right terminology or examples to express his ideas. In ca. 1138, his views would lead to his downfall because he was murdered by an angry mob in the town of St-Gilles while attempting to make a bonfire of crosses, a performance that would have stirred up religious fervour and excitement.²⁶⁰

Henry of Lausanne was considered another divisive figure during the wave of apostolic movements that appeared in western Europe in the first half of the 12th century. A possible former monk of the Benedictine order, his truly itinerant style of preaching persistently was unconfined by the regional specificity of Peter of Bruys, rousing religious sentiment at the cities of Le Mans and Toulouse in the late 1110s by questioning the spiritual capabilities and functionality of wealthy and status-driven clergymen in performing certain sacraments, mainly the Eucharist, which led to his expulsion from both cities.²⁶¹ Henry's views were quite radical towards the end of his life, shifting the focus from the worthiness of priests in sacramental rituals to denying that the priesthood was needed in its entirety, a stance which angered the ecclesiastical intellectuals who debated these views, in addition to those who wrote refutations of his ideas without ever actually meeting him.²⁶² A certain "William the monk" seems to have debated with Henry briefly and recorded the conversation that they had between each other. Henry was

exclure: Chuny et la société chrétienne face à l'hérésie, au judaïsme et à l'islam, 1000-1150 (Aubier: Paris, 1998)), 21.

²⁵⁷ Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion*, 109, 120, 122; Biget, "À la source, un anticléricalisme et un évangélisme," 39.

²⁵⁸ Biget, "À la source, un anticléricalisme et un évangélisme," 40. Bernard of Clairvaux and Henry the Monk, two works that are useful for purposes of this paper, followed Peter the Venerable's refutational literary style.

²⁵⁹ Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 128.

²⁶⁰ Hamilton, "Religion and the Laity," 518; Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 128.

²⁶¹ Hamilton, "Religion and the Laity," 518-519; Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 130.

²⁶² Hamilton, "Religion and the Laity," 518; Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 130; Merlo, "Christian Experiences of Religious Non-conformism," 439.

believed to have said, according to William, that God was the only authority and full “...obedience is owed to God rather than to men”.²⁶³ Much like Peter the Venerable’s *Contra Petrobrusianos*, albeit on a much smaller scale and with less eloquence and significance, William the Monk’s work followed this style of rhetorical literature, very popular among Christian polemicists in the 12th century. Additionally, William outlines Henry’s views about an inadequate priest being charged with the task of consecrating the bread and wine to Christ’s body and blood; the crux of William’s reply was that “...no one is without sin”.²⁶⁴ To this point, it must be reiterated as to why the position of a priest was crucial, specifically in the Eucharistic ritual. Mediation is a key aspect in the relationship between the temporal and the divine. Medieval theologians speculated profoundly about whether the bread and wine consumed during the Eucharist was the actual historical body of Jesus Christ or if it was simply Christ’s spiritual “presence” that was infused during consecration; Berengar of Tours was the most famous proponent of these ideas in the late 11th century, and by professing these views which seemed quite radical at the time, the importance of the priest in this ritual was indirectly accentuated. Henry of Lausanne stressed that obedience to God was more important than obedience to man, but the “man” who was charged with uttering the important prayer, the *sanctus*, needed to turn the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ was the priest. Without this prayer, the consecration does not happen, and while the bread and wine remain symbolic, they do not transform into the historical body and blood of Christ, which is the whole point of the ritual. Henry remained adamant that unworthy priests should not preside over the sacraments, but in this, he also denied the power of God’s grace which blessed the ritual itself, and what it meant; details about a priest’s unworthiness had no consequence or power over God’s grace, which is what William the Monk was attempting to deduce in his work.²⁶⁵ Additionally, Grado Merlo has outlined an important aspect concerning the usefulness and validity the role of the priest contained within Christianity, which was confirmed in 1116 at a synod in Rome; the priesthood added to the Church’s soteriological function by being instrumental to adherents and congregants for all their basic spiritual needs, not acting as simply an extended “arm” of the Church and its institutions, and through this crucial role as mediator between temporal and divine the position of the priest in history and religious society, just like the Church since the time of the martyrs, was “inalienable” and it should be respected as a visible sign of God’s power and presence in the world.²⁶⁶ It is likely that Henry’s *perception* of immoral behaviour and sinfulness on the part of several unprofessional priests in the 12th century caused him to view the priesthood in its entirety, as one not worthy of apostolic succession and as a reformer, although professing radical views like discarding the priesthood completely, expressed his discontent that many priests were not doing enough to merit the important position they held within the ecclesiastical community. Additionally, Henry’s ideas have given light to another point of view, one shared by Claire Taylor and Bernard Hamilton: Henry possibly understood that a societal gap had been created between the clergy and the laity in the wake of the church reforms of the late 11th century, and he openly preached these ideas in order to have more lay participation in religious communities

²⁶³ Merlo, “Christian Experiences of Religious Non-conformism,” 439. For the contemporary source that identifies the “debate” between William the Monk and Henry of Lausanne see “William the Monk: Debate with Henry of Le Mans,” in *Heresy and Authority*, 76.

²⁶⁴ “William the Monk: Debate with Henry of Le Mans,” *Heresy and Authority*, 77.

²⁶⁵ “William the Monk: Debate with Henry of Le Mans,” *Heresy and Authority*, 77. William calls this person without sin “imaginary” because according to him, as well as by tradition Catholic spiritual standards, no one is without sin. See also Hamilton, “Religion and the Laity,” 518.

²⁶⁶ Merlo, “Christian Experiences of Religious Non-conformism,” 439.

without worrying about the restrictions of being in clerical orders, and this participation, which he surely believed, was being monopolized by clerics and restricted the opportunities that lay people had in understanding their faith in a deeper way.²⁶⁷ Henry attempted to push the Church into making religious knowledge more accessible starting with the communities and localities which he preached in. The notion of having an important and impactful relationship between laity and clergy is not a foreign concept, especially not for France during the Middle Ages. The Peace of God movement, which began at the end of the 10th century, proposed the idea of shared communal spaces between laity and clergy after decades of warfare, and accentuated the need for a safe environment where both classes could peacefully interact at various festivals, feasts, and religious activities. Perhaps Henry of Lausanne was looking to mend the relationship between laity and clergy after it had been severed due to the Church reforms, by stressing the need for more lay involvement in ecclesiastical environments? Also, with regard to heresy, both the Peace of God movement and the Church reforms were followed by the appearance of heresies which affected and destabilized the religious, political, and social climate during their respective time periods. The correlation of heresy with movements that stressed the apostolic life in the 11th and 12th centuries was not necessarily caused by the Church assuming that these movements had deviated from Christianity and its doctrinal tenets, but mostly because they had dared to preach about the Scriptures outside the authority of the clerical *ordo*. It was a question of denying the Church the authority it had worked so hard to gain, and, from the part of the ecclesiastical authorities, failing to understand why these movements appeared in the first place.²⁶⁸ Professing simplistic purity and advocating for the reclusive benefits of adopting the life lived by the Apostles was the prerogative of the ecclesiastical class, and to their understanding, only they had the authority to preach about it.

Due to both Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne preaching their heretical ideas in the Languedoc, specifically in the Toulousain, it has left many scholars wondering if their presence in that region explains the possible advent of “Catharism” from the mid-1160s onward. Malcolm Barber has discussed certain examples of clerical abuse in the Languedoc, which could be the reason why evangelical preachers like Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne were present in cities like Toulouse. Although some examples are from the early 1170s until about 1201, which is after Peter and Henry’s time, it is possible that clerical problems were present before 1170, but only showcased themselves after successive preaching missions like those of Bernard of Clairvaux in the 1140s, as well as those that Peter of St-Chrysogonus and abbot Henry de Marcy documented. In any case, Barber mentions two bishops, Fulcrand and Raymond of Rabastens, who behaved immorally for men in their position: Fulcrand lived a wealthy life from the rents he collected as a landowner, and Raymond was a vengeful simoniac cleric.²⁶⁹ It is likely that clerics who behaved in similar ways as Fulcrand and Raymond existed before the 1170s, making them targets for the evangelical preaching of Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne in the Toulousain, and its surrounding area. It was the manner in which they preached that made church officials fear the worst. However, it can be argued that while their views disrupted the religious and social order of the localities they preached in, they were not dualists, but simply radical reformers who thought that they had the answers to cure certain aspects of clerical corruption. Even if Peter and Henry had no striking dualistic tendencies, possibly other than Peter’s rejection of the Old Testament, certain doctrinal and practical elements of “Catharism” were based on the idea that

²⁶⁷ Hamilton, “Religion and the Laity,” 519; Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 130.

²⁶⁸ Merlo, “Christian Experiences of Religious Non-conformism,” 440.

²⁶⁹ Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 58.

the Catholic Church, with its corrupt and wealth-minded clergy, was not the true church of Christ.²⁷⁰ These aspects referring to the improper behaviour by clerics can be correlated to what both Peter and Henry preached about, even calling for an end to the priesthood. Of course, this was their *interpretation* of certain Biblical passages that called for proper behaviour by clergy members who were in charge of delivering important sacraments to their congregants. The “Cathars”, however, understood and interpreted Scripture in their own way, but saw fit to maintain a life of asceticism based on apostolic precedents, the same apostolic precedents that Peter and Henry preached as central to Christian life. Even their ritual sacrament, the *consolamentum*, was a variation of the imposition of the hands that was described in the New Testament, when attempting to invoke the Holy Spirit, and this ritual was performed by anyone who had been given the title of *perfectus* (for a male), *perfecta* (for a female).²⁷¹ Even the analysis of their name pertains to the type of life they were hoping to live: a “perfect” life, and the quest for perfection was a result of the apostolic movements that took place in the first half of the 12th century. The *perfecti* received this name after a strict fasting period, and after making a life-altering decision to observe reclusiveness and asceticism that followed their “consolation” ceremony, thus permitting them to administer the *consolamentum* rite to the followers (*credentes*), who chose to live their life in a similar manner. More importantly, the “Cathars” search for perfection in an environment that they perceived as “foreign” made for a rather grim view of society and worldly outlook: their primary purpose was to reunite not only their souls with their bodies, but also the souls of their followers, in an attempt to avoid perpetual *metempsychosis*.²⁷² The “consoled” or “perfected Cathars” possessed monastic tendencies, showcased by their renunciation of wealth, strict moral comportment, poverty, asceticism, as well as their propensity for being as far removed from worldly affairs as possible, bearing close resemblances to the monks of the Carthusian order.²⁷³ However, for medieval contemporaries who claimed that they debated and witnessed these heretics in the flesh, their presence in religious society posed a problem for hierarchical Church: how were they able to differentiate “Cathar” from Catholic? If “Cathars” possessed similar apostolic virtues, dressed the same as Catholic monks, even followed similar dietary restrictions, with what criteria would contemporaries differentiate one from being heretical and the other “orthodox”? The Second Lateran Council in 1139 convened to discuss this very issue: it reiterated a canon that was put forward at the council of Toulouse (1119) regarding this matter, by denouncing and condemning “...those who, simulating a sort of religiosity, refuse the sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord...”²⁷⁴ This clear and explicit warning was delivered to Christians to be wary of those who possessed false piety, and it is likely that Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne were the targets of this anathema because of their hatred of the priesthood and their refutation of important Christian rites like the Eucharist. The Church’s perspective must also be understood in light of these condemnations from Lateran II: the semblance of piety that certain evangelical preachers

²⁷⁰ Kienzle, “Religious poverty and the search for perfection,” 49.

²⁷¹ Kienzle, “Religious poverty and the search for perfection,” 48

²⁷² Hamilton, “The Cathars and Christian Perfection,” in *The Medieval Church Universities, Heresy, and the Religious Life: Essays in Honour of Gordon Leff*, eds. Peter Biller and Barrie Dobson (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999), 10, 14, 23.

²⁷³ Hamilton, “The Cathars and Christian Perfection,” 15; Hamilton, “Religion and the Laity,” 529, 530. Lying and killing, aspects which have been mentioned in Part 2, in the “Beliefs and Practices” section of this paper, were all strictly forbidden by “Cathars”.

²⁷⁴ Merlo, “Christian Experiences of Religious Non-conformism,” 440; see also Jimenez-Sanchez, *Les Catharismes*, 263.

possessed, whether they had clerical training or not, placed them in a category of threat to the “salvific order”, becoming both a political and religious problem, as Grado Merlo has put it.²⁷⁵ It was the Church’s *perception* that Peter, Henry, and by heretical extension, the “Cathars”, insulted the Church and its institutions by expressing the notion that the priesthood was not needed for sacramental rituals. In addition, it is not known if any *perfecti* possessed any clerical training, except for what is described in the letter to Bernard of Clairvaux by Eberwin of Steinfeld in 1143/44 which stated, that many monks and clergymen were heretics from this sect, present in history since the “time of the martyrs”.²⁷⁶ Therefore, if uncertainties about the clerical training of the heretics haunted the minds of medieval churchmen, they perceived their heretical doctrine to be professed and administered by the *perfecti*, who were, in essence, lay people and outside the clerical *ordo*.²⁷⁷ Due to this *perception*, medieval intellectuals labelled “Catharism” as a counter-church that contained semblances to the structure and organization of the Catholic church, but was far from it.²⁷⁸ As such, staying true to their difficult spiritual endeavours, “Cathars” adopted the label of “good Christians” by supposedly displaying humility and kindness when interacting with others, and, constantly ensuring that they sinned as less as possible in their every-day tasks, it gave them a sense of awareness of their human frailty and continuously called on God for blessing and grace.²⁷⁹ A reiteration must be mentioned on what has already been discussed, mainly, that the “Cathars” believed in a “Good God” who created the spiritual “Land of the Living”, while the world their souls were trapped in was created and inhabited by the “Evil God”, responsible for all its material corruptions. Hamilton claims that “Cathars” truly felt alone, which is why their spiritual journey towards perfection felt more arduous than that of their Catholic counterparts: they were subjected to the world and all its evils, at the mercy of the “Evil God” who made their task of salvation harder with each passing day.²⁸⁰ The process toward salvation was made even harder when the “Cathars” were persecuted during the crusading years, followed by intense inquisitorial tribunals especially during the 1230s and 1240s. During these years, when people saw friends and family members killed from battle, or tried and sent for execution by inquisitors, perseverance for many would have been a difficult virtue to possess, and for others, a quick death after consolation would have been welcomed.²⁸¹ Therefore, throughout the life of a “Cathar”, the quest towards perfection encompassed a variation of different objectives, predominantly spiritual but temporal as well (although minimal). The adoption of strict ascetic practices which saw them curb lustful actions in areas like food, sex, and violent conduct was an attempt to defy the odds that weighed against their salvation, and the fear of a momentary lapse of judgement or concentration might resort to their souls enduring another round of transmigration upon their death.²⁸²

²⁷⁵ Merlo, “Christian Experiences of Religious Non-conformism,” 440.

²⁷⁶ “Everinus of Steinfeld,” *Heresy and Authority*, 94; Roach, *The Devil’s World*, 67.

²⁷⁷ Katherine Jansen, “The Word and its diffusion,” in *The New Cambridge History of Christianity: Christianity in Western Europe c. 1100-c. 1500*, eds Miri Rubin and Walter Simons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 117.

²⁷⁸ Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 46.

²⁷⁹ Hamilton, “The Cathars and Christian Perfection,” 16.

²⁸⁰ Hamilton, “The Cathars and Christian Perfection,” 21.

²⁸¹ Hamilton, “The Cathars and Christian Perfection,” 22.

²⁸² Hamilton, “The Cathars and Christian Perfection,” 23.

3.2 – A Persecuting and Repressive society? Religious Correction via Preaching and *Inquisitores haereticæ pravitatis*

a – Preaching as a mode of Religious Correction

The appearance of evangelical preaching in the early 12th century which was very quickly labelled heretical by Christian intellectuals who either read about, or supposedly debated with the proponents of these views, caused a problem for the Church hierarchy. If heresy was deemed to have been spreading quickly, and lay people in these localities were being taught false beliefs, preaching the correct faith was one way to stop the spread. The rise of literacy and the unsanctioned vernacular translations of the New Testament aided in the supposed spread of heresy; adherents of certain anti-clerical movements that targeted the actions of the ecclesiastical class carried with them certain Scriptural passages, mainly from St-Paul's epistles, that described the ideal comportment that bishops and priests needed to possess while in office. In 1 Timothy 3: 2-5, Paul claims that the "noble task" of becoming a bishop, requires a person to be "...temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money".²⁸³ Additionally, a bishop must "...manage his household very well...for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he manage God's church?".²⁸⁴ As is evident, the qualifications for becoming a bishop did not change all that much from Paul's time to the 12th century, and the appearance of heresies concerned themselves with the actions and comportment of people in clerical office. The Church forbade lay preaching in the 12th century, because of the lack of training that many individuals possessed in Biblical understanding, making them inadequate vessels of knowledge in areas that required highly sophisticated theological training.²⁸⁵ Possessing a clerical education allowed future Christian intellectuals to gather important skills from studying the liberal arts (*trivium* and *quadrivium*), aiding them in the fight against heresy, in case they had to debate with a stubborn heretic about Scriptural authority. Mary Dove has accentuated the argument that even supposed heretics understood Scripture well, probably due to a rise in literacy, and this ensued long debates with Catholics about doctrine, usually an attempt by both parties to stake their claim for religious supremacy.²⁸⁶ If the Church was not able to supplant heretical teaching with the use of reason and logic, then a more tranquil and pastoral initiative needed to be established. Between 1145 and 1208, the Church considered heresy as the main threat to the stability and order of Christendom and sanctioned many preaching campaigns to counter what was being taught by supposed "heresiarchs". Some areas, like the Languedoc, did not necessarily follow the heretical preaching of one individual, but many, and these elite officials were often labelled as *perfecti* by their opponents, who created open and more inclusive religious communities, offering active participation to some women in their religious institutions, which was strictly forbidden in the Catholic church.²⁸⁷ Therefore, this movement may have intrigued certain lay people in more remote areas, who either did not have access to the knowledge professed by Catholicism on a regular basis, or were just simply looking for a more active role in a religious community. Preaching was usually done in the vernacular language of the area that was being visited, to ensure maximum retention and comprehension. As such, the Church's main prerogative for the

²⁸³ *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1245.

²⁸⁴ *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1245.

²⁸⁵ Jansen, "The Word and its diffusion," 117.

²⁸⁶ Dove, "Scripture and reform," 583.

²⁸⁷ Jansen, "The Word and its diffusion," 114; Roach, *The Devil's World*, 84.

majority of the second half of the 12th century, was to eradicate heresy and the people who continued to openly defy the Church's directives of salvation through their institutions. Preaching aided in the Church's struggle against heresy because it allowed Catholic preachers to deliver vivid public sermons that were loaded with Scriptural passages and metaphors, important messages that were emphasized with Biblical examples, as well as allegorical imagery that was both instructive and impressive to people who did not hear them often.²⁸⁸ Briefly, certain performative elements and the way in which words were used was immensely important. Preaching also attempted to demonstrate to the laity the true nature of Scriptural authority in case many doubted certain spiritual aspects of the faith which might have been targeted by anti-clerical preachers. Although it has been stressed before, the rise in literacy must not be taken for granted. Early medieval preaching and sermons had been the prerogative of learned bishops who were educated and well versed in Scripture; in the 12th century this would change with the rise of evangelical preaching, some of its proponents now learned in Scripture, preached views of radical reform to the established religion in the various localities that would hear them speak.²⁸⁹ Because the Church *perceived* the ideas of these itinerant preachers as false, it had an obligation to right these wrongs with the instillment of right belief and moral practice by diffusing the "Good news" with the aid of its orthodox preachers.²⁹⁰

Bernard of Clairvaux was a master in the use of allegorical imagery in his sermons, both oral and written. These are showcased by the extensive anti-heretical literature that is attributed to him in the 1140s, as well as his well-documented preaching campaigns in the Languedoc, recorded by Geoffrey of Chartres. Bernard along with the Cistercian order were at the forefront of the preaching campaigns in the first half of the 12th century, which went against the monastic values that promoted seclusion, austerity, and withdrawal from the evils of the world. Bernard's actions demonstrated that the exact opposite was needed in order to rid Christian society of heresy; Kienzle's description, taken from Bernard's own letters, designated him as "neither cleric nor layman", and as someone who was genuinely concerned with the state of Christendom during his time.²⁹¹ The incorporation of the abbeys of Frontfroide in 1143, and Grandselve in 1145 gave the Cistercians a base in the Languedoc, a region where the reforms of the Church did not have a profound impact, as well as an area which had seen a lot of anti-clerical preaching with the likes of Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne.²⁹² Kienzle has examined the possible reasons behind the 11th century Church reforms not flourishing in the south; the intellectual milieu of the Languedoc chose focus on disciplines like law, medicine, and science rather than the liberal arts that comprised the *quadrivium* and *trivium*, which were prevalent in the cathedral and monastic schools of northern Europe.²⁹³ The knowledge garnered from the educational centers in the north, and the focus on rhetoric, logic, and grammar, gave many of its students the intellectual skills they required to debate and refute heretical ideas if ever they were confronted by them.²⁹⁴ Bernard possessed these skills, and he used his persuasive intellectual capabilities to preach in the Languedoc, in hopes that it would turn the locals away from the supposed heresy which they

²⁸⁸ Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 86, 87; Mark Gregory Pegg, *A Most Holy War: The Albigensian Crusade and the Battle for Christendom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 41.

²⁸⁹ Jansen, "The Word and its diffusion," 115.

²⁹⁰ Jansen, "The Word and its diffusion," 114.

²⁹¹ Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 29, 30; Jansen, "The Word and its diffusion," 119.

²⁹² Biget, "'Les Albigeois'," 230; Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 35, 36, 40.

²⁹³ Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 35, 36

²⁹⁴ Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 25, 26.

believed in. One of Bernard's most famous written sermons on the *Song of Songs*, was a response to the letter he received by Eberwin of Steinfeld who witnessed "heretics" in Cologne, but it might have also been aimed at Henry of Lausanne who was causing confusion and unrest with his supposed heretical preaching in the Toulousain. Kienzle has rightfully placed written medieval sermons in the category of anti-heretical literature, and Bernard's *Sermon on the Song of Songs* was most likely influenced by Peter the Venerable's *Contra Petrobrusianos*, using similar refutational language.²⁹⁵ Of course, the written sermon would most likely only have circulated within intellectual circles rather than to a wider lay audience in this period – this would change in the 13th century – but, learned individuals might adopt certain aspects of written sermons and apply them to public sermons, especially if the content of the written sermons was correlated with the message that was trying to be passed. Therefore, in broader terms, Kienzle claims that a large array of anti-heretical literature during this period can be divided into four categories, all of which are vital for the intellectual battle against heresy. Each category is identified below:

First, heretical adherents were demonized as being spawns of Satan, instilling a certain amount of fear in people who happen to hear about them or interact with them, in any capacity.²⁹⁶ In Sermon 65 on the *Song of Songs*, Bernard of Clairvaux, described heretical professors as "seducing spirits", who were "skilled and experienced in presenting evil under the guise of good".²⁹⁷ Similarly, in the letter composed prior to his trip to the Languedoc in 1145, attempting to understand Henry's views, Bernard calls Henry's denial of infant baptism a "...devilish jealousy", because children are innocent and need to get as close to God in their life as early as possible.²⁹⁸ In the second paragraph (or chapter), Bernard continues to demonize Henry by comparing his preaching techniques to "...diabolical art" upon which he managed to persuade "...stupid and foolish people to ignore the obvious facts in front of them, and believe that the prophets were deceived and the apostles were in error".²⁹⁹ This can be slightly contradictory, because while trying to maintain apostolic elements in his views, he risks claiming that the apostles did not support the idea of infant baptism, which is not necessarily false, but it remains a debate among Biblical scholars as to when the first examples of infant baptisms are attested.³⁰⁰

Second, heretics were polluted by their depravity, and could contaminate others by encountering them, or by hearing them preach.³⁰¹ Henry of Lausanne's condemnation at the Council of Pisa in 1135 was a culminating event in the Church's fight against heresy during the 1110s, 20s, and 30s. Henry was deemed to have "...spread the germ of his heresy in remote places, and to corrupt the Church of God with the stain of his wickedness".³⁰² An animated and knowledgeable preacher would have possibly helped to counter the falsities that were spread by erroneous belief, and, exhibited in Bernard's positive preaching in the city of Toulouse, many people supposedly managed to drive out the *Ariani* (Arians, most likely an allusion to the legacy of past heretics) from the city, their supporters renouncing them, freeing the city from the "...infection of heresy".³⁰³ Although Bernard's purpose for travelling to the Languedoc was to

²⁹⁵ Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion*, 126, 127.

²⁹⁶ Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 11.

²⁹⁷ "St. Bernard: Sermon 65 on *The Song of Songs*, 1144," in *Heresy and Authority*, 95.

²⁹⁸ "Henry: St. Bernard prepares his mission," *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 39.

²⁹⁹ "Henry: St. Bernard prepares his mission," *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 40.

³⁰⁰ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 528.

³⁰¹ Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 12.

³⁰² "Henry: The Council of Pisa, 1135," *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 39.

³⁰³ "Henry: St. Bernard's Mission, 1145," *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 43.

attempt at “freeing” the area completely from heresy, he would ultimately fail in this regard, because of *castra* like Verfeil, where he found obstinate locals not willing to hear him preach. In fact, the story at Verfeil is a prime example many scholars use to prove heresy was a *lived reality*, pointing to possible early indications of “Cathars” present in the *castrum*, who chose to bang the doors of their houses loudly to drown out Bernard’s public sermon.³⁰⁴

Many years after Bernard of Clairvaux’s preaching campaign in the 1140s, two more Cistercians clerics attempted once again to rid the Languedoc of heresy by preaching. Peter St. Chrysogonus, a papal legate and Henry de Marcy, abbot of Clairvaux, took to the south in the late 1170s, armed with evidence which they deemed conclusive of the presence of heresy.³⁰⁵ More importantly, recorded in their experiences is the same type of language used by Bernard of Clairvaux, one of heretics being contaminated and polluted by their perversion. Beginning with the chronicle of Peter St. Chrysogonus, the legate mentions the “...false brethren” Raymond de Baimac and Bernard Raymond, who willingly preached against the Christian faith with their “...poisonous teaching”, ultimately dragging many souls who believed in these views to “ruin”.³⁰⁶ Similarly, the account of abbot Henry de Marcy describes the city of Toulouse as the “...mother of all heresy”, even going so far as to calling it “...so diseased that from the soles of its feet to the top of its head...there was not a healthy piece in it”.³⁰⁷ Abbot Henry perceived that Toulouse was completely infected with heresy due to the people not understanding a brief sermon that he supposedly conducted in the city, but when the “heretics” – chief among these “heretics” was revealed to be a man named Pierre Maurand – spoke, twisting and ignoring the “...truth of the Gospels” everyone “applauded”.³⁰⁸

Third, allowing the spread of heresies to continue would prove detrimental to the stability of society. It was the place of the church in medieval society to make sure that religious order was kept, and heretical practice defies this divinely ordained order, enhanced by centuries of tradition.³⁰⁹ In Bernard’s sermon, he attacked the heretics who hide falsities “in secret” and concert “together their nefarious discourses”.³¹⁰ Bernard here was addressing the secretive aspects concerning this heretical doctrine, as he deemed it a necessity to reveal doctrine that glorified God.³¹¹ It is these secretive aspects that destroy the order and stability of Christendom, and Bernard claims that historically, proponents of the true faith did not “keep their gospel secret” and suffered martyrdom for upholding their beliefs.³¹² One of the key aspects of preaching and an element that made it an extremely valuable for the diffusion of the Word of God was its use of Biblical examples. The Song of Solomon alluded to “the little foxes, that ruin the vineyards” Knowledge of this interesting passage in Bernard’s sermon demonstrates his Scriptural breadth: the “Lord’s vine...planted by the hand of the Lord, redeemed by his blood,

³⁰⁴ “Henry: St. Bernard’s Mission,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 43; Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 98.

³⁰⁵ Count Raymond V of Toulouse wrote to the Cistercian general chapter in 1177 asking for aid against heretics in his realm. This topic will be analyzed more later on.

³⁰⁶ “Legation in the Languedoc: Peter of St. Chrysogonus,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 113.

³⁰⁷ “Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 117.

³⁰⁸ “Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 118.

³⁰⁹ Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 12; Jansen, “The Word and its diffusion,” 117.

³¹⁰ “St. Bernard: Sermon 65 on *The Song of Songs*, 1144,” *Heresy and Authority*, 96; see also Mary Dove, “Scripture and reform,” 582.

³¹¹ “St. Bernard: Sermon 65 on *The Song of Songs*, 1144,” *Heresy and Authority*, 97. Here, Bernard uses a passage from Matthew 10:27 to enhance his message: “Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.”

³¹² “St. Bernard: Sermon 65 on *The Song of Songs*, 1144,” *Heresy and Authority*, 97.

watered by his word, propagated by his grace, and rendered fruitful by his spirit” was in the gravest of danger by the “multitude of its assailants”.³¹³ Here, the “Lord’s vine” is an allegorical interpretation of Christendom, a favourite example among anti-heretical preachers in the 12th century, and its integrity is being harmed by these “foxes” who attacked the vine in secret.³¹⁴ The “multitude of its assailants” is surely referring to those who preach and follow heretical beliefs, using the guise of orthodoxy to spread false teachings. Mark Pegg has given important insight in his examination of the “foxes in the vine” allegory, and what was perceived by medieval churchmen of possible heretical continuity when referring to that example: “the vine” was Christianity, “perfect and unchanging” against the attacks of the foxes which were “tiresome, repetitive, and unoriginal” constantly “recycling ancient ideas”.³¹⁵ Henry of Lausanne was perceived as a fox who attacked the vine by recycling the ideas of his predecessor, Peter of Bruys. The pronouncements of the Second Lateran council warned of those who “simulated” a sort of religiosity, and similarly, abbot Henry de Marcy has done the same in his chronicle. The orthodox preachers he denotes as “labourers” who work to assemble a great “harvest” in the field, but the work cannot be done with success because of the lack of aid (“...the labourers are few”) and, as a result, it left the “...despoilers” of the field who portrayed “...themselves deceitfully in the guise of labourers” and who forestalled the “...harvest with their own destruction”.³¹⁶ This sentence alone is filled with many allegorical elements, and it would be important to briefly deconstruct it. The “field” and the “harvest” can possibly be in reference to Christianity and orthodox belief respectively, and the spiritual benefits that one received from following orthodox belief (salvation – usually by participating in the sacraments), was being destroyed by the false “labourers”, an allusion to “heretics” who countered the preaching of the true “labourers”, the orthodox clergy. Abbot Henry’s perception was that Toulouse had slowly slipped into decay and destruction because of the secretive preaching against the Church. Preaching true belief was the traditional way of evangelizing people who would hear the Word of God, and it has been the task of preachers since the time of Christ’s early apostles. In many cases, Christian tradition was “long-lived”, and it can sometimes triumph over novelty (a “new-fangled” heresy), no matter how appealing the novelty can be.³¹⁷ The Church withstood adversity before, and with the help of able-minded individuals, it believed that it could vanquish any issue that came its way. This is showcased by the preaching that was presided by one of abbot Henry’s clerics in the city of Toulouse when they attempted to find prominent supporters of heresy. Public preaching of right belief trumped the secretive ways of the “heretics” and the use of Biblical imagery, again, helped to accentuate the message being passed: Toulouse was likened to “Zion”, and, when “...orthodoxy had been preached” to the “...crowds of infidels” the “foxes...buried themselves in holes in the ground...so that they could destroy from below the roots of the holy plants which they no longer dared to attack in the open”.³¹⁸ Prior to the Albigensian crusade being called and warfare decimating the preaching of heretical ideas, although there are many literary examples that mention “secrecy” and “deception” in medieval polemics, much of the interaction between heretic and heretic, or even heretic and non-heretic was public. However, preaching, or even,

³¹³ *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 684. Passage taken from the Song of Solomon 2: 15; “St. Bernard: Sermon 65 on *The Song of Songs*, 1144,” *Heresy and Authority*, 95.

³¹⁴ “St. Bernard: Sermon 65 on *The Song of Songs*, 1144,” *Heresy and Authority*, 95.

³¹⁵ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 24.

³¹⁶ “Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 117.

³¹⁷ Peter Biller, “Christians and heretics,” in *The New Cambridge History of Christianity: Christianity in Western Europe c. 1100-c. 1500*, eds Miri Rubin and Walter Simons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 185.

³¹⁸ “Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 118.

instances where heretics would meet to discuss aspects of their beliefs and practices, was done in private houses of prominent individuals.³¹⁹ Inquisitorial depositions from the 1230s and 1240s aid in this regard, but these are the contradictions the historian must be aware of when analyzing contemporary medieval literature. Medieval polemicists sometimes lacked coherence in their writing, and in this regard, abbot Henry manipulated the dichotomy of open and concealed preaching to suit his rhetorical needs.³²⁰ Was the “preaching” of the heretics public or in secret? A definitive answer, at this time, cannot be given.

Finally, the instability in the church accentuated the possibility of imminent doom, and elements of apocalypticism are evident in anti-heretical literature.³²¹ The coming of the end times and Judgement Day have always been rhetorical tools used by medieval churchmen to describe the disheartening events happening in their world. With the advent of potential heretical teachings spreading like wildfire, it is understandable that such rhetoric was being produced to entice the believer to not fall victim to these falsities. Paul had warned his pupil Timothy that the end times would be imminent when people concerned themselves about barring certain foods from their diet, rather than continuing to observe aspects of right belief. The epistle 1 Timothy 4:1-3 explicitly describes that “...in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons...forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving...”.³²² The German canon Eberwin of Steinfeld denoted these exact elements when he warned Bernard of Clairvaux in his letter from 1143/44. “They”, alluding to the “heretics” which he confronted in Cologne prior to writing his letter, “...forbid every kind of milk and what is made therefrom and whatever is born of coition”.³²³ Paul’s letter to Timothy not only warns about the food aspect, but also about people who will act as beacons of truth, but are in fact the exact opposite; through their evil, they appear as “...deceitful spirits”, adhering to the “...teachings of demons”.³²⁴ It is safe to assume that Paul’s warning can pertain to the people which scholars labelled as “heresiarchs”, or even the *perfecti* of “Catharism”, who attempt to deceive Christian people with their false doctrines, driving them away from the Church and from salvation.

Both major preaching campaigns in 1145 and in 1178 did not manage to rid, or even suppress heresy from supposedly spreading in the Languedoc. The Cistercians never managed to convince their perceived heretical audiences that adherence to Orthodoxy was the only way to attain spiritual fulfilment, and the Church’s approach needed to change if it wanted to succeed in the south. In the early 13th century, Cistercian preachers like Pierre de Castelnau, and abbot Arnaud Amaury had still not made any grounds in the Languedoc, until they met Diego, bishop of Osma, who told them to change their ways by appearing humbler and more pious, so that the locals might actually believe the message they were trying to convey.³²⁵ The failures of the Cistercian preachers stems from the continuous beliefs on the part of the “heretics” that the entire clerical class of the Church was corrupt, and did not live what they preached. Diego of Osma’s approach was influenced by the Apostles, who travelled to their destinations while barefoot, showing

³¹⁹ Biller, “Christians and heretics,” 181.

³²⁰ Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 128.

³²¹ Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 12.

³²² *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1246.

³²³ *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1246; “An Appeal from Eberwin of Steinfeld Against Heretics at Cologne,” *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 129.

³²⁴ *Holy Bible, NRSV*, 1246.

³²⁵ *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 17.

ample signs of humility, simplicity, and piety.³²⁶ By the early 13th century, the beliefs and practices of the “heretics” in the Languedoc were probably known to medieval churchmen due to Eckbert of Schönau’s *Liber contra hereses Katarorum* as well as Alan of Lille’s *De fide Catholica*. Therefore, in order for the preaching missions of the early 1200s to be successful, outlining the errors of the “heretics” would have been a useful tool if ever doctrinal debates among both parties ensued. As such, Mary Dove has indicated that this sort of literary evidence existed, in the form of a small pamphlet style source, which contained Biblical passages that “heretics” used to formulate their doctrine, other Biblical passages and maybe even Patristic writings that were used to counter their beliefs, as well as possible information given to identify “heretics” by the way they dressed.³²⁷ Diego of Osma, along with Dominic Guzman, a Castilian sub-prior and the future founder of the Dominican Order of the Preachers, set out to emulate their apostolic predecessors by displaying examples of poverty, piety, and austerity, in an attempt to win-over some heretics to the Catholic cause.³²⁸ Diego and Dominic, accompanied by a “brother Ralph” and Guy Vaux-de-Cernay (Peter’s uncle), held public debates and sermons in places like Servian, Montréal, Pamiers, Verfeil, and Béziers between 1206 and 1207, areas which were perceived as having large heretical populations.³²⁹ Their success rate was quite low in many of these areas, but at Pamiers in 1207, they managed to convince a Waldensian member, Durand of Huesca, to return to the Catholic faith after he heard their debate between a group of Waldenses.³³⁰ While Durand was not a “Cathar”, he lived in Pamiers, which, during this time was part of the dominion of the Count of Foix and a place that was “known” to have “Cathar” sympathizers.³³¹

Between 1206 and 1208, Pierre de Castelnau was attempting to coerce Count Raymond VI of Toulouse to divulge information about potential “Cathar” centers, as well as which members of his nobility might be “Cathar” supporters.³³² In 1207, Pierre excommunicated Raymond VI for his suspected complicity in supporting heretics, but also, for his use of mercenaries in armed conflicts.³³³ This led to Pierre’s murder by one of Count Raymond’s men, causing Pope Innocent III to stop the preaching missions in the Languedoc, and to respond with a call to arms; in March 1208, the crusade against the Count and all who supported heresy was formalized, but fighting did not begin until the summer of 1209, ending officially in 1229.³³⁴ Details of the fighting will not be given much prominence here, but in another section. What must be outlined here, is that the crusade would ultimately fail in what it was set out to do. Conflicts did not erase heresy, it merely drove it underground. Supposed “heretics” were burned in certain sieges, but it did not destroy the movement of “Catharism” as a whole. A more intellectual and inquisitive system needed to be put in place, requiring thorough investigative processes on grander scale, covering a

³²⁶ *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 17; Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 242.

³²⁷ Biller, “Christians and heretics,” 170; Dove, “Scripture and reform,” 582.

³²⁸ *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 17; Jimenez-Sanchez, “Les Catharismes,” 280.

³²⁹ Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 242; Jimenez-Sanchez, “Les Catharismes,” 280.

³³⁰ *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 27.

³³¹ *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 27. Knowledge of the complicity in adhering to “Catharism” by many prominent residents of Foix comes from inquisitorial records, mainly the deposition of Count Raymond-Rogers’ wife, Philippa. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay even mentions that Count Raymond-Roger was himself present during the debate at Pamiers in 1207.

³³² *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 19 n.22.

³³³ *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 21; *The Song of the Cathar Wars: A History of the Albigensian Crusades*, trans. Janet Shirley (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 13.

³³⁴ *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 31.

wide array of localities in the Languedoc. The inquisitorial procedure had its flaws, but in the long run it would prove to be successful in eradicating heresy.

b – Inquisition as a mode of Religious Correction: “Catharism” as a *lived reality*?

Following the end of the Albigensian Crusade, and the peace treaty that was signed in 1229 between the crusading army and Raymond VII, a council was convened in the same year in Toulouse. The tactic of preaching in heretical areas, as well as providing a good example of orthodox humility and piety to heretics, whereupon they might see that their differences were not so great, was a failure. Stricter measures needed to be put in place in order for heretics to be found and punished accordingly. As such, the first clause of the Council of Toulouse ensured that the laity and ecclesiastical class cooperate in order to thoroughly search for heretics, “...inspecting every single house and underground room that gives rise to some suspicion...”.³³⁵ This was not always an easy thing to do, and to find “two or three lay people of good repute...in every single parish...” took people away from their daily activities in order to search for heretics.³³⁶ This process followed the nature of denoting a heretic by means of an *accusatio*, and it delivered information about a person who might not have been liked by another member of the parish, leading them to believe that this person might have been a heretic but without proper proof.³³⁷ Many times, accusations were based on falsities, which would have repercussions for the person, and sometimes an entire community, upon making such claims.³³⁸ Thus, as the Church was determined to eradicate heresy, it penetrated into the private lives of individuals, destroying homes and possible livelihoods.³³⁹ While these extreme measures were implemented in the hope of successfully finding heretics, they generally lacked evidence, and the prosperity of a community, built on the relationships cultivated by its members through many different ways, suffered immensely. Therefore, the process of *accusatio* quickly changed to *inquisitio*, and in the early 1230s, Pope Gregory IX appointed “inquisitors into heretical depravity”, first to Germany, and then to the Languedoc, which proceeded to establish a more organized and thorough investigation of heresy.³⁴⁰ Specifically in the Languedoc, the Church commissioned the newly founded Dominican order to “inquire” about people in communities that were historically known to contain heretics.³⁴¹ Inquisitions were based on the gathering of information of a particular person who might have been predisposed to heretical behaviour, either by being himself a heretic, or by interacting with “heretics” in their daily lives. Usually, people of interest were targeted because of their *fama* (reputation), but their accusers were never revealed to them, as was the case with the *accusatio*, making cases more discreet in nature, and allowing inquisitors more time to gather more information that might be useful.³⁴² Gathering substantial amounts of information

³³⁵ “The Council of Toulouse, 1229,” in *Heresy and Inquisition in France, 1200-1300*, 191.

³³⁶ “The Council of Toulouse, 1229,” *Heresy and Inquisition in France, 1200-1300*, 191.

³³⁷ Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition* (Plymouth: Rowan & Littlefield, 2011), 99.

³³⁸ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 99.

³³⁹ “The Council of Toulouse,” *Heresy and Inquisition in France, 1200-1300*, 192. Clause 6, or Line 6, deemed it necessary to raze the house of a person who was either suspected of heresy, or found hiding a heretic.

³⁴⁰ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 99; Roach, *The Devil’s World*, 135; John Arnold, “Repression and power,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Christianity in Western Europe c. 1100- c. 1500*, eds. Miri Rubin and Walter Simons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 360.

³⁴¹ Roach, *The Devil’s World*, 136.

³⁴² Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 100, 101.

from many different sources, and having to cross-check depositions, attempting to determine myth from reality was a meticulous task, even for the most literate and intelligent minds of the time. Inquisitors would eventually adapt and change the way they retained information, especially famous ones like Bernard Gui in the 14th century, and inquisitorial manuals became a mainstay of the office by that time.³⁴³ Localities where supposed heretics gathered, their network of relations, their possible profession, whether they were convicted “heretics” and abjured etc., were some of the aspects that later inquisitorial manuals contained. These manuals made the job of future inquisitors easier to dispense judgement. This the technical side of the inquisitor’s position, and while the gathering of information in an erudite manner might end up being either fruitful or fruitless, the work was too large and grandiose to attempt without the aid of the secular authorities.

During the Albigensian crusade, the years of 1217-18 to 1222 is when the armies of the southern principalities managed to gain momentum, and at one point, the possibility of regaining lost territory became a reality. After 1222, the French royal government became increasingly involved in the conflict, aiding the crusader army with fresh supplies and reinforcements which made the conflict unwinnable from a southerner perspective. Both sets of armies, the royal and the crusading, managed to work together to gain the upper hand on the southern armies, ultimately defeating them in the process. In short, cooperation was a much valued commodity during occasions that called for it. In fact, cooperation was the determining factor in the relationship between the secular authorities and ecclesiastical ones when it came time to punishing “heretics”.³⁴⁴ Arnold has expressed that, although inquisitorial tribunals might think that a proper verdict has been proposed to a deponent, without the help of the secular arm of the government, their punishment was insufficient and could not be finalized.³⁴⁵ Because the Church was unable to spill blood and take a life, the aid of the secular authorities, if it was forthcoming, was crucial. It must also be understood that the years of 1179 to 1199 were definitive in the legal developments that helped classify heresy as not only a crime against God but against the state as well, subject to all kinds of fiscal and proprietary punishments, as well as capital punishment for rare occasions.³⁴⁶ Beginning with the Third Lateran council in 1179, Canon 27 demanded that the secular authorities aid the Church in pursuing “heretics” and bringing them to justice.³⁴⁷ This mentality was followed by papal bulls like *Ad abolendam* (1184) and *Vergentis in senium* (1199), which helped accentuate the fear of disorder that adherence to heresy might cause, cementing “heretics” as treasonous beings, guilty of lèse-majesté.³⁴⁸ Julien Théry has denoted that “heretics” were sometimes likened to vagabonds, people who wandered aimlessly, not tied to any religion, social institution, or locality.³⁴⁹ These people were considered immensely dangerous to society because they had nothing to lose. They were unrooted, and could sway populations with their evil views and beliefs. Examples of this have already been discussed: Peter of Bruys and Henry of

³⁴³ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 107.

³⁴⁴ Arnold, “Repression and power,” 360, 363.

³⁴⁵ Arnold, “Repression and power,” 363.

³⁴⁶ Arnold, “Repression and power,” 358; Roach, *The Devil’s World*, 138. The legal developments that were ratified at the Third Lateran Council in 1179 will form the basis of an important section in the fourth part of this paper.

³⁴⁷ Arnold, “Repression and power,” 359-360.

³⁴⁸ Arnold, “Repression and power,” 360; Roach, *The Devil’s World*, 138.

³⁴⁹ Julien Théry, “L’hérésie des bons hommes: Comment nommer la dissidence religieuse non vaudoise ni béguine en Languedoc? (XIIIe-début du XIVE siècle),” in *Heresis* 36-37 (2002), 108.

Lausanne. This was surely the Church's thinking when they attempted to suppress heresy with the development of stringent laws.

Convicting "heretics" was a process that would be finalized after a long investigation. The arbitrary judgements that were handed out by zealots like Conrad of Marburg would be replaced with more tempered actions, and ones that reflected the pastoral nature of the Church: light penances were given to those who confessed within the given grace period that followed a general sermon, an event most likely filled with animated, allegorical preaching and Biblical imagery about the importance of adhering to the right faith.³⁵⁰ These light penances included forced pilgrimages, paying fines, performing charitable acts for the less fortunate, labelling (in the form of bright yellow crosses), and in slightly more serious cases, imprisonment was conferred.³⁵¹ For example, the deposition of Guilhem de Saint-Nazare in 1245 from *MS 609*, examines an individual who supposedly knew many heretics and interacted with them on many different occasions throughout his life.³⁵² His deposition spans a time-frame of about 40 years in the town of Montréal, and throughout this time he apparently "adored" the heretics (1205), he heard heretics preach (1228), and harboured a convicted heretic for about 3 months (1242).³⁵³ Under the canons established at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 and even at the council of Tarragona in 1242, Guilhem would have been convicted for supporting heresy due to his actions in 1228 and 1242.³⁵⁴ Similarly, the deposition of man named Garnier senior from 1245 in Castelnaudary denotes that the witness bought and sold items to heretics in the open (1205), as well as supposedly hearing some heretics preach (1235) and followed by an instance where he and many others "adored" the heretics (1237).³⁵⁵ Garnier senior, just like Guilhem, would have been subjected to punishment, unless his confession was given to the tribunal within the grace period.

The most serious form of punishment was execution, but this was only reserved for heretics who had previously promised to abjure their heretical ways, only to return to their error.³⁵⁶ Robert Grosseteste's words of heresy being "pertinaciously defended" is evident in cases where executions were handed out, even if they were an extremely rare sight throughout a period of intense investigation.³⁵⁷ Sending someone to their death was so rare, that during the period of 1245-46, where Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre interrogated around 5000 people in the Lauragais, none were sent to the flames.³⁵⁸ Executions were usually public spectacles, designed to show onlookers what happened when they obstinately defended their errant ways.³⁵⁹ Executing a heretic publicly contributed to the psychological aspects of committing a crime as foul as heresy. However, it also meant that the Church had failed in its pastoral mission: preaching the Word of God to areas where heresy was present had not worked, and lighter punishments for

³⁵⁰ Arnold, "Repression and power," 362; Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 108-109; Roach, *The Devil's World*, 139.

³⁵¹ Arnold, "Repression and power," 366, 367; Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 113; Roach, *The Devil's World*, 140-144

³⁵² *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-26: MS 609-0465, 32r-32v.*

³⁵³ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-26: MS 609-0465, 32r-32v.*

³⁵⁴ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 109.

³⁵⁵ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-26: MS 609-0182, 13v-14r.*

³⁵⁶ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 114.

³⁵⁷ Roach, *The Devil's World*, 138.

³⁵⁸ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 115.

³⁵⁹ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 114-115.

convicted “heretics” during inquisitorial tribunals did not stop some of them from continuing in their ways. It was a message, albeit a very gruesome one: death was an example of what not to do, and although the Church was clement for most cases, it needed to show that it was not to be made a mockery of in others. Death was not the only punishment that had a severe psychological impact on those convicted of heresy. Certain penitential acts like labelling or forced pilgrimages might also cause problems for the ones subjected to performing these actions. Penitents who were forced to wear yellow crosses often found themselves ridiculed, isolated from society, even unable to work, but their abuse, at times, made their reward much sweeter.³⁶⁰ Their struggle was understood by the Church as an important mental and physical sacrifice that needed to be performed so that their repentance was considered genuine, only then could they be reinstated into Christian society.

Similarly, punishments were unable to be given without a proper confession, which also caused many issues. How was a confession considered truthful? In actuality, confessions were never understood as being aspects in the inquisitorial system that delivered outright success because of the unknown nature of their veracity, as well as the psychological nature behind them. For example, returning to the deposition of Guilhem de Sainte-Nazare, the source claims that in 1243, Guilhem wanted to confess some information that he knew to “...brother Ferrier”, and was instructed by a certain “P. de Vinhalet” (his first name was possibly Peire, Occitan for Pierre), to not go to the inquisitors.³⁶¹ In 1245, he finally gave his deposition and his confession, the source currently being discussed, but were the details of his deposition truthful? P. de Vinhalet had counselled against this act, so it is possible that Guilhem may have colluded with him and other members of the community to lie to the inquisitor, giving him answers he wanted to hear, rather than giving a truthful deposition. This was one of the forms of resistance that deponents used to get back at inquisitors, who they believed were encroaching heavily in their private lives.³⁶² On the part of the inquisitors, the forms of extracting a confession varied, but the best way was to interrogate entire communities which were “suspected” of having been involved with “heretics”. Inquisitors might also play one deponent against another, coercing one into a confession by claiming that a family member or friend had confessed by directly quoting their deposition, and if they did as well, they would receive a lighter penance.³⁶³ However, the worst tactic for extracting a confession was the threat of torture. The way in which a confession would be extracted changed after 1252, when Pope Innocent IV delivered his *Ad extirpanda* bull, allowing inquisitors the power to torture deponents for confessions.³⁶⁴ Again, this method of extraction did not always deliver the most truthful confessions, simply because deponents who were being tortured gave inquisitors certain answers to their question, but whether or not they were saying the truth was never revealed. It is highly likely that they gave inquisitors answers in hopes that they would end their torture session. Also, while torture was most likely a tactic used in the secular courts to extract a confession from a deponent, there is no historical evidence that proves that the power given to ecclesiastical courts by the passing of *Ad extirpanda* was actually used in practice.

It is not surprising that inquisitors received resistance from the laity in the areas where intense interrogation was being conducted. Incidents of tension, anger, violence, and public disorder are

³⁶⁰ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 113.

³⁶¹ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-26: MS 609-0465, 32r-32v.*

³⁶² Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 112.

³⁶³ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 109, 110.

³⁶⁴ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 111.

evident in the contemporary work of William Pelhisson, a native of Toulouse who chronicled events throughout most of the 1230s, and whose crucial source illustrated the lengths inquisitors would go to in order to achieve their goals. Bernard Gui, the brutal inquisitor from the early 14th century was in charge of recopying William's confusingly dated work, which ceases most of its historical narrative around 1238.³⁶⁵ Often times, inquisitors clashed with the city governors, or consuls, who threatened to act, sometimes with violence, towards friars "arbitrarily" accusing them of heresy.³⁶⁶ A good example of the arbitrary nature of inquisitorial accusations is the case of a man named John Textor, who, in either 1231 or 1232, was accused of heresy by inquisitors who had claimed to have several witnesses attesting to his culpability.³⁶⁷ Durand of St Ybars, the Dominican vicar who was in charge of the man's future, condemned him of heresy and proposed to have him executed by burning, but this was quickly stopped by the supporters of John Textor who angrily opposed the verdict.³⁶⁸ Roach has studied Pelhisson's chronicle, and provides another example of resistance, this time from 1235, describing the inquisitor Guilhem Arnaud and his struggles in Toulouse: Guilhem was the cause of a chaotic upheaval which had him removed from the city after he confronted about 12 leading citizens whom he believed were either involved with "heretics" or were possibly "heretics" themselves.³⁶⁹ Even after being removed from Toulouse by force, Guilhem tried to get the local clergy to deliver the citations for the 12 citizens, but they received death threats from them, causing the entire inquisitorial group to be removed from the city entirely and the inquest suspended for many months.³⁷⁰

The situations mentioned above did not involve any loss of life, even though Guilhem Arnaud was very close to having his Dominican colleagues killed for his tenacity in wanting to uncover heresy in Toulouse. There are instances where conspiracies to kill inquisitors were formed by disgruntled locals. Pierre-Roger, lord of Mirepoix, and vassal to the Count of Foix was the organizer of plot that killed inquisitors in Avignonet in 1242, an event which would have massive repercussions for those involved.³⁷¹ In the deposition of Guilhem Arnaud (not to be confused with Guilhem Arnaud the inquisitor, or the Guilhem Arnaut which was one of the murdered inquisitors at Avignonet) from 1245, the deponent was at the house of Pierre-Roger, along with many others, when the plans were laid out to murder the inquisitors.³⁷² Pierre-Roger commissioned at least 50 people in this planned execution, providing instructions on what to do, who to follow, in order for the deed to be completed as swiftly as possible.³⁷³ However, upon reading the deposition, there were some confusing parts that did not seem to fit well with the narrative, making the deposition slightly less believable. Mainly, Guilhem Arnaud claimed that he stayed in the house of Pierre-Roger of Mirepoix for two months, as well as with Pierre-Roger in a place called "the grove of de la Silva" (probably the hamlet of Gaja-la-Selve) the night the inquisitors were murdered by the group of conspirators.³⁷⁴ The next day, the group returned to

³⁶⁵ "The Chronicle of William Pelhisson," in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 207.

³⁶⁶ "The Chronicle of William Pelhisson," *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 210.

³⁶⁷ "The Chronicle of William Pelhisson," *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 213. The proposed dates of 1231/32 for John Textor's accusation can be found in footnote 38, which coincide with the duration that a man named Durand of St Ybars was vicar of the Dominican house in Toulouse.

³⁶⁸ "The Chronicle of William Pelhisson," *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 213.

³⁶⁹ Roach, *The Devil's World*, 137.

³⁷⁰ Roach, *The Devil's World*, 137.

³⁷¹ Roach, *The Devil's World*, 139; Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 116.

³⁷² *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-46: MS 609-0564, 37r-38v.*

³⁷³ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-46: MS 609-0564, 37r-38v.*

³⁷⁴ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-46: MS 609-0564, 37r-38v.*

tell Pierre-Roger that the task had been completed, but the deponent claimed to have been unaware that this entire thing was planned until after it was told by certain members of the group.³⁷⁵ If Pierre-Roger had been planning this for a long time, and the deponent was in his house with him the night the inquisitors were murdered, surely he would have figured out Pierre-Roger's intentions. If Guilhem was truly never aware of the plot, why was he in the house of Pierre-Roger for that much time? The deposition does not mention anything in terms of monetary transactions between the two people, or of any previous contacts with anyone mentioned in the group of people involved, but it does mention a brief instance where the deponent was asked to bring bread and wine to supposed "heretics", 18 years prior to his deposition.³⁷⁶ At the end of the deposition, Guilhem, according to the inquisitor, claimed that he did not give or send anything to "heretics".³⁷⁷ If this document is to be read at face value, then there is clearly a contradiction here. Did he give the "heretics" the bread and wine some time in 1227, or did he not? In addition, it is also hard to believe that Pierre-Roger had him stay in his house for 2 months without giving him the slightest inclination as to what was being planned for the murder of the inquisitors. Therefore, it is highly likely that this could be another instance where deponents lied to inquisitors during their confessions to get them off their backs. The killing of the inquisitors at Avignonet outraged the French crown, and in May 1243, King Louis IX dispatched a force at Montségur, the stronghold of Pierre-Roger, and the place where he and the mob had returned after doing the deed.³⁷⁸ Montségur was considered an impregnable fortress because of its lofty placement, and for 10 months there was a protracted siege until, finally, one of the towers of the fortress was taken by a small band of mercenaries in February 1244.³⁷⁹ Pierre-Roger surrendered the castle and his life was spared, but the lives of approximately 200 people, some of whom were possibly "heretics", who sought refuge in the fortress were not; they were burned alive, formally eliminating any possibility of a future armed resistance.³⁸⁰

The deposition of Guilhem Arnaud is not the first instance where contradictions and confusing language has been identified when reading contemporary inquisitorial documents. Most of the depositions from the *MS 609* that were used for this study contained similarities, which makes their veracity quite questionable. More importantly, many scholars have argued that the depositions do not display, to a certain extent, elements of historical actuality where heresy was a *lived reality*.³⁸¹ Much of what has been said about heresy in the 12th century was analyzed by Christian intellectuals who believed that it was a regurgitation of past heresies. Polemicists like Peter the Venerable, Eckbert of Schönau, Alan of Lille, to name a few, systematically argued and denounced any deviants of the faith, using strong exclusionary language, and politicizing certain anti-clerical movements as events that would lead to instability and problems of social order. Developments in canon law, along with the intellectual breadth of people in high governmental positions, both secular and ecclesiastical, created an environment where political and religious mechanisms were geared toward the creation of a perfect temporal and spiritual world.³⁸² However, through the development of sophisticated judicial and social institutions, persecution of

³⁷⁵ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-46: MS 609-0564, 37r-38v.*

³⁷⁶ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-46: MS 609-0564, 37r-38v.*

³⁷⁷ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-46: MS 609-0564, 37r-38v.*

³⁷⁸ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 185.

³⁷⁹ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 186.

³⁸⁰ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 186-187.

³⁸¹ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 106-108; Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, ix-xiv.

³⁸² R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 142, 145; Arnold, "Repression and power," 358.

undesirable members, especially religious deviants, ensued.³⁸³ Moore calls it the establishment of a “high culture” propagated by a “dominant elite” that looked to persecute and destroy these new religious movements that did not have the organization, power, influence, and intellectual disposition to depose Catholicism as the main religion, even though these movements were perceived as overly systematic and organized by Catholic clergymen.³⁸⁴ A high degree of intellectuality among learned members of society created the heretical threat. In turn, Pegg argues that the Albigensian crusade, followed by inquisitorial persecution, were elements which showcased that these actions were gross misunderstandings on the part of the Catholic church, displaying a linear thought process when coming into contact with people who they believed were religious deviants.³⁸⁵ The works of Pegg and Moore are important tools to use in the analysis of inquisitorial documents, and while their arguments provide a fresh take on heresy as a *lived reality*, they must also be scrutinized with caution.

The deposition of Guilhem Mas senior contains some interesting contradictions. The deponent states that in 1220, he was in the house of a certain Estolt de Rochavila in Mas-Saintes-Puelles, where he “adored” the heretics present in the house, and listened to their preaching.³⁸⁶ At the end of the deposition, he claims that he did not hear the heretics speak of errors of “...visible things, of matrimony, or of baptism...”.³⁸⁷ If he heard them preaching, but he did not hear of any errors, then what was the contents of their preaching? He also claimed that he heard about clergymen “speak of the errors of heretics”; would it be safe to assume that these errors were about visible things, matrimony, and baptism?³⁸⁸ It is possible, and this assumption can be based on what is known about the preaching campaigns of the mid-to-late 12th century. Catholic preaching campaigns were conducted because of a *perceived* heretical threat, which assumed that doctrinal errors and beliefs were spreading by “heretics” (possibly those labelled as *perfecti*) in the Languedoc. By the time that Guilhem would have heard this preaching, in 1220, the crusade would have been in full effect, possibly driving “Catharism” underground.³⁸⁹ However, assumptions cannot be taken as elements that display truth, especially not with an example such as this, and because of the contradictory nature of the deposition, a conclusion cannot be properly given at this time.

The depositions of Guilhem del Mas senior, Pelegrina de Mont Server (who is the daughter of Guilhem del Mas senior), and Arnaud de Rosengue, all of which describe events roughly between 1215 and 1231, possess many similarities in that, they all supposedly “adored” heretics at one point in their lives.³⁹⁰ Guilhem Mas senior “adored” “heretics” in the house of Estolt de Rochavila in 1220; Pelegrina de Mont Server “adored” “heretics” in the house of her father, Guilhem Mas senior in 1220; and Arnaud de Rosengue “adored” “heretics” in the house of Peire

³⁸³ Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, 4; Arnold, *Inquisition and Power*, 50.

³⁸⁴ Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, 142.

³⁸⁵ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, xii, xiii.

³⁸⁶ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-46: MS 609-0201, 17r.*

³⁸⁷ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-46: MS 609-0201, 17r.*

³⁸⁸ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-46: MS 609-0201, 17r.*

³⁸⁹ Biller, “Christians and heretics,” 181.

³⁹⁰ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-46: MS 609-0201, 17r* (deposition of Guilhem del Mas senior), *MS 609-0015, 2v-3r* (deposition of Pelegrina de Mont Server), *MS 609-0209, 19r* (deposition of Arnaud de Rosengue).

Cap-de-Porc in 1231.³⁹¹ The Church perceived that the “adoration” of these “heretics” was an act of holiness, further adding on to the perception of heresy as something that came to replace Catholicism with the selection of these people who displayed false piety.³⁹² Pegg has sternly disagreed with the Church’s persecution of these *perceived* “heretics”, claiming that the “adoration” of which the sources spoke about was a Languedocian custom called *cortezia*, a form of quotidian courtliness that most communities adhered to.³⁹³ Inquisitorial documents that referred to deponents “adoring” certain individuals was in the religious way, like the way in which certain Christians display reverence to religious icons, or the Cross; these examples formed elements of spiritual worship, and ones that were reserved for God, Jesus, and the Virgin Mary. Pegg has regarded this as a misunderstanding on the part of Church officials, explaining that people who displayed *cortezia*, were usually people of influence in the community, comporting themselves in a highly prudent, truthful, respectful, and stable manner, always with moderation and never extravagance or excess.³⁹⁴ Also, they were known to speak with calmness and assurance, which made them perfect for adjudicating local disputes that required a temperate and rational character, with the ability to be fair and just.³⁹⁵ The deposition of Bernard Mir Arezat from *MS 609*, described this very scenario: the deponent saw people who were labelled as “heretics” on a farm near the town of Saint-Martin-Lalande adjudicating a case between two knights, upon which the resulting feud was settled with the payment of a debt.³⁹⁶ The “heretics”, according to Pegg’s assessment, would have displayed *cortezia*, making them ideal candidates for judging disputes. Also, the possession of a great virtue like *cortezia* was important in a hostile and cutthroat environment due to the system of partible inheritance that was customary in the Languedoc.³⁹⁷ Southern practices dictated that lords, or any landholder for that matter, male or female, divided the lands that they owned equally among their family members and sometimes religious institutions.³⁹⁸ The system of land tenure in the south was different than that in the north, and primogeniture, especially in the households of minor nobles, was not a practiced custom. Due to the unbroken use of old Roman law charters, rights and claims were often misconstrued upon the death of the lord, or person who possessed the land, and feuds would ensue over minor monetary gains, fields, weaponry, even livestock.³⁹⁹ For example, Pegg claims that the house of a *castrum*, the small fortified enclosure which dotted many landscapes in the south, might be inherited by one person, and the fortifications that circled the enclosure given to another, making it extremely hard to trace where certain parcels of land began and where some ended, leading to conflict.⁴⁰⁰ The *cortezia* that was present in the inquisitorial depositions, according to Pegg, displayed events where a wise and honourable man was needed for a certain dispute, became synonymous with heresy.⁴⁰¹

³⁹¹ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-46: MS 609-0201, 17r, MS 609-0015, 2v-3r, MS 609-0209, 19r.*

³⁹² Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 33.

³⁹³ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 27, 28.

³⁹⁴ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 28-29.

³⁹⁵ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 29, 32.

³⁹⁶ *The Registry of the Great Inquisition at Toulouse, 1245-46: MS 609-0425, 30r-30v.*

³⁹⁷ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 29-32.

³⁹⁸ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 29-30.

³⁹⁹ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 30; Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade*, 17, 18, 19.

⁴⁰⁰ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 30.

⁴⁰¹ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 33.

The office of inquisitor became highly professionalized with the development of manuals, purporting an efficient systematization of intellectual knowledge concerning heresy that would be easily passed down from one inquisitor to the next.⁴⁰² Most of this knowledge of heretical belief was taken from polemical literature written in the past, condemning depravity and labelling heresy as deriving from the Devil.⁴⁰³ Arnold claims these polemics lacked “cultural context” mainly because of how these heresies were *perceived* by their contemporaries, and what “general” knowledge had been known about them, may or may not have been relevant in the time they lived in.⁴⁰⁴ In addition, how this work relates to “Catharism” is simple: Arnold outlines that the inquisitors wanted to identify the meaning of “Catharism”, and to attempt at controlling it so that it did not spread to orthodox believers. More so, the elevation of “Catharism” as a serious religious, social, and political threat was a product of the Church always wanting to come out victorious when an existential threat came knocking on its doors.⁴⁰⁵ Théry has deduced notions of this idea quite well: the doctrines of a highly organized sect, with the semblance of an identical religious hierarchical structure to that of the “orthodox” party, only survives in two sketchy texts, of which context, authenticity, and even dating, are still a bone of contention among many scholars.⁴⁰⁶ This is hardly enough evidence to assume that an apocalyptic sect, and one that has been around for centuries, was on the verge of destroying the Church. The “Cathars” and their believers were now placed at the forefront of the inquisitorial procedure, identifying potential social connections and how they interacted with each other, or with non-believers, in everyday life, either “religiously” or not.⁴⁰⁷ However, these texts do not display a *lived reality* of heretical existence, mainly because of the lack of evidence that exists on the deponents: the language of the source seems too linear to display relative truth to what was recorded.⁴⁰⁸ In addition, notaries have a part to play in the way inquisitorial sources were written: as highly literate professionals, they would have been in charge of recording important documents that aided in the inquisitorial procedure, such as penances and sentences that certain deponents were given.⁴⁰⁹ They would have been in charge of transcribing the testimony of a deponent after layers of vernacular to Latin translations, proof reading, and attempted reconstruction of conversational nuances between the inquisitor and deponent that were very hard to record in the third person.⁴¹⁰ Therefore, a question must be asked: after all this is recorded, and the proper corrections were made, was the voice on paper truly that of the deponent’s, or was it altered by the intellectuals who prepared the documents? Scholars must be content with never knowing the ultimate truth behind these inquisitorial sources, even though the answer to this question is quite evident.

Thus, inquisitors were the products of the intellectual elites that proceeded them, mainly, the ecclesiastical polemicists of the 12th century. They continued the persecutive work that had commenced in that century, because Moore argues, it “needed” to be done.⁴¹¹ Although it is rather simplistic to need something as intense as religious dominance to control 12th century European societies, however, with this same mentality, a religious deviant who was capable of

⁴⁰² Arnold, *Inquisition and Power*, 50.

⁴⁰³ Arnold, *Inquisition and Power*, 55.

⁴⁰⁴ Arnold, *Inquisition and Power*, 55.

⁴⁰⁵ Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief*, 193.

⁴⁰⁶ Théry, “L’hérésie des bons hommes,” 110-111.

⁴⁰⁷ Arnold, *Inquisition and Power*, 134.

⁴⁰⁸ Théry, “L’hérésie des bons hommes,” 111.

⁴⁰⁹ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 106.

⁴¹⁰ Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition*, 108.

⁴¹¹ Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, 148.

spreading falsities and leading people astray with the poison of heresy needed to be stopped by any means necessary.⁴¹² Stately apparatuses and the intellectual capabilities of learned individuals – at times perceived as an “intellectualist bias” compared to their illiterate and simple counterparts – in both the 12th and 13th centuries allowed for the persecution of undesirables to evolve and adapt: the rhetorical, polemical literature in the first half of the 12th century, along with the legislative developments of the state and Church that proceeded to incriminate “heretics” by the late 1100s, followed by crusade and inquisition in the 13th century.⁴¹³ Within this framework, there was always the notion of the past – the views of ancient “heretics” flooded the minds of medieval intellectuals during the wave of the anti-clerical movements in the early 11th and early 12th centuries, and in continuous fashion, the linear thinking of the past returning to haunt, once again, was the product of a flawed assumption of human thinking.⁴¹⁴ These flawed assumptions, such as the assertions on the part of inquisitors to associate *cortezia* with “adoration” when they were unfamiliar with the customs of the Languedoc, dictated a mindset that arbitrarily judged these individuals to be religious deviants, when it was most likely not the case.

Whatever and whoever “started” spreading the false, heretical views in the Languedoc, one thing is particularly noticeable: the events of the late 1170s and early 1180s are immensely important, more so than any other period that comprises the history of heresy. Four different dates, that discuss four different developments: 1177, 1178, 1179, and 1181. The events that are coupled with these dates were essential for the construction of heresy in the Languedoc, steeped in the memory of the people and institutions involved.

⁴¹² Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, 149; Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief*, 200.

⁴¹³ Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, 151, 152, 154, 156.

⁴¹⁴ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, xiii, 10.

Part 4: If not by the Book, then Perhaps by the Sword? The Formative Years of 1177 to 1181: Heresy, Memory, and the Military Justification for the Albigensian Crusade

Before discussing the importance of the year 1177 and what it revealed to the Catholic clergymen about their “suspicions” of heresy in the region of the Languedoc, the political climate in the county of Toulouse and its relations with neighbouring entities must be discussed. It can be argued that the endemic warfare in the region created the prejudice on the part of medieval churchmen who believed that the instability in the region was a formidable breeding ground for heresy. The formation of *castra* in the region was a response to the constant warfare between the greater nobles, and the petty nobility needed protection from the *routiers* (a term often used for mercenaries), who were employed by the count and viscounts.⁴¹⁵ Inasmuch, the changing of political tides that the lesser nobles took advantage of meant that their semi-independent status was maintained throughout a period of intense armed struggle.⁴¹⁶ Basically acting as local *routiers*, they played lords against each other in a period which lacked steady loyalty to begin with.

4.1 – 1177: The Year Everything Changed

The county of Toulouse held a strategic geopolitical position, and what it lacked in natural resources, it made up for in accessible trade routes to Italy, Byzantium, and the Holy Land.⁴¹⁷ The counts of Toulouse, considered as possibly the greatest peers of the kings of France, struggled to maintain a stable, strife-free environment. Since at least the late 1120s, Toulouse had been at odds with another rising power in the western Mediterranean, the Counts of Barcelona, who looked to incorporate areas of Provence into their growing state.⁴¹⁸ Tension between Count Alphonse-Jourdain and the Counts of Barcelona did not slow down in the 1130s; the city of Narbonne was taken forcefully by the Toulousains, who then looked to control Melgeuil and Montpellier.⁴¹⁹ As a result, in 1142 Count Alphonse-Jourdain was captured and imprisoned by Roger I Trencavel, who formed a coalition with the petty local barons to regain control of Narbonne, one of the first instances of tension between the Counts of Toulouse and the Trencavel viscounts.⁴²⁰ By the 1150s, the Counts of Barcelona had managed to gain more ground in the Languedoc when Raymond Trencavel, son of Roger I, now viscount of Albi, Béziers and Carcassonne transferred his allegiance from Toulouse to Count Raymond-Berenguer IV of Barcelona.⁴²¹ This action would result in Count Raymond V capturing Raymond Trencavel and imprisoning him in 1153.⁴²² In subsequent years, the county of Toulouse would come to know immense pressure from many sides, including Henry II of England, the Counts of Foix who followed the Trencavels in switching allegiances, the lords of Montpellier, who also allied with Barcelona, as well as Louis VII of France who always sought to tame Toulouse into submission to his will, with little to no avail. Henry II’s marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152 opened the

⁴¹⁵ Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade*, 21.

⁴¹⁶ Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 97.

⁴¹⁷ Roach, *The Devil’s World*, 38.

⁴¹⁸ Elaine Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility and the Albigensian Crusade* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), 94.

⁴¹⁹ Biget, “‘Les Albigeois’,” 229; Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 94

⁴²⁰ Biget, “‘Les Albigeois’,” 231.

⁴²¹ Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade*, 22, 23.

⁴²² Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 98.

door for Henry to stake a claim at possessing Toulouse by using the law of *jure uxoris* (“by right of wife”). Eleanor’s great-grandfather William IV was count of Toulouse in the mid-11th century, and Henry looked to take advantage of this claim to expand his territories on the continent further south. The kingdom of France had also maintained interest in subduing Toulouse, but it never had any long-term influence in the south except on occasions, when, for example, Louis VII of France allied with Raymond V to expel the Angevin-Trencavel-Catalan coalition which culminated in an unfought conflict in 1159.⁴²³

On top of all these issues, there was talk of potential heretical activity spreading through local communities, as well as some major towns, mostly in the Lauragais (the area located south of Toulouse, and north of Carcassonne). By 1177, Raymond V was looking at a potential invasion from various fronts, and he had to act quickly in order to save his lands. In the same year, he wrote to the Cistercian general chapter, asking for aid from the Church in the fight against heresy.⁴²⁴ After the customary formalities and dedications, Raymond V’s letter begins by stating that, “In our lands the little foxes destroy the vineyards planted by the right hand of the Lord”, proceeding to summarize many of the beliefs and practices of these heretics.⁴²⁵ The allegorical imagery that was associated with the “foxes in the Lord’s vine” had been used before, famously by Bernard of Clairvaux in his 65th sermon on *the Song of Songs*, which was directed at Henry of Lausanne. The letter continues with Raymond claiming that, “Priests perverted by this fetid heresy will administer it to the faithful and churches once venerated in the past will lie as untilled fields”.⁴²⁶ Here is an allusion to the prejudice of medieval churchmen on how heresy has manifested itself, with the “wolves in sheep’s clothing” allegory, Raymond implies that false clerics have penetrated the Church and administered this error to those who innocently believe it to be the truth. Continuing to what is possibly the most important part of the letter, Raymond claims that he is “...impotent to put an end to the general desertion of the faith. The task is beyond my feeble resources. The greatest vassals of my dominions are themselves infected with heresy and with them a great number of their subjects. I neither can nor dare impose my will on them”.⁴²⁷ Raymond even went as far as to ask the King of France for aid, whose “...presence will put an end to this evil” whereupon the count would “...show him the heretics” in an effort to “...wipe out all the enemies of Christ”.⁴²⁸ This was, without a doubt, a massive reveal. One could even argue that it was bigger than when heresy revealed itself in 1165 at Lombers. His letter was intelligent, strategic, and sprinkled with elements of betrayal. Jean-Louis Biget calls it a sensational instance of *realpolitik*, a pragmatic political manoeuvre that offered Raymond some respite in an extremely tense situation, rather than have his lands open to invasion as a potential excommunicate.⁴²⁹ Raymond submitted to aid from the church, and it is very possible that his letter to the general chapter was most likely not written by him, but commissioned through him from the Cistercian abbeys in the area, mainly Grandselve and Frontfroide, which had been purchased by the Cistercian order in the 1140s. These abbeys provided an “orthodox” base in a

⁴²³ Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 98-99; Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 45.

⁴²⁴ Biget, “‘Les Albigeois’,” 238.

⁴²⁵ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 50.

⁴²⁶ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 50.

⁴²⁷ Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade*, 23-24; Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 50; Biget, “‘Les Albigeois’,” 239.

Sumption’s translation has slightly different wording than that of Pegg’s a few lines above, but both scholars want to emphasize the same thing. Biget’s is most likely the best translation, which he showcases in various parts throughout the section of his paper.

⁴²⁸ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 51.

⁴²⁹ Biget, “‘Les Albigeois’,” 239.

land supposedly consumed by heresy. Whether Count Raymond V was sincere in his alarming letter, or whether it was a forgery (as Jean-Louis Biget claims it was), it no doubt gave a glimpse into the situation in the Languedoc, and what the possible avenues of reprieve were.⁴³⁰ Who were these great vassals that the count was referring to, and how come greater emphasis was placed on them as proponents of heresy rather than his inability to eradicate heresy? Was he aware of the religious troubles in his realm, if any? The endemic warfare had caused extreme tension between him and his “greatest vassals”, the Trencavel viscounts, and Raymond looked to “deflect” any potential blame that was put on him for being unable to, supposedly, eradicate heresy in his lands. By saying that he would “show the heretics” to the king of France, he implied that the Trencavels supported heresy and willingly spread it by employing false priests in their lands. In addition, he played a game of political chess, by pitting the Trencavels, the crown of Aragon, and the crown of France against each other. Now that he allied himself with the Church, virtually enfeoffing his lands to the papacy, who would dare invade him? Doing so would be a direct challenge against the Church, which looked to remedy the situation in the Languedoc without bloodshed (for now). As such, this document must be analyzed with caution, as the terminology indicates that Raymond’s words were most likely not his own.

4.2 – 1178: The Missions of Legate Peter of St. Chrysogonus and Henry, Abbot of Clairvaux

Whether the veracity of Raymond’s letter can be attested to his own person or to others writing in his name, as well as to the situation he explicitly described, it opened the door for potential preaching campaigns that looked to attempt, once again, at diffusing orthodox teachings in an area that was apparently riddled with heresy. Pope Alexander III commissioned his legate to France, Peter of St. Chrysogonus, as well as Henry de Marcy, abbot of Clairvaux to travel to the Languedoc and inquire about the situation. Their letters provide important details on the two separate instances where “Catharism” may have possibly showcased itself.⁴³¹ Of the two churchmen, Henry’s involvement had particular significance, because it was the second time a Cistercian abbot travelled south to inquire and fight heresy, the first being Bernard in 1145. The Cistercians had a great legacy of preaching against heretical activity in the south, and this would continue into the early 13th century with Pierre de Castelnau and Arnaud Amaury.

Biget claims that the mission of these churchmen was two-fold: it not only looked to analyze the situation in the lands of the Trencavels, newly identified as supporters of, and possibly adherents to, heresy, but also the situation in the city of Toulouse which had issues with its consuls, who looked to take action in governing the city independently, without the authority of the count.⁴³² More importantly, Peter’s mission would confirm the letter that Raymond wrote to the Cistercians in defence of the Church, where he would put an “...end to this faithlessness”.⁴³³ Peter’s letter mentions two “heresiarchs”, Raymond de Baimac and Bernard Raymond who met Peter and the rest of the travellers, to defend their faith after being unjustly treated by the count and branded as heretics.⁴³⁴ At the church of St. Etienne (now Toulouse Cathedral), a small

⁴³⁰ Biget, “‘Les Albigeois’,” 238.

⁴³¹ “Legation in the Languedoc: Peter of St. Chrysogonus” and “Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux” both from *The Birth of Popular Heresy*.

⁴³² Biget, “‘Les Albigeois’,” 241; Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 192.

⁴³³ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 50.

⁴³⁴ “Legation in the Languedoc: Peter of St. Chrysogonus,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 113.

council was convened where they professed their innocence and adherence to the orthodox faith, but did not want to swear an oath to uphold these beliefs in the future. This, according to Peter, was a sign of their heretical belief, related to a similar example at the council of Lombers in 1165, where some “Cathars” refused to take oaths to not preach their heresy in public. Peter’s letter concludes by describing the excommunication ceremony that was conferred to these heretics Raymond and Bernard.⁴³⁵ In addition, it was not only Count Raymond’s plea that forced Peter and Henry south, but also, it was an opportunity to broker an agreement to free Gerard, the bishop of Albi, who had been taken captive by viscount Roger II Trencavel in 1174 as part of his ongoing feud to supplant the bishop as chief lord of the city of Albi.⁴³⁶ The events of Peter’s mission showcased two things: that Raymond V was, supposedly, a true friend of the Church when he banished Raymond de Baimac and Bernard Raymond from his lands on suspicion of heresy, and the Trencavel viscounts showed their complicity as possible heretical sympathizers when Roger II abducted the bishop of Albi, an “orthodox” prelate.⁴³⁷ Disregarding the quarrel between Roger II and bishop Gerard, Elaine Graham-Leigh had denoted that apart from this unfortunate incident, the Trencavels had a fairly cordial relationship with the Catholic church, showcased in the donations to several Benedictine abbeys in areas like Carcassonne, Narbonne, and Béziers.⁴³⁸ The relationship between Gerard and Roger II had culminated in Gerard’s imprisonment, only because Roger did not want Albi to become like Béziers, a town whose chief overlord was the bishop, and not the viscount.⁴³⁹ However, Gerard’s capture would lead to serious issues for future Trencavel viscounts.

Similarly, Abbot Henry of Clairvaux’s letter is just as informative, describing a different situation where heretical activity showcased itself. Henry paints a much bleaker picture of his experiences in the Languedoc, claiming the city of Toulouse was so “diseased” with heresy and error “...that there was not a healthy piece in it”.⁴⁴⁰ An inquiry was made by Henry – one of the first instances of *inquisitio* in the south before it had been formally established in the mid-13th century – demanding the names of important people in the city who were rumoured to be heretics, and when the list was returned to him, the name Pierre Maurand, a Toulousain consul, came up more than once. Pierre was questioned, asked about his beliefs, and deemed a heretic in front of the bishop of Toulouse, as well as Henry who was present during this trial.⁴⁴¹ Pierre was imprisoned for many days until, according to Henry, a miracle occurred and he “...came to his senses, and was moved to repentance by the Lord...”⁴⁴² The following day he was taken to the church of St. Sernin where he performed the prescribed penitential acts, and abjured heresy. He was also charged to identify and destroy the castles and fortifications that heretics would meet in, although, whether that last part was put into practice is not attested throughout historical sources.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁵ “Legation in the Languedoc: Peter of St Chrysogonus,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 116.

⁴³⁶ “Legation in the Languedoc: Peter of St Chrysogonus,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 113; Biget, “‘Les Albigeois’,” 241; Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 73.

⁴³⁷ Biget, “‘Les Albigeois’,” 242.

⁴³⁸ Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 72, 73.

⁴³⁹ Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 73 n. 96.

⁴⁴⁰ “Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 117.

⁴⁴¹ “Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 119, 120; Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 194.

⁴⁴² “Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 120.

⁴⁴³ “Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 120.

Abbot Henry was then charged with ordering the release of the bishop of Albi, so he travelled to the viscounty with a small force, whereupon they reached Castres, and managed to speak with Roger II's wife, Adelaide, daughter of Raymond V, as well as many of his followers.⁴⁴⁴ Roger was not there to face the band and defend himself, fleeing to one of his remote strongholds which surely did not help his case; the bishop was released upon peaceful negotiations with Adelaide, and Roger was rendered an excommunicate, as well as a "...traitor, a heretic, and perjurer for having violated the personal safety of the bishop".⁴⁴⁵ As an excommunicate, Roger's lands could now be invaded by Christian forces who looked to avenge these wrongdoings. This is explicitly mentioned by abbot Henry when he said, "It is clear from this that a fine door is open to Christian princes to avenge the wounds of Christ...".⁴⁴⁶ Raymond V had been very cunning when he supposedly wrote that letter to the Cistercians in 1177, because he avoided exactly what was happening to Roger II. The fate of the Trencavel viscount would be sealed at the Third Lateran Council in 1179, which displayed novel legislative apparatuses for treating heresy and setting a precedent for future actions against "heretics".

4.3 – 1179: The Pronouncements of the Third Lateran Council Concerning Armed Conflict Against Heretics

Peter and Henry's letters to the pope produced a sufficient amount of evidence needed to propose legislation against heresy. Canon 27 of the official decree, probably formulated with the aid of abbot Henry and Peter, anathematized heretics, their defenders, those who harboured them, and those who had economic transactions with them, targeting specifically the areas of Gascony, Albi, and Toulouse, as areas that were the most greatly affected.⁴⁴⁷ The part of the canon that identifies the specific locality in which heretics were located is extremely valuable. Prior to this, there was only an assumption of the Languedoc being "infected" with heretics, and even the importance of the meeting at Lombers in 1165, when heresy was "indirectly revealed" to the bishop of Lodève, it was not enough to assume that heresy was rampant in the entire region. Now, the name attached to a heretical center was crucial because it completed the combination: Albi was the center, and Roger II Trencavel and his vassals were the proponents. Furthermore, the abduction of Gerard, bishop of Albi may have also had something to do with the assumption of Trencavel complicity: an orthodox preacher had been captured and imprisoned. Raymond V's letter came at an increasingly vital time. This was the "evidence" the Church officials needed to pursue all avenues of possibility to subdue the south. And they would.

The decree of Lateran III concerning heretics was a culmination of what had been proposed in previous councils, mainly Toulouse (1119), Second Lateran (1139), and Reims (1148), which demanded more aid from the secular authorities to help the church fight heresy. The canon in 1179 had a slightly different tone to it than previous councils like that of Tours in 1163, which

⁴⁴⁴ "Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux," *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 121; Biget, "Les Albigeois," 242; Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 196.

⁴⁴⁵ "Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux," *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 121; Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 196.

⁴⁴⁶ "Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux," *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 122.

⁴⁴⁷ "The Third Lateran Council, 1179: Heretics Are Anathema," in *Heresy and Authority*, 168, 169; Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 207; Danica Summerlin, *The Canons of the Third Lateran Council of 1179: Their Origins and Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 173, 175.

targeted the defenders and harbourers of “heretics”.⁴⁴⁸ Now, Lateran III targeted “heretics” and brought with it new legislative changes, such as the proposition for armed conflict, and justifying this action through historical precedent. This was ratified and expressed in part of the canon that reads “...it is helped by the laws of catholic princes so that people often seek a salutary remedy when they fear that a corporal punishment will overtake them”, alluding to a similar passage from Henry’s letter to the pope that read, “It is clear from this that a fine door is open to Christian princes to avenge the wounds of Christ...”.⁴⁴⁹

It is also interesting to note that, on top of the anathema directed towards “heretics” the council proceeded to condemn the *routiers*, the mercenaries employed mostly by the count of Toulouse, and called on “...all the faithful...for the remission of sins, that they oppose this scourge with all their might and by arms to protect the Christian people against them”.⁴⁵⁰ Summerlin has noted the confusing area in the canon that barely differentiates between the “heretics” and the *routiers*, claiming that scholars questioned the way the canon was written, placing both parties in virtually the same category.⁴⁵¹ Regarding this, although a scholarly interpretation and analysis has surely looked into the nuances in the canon concerning the two groups, this is not the scope of this section of the paper. However, as the *routiers* supposedly disregarded the regions in which they were employed, laying waste to churches and other sacred grounds, it is normal that they were condemned and placed in a similar category to that of “heretics”. The peace and prosperity of Christian society was at stake if both of these groups roamed free from region to region, and if the Church’s legislature brought the secular authorities that much closer to eradicating both, armed conflict seemed the only possible solution.⁴⁵²

In addition, there is a hint towards justifying the armed conflict proposed in the canon and turning it into a crusade. The passage reads, “...we receive under the protection of the church, as we do those who visit the Lord’s sepulchre...”.⁴⁵³ The language here, does not shy away from displaying the true intentions of the council, and it can be interpreted as a gateway for warriors to fight heresy by receiving the indulgence that would be given to those who travelled to the Holy Land. Allusion to crusading is evidenced in another passage of the canon which describes, “...those princes and Catholic men who, fired by their faith, have taken upon themselves the task of driving them out, if by the gift of God they die in sorrow and confession, they should know that they will receive pardon for their sins and the prize of an eternal reward”.⁴⁵⁴ The plenary indulgence and the remission of sin it offered to warriors who travelled east, first put forward by Pope Urban II during his call for a crusade at Clermont in 1095, would become a very influential doctrine wholly transferrable to other enemies of the Christian faith. If a warrior took up the sword in defence of Christendom from foreign enemies, it was justifiable in the eyes of the church, and if done solely by faith and not to enact revenge, it was acceptable on enemies within. Although the political climates were relatively different, the rhetoric in 1095, 1179, and 1208

⁴⁴⁸ Summerlin, *The Canons of the Third Lateran Council*, 174.

⁴⁴⁹ “The Third Lateran Council, 1179: Heretics Are Anathema,” *Heresy and Authority*, 170; Summerlin, *The Canons of the Third Lateran Council*, 175-176. Peters’ translation from *Heresy and Authority* is slightly different, but both scholars summarize Canon 27 quite well.

⁴⁵⁰ Summerlin, *The Canons of the Third Lateran Council*, 176.

⁴⁵¹ Summerlin, *The Canons of the Third Lateran Council*, 176, 177.

⁴⁵² Summerlin, *The Canons of the Third Lateran Council*, 177.

⁴⁵³ “The Third Lateran Council, 1179: Heretics Are Anathema,” *Heresy and Authority*, 170; Summerlin, *The Canons of the Third Lateran Council*, 175.

⁴⁵⁴ Summerlin, *The Canons of the Third Lateran Council*, 175.

concerning the crusade indulgences were very similar. In this regard, it would be important to briefly analyze Urban's speech and how it was used as a historical precedent for Innocent III in 1208, when he formally called the crusade against the Albigensians.

Understanding the spiritual drive that led warriors to the Holy Land, leads to comprehending the heightened religiosity that took place in medieval Europe towards the end of the 11th century, quite possibly a product of the Gregorian reforms that had begun some decades earlier. Urban's speech was couched in a rhetoric of liberation: Robert of Rheims, who was possibly present at Clermont in 1095, wrote that Urban was weary of Muslims destroying "the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of their own religion".⁴⁵⁵ Medieval churchmen were aware of the issues that went on in the east. Christian persecution in peripheral areas led to anxiety among medieval clergymen that their holy sites were being desecrated and disrespected, as is evident by the actions of al-Hakim, the caliph who destroyed the Holy Sepulchre in 1009.⁴⁵⁶ This was only one example, but there may have possibly been other undocumented ones. The anxieties that came with the "Muslim threat" may have probably been overexaggerated by medieval clerics, but examples such as the events in 1009 would have surely increased their perception of an imminent attack. Therefore, establishing a theological and religious justification for armed conflict, especially in the analysis of the literary works of contemporary churchmen who considered themselves deeply pious, was not difficult after the events of the First Crusade. The post-victory literature did not shy away from identifying the true victor in such a conflict: God.⁴⁵⁷ Guibert of Nogent, writing shortly after the victory in Jerusalem, wrote that God "personally regulated" miracles, and it would be only right to ascribe the liberation of the Holy Sepulchre to God's "divine interventionary power".⁴⁵⁸ Therefore, if one is to follow the pattern of identifying crusading as a spiritually driven act of liberation, where armed conflict was justified because of the pain and suffering inflicted by God's enemies on Christians in the east, can this not be attributed to God's enemies at home, like "heretics" in Christian kingdoms? The constant allusion to "foxes" destroying the "Lord's vine" provided justifiable evidence that, while the threat of a perceived Muslim invasion was serious, defending the vine and liberating it from the "multitude of its assailants" ("heretics"), was just as important as defending Christendom and liberating the Holy Sepulchre from a "race utterly alienated from God...".⁴⁵⁹ The spiritual significance of the crusade was culminated when Pope Urban II accompanied it with an indulgence, used towards the remission of sins.⁴⁶⁰ It is not surprising that Innocent III's rhetoric was similar when he proposed a crusade indulgence for warriors who were willing to travel south to destroy heresy. In 1208, Innocent's frustration and anger can be heard in his crusade encyclical, even if it is on paper, and those willing to undertake the task, armed with the "life-giving sign of the cross" were rewarded with "...remission of sins by God and his vicar to all who, fired by the zeal for the

⁴⁵⁵ "The Speech of Urban II: The Version of Robert of Rheims," in *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*, ed. Edward Peters (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2nd edition, 1998), 27.

⁴⁵⁶ "Introduction," in *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres*, 14.

⁴⁵⁷ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), 140.

⁴⁵⁸ Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, 140.

⁴⁵⁹ "The Speech of Urban II: The Version of Robert of Rheims," *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres*, 27.

⁴⁶⁰ "The Speech of Urban II: The Version of Robert of Rheims," *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres*, 27, 28.

orthodox faith, take up arms for this work of piety”.⁴⁶¹ Innocent was fully aware of what he was doing. The warriors who fought for Christ in the Languedoc were now historically and spiritually connected with their predecessors who fought in the east.

4.4 – 1181: The “mini crusade” of Henry, Abbot of Clairvaux

Returning to the narrative, based on canon 27 from the decree of the Third Lateran Council, it is clear that Viscount Roger II Trencavel was rendered an excommunicate for allowing heretics to roam unpunished in his lands (if we can remember Raymond de Baimac, Bernard Raymond, and Pierre Maurand from Peter and Henry’s letters). This left the viscount vulnerable to attacks from orthodox princes that wanted to avenge the wrongs done to the faithful in his realm. As such, Pope Alexander III charged abbot Henry of Clairvaux, now a papal legate to France, with the leadership of an armed force destined for the lands of Roger II.⁴⁶² The force marched to Lavaur, one of the great fortified towns in the lands of the viscount, and within hours Roger II’s wife, Adelaide, surrendered the *castrum* to abbot Henry.⁴⁶³ It is possible that no lives were lost during this extremely short siege, but had there been, in the eyes of the Church, they would have been wholly justified. In this regard, an analysis of why armed conflict and warfare against heretics was justified by medieval clergymen, beginning with ancient and contemporary theories of the “just war”.

It would be impossible to give a concrete analysis of the “just war” theory without taking a look at the work of the theologian who made the topic famous, St. Augustine. In his “Letter 189, to Boniface”, when discussing if the waging of a war is a prelude to peace, Augustine declares that, “Peace is not sought in order to provoke war, but war is waged in order to attain peace”.⁴⁶⁴ Augustine demonstrates that violence can be “...returned to one who rebels and resists, so should mercy be to one who has been conquered or captured”.⁴⁶⁵ There is a way in which the last quote can be related to the situation that took place at Lavaur in 1181 and at Béziers in 1209, when the crusading army stormed and sacked the city. The situation in 1181 culminated with an armed conflict, even though it was unfought, due to Roger II Trencavel’s capture of bishop Gerard of Albi, an event that “violated the peace and personal safety of the bishop”.⁴⁶⁶ However, the violation of personal peace may be extended to societal peace and order, a consequence of the bishop’s absence. If the bishop was not there, were congregants getting their spiritual needs attended to? The anti-clerical movements of the early 11th century and early 12th century appeared because of the laity not being spiritually fulfilled, lacking engagement in religious institutions. Although the bishop was abducted, an action that was not of his own doing, were his tasks being completed by someone else? Possibly, but it is not certain. Also, a crusade was called to Roger II’s lands in order to restore peace: mainly, as a “perjurer and heretic” his lands were open to invasion by Christian princes who looked to “avenge the wounds of Christ”.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶¹ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 60.

⁴⁶² Biget, ““Les Albigeois”,” 243.

⁴⁶³ Biget, ““Les Albigeois”,” 243

⁴⁶⁴ “War” in *Augustine: Political Writings*, trans. Michael W. Tkacz and Douglas Kries et al. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), 220.

⁴⁶⁵ “War”, *Augustine: Political Writings*, 220.

⁴⁶⁶ “Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 121

⁴⁶⁷ “Legation in the Languedoc: Henry of Clairvaux,” *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, 122.

In 1209, a similar scenario ensued. William of Tudela, the author of one part of *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, says due to Béziers' resistance to crusader advancements and the denial of their offer of a peaceful surrender, they "...should be slaughtered wholesale, once the castle had been taken by storm".⁴⁶⁸ As such, William proceeds to explain that the women, children, and clergymen were all killed, even those "who fled into the church" to seek sanctuary.⁴⁶⁹ Relating these events to what Augustine had said about peace, should the warriors not have been merciful to those that they conquered, mainly the non-combatants? If their primary objective was to search and destroy "heretics", should the others not be left alone? The issue with Béziers, and the events surrounding the eradication of heresy, was that not all of the people in the city were "heretics", aside from a potential select few. In the frenzy that followed the siege, how were the soldiers supposed to differentiate a heretic from a Catholic? Canon law justified corporeal punishment in situations where peaceful negotiations were denied, but the events at Béziers showed that sieges were not linear processes. Things changed, people had to adapt, for better or for worse. In this regard, Gratian's *Decretum*, especially the clause concerning "just war" on heretics, must be analyzed intently.

Theorizing war and conflicts have been a favourite of political philosophers since St. Augustine famously wrote about "just war" in the late 4th century. However, in the Middle Ages, one name is famous for taking Augustine's ideas and developing them further by including aspects of Christian morality: Gratian. As such, Frederick H. Russell's assessment is crucial, claiming that Augustine believed in divine sanction, using the Old Testament wars as example to justify the right to wage a war.⁴⁷⁰ In the 12th century, when the papacy was growing more centralized and canon law was in its mature, but not-yet-final stage, Gratian used Augustine's ideas, but infused it with Christian morality, and the appropriateness of war-waging for spiritually conscious Christians.⁴⁷¹ Gratian justified military action and punishment toward an evil-doer as an act of benevolence and for the best interests of the injured party.⁴⁷² If the punishment of "heretics", according to Augustine, was necessary, and should be performed as an act of charity and healing, rather than of hatred.⁴⁷³ Also, Gratian used Augustine's idea of just conflict towards "heretics" as a defence of the church; heresy was a grievous sin, and the church could wage a "just war" on "heretics" in order to get them to return to orthodoxy.⁴⁷⁴ War on "heretics" was part of the moral duty of the church, and warfare, no matter how violent and cruel, was seen positively.⁴⁷⁵ As such, is it by these justifications that the crusaders acted the way they did towards the people of Béziers in 1209? There is an argument that could be made, that the citizens had a chance to give themselves up, to abjure heresy and receive penitential punishments. However, was it absolutely certain that the crusaders would peacefully give whatever "heretics" existed in the city to the religious authorities? An answer to this question will never be known.

Similarly, McGlynn mentions how the crusades drastically changed warfare with the attachment of significant religious importance, against an enemy on the periphery of

⁴⁶⁸ *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, 21.

⁴⁶⁹ *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, 21.

⁴⁷⁰ Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, 23.

⁴⁷¹ Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, 55, 57.

⁴⁷² Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, 58; Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 57.

⁴⁷³ Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, 24.

⁴⁷⁴ Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, 75.

⁴⁷⁵ Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, 76.

Christendom, who adhered to a different religion and came from a different ethnic background.⁴⁷⁶ The Albigensian crusade, for all its similarities to the First Crusade, differed in the area of religious adherence, and the fact that it was a war waged against people of mostly regional and not ethnic differences.⁴⁷⁷ McGlynn seems to suggest that the crusaders were more shrewd than generally believed: some “heretics” might have been leading citizens of the bourg and city, and had considerable influence and wealth.⁴⁷⁸ By eliminating these high profile citizens, it might make the city easier to pacify. Also, as Béziers was stormed and sacked, the papal legate at the time, Arnaud Amaury, confirms that it was the foot soldiers who razed the city in such violent disorder, attempting to deflect any blame from the nobility or knightly class, who would have surely acted chivalrously.⁴⁷⁹ McGlynn claims that the commanders could have stopped the indiscriminate slaughter, but were too concerned with the city’s wealth to pay attention to what the foot soldiers were doing.⁴⁸⁰ Another question could be asked: were the crusaders aware of the implications that surrounded the “just war”, or even the laws of war? Their actions are connected to what Russell had mentioned about Gratian’s ideas: that violence of any kind towards heretics was justified because of their deviation from the church, which was viewed as an immense evil.

4.5 – A lifetime of Southern Disobedience? The Trencavel Dynasty and its Damned Memory

The “mini crusade” of 1181 paved the way for future armed expeditions against heretics. By the time Pope Innocent III came to office in 1198, this event would have been an important example of a “successful” campaign against heresy, even if it was short. However, Innocent’s pontificate brought with it new and old elements in the fight against heresy. As has been previously mentioned, the *Vergentis in senium* decretal in 1199 brought with it new legislative charges against heresy: it was now considered a crime against the state, and those found guilty of heresy were to have their property removed, and transferred to the secular authorities for potential corporeal punishment. The legacy of Lateran III for the latter element was hard to forget.

Also, the Cistercian order held significant influence in the fight against heresy before, and during Innocent’s pontificate, even if most of the Cistercian preaching campaigns against heresy garnered mixed results. When Innocent made Arnaud Amaury his legate to France in 1204, he was collaborating with a former abbot of Grandselve, and it is highly likely that Arnaud would have had access to the letters produced by Henry and Peter, and his knowledge of past events in the Languedoc would have been more than adequate.⁴⁸¹ The years of 1203-04 until 1208 was the last period that the papacy conducted preaching campaigns in the Languedoc before the murder of Pierre de Castelnau. Innocent III commissioned Arnaud for this task, accompanied by Pierre de Castelnau, Raoul (or Ralph) of Frontfroide, and Milo, a papal notary.⁴⁸² Like abbot Henry,

⁴⁷⁶ Sean McGlynn, *By Sword and Fire: Cruelty and Atrocity in Medieval Warfare* (London: Phoenix, 2009), 170.

⁴⁷⁷ McGlynn, *By Sword and Fire*, 170.

⁴⁷⁸ McGlynn, *By Sword and Fire*, 172.

⁴⁷⁹ McGlynn, *By Sword and Fire*, 175-176.

⁴⁸⁰ McGlynn, *By Sword and Fire*, 176.

⁴⁸¹ Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 47 n. 53.

⁴⁸² Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 47.

Arnaud would also lead an army south, and was possibly just as unwavering as Henry, maybe even worse if the quotes attributed to him are to be taken as truthful.⁴⁸³

In addition, Lavaur would be known as one of the “synagogues of Satan”, and a stronghold that was not only besieged in 1181, but again in 1211, during the early stages of the Albigensian crusade.⁴⁸⁴ Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay described the people who had taken refuge at Lavaur during the crusade: they were all “...enemies of the cross” mentioning “...Aimeric the lord of Montréal...and numerous other knights...and...the Dame of Lavaur, widow name Giraude, a heretic of the worst sort and sister to Aimeric”.⁴⁸⁵ The situation in 1211 was different, as the crusaders had lost many men at the small but significant battle of Montgey some days prior, and due to the crusaders’ frustration during this battle, their treatment of the warriors of Lavaur was shocking.⁴⁸⁶ The lady, Giralda (Giraude) was thrown down a well and heaped on with boulders and stones. The knights, all massacred. The “Cathars” of the stronghold, if any, burned to a crisp.⁴⁸⁷ Did Arnaud Amaury know about the previous “siege” of Lavaur in 1181, and did he relay any information to Simon de Montfort about Lavaur and its legacy of defiance that dated back to abbot Henry’s time? It is very possible.

Finally, were the Trencavel truly the enemies of the church? Graham-Leigh considers the relations between the Trencavel and the church to be cordial, although it is hard to justify this entirely without mentioning the harsh treatment of Roger II Trencavel towards the bishop of Albi. More importantly, was this stain transferred to his son, Raymond-Roger? It is difficult to say for sure. William of Tudela, the author of the *Song of the Cathar Wars*, proclaimed that, “Nowhere in the wide world is there a better knight or one more generous and open-handed, more courteous or better bred”.⁴⁸⁸ Even Simon de Montfort acted honourably after Raymond-Roger died in captivity, having his body displayed for his subjects to mourn him.⁴⁸⁹ Although, the killing of an equal would have been in poor taste, even if Raymond-Roger’s seat of power, Carcassonne, was peacefully surrendered to Simon. However, Arnaud Amaury begged to differ with William’s compliments about Raymond-Roger: he was considered the “worst defender of the heretics”, a sentiment most likely shared by many Catholic churchmen involved in the crusade, in one way or another.⁴⁹⁰ If the legacy of Trencavel complicity with heresy had been true, and Raymond-Roger was truly a defender of “heretics” like his father, how come he supposedly confessed his orthodoxy to legate Arnaud Amaury, as well as Milo of Frontfroide a couple of days before the siege of Béziers? Both churchmen outrightly refused to listen to the viscount’s terms, rendering him guilty of a crime that may or may not have been legitimate.⁴⁹¹ Was it a case of the young viscount simply paying for the sins of his father? Surely, if he had been guilty of supporting “heretics” would he have taken the time to visit the churchmen and confess to them? Remembering the words of Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, “heretics” usually “pertinaciously defended” their error. What may have been true for Roger II, was not

⁴⁸³ In the 1220s Caesarius of Heisterbach, a Cistercian prior, is famous for attributing to Arnaud Amaury the apocryphal declaration, “Kill them all! God will know his own!” during the siege and sack of Béziers.

⁴⁸⁴ Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 34.

⁴⁸⁵ *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, 111; Barber, *Dualist Heretics*, 34-35.

⁴⁸⁶ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 111.

⁴⁸⁷ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 110.

⁴⁸⁸ *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, 18.

⁴⁸⁹ *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, 29.

⁴⁹⁰ Pegg, *A Most Holy War*, 93.

⁴⁹¹ Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 55.

necessarily true for Raymond-Roger. Even with Raymond-Roger attempting to broker an agreement with Arnaud Amaury, the idea that the lands of the viscount were infected with heresy was a sentiment that barely changed throughout the battles and conflicts of the Albigensian crusade. It cemented the notion of a perpetual southern disobedience, even until the final days of “Catharism” in the early 14th century, when one final attempt was supposedly made in “reviving” the sect by the Autier family. Swift stately apparatuses quashed the “revival”, supposedly ending “Catharism” for good.

Conclusion and Final Assessment

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the development of the so called “Cathar” heresy in the southern French region of the Languedoc from c.1150 to c. 1260, and to deconstruct why the Catholic Church reacted to the appearance of this heresy with the proposition of a crusade, which it justified in both religious and military terms. By scrutinizing the beliefs and practices of the “Cathars”, and how they may have been historically linked to previous sectaries like Manichaeans or Bogomils, a large majority of this thesis discussed possible avenues of transference from these sects, either through historical, and/or mythical individuals, or by native regional developments through the various social, religious, and political climates. In addition, the reforms of the Church in the late 11th century took up an important part of this thesis, as well as the anti-clerical movements in the first half of the 12th century, which were a direct cause of the strict reforms that had been enacted. The Church’s perception for the reason these movements appeared was unchanged throughout history: they were the heresies Paul warned in his letter to the Corinthians, a constant struggle that the orthodox party had to deal with in the maintenance of right belief. To counter the spread of these beliefs, the Church conducted preaching campaigns, and when that did not work, a crusade was called which also failed to eradicate heresy. The justification for the crusade was made possible by the legal developments in the late 12th century, which deemed heresy a crime against the state, punishable by armed conflict upon which death might ensue. In addition, inquisitors, extremely learned men from the Dominican order were commissioned to inquire about heretical networks in the Languedoc, by interrogating families and many people who were perceived to have come in contact with heretics or might have even been heretics themselves. A severe methodological issue is prevalent when studying inquisitorial depositions: contradictions appear, and the voice of the deponent is not the one that is being read when analyzing the source, making it very hard to conclude if the deponents were involved with heresy in one way or another.

In the first section, I tried to provide a clear-cut definition of heresy, one of the most arduous of tasks for the historian, only because it brings with it many different biases and presuppositions that one has to filter through in order to get a proper definition. In the first two centuries of Christianity, there had not been a definitive separation between the “factions” that differed on certain doctrinal areas of Christian belief. The term “*hairesein/haeresis*” was not so much a way to denote between “right” and “wrong” belief, but a choice people made, based on the free-thinking ancient Greek school of thought. Debates between early Christian intellectuals were open, so too were the ideas expressed about Christ’s nature, which were still being worked out during this time as a Biblical canon had not yet been defined. However, by the 3rd century, this began to change, and the gap in freedom of thought and expression in areas concerning “right” and “wrong” in Christian belief was being narrowed down. Apologists and Church Fathers (as well as other Christian thinkers) between the 3rd and 4th centuries worked on refining the important strides that were made in Christian doctrinal developments since Christ’s resurrection, while dealing with regional cultural practices that shaped the point of view of opposing members. There were no outright legislative prohibitions on “heretics” until the 5th century, when Emperor Theodosius II codified previous Roman law tracts, whereupon the illegality of heresy was newly defined as a crime against the state. Yet, the “judgements” that early Christian churchmen proposed on “heretics” were subjective, and the divergences of views that certain ecclesiastical officials held played important roles in defining “right” doctrine (orthodoxy) and “wrong”

doctrine (heresy). Heresy quickly began to be perceived as a threat to the unity and to the stability of the social and religious order.

The second section analyzed the beliefs and practices of “Catharism” as well as its possible historical derivation from Manichaeism and Bogomilism. While there were some similarities between all three sects, it is extremely hard to trace any possible historical connection between them. One major issue, the time gap between the appearance of the Manichaean – late 3rd c. –, the Bogomil – late 10th to 11th c., and the “Cathar” – 12th to 13th c. movements, respectively, encompass almost 900 years. Manichaeism and “Catharism” shared a similar pattern of beliefs in areas like the usage of a hierarchical elite, and the “two principles”: Manichaeans saw the “two principles” as particles of Light and Darkness, and “Cathars” as a “good God” and an “evil God”, which was similar to the views of the early Gnostics as well as other Christian dualist sects that followed them in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. However, these are the only similarities between the two sects, and based on this evidence, it is very hard to deduce whether continuity between them actually existed. Bogomilism on the other hand, was closer to “Catharism” in different ways: the initiation process conducted via a spiritual baptism like the imposition of hands, the hierarchical system of elites, as well as the belief in “the two principles”. The dualism that the Bogomils believed in was a “moderate dualism”, which did not see “two principles” create “two” different worlds, but rather, God created a spiritual realm, and in time, his son Lucifer (the Devil) became jealous and started a conflict with God. This cosmic struggle led to the Devil’s banishment from the spiritual realm, causing him to create the world in which man lived. The “Cathars”, on the other hand, supposedly believed in “two worlds” created by “two” different “Gods”, one good and one evil, which was brought over to the Languedoc from “Papa Nicetas”, a Byzantine Bogomil bishop. Nicetas was possibly a member of the “Dragovitsan” order of “absolute dualists” in the Byzantine empire, who were the remnants of certain 10th century Bogomils that had broken away from the “moderate dualists” and settled in Constantinople. In this, there is a correlation to the “heretics” that Eberwin of Steinfeld wrote about in Cologne in the 1140s claiming that certain members of their sect came from “Greece” and have been around since the time of the martyrs. This would suggest that historically Bogomils infiltrated the ecclesiastical system of the Byzantine empire in the late 11th and early 12th century whereupon “Papa Nicetas” travelled west in the 1160s and convened a great council in southern France, transferring heresy from east to west. It is likely that this did not happen, simply because there are no credible contemporary sources that chronicle this event, or even allude to its possible existence. This notion of a “source” of evil, was the creation or perception of medieval intellectuals who needed to denote a “heretical starting point”. Unifying heresy and making it continuous throughout history made it easier to denounce, labelled as a constant “threat” to the Church which needed eradication. The “invention” of a “heresiarch” like Papa Nicetas, as well as figures like Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne linked heresy between these individuals, creating a historical line of transmission of error that was justifiable through only one source: the Devil.

Terminology played an important part in the way heresy was perceived by medieval churchmen, and what they did not fully comprehend, they always attempted to compare it to the past. “Heretics” in the Middle Ages, until the end of the 12th century, were a labelled as “Manichaeans”, or even “Arians”, constructing a historical link between the sects, even though it is highly unlikely that one existed. Eckbert of Schönau was the catalyst for the creation of an heretical nomenclature for dualists in the Middle Ages. He coined the word “Cathars” to designate them and linked them to Mani, the founder and leader of the Manichaean “heretics” of

old. Many polemical writers in the 12th century would continue this legacy, mainly Alan of Lille in the 1190s, creating a reality in which these “heretics” existed through their polemical writings and denunciations.

The third section examined certain historical events of the late 11th century, as well as religious life in the 12th century and the way in which the church reacted to the appearance of heresy. The heresies of the year 1000 showcased that a relationship between the clergy and the laity was immensely important, for many different reasons: the Peace of God movement was a result of endemic warfare in France in the 10th century, and churches and religious institutions bore the brunt of a disgruntled and angry laity. When the Peace disintegrated, heresies appeared, displaying the idea that a relationship between the clergy and the laity was valuable for the betterment of medieval society. Furthermore, a sequence can be seen: the great reforms of the Church that were conducted in order to respond to the lax priesthood were so strict and, one could say, elitist in nature, that they created a gap between the clergy and laity. This gap led to the rise of anti-clerical movements in the early 12th century which stressed the need to purify the faith due to abuses of the priesthood, which a portion of the laity believed was corrupt. Although there is a possible pattern between the heresies of the year 1000 and the anti-clerical movements of the early 12th century, in which they stressed the continual relationship between clergy and laity, and more involvement in ecclesiastical institutions, continuity in this regard cannot be said with certainty. These anti-clerical movements were said to diffuse heretical knowledge and false belief, to which the Church countered with preaching and inquisition. Both preaching and inquisition were conducted because of the *perceived* heretical threat, but both were possibly the wrongful *perceptions* of medieval churchmen, who created the “heretical threat” through their polemical writings, and with inquisitorial tribunals. The highly intellectual environment that certain medieval churchmen were surrounded in, the progression of stately apparatuses that needed learned and educated people, created an environment based on elitism and prejudice. Medieval churchmen believed that heresy” was rampant in areas like the Languedoc because of a few examples where “heretics” revealed themselves, and their constant fear of this “disease” becoming widespread created the perfect polemical literature in which they were able to express themselves in many different ways. It is likely that heresies and even “dissent” between the Church and the laity existed, but that their existence was viewed as an apocalyptic threat to Christendom was an “exaggeration” or an “amplification” by medieval polemicists. Inquisitorial depositions may also possibly relay the intellectual bias of their creators: whether the deponents actually belonged to heretical communities, witnessed and interacted with heretical individuals, or adhered to heresy themselves, inquisitorial depositions did not display the voice of the deponents, but rather that of their persecutors. Actions taken by inquisitors to eradicate heresy were done on the *perception* and possibly the conviction of its “believed” existence.

The fourth section outlined the crucial years of 1177 to 1181, and the legislative, political, and social developments in the Languedoc. The events that transpired within these years formed the basis of the actions that were taken by the secular and ecclesiastic authorities in dealing with the heretical problem. The memory of past events, especially during this short period, provided a historical precedent for ecclesiastical officials who attempted to formulate a solution for stopping heresy. Also, theories of “just war” were used in conjunction with solving the heretical issue, and the legal advancements, especially the ones ratified at the Third Lateran Council which concerned itself the proposition of armed conflict against heretics, brought with it a moral Christian perspective to an ancient political theory. Heresy was treasonous to God, and heretics

could be met with the sword to avenge the wrongs and the affront done to God. Also, extremely vital in this interpretation was the transference of the crusade indulgence from Muslims to heretics. This was possibly due to the events that took place in this period, especially with the letter of Raymond V in 1177, and the “evidence” of “heretics” in the Languedoc in 1178. The Church’s suspicions were now realities, and it had the evidence needed to proceed in whatever way they deemed necessary, via a crusade.

Even with the consolidation of the four main parts of this work, as well as the proper research conducted, a definitive answer to the question, **does Catharism belong to a long tradition of religious dissent, is it a revival of ancient heresies, or was it simply “invented”, “amplified” or “exaggerated” to justify the religious and political expansion taking place during the 12th and 13th centuries,** might never be found. The promulgation of the Albigensian Crusade, using the eradication of heresy as the prime argument for its call, was possibly a ploy by the Catholic Church to annex the string of semi-independent political entities in the Languedoc, forcing religious reform in the region. It is highly likely, that the crusade was catered to both the religious and political climates of the 12th and 13th centuries. At times religious, and at times political, never one more than the other.

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