THE BIRTH OF THE LUCIFERIANS: REVISITING THE PERSECUTION OF HERETICS BY CONRAD OF MARBURG

František Novotný

ON the day of Saint Abdon and Sennen, 30 July 1233, blood was shed near the Thuringian metropole Marburg. At least two men were slain, one of whom, a certain Minorite Gerhard, reportedly tried to protect his companion with his own body. That other man was Conrad of Marburg, the first papal inquisitor ever appointed.[1]

A learned secular priest,[2] and a recognized and reputed preacher since the mid-1210s, Conrad earned his major fame in the second half of the

[1] Although the establishment of the Dominican tribunal in Regensburg (22 November 1231) is often identified with the founding of the papal inquisition, Conrad was granted identical authority to judge the heretics a few weeks earlier. The same conclusion can be found in Alexander Patschovsky, "Zur Ketzerverfolgung Konrads von Marburg," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 37 (1981): 643–44, and Lothar Kolmer, *Ad capiendas vulpes: Die Ketzerbekämpfung in Südfrankreich in der ersten Hälfte des 13. Jahrhunderts und die Ausbildung des Inquisitionsverfahrens* (Bonn, 1982), 122. Kolmer nonetheless points out that although Conrad's mission was the first papal inquisition *de iure,* it took a few years more until the establishment of the first permanent inquisitorial tribunals in the southern French Languedoc, adopting the general methods and procedures studied inter alia by James B. Given, *Inquisition and the Medieval Society: Power, Discipline, and Resistance in Languedoc* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1997).

[2] 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, 2006), 533, questions Conrad's education by pointing at the passage from the hagiography of the landgravine Elisabeth by Caesarius of Heisterbach, where Conrad is introduced as "vir admodum literatus" (Albert Huyskens, ed., *Die Schriften über die heilige Elisabeth von Thüringen,* in vol. 3 of *Die Wundergeschichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach,* ed. Alfons Hilka [Bonn, 1937], 351). With the whole passage referring to Conrad in a positive light, however, the adverb

Mediaeval Studies 83 (2021): 119–64.

1220s as an extraordinarily strict confessor of the later canonized Thuringian landgravine Elisabeth, daughter of the Hungarian king Andrew II and wife of the landgrave Louis IV. In 1227, the year that Elisabeth widowed, Conrad was entrusted by the pope, Gregory IX, on 12 June to bring suspects of heresy to the bishop's justice.[3] On 11 October 1231, just weeks before the young landgravine's death, the pope significantly extended Conrad's competences, empowering him to judge the heretics himself, independently of the bishops.[4] This extension made Conrad an inquisitor *sensu stricto,* and together with the bull *Ille humani generis* from November 1231, granting the Dominican prior in Regensburg the same judicial right, marks the factual beginning of the papal inquisition.[5] The year 1231 also marks the onset of a massive anti-heretical campaign headed by Conrad, with its epicentre in the upper Rhineland. It brought an uncertain number of people to the stake and imputed blame for heresy even to several influential nobles. It was probably his immoderate attitude toward those in power that eventually cost Conrad his life.

Before Conrad fell victim to assassination, his inquisitorial activity gave birth to a notorious phantasm of medieval heresiology—an imaginary devil-worshipping sect, known to some medieval authors, and more widely to modern scholars, as Luciferians.[6] As was demonstrated already

admodum must be translated as "properly," not "barely." Moreover, even the sources otherwise critical of Conrad, most prominently the episcopal chronicle from Worms, admit that he was a learned and educated person. See *Chronicon Wormatiense,* ed. Heinrich Boos (Berlin, 1893), 168.

[3] Georg H. Pertz and Karl Rodenberg, eds., *Epistulae Saeculi XIII e Regestis Pontificum Romanorum,* vol. 1 (Berlin, 1883), 277.

[4] Patschovsky, "Zur Ketzerverfolgung," 643. Patschovsky adopts the transcription of relevant parts of the now lost document from Johann P. Kuchenbecker, *Analecta Hassiaca* 3 (Marburg, 1730), 73–75.

[5] James Fearns (ed.), *Ketzer und Ketzerbekämpfung im Hochmittelalter* (Göttingen, 1968), 73–75.

[6] Recent voices suggesting that there were indeed actual Luciferians in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, although their excess might have been exaggerated from the inquisitorial perspective, have been rare. One of the most influential has been Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1972). Piotr Czarnecki, *Średniowieczny lucyferianizm (XIII–XV wiek)* (Gdańsk, 2006), argues in a similar vein. Neither of the authors, however, provides a persuasive argu-

by Henry Charles Lea and Joseph Hansen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this phantasm, reappearing many times throughout the late middle ages, also prefigured the later infamous imagery of the Witches' Sabbat.[7]

Of the several texts dealing with Conrad of Marburg's pursuit of this phantomic movement, the most complex and most influential is the papal bull *Vox in Rama,* which the pope, Gregory IX, addressed in June 1233 to Conrad himself and several German prelates, as well as the headmen of the Holy Roman Empire: Emperor Frederick II and his son Henry VII, the king of the Romans. Belonging to a series of documents by Gregory IX aiming to suppress heresy during his pontificate, the bull declares a crusade against a depraved sect, discovered during Conrad's inquisitorial activity and spreading rapidly across Germany. Its followers were said to perform horrific rituals and adore Lucifer himself, whom they allegedly believed would eventually overthrow God and take possession of the heavenly throne.[8] The phantasmal Luciferians constituted a highly untypical target for the early papal inquisitors. The detailed descriptions of their perverse rituals, while recalling some elements of scarce eleventh- and twelfth-century reports about devil-worshipping heretics,[9]

ment which would deal with the problem of the massively stereotypical nature of the accounts of antinomian and devil-worshipping heretics in general—the main reason for which a large majority of medievalists deem them as fiction. This view has achieved a broad consensus since the appearance of the influential work by Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (Sussex and London, 1975).

[7] Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages,* vol. 2 (New York, 1887), 334; Joseph Hansen, *Zauberwahn, Inquisition und Hexenprozess im Mittelalter und die Enstehung der Grosser Hexenverfolgung* (Munich, 1900), 229–332. From the recent scholarship, see above all Kathrin Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie zur Hexerei: "Wirkliche" und imaginäre Sekten im Spätmittelater* (Hannover, 2008), 311–37.

[8] *Vox in Rama,* ed. Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss und Schwarzer Kater: Götzendienst, Idolatrie und Unzucht in die inquisitorische Phantasie des 13. Jahrhuderts* (Warendorf, 1996), 27–32.

[9] Most notably the records on the heresy in Orléans, 1022, by the Benedictine monk Paul of Chartres, writing after 1050 (*Vetus Agano* 6.3, PL 155: 265–66) and Adémar of Chabannes (Ademarus Cabannensis, *Chronicon* [recensiones beta et gamma] 3.59, ed. P. Bourgain, CCCM 129 [Turnhout, 1999]); later also the notice about diabolical heretics written by Guibert of Nogent in the early twelfth century

know no immediate parallel in any known inquisitorial record from the rest of the thirteenth century.

The question of where these alleged Luciferians came from has resurfaced repeatedly since the classical works by Lea and Hansen. The bizarre character of the sect supposedly discovered by Conrad of Marburg, together with the harshness of the methods he employed against it, as reported by his contemporaries, has led historians to consider whether Conrad's campaign was typical of early inquisitorial activity or more the anomalous efforts of a fanatical individual. The majority of them tend to conclude the latter, and Conrad's pursuit of the Luciferians is typically explained in terms of his reported fanaticism. Lea characterized Conrad as a man, whose "bigotry was ardent to the pitch of insanity."[10] In later classical scholarship, Norman Cohn presents the same view in his classical work about the demonization of medieval heretics and the emergence of the great witch hunt.[11] According to Malcolm Lambert, "Conrad initiated a reign of terror" in the areas where he was carrying out the inquisition.[12] Similarly, Karen Sullivan emphasizes Conrad's stern personality, which led him to treat with severity the landgravine Elisabeth as well as those deemed to be heretics.[13] Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane calls Conrad's effort explicitly a "failure" of the early papal inquisition, which actually led to its softening in German cities in the following years.[14] Kathrin Utz Tremp, who studied the development of the devil worship stereotype from the thirteenth-century persecution of heretics to the early witch trials argues that his methods resemble the witch

(*De uita sua siue Monodiae* 3.17, ed. Edmond-René Labande, *Guibert de Nogent: Autobiographie* [Paris, 1981], 428–30; PL 156:951), and the report by the Oxford archdeacon Walter Map at the end of the twelfth century on the "publicans" (Walter Map *De nugis curialium* 1.30, ed. and trans. M. R. James, rev. C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors [Oxford, 1983], 118–20).

[10] Lea, *History of the Inquisition* 2:326.

[11] Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonization of Christians in Medieval Christendom* (Chicago, 2000; first ed., 1975), 50.

[12] Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars* (Malden, Mass., 1998), 119.

[13] Karen Sullivan, *The Inner Lives of the Medieval Inquisitors* (Chicago, 2011), 75–96.

[14] Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition* (Lanham, Md., 2011), 98.

trials of the fifteenth century rather than the procedures typical of thirteenth-century inquisitorial tribunals.[15]

Nevertheless, the connection between Conrad's reported cruelty and his interest in the alleged Luciferian sect emerges from unwarranted speculation. There is no known evidence of any connection between the supposed fanaticism of individual inquisitors and their focus on devil worship themes. Conrad was not the only early inquisitor notorious for his cruelty: just a few years later, Robert le Bougre persecuted heretics in Burgundy with similarly controversial harshness, yet no diabolical sects are reported from his investigations.[16] Conversely, nothing suggests that the often discussed trials against alleged Luciferians in fourteenth-century Austria, Bohemia, Silesia, or the Mark Brandenburg can be characterized by any extraordinary degree of inquisitorial fanaticism, compared to the trials in which no devil worship was mentioned.[17] The connection between inquisitorial fanaticism and accusations of devil worship appears to be an intuitive yet unfounded historiographical shortcut.

Instead of the peculiarities of the inquisitor's personality, the question of where the dark image of the Luciferians came from should focus on the particularities of the context in which Conrad was operating. Such an

[15] Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie,* 336–37.

[16] Charles H. Haskins, "Robert Le Bougre and the Beginning of the Inquisition in Northern France," *The American Historical Review* 7/3 (1902): 437–57; Michael Lower, "The Burning at Mont-Aimé: Thibault of Champaigne's Preparations for the Baron's Crusade of 1239," *Journal of Medieval History* 29/3 (2003): 95–108.

[17] For sources on the Austrian trial in Krems upon Danube, 1315, see *Annales Matseenses,* ed. Wilhelm Wattenbach, MGH SS 9 (Hannover, 1851), 825–27. For the scholarship, see Peter Segl, *Ketzer in Österreich: Untersuchungen über Häresie und Inquisition im Herzogtum Österreich im 13. und beginnenden 14. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn, 1984), 300–302. For sources on the Bohemian trial in Prague, 1318, see Josef Emler, ed., *Regesta Bohemiae et Moraviae* III (Prague, 1890), 178–80. For sources and scholarship on the trial in Silesian Schweidnitz, see Alexander Patschovsky, "Waldenserverfolgung in Schweidnitz 1315," *Deutsches Archiv* 36 (1980): 137–76. For the trials in the Brandenburgian town Angermünde, 1336, see Dietrich Kurze, "'Ketzer-Angermünde.' Zur Bezeichnung der Stadt und zur Inquisitionprozess des Jahres 1336," *Jahrbuch für Brandenburgische Landesgeschichte* 51 (2000): 30–51. For sources from the inquisitorial trials in the fourteenth century Mark Brandenburg in general, see D. Kurze, *Quellen zur Ketzergeschichte Brandenburgs und Pommerns* (Berlin and New York, 1975).

approach was adopted by Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller, who discusses the intellectual context of Conrad's inquisitorial mission and concludes that the Luciferian scheme emerged from the intellectual discourse among a small group of individuals, within which the reputed author, Cistercian Caesarius of Heisterbach, played a prominent role.[18] Uwe Brunn focuses more on the political context of Conrad's inquisition, yet, nonetheless, ultimately accords with Hergemöller in concluding that a small circle of men including Conrad of Marburg fabricated the bogeyman of the Luciferians within their speculations about heresy.[19]

I agree with both Hergemöller and Brunn in that the conjecture of a few individuals gave birth to the Luciferian imagery, which is therefore not a product of the popular imagination, although some of the motifs this imagery contained were borrowed from it. Hergemöller's and Brunn's conclusions, however, do not explain the motivation behind the mentioned individuals' fabrication of the fictitious Luciferian heresy, nor why the development of the Luciferian imagery was comparatively quick but still gradual. I will argue that while both authors duly analyzed the intellectual environment of Conrad's inquisition, they nonetheless still underestimated its connection to the political context of the respective events. Conrad of Marburg was no adventurous heresy-hunter, but a reputed preacher appointed by the pope to pursue a specific quest. This dimension of Conrad's inquisitorial effort was emphasized by Alexander Patschovsky, who analyzed the fragmentary information about the inquisitor's judicial methods and found them compatible with the contemporary anti-heretical legislation, both ecclesiastical and imperial. He explains the negative attitude of many Conrad's contemporaries towards his inquisition as an effect of encountering a legal novelty they were not yet used to.[20] The same stance was adopted by Daniela Müller, according to whom Conrad's policy was "neither unrestrained nor arbitrary," but "conformed closely to the new canonical norm."[21]

[18] Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 212–16.

[19] Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "Cathares,"* 538–40.

[20] Patschovsky, "Zur Ketzerverfolgung," 665–67.

[21] Daniela Müller, "Conrad de Marbourg et les cathares en Allemagne," in *Europe et Occitanie: Les pays cathares,* ed. Marie-Paule Gimenez, Heresis 5 (Villegly, 1995), 53–80, at 58.

In this article, I present the thesis that Conrad's reliance on the papal mandate was in fact the principal motivation behind the construction of the Luciferian phantasm. Specifically, I argue that the existence of the dangerous Luciferians served the inquisitor as a crucial argument in his attempt to receive resolute papal support for his mission while wrestling with growing political resistance from the local bishops. Put in more theoretical terms, the "discovery" of the Luciferian cult, traditionally studied with a focus on imagination and ideas, must in the first instance be explained in terms of political reasoning.

The second key point of the debate about Conrad of Marburg and the birth of the Luciferian phantasm discusses the ingredients from which this phantasm was constructed. The character of the alleged Luciferian doctrine has led historians to an almost unanimous conclusion about the identity of the real heterodox group behind such obscene imageries: it was the Cathars, perceived by their orthodox contemporaries as metaphysical dualists, believing in God as the creator of souls and the Devil as the creator of matter, and identifying their own souls with the fallen angels, trapped in the material world and striving to reach heaven once again.[22] Alexander Patschovsky and Malcolm Lambert both assume that anti-heretical authors simply made one more step in their theorizing about the Cathars, and ascribed to them the belief that they constituted Lucifer's suite of fallen angels, and thus worshipped their master.[23] In similar vein, David Zbíral situates *Vox in Rama* into a long tradition of demonizing metaphysical dualism,[24] most explicit in the *English Chronicle* by Ralph of Coggeshall, written shortly before 1200: certain sectar-

[22] There is, in fact, a lively discussion about how widespread such radical dualism, accented by the medieval heresiologists, was among the Cathars themselves. The traditional perception of dualism as a constitutive element of a relatively uniform Cathar milieu was advocated by Malcom Lambert in *The Cathars*. An influential criticism of this notion of Catharism was delivered shortly after by Mark Gregory Pegg, *The Corruption of Angels: The Great Inquisition of 1245–1246* (Princeton, 2001). The debate is currently still a lively one. See above all Antonio Sennis, "Questions about the Cathars," in *Cathars in Question,* ed. Sennis (York, 2016), 1–20.

[23] Alexander Patschovsky, "Konrad von Marburg and die Ketzer seiner Zeit," in *Sankt Elisabeth: Fürstin, Dienerin, Heilige* (Sigmaringen, 1981), 70–77, 74; Lambert, *Cathars,* 121.

[24] David Zbíral, *Největší hereze* (Prague, 2007), 105–6.

ians in Rheims, called *publicans,* were said to perform "horrendous rites" in honour of the "fallen angel *Luzabel,*" whom they allegedly revered as the creator of bodies and matter.[25] Kathrin Utz Tremp argues that not only this doctrine, but also certain motifs of the Luciferian ritual, described in *Vox in Rama,* resemble the actual practices of the Cathars, and concludes that "the image of the Luciferians . . . was rooted ultimately in Catharism."[26]

All these conclusions are, again, relevant to a certain degree, but at the same time insufficient for one reason: they are based on a synchronic view of Conrad's campaign, as if it was a single historical moment. Their authors perceive the emergence of the Luciferian imagery during Conrad's inquisition as an act of demonization. This view has been perhaps most explicitly expressed by Lothar Kolmer, according to whom the existence of the Luciferians was "a fixed idea of Conrad."[27] I will argue that the birth of the Luciferian imagery was not a moment but a process, and one highly important for the topic of the demonization of late medieval religious nonconformists. The focus on this process allows us to study how the Luciferian scheme emerged from the dialectic relationship between the cultural imagination and the work of a particular judicial institution—a pattern essential for understanding the late medieval per-

[25] Ralph of Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglorum,* ed. Joseph Stevenson (London, 1875), 124–25.

[26] Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie,* 332, discusses two motifs in particular: the term "perfecti," used by anti-Cathar polemics to denote Cathars fully initiated into their heresy, and the supplication "parce" (spare), a ritual formula frequently used by the Cathars in several contexts, yet usually in the plural (*parcite*). For an example of the supplicative verb "spare" in the context of Cathar rituals, see Antoine Dondaine (ed.), "Le Tractatus de Hereticis d'Anselme d'Alexandrie O.P.," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 20 (1950): 314. It should nonetheless be noted that the use of the verb in a supplicative context is not exclusively Cathar, as it derives from the biblical book of Joel 2:17, "*Parce domine populo tuo*!" (Spare your people, Lord!), and was quite commonly used in medieval Christian prayer, e.g., in the thirteenth-century chant *Dies Irae,* traditionally ascribed to Thomas of Celano, the early historiographer of Francis of Assisi, whose authorship has, however, been disputed by modern scholarship (see Robert Chase, *Dies Irae: A Guide to Requiem Music* [Lanham, Md., and Plymouth, 2004], esp. 4–6). The use of the verb in the singular form (*parce*) should therefore be seen as a rather indirect and distant echo of heresiologist knowledge about the Cathars than a direct link.

[27] Kolmer, *Ad capiendas vulpes,* 118.

secutions of alleged devil worshippers. I will try to show that the alleged Luciferians were not simply demonized local Cathars—chiefly since, as I will argue, Conrad of Marburg was unlikely to encounter any significant Cathar group. The demonization of the Cathars played a pivotal role in the emergence of the Luciferian phantom—however, not straightforwardly. The persecution of heretics by Conrad of Marburg developed significantly over time, and it is therefore proper to examine how the specific synthesis of the heresiologists' knowledge and imagination about the demonic, occurring under particular *political* circumstances, resulted in the genesis of the Luciferian imagery.

I will argue that two cases of anti-heretical propaganda served as prominent sources of ingredients for the Luciferian synthesis: the campaigns against the dualist Albigensians in the southern French Languedoc, and against the rustic rebels called *Stedinger* in the archdiocese of Bremen. Both affairs earned strong papal support in the years prior to Conrad's effort, and I consider this circumstance crucial for their influence on Conrad's inquisition, struggling against increasing opposition.

The core of my analysis focuses on three sources immediately related to Conrad's campaign in the years 1231–33, providing the most extensive information about the content of the investigated heresy: the record in the fourth continuation of the chronicle *Gesta Treverorum,* the "public confession" of a heretic named Lepzet, or *Error Katerorum,* and the papal bull *Vox in Rama*.

Gesta Treverorum

The earliest record concerning Conrad's anti-heretical campaign describes events which occurred in the archepiscopal city of Trier in 1231.[28] The main source here is the Fourth continuation of the chronicle *Gesta Treverorum,* written in the mid-1240s. [29] It is not possible to dis-

[28] Although Conrad is reported as a preacher against heresy during the 1220's, and an active persecutor since 1227, nothing is known about the character of heresy he persecuted before 1231.

[29] *Gesta Treverorum continuata* IV, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS 24 (Hannover, 1879), 400–402. Another version of the report, which corresponds almost verbatim to this one, appears in a manuscript from the abbey of Tholey, see Joseph Harzheim, ed., *Concilia Germaniae* III (Cologne, 1760), 539–40.

tinguish which passages refer to specific events in Trier and which reflect Conrad's persecutions in general. Since the chronicle reports the condemnation of certain heretics together with money counterfeiters at the archdiocesan synod in autumn 1231, however, it is probable that it relies mainly on information from this synod and captures the perception of heresies as they were discussed there. According to the *Gesta,* three heretical "schools" were discovered in Trier.[30] Notably, a woman Lucarde was burnt there, who

> seemed to lead an extraordinarily pious life, but in fact much cried for Lucifer, unjustly expelled from heaven, in an attempt to help him return with her tears.[31]

Alexander Patschovsky and Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller both interpret this note as an indication that the Luciferian scheme was generally applied during the Trier affair.[32] Lucarde, however, is not said to worship Lucifer with any obscenities, but rather to express compassion for him. Her reported belief in fact recalls the ancient Christian concept of Apokatastasis (Restoration), which includes the belief in the eventual salvation of Satan, rather than the abominations soon to be ascribed to Luciferians.[33]

It is also important to stress that Lucarde's case was after all not isolated when it comes to such Apokatastasis-like doctrines in Conrad of Marburg's social environment. As noted already by Lea, the Trier woman's mourning closely resembles one slightly older affair: the condemned beliefs of Henry Minnike, a provost of the Cistercian Neuwerk nunnery in the north German town Goslar, the trial against whom was

[30] *Gesta Treverorum continuata* IV, 401: "in ipsa civitate Treveri tres fuisse scolas hereticorum, publicatum est."

[31] Ibid.: "exusta est ibi quedam Lucardis, que sanctissime vite putabatur, que incredibili lamentatione lugebat Luciferum iniuste de celo extrusum, quem volebat replorare denuo in celum."

[32] Patschovsky, *Zur Ketzervelfolgung,* 656; Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller, "Black Sabbath Masses: Fictitious Rituals and Real Inquisitions," in Christoph Auffarth and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *The Fall of the Angels* (Leiden and Boston, 2004), 176–90, 176.

[33] For an overview, see Illaria Ramelli, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis. A Critical Assessment from New Testament to Eriugena* (Leiden and Boston, 2013); and Constantinos A. Patrides, "The Salvation of Satan," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24/8 (1967): 467–78.

conducted between 1222 and 1224. At the end of the trial, Minnike confessed to shocking errors, including the belief in the devil's return to the Glory at the end of time, a belief in a woman called Wisdom, dwelling in heaven and being greater than the Virgin Mary (probably echoing concepts of personalized Holy Wisdom),[34] and the contempt for matrimony. Eventually, he was condemned as a Manichean.[35]

For a long time, historians considered Conrad of Marburg to have been involved in Minnike's case.[36] Although Patschovsky seriously questioned his participation, pointing out that the earliest note about it, included in the New Chronicle of St. Peter of Erfurt, comes as late as in the 1270s, there nonetheless exists a connection between the trial against Minnike and Conrad of Marburg: Minnike's main judge, the bishop Conrad of Hildeshem, is explicitly mentioned in *Vox in Rama* as one of the men reporting to the pope about the existence of the Luciferian sect. The roles of both Minnike's and Lucarde's cases as components from which the Luciferian imagery was constructed must therefore be considered. It is, however, appropriate to distinguish between their beliefs and the doctrine about Lucifer's conquest of heaven. Their beliefs probably did influence the character of the Luciferian scheme, but they were not identical with it.

Besides Lucarde's belief, the *Gesta Treverorum* briefly mentions certain perverse practices, which might also be relevant for the construction of Luciferian imagery. There is nonetheless no explicit connection made between Lucarde and these obscenities, and nothing indicates that either

[34] See Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2016), 190–206.

[35] For the verdict over Minnike, see Harzheim, ed., *Concilia Germaniae* III, 515–16. For the overview of the case, see Balthasar Kaltner, *Konrad von Marburg und die Inquisition in Deutschland* (Prague, 1892), 90–95; and Lea, *History of Inquisition* 2:324–25. While Kaltner viewed Minnike as "nothing else than a follower of the neo-Manichean error" (*Konrad von Marburg,* 94), Lea adopted a more nuanced stance and emphasized the supposed connection of Minnike's opinion to what he calls "mystic pantheism" of the twelfth and early thirteenth century (Lea, *History of Inquisition* 2:324). According to the late Modern Chronicle of St. Peter, Minnike was burnt at the stake. As Alexander Patschovsky points out, however, this information might well be imprecise, influenced by the logic of later inquisitional procedure, recognizing the death penalty only for relapsed heretics; "Zur Ketzerverfolgung," 693.

[36] Kaltner, *Konrad von Marburg,* 90–95; Lea, *History of the Inquisition* 2:325.

motif was presented as characteristic of one single sect. The obscenities are ascribed to some other of the various heretics from Trier:

> Some [of the heretics] redeemed their own mothers from consanguinity with 18 pence and married them. Others kissed a pale man and a cat and did even worse things.[37]

Here, it is important to stress that neither cat worship, including the practice of kissing the animal, nor incestuous orgies were innovations introduced during Conrad's campaign. They are high-medieval anti-heretical topoi, used typically but not exclusively for the demonization of the Cathars and reappear multiple times in various sources. The first mention of alleged heretical cat worship appears as early as the first half of the eleventh century, when the Benedictine Paul of Chartres reports on certain heretical canons from Orleans, burned at the stake in 1022, and subsequently this motif occurs in the satirical work *De nugis curialium* by the Oxford archdeacon Walter Map (ca. 1180).[38] A few years later, the Parisian professor of theology Alan of Lille connected this stereotype to the Cathars, when he suggested the etymology of the name Cathar from the word *cattus* [a cat], because, as he explains, Lucifer appears to the heretics in the shape of this animal.[39] Cat worship is also documented in visual culture of the early thirteenth century. As Hergemöller importantly noticed, in the Viennese *Bible moralisée* (ca. 1215), a richly illuminated exemplar of the Scripture destined to educate French royal courtiers, a cat-like animal appears repeatedly in illustrations depicting biblical scenes of idolatry. In one of them, related to the idolatry scene from 1 Maccabees, cat worshippers are introduced as "the Albigensians,

[37] *Gesta Treverorum continuata* IV, 401: "alii matres proprias, redimentes consanguinitatem, que ibi erat, per 18 denarios, in coniugium sumebant, alii pallidum hominem vel etiam cattum osculabantur, et adhuc peiora faciebant."

[38] See n. 9 above.

[39] Alanus de Insulis, *De fide catholica contra haereticos libri quator* 1.63 (PL 210:366), with other possible etymologies of the name Cathar from *catha*, word of an obscure origin which Alan translated as "flux" and interpreted as the reference to the Cathars' sexual promiscuity, and also from a word for "pure," probably referring to the ancient Greek word *καθαρός*: "Hi dicuntur Cathari, id est *diffluentes per vitia,* a catha, quod est *fluxus;* vel cathari, quasi *casti,* quia se castos et justos faciunt. Vel Cathari dicuntur a *cato,* quia, ut dicitur, osculantur posteriora catti, in cujus specie, ut dicunt, apparet eis Lucifer."

infidels of our time."[40] The name Albigensians denoted the Languedocian Cathars.[41] The motif of cat worship is documented also in the Rhine valley. In the late twelfth-century description of the interrogation of a demon during an exorcism,[42] performed with the assistance of the Benedictine abbess Hildegard of Bingen, the demon is forced to expose the vices of a certain Cathar group from Mainz, including the practice of kissing the devil in the form of a "white cat, big as a medium-sized dog, covered with bird feathers on both sides." The passage further indicates that the cat worship topos was widespread already in the decades prior to Conrad's inquisition. What Conrad did was to incorporate this motif into a systematic description of the Luciferian ritual.

The same can be said about another motif found in the *Gesta,* namely the accusation of incest. It was a general strategy of discrediting various allegedly antinomian heretics of the twelfth century, who reportedly detested matrimony. The typical argument, explicitly formulated, among others, by the Cistercian Geoffroy of Auxerre, secretary of Bernard of Clairvaux, claims that since the heretics regarded matrimony as void of

[40] Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss*, 143–46.

[41] The name derives from the city of Albi, one of the centers of the Cathar movement in Languedoc. For an overview, see Malcom Barber, *The Cathars: Dualist Heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages* (London, 2014), esp. 34–70.

[42] Dendermonde, Bibliothek der Abeti St. Pieters-en-Paulus, Nr. 9, fol. 170v–173r. The manuscript is included in a large codex predominantly containing works by Hildegard of Bingen, and apparently consists of multiple textual layers. Uwe Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "Cathares,"* 387–95, treats the passages about the Cathar sect as a part of the context of Conrad's inquisition; his assumption, however, does not seem to be very well justified. The description of this sect's depravity in fact differs a great deal from the Luciferian imagery introduced during Conrad's campaign: The heretics are said to worship Lucifer mainly for material profit, not as a future conqueror of heaven. Moreover, they reportedly killed infants born from the heretic orgy and made certain malicious powder from their bodies. Both these motifs are missing from the sources emerging from Conrad of Marburg's campaign. The description is thus more likely older, perhaps from the late twelfth century. For this argument see František Novotný and David Zbíral, "Démon zrcadlem pravdy: Teologie, morální ponaučení a hereze v porýnském líčení exorcismu z okolí roku 1200," *Religio: Revue pro religionistiku* 29/1 (2021): 57–85, 64–67.

meaning, they considered all sexual relationships equal, including incestuous ones.[43]

The "pale man" allegedly kissed by the heretics may denote a haunting, demonic apparition: the bull *Vox in Rama* mentions the sectarian practice of kissing "a strangely pale human with utterly black eyes," apparently rather a demon than an actual mortal human.[44] A strange pale man seems to be a loyal companion of Conrad's inquisition: It is further mentioned in the petition criticizing the inquisitor's methods, sent by the Mainz archbishop to the pope just days before Conrad's death.[45] In the *Gesta,* however, the motif of the pale man is not yet explicitly mentioned in the context of Devil worship, which again suggests that the whole concept of the diabolical sect was perhaps under development, but not fully established during the Trier archiepiscopal synod. The association between heretics and pale skin itself constituted a long known anti-heretical topos. The bishop Wazo of Liège had complained already in the first half of the eleventh century that some people hastily identified others as heretics only because of their pale skin.[46] Temporarily and geographically more proximate, the motif of the pale heretic appears in the early 1160s in a letter by Hildegard of Bingen to the Clergy of Cologne,[47] and around 1220 in an *exemplum* (short moral story) by the Cistercian

[43] Geoffrey of Auxerre, *Sermones super Apocalypsim*, ed. Ferruccio Gastaldelli (Rome, 1970), 210.

[44] *Vox in Rama,* ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss*, 28.

[45] Quoted in *Chronica Albrici monachi Trium Fontium*, ed. P. Scheffer-Boichorst, MGH SS 23 (Hannover, 1874), 931: "Et magister nulli quantumvis alte persone locum dedit legitime defensionis, nec etiam confiteri proprio sacerdoti, sed accusatum oportuit confiteri se hereticum esse, buffonem, cattum, pallidum virum et huiusmodi monstra diffidentie pacis in osculo salutasse."

[46] See the letter of Wazo to the Bishop of Châlons, quoted in the *Gesta episcoporum Tungrensium, Traiectensium et Leodensium* 2.63, ed. R. Koepke, MGH SS 7 (Hannover, 1846), 228.

[47] The letter, dated by its editor to the year 1163, mentions certain people seduced by the Devil, who were expected to come forth with pale faces ("populus iste qui hoc faciet, a diabolo seductus et missus, pallida facie ueniet"); Lieven van Acker, ed., *Hildegardis Bingensis Epistolarium,* vol. 1, CCCM 91 (Turnhout, 1991), 40.

Caesarius of Heisterbach.[48] Caesarius's participation in the pursuit of the Luciferians has been considered, notably by Hergemöller, and the argument has been developed further by Brunn. In the mid-1230s, Caesarius wrote a hagiography of the Thuringian landgravine Elisabeth, in which he repeatedly praises her confessor, Conrad of Marburg. He was furthermore the correspondent of a notorious companion of Conrad, a certain John known as the "Executioner of heretics."[49] Just like cat worship and incestuous intercourse, the kissing of a pale man should be viewed as a component from which the Luciferian scheme was constructed, but not yet in Trier in 1231. These carnal obscenities and the doctrine about Lucifer's ascension are presented as different offences independent of one another, disconnected examples of various depravities the various heretics commit.

Thematically, a third category of errors appears in the record: anticlerical opinions. The list of these is, in fact, more extensive than the notes about crying for Lucifer and the various obscenities:

> And more sects were there. Many [of the heretics] were educated in the Scripture, which they had translated into German. Others were practicing a second baptism, others did not believe in the body of the Lord, others claimed that a sinful priest cannot properly consecrate the body of the Lord. Others claimed that the body of the Lord can be consecrated by whomsoever, a man or a woman, ordained or not, in a mug or a chalice alike, at whatever place. Others held confirmation and unction for needless. Others dishonoured the supreme pontiff, clergy and the monks, others denied the effects of ecclesiastical supplications for the dead. . . . Others held every day for equal, refusing to feast and fast, so that on feast days they worked, and ate meat on Good Friday.[50]

[48] Caesarius Heisterbacensis, *Dialogus Miraculorum* 5.18, ed. Joseph Strange, 2 vols. (Bonn, Brussel, Cologne, 1851), 1:296; Fontes Christiani 86/3 (Turnhout, 2009), 1008.

[49] Caesarius listed this writing "Against the heresy about Lucifer" among his works, which he mentions in his letter to another Cistercian, Peter of Marienstatt, probably not long before his death in the late 1230s; Alfons Hilka, ed., *Die Wundergeschichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach,* vol. 1 (Bonn, 1933), 6.

[50] *Gesta Treverorum continuata* IV, 401: "Et plures erant secte, et multi eorum instructi erant scripturis sanctis, quas habebant in Theutonicum translatas. Et alii quidem baptisma iterabant, alii corpus Domini non credebant, alii corpus Domini

The most important conclusion which can be drawn from this description is that despite Utz Tremp's claim about Conrad persecuting "ultimately the Cathars,"[51] the described teachings do not much resemble Cathar doctrines—especially the lay celebration of Eucharist, a sacrament which the Cathars were recognized as rejecting altogether.[52] They are in fact much closer to the doctrines of the other major heterodox movement of the thirteenth century, the Waldensians.[53] The mention of the lay celebration of Eucharist among certain Rhineland heretics, described by the Benedictine abbot Everwin of Steinfeld in the mid-twelfth century, well before the formation of the Waldensians, nonetheless suggests that it might constitute a typical element of the heterodoxy popular along the Rhine valley in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, neither specifically Waldensian nor Cathar.[54] In any case, the description of anticlerical errors in the *Gesta Treverorum* further undermines the simple identification of the Luciferians with the Cathars as regards the real target of Conrad of Marburg's persecution. From Trier, nothing specifically Cathar is reported. The doctrinal expressions are generally anticlerical, the inculpation of obscenities is generally anti-heretic, and even Lucarde's crying for Lucifer cannot be interpreted as an echo of Catharism.

a malis sacerdotibus non posse confici dicebant, alii indifferenter corpus Domini a viro et muliere, ordinato et non ordinato, in scutella et calice in ubique locorum posse confici dicebant. Alii confirmationem et inuncionem superfluam iudicabant, alii summo pontifici, clero et religioni derogabant, alii defunctis suffragia ecclesie prodesse negabant. . . . Alii dies omnes equipedentes, feriari et ieiunare nolebant, unde et diebus festis operabantur et in parasceve carnes manducabant."

[51] Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie*, 332.

[52] For an influential and widespread source (extant in more than fifty manuscripts), see the early thirteenth-century north Italian fictional disputation between a Catholic and a dualist heretic, called Patarine in most of the manuscripts, holding, however, clearly Cathar doctrines. See Carola Hoécker, ed., *Disputatio inter Catholicum et Paterinum hereticum: Die Auseinandersetzung der katholischen Kirche mit den italienischen Katharern im Spiegel einer kontroverstheologischen Streitschrift des 13. Jahrhunderts,* Edizione nazionale dei testi mediolatini 4 (Florence, 2001). For the edition of the passages on the rejection of Eucharist, see ibid., 83–88.

[53] Duly noticed by Paul L. Pixton, *The German Episcopacy and the Implementation of the Decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council* (Leiden and Boston, 1995), 382.

[54] In a letter by Everwin to Bernard of Clairvaux, PL 182:678.

The motif of Lucifer's eschatological conquest is echoed in no Cathar source except maybe for the public confession of two dualist heretics in Italy in 1229, which mentions the opinion that the angel Lucifer was in fact deceived by the devil and an unsuccessful attempt was made by a "good angel" to redeem him after his fall.[55] The resemblance of this motif to the belief in Lucifer's ascension, however, is only remote; in addition, this idea seems to be completely marginal throughout sources about Cathar teachings compared to other Cathar cosmological speculations.

In contrast, the anticlericalism described in the *Gesta* appears to reflect the world of religious nonconformism in the Rhineland in the first half of the thirteenth century. Specifically, the refusal to fast seems to be one of the most common expressions of religious dissidence in the region at that time and seems to be mentioned, for example, in the *Annals of Marbach,* and also in Caesarius of Heisterbach's recollection of the burning of certain heretics in Sinzig, southeast of Cologne, in the late 1220s.[56] Of the major heterodox milieus, Conrad is much more likely to have met the Waldensians than the Cathars. This hypothesis is supported by an extant *interrogatorium* (list of suggested questions) for the investigation of Waldensian heretics, which almost certainly originated from Conrad's period and area or activity.[57] This indicates that the Church judicial institutions, whether episcopal tribunals or the newly established papal inquisition, dealt with the Waldensian movement on a regular basis. In contrast to this *interrogatorium,* the text which accompanies it in the manuscript tradition, the confession of a certain former heretic Burchard from Leuven (then, in the archdiocese of Cologne), refers without the slightest doubt to the teachings of the Cathars and presents them as almost extinct.[58] Both Alexander Patschovsky and Daniela Müller duly

[55] The so-called public confession of Peter and Andrew; Jean Guiraud (ed.), *Histoire de l'Inquisition au Moyen Âge II: L'Inquisition au XIII^e siècle en France, en Espagne et en Italie* (Paris, 1938), 456–57.

[56] *Annales Marbacenses,* ed. Hermann Bloch, MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum 9 (Hannover, 1907), 93; Hilka, *Wundergeschichten* 1:184.

[57] See Patschovsky, "Zur Ketzerverfolgung," 651–65; and Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 40–48.

[58] *Error Katerorum,* ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 45–46. Burchard's description of the sect he used to be a member of refers symptomatically to Cathar rituals and teachings: notably, the so-called consolamentum, or the Cathar baptism, and

note that this Burchard confessed to meeting only one heretic besides his family in twenty-four years, and in the last twelve years he met none. On this basis they both conclude that Catharism was probably a forlorn, barely surviving phenomenon in the upper Rhineland of the early 1230s.[59] After all, there are no further clues pointing towards it in the region between 1200 and 1230.[60]

To conclude this section on the *Gesta Treverorum,* the chronicle record does not describe the Luciferian sect, nor does it refer specifically to the heresiologists' knowledge about the Cathars. It just mentions some of the motifs Luciferian imagery subsequently employed and juxtaposes them with Waldensianism-echoing anticlerical opinions, actually present in the upper Rhineland of the 1230s. That Conrad persecuted not only Cathars but also some Waldensians was assumed by Patschovsky and Lambert;[61] neither of them, however, discusses the diachronic relation between the two targets of persecution. In contrast to the *Gesta,* there stands another source, which contains both the imagery of a Luciferian

self-identification of believers as "The Good Men," typical for heterodox groups known to heresiologists as the Cathars.

[59] Patschovsky, "Zur Ketzerverfolgung," 665; Müller, "Conrad de Marbourg," 75.

[60] Before the year 1200, in contrast, dualist heretics called Cathars are reported repeatedly from the region. There has been lively debate about whether the heretics burned in Cologne, described in the Premonstratensian Everwin of Steinfeld's letter to Bernard of Clairvaux (after 1150) as practicing baptism by the imposition of hands and avoiding meals of carnal origin, can be conceived as certain "proto-Cathars" (PL 182:676–80). Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "Cathares,"* 150–60; and Zbíral, *Největší hereze,* 15–17, are both rather skeptical, pointing out than any clues pointing towards dualist beliefs are missing from Everwin's letter. A dualist movement called the Cathars is criticized by another abbot, Eckbert of Schönau, in his extensive *Sermones contra Catharos*, written between 1163 and 1165 (PL 195:11–98). Several sources mention the burning of certain Cathar (alternatively "Catafrige") heretics in 1163 Cologne. See above all *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, ed. G. Waitz, MGH SS 18 (Hannover, 1880), 114. Criticism towards Cathar dualists appears notably in both works by and hagiographies about the mystic Hildegard of Bingen: see Theodoricus Epternacensis, *Vita sanctae Hildegardis uirginis* 3.22 (ed. M. Klaes, CCCM 126 [Turnhout, 1993]; PL 197:126). See also the passages from the Dendermonde manuscript discussed above, which nonetheless uses the name Cathars without any doctrine ascribed to them.

[61] Patschovsky, "Konrad von Marburg und die Ketzer," 73–74; Lambert, *The Cathars*, 120.

sect and clear references to Catharism. This is the so-called public confession of the Cologne Cathar Lepzet, known under its incipit *Error Katerorum*.

Error Katerorum

The manuscript tradition of Lepzet's confession is prominently tied to the so-called *Anonymous of Passau,* a dossier of polemical writings against heretics, Jews, and pagans, compiled probably about the year 1260 and extant in dozens of manuscripts.[62] Following the tradition of the *Anonymous,* the *Error Katerorum* was typically copied together with two other anti-heretical texts from the 1230s: another confession, made by a certain heretic Burchard from Leuven, and a questionnaire for investigation of the Waldensians.[63] Hergemöller further divides the manuscript tradition according to the orthographical variants of the heretic's name: Lepzet, Lepret, or Lebzer.[64] The earliest and most complete manuscript of the *Error,* written at the turn of the fourteenth century, is found in Sankt Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 974.[65]

The connection between the *Error Katerorum* and Conrad of Marburg has been unanimously accepted by historians at least since Alexander Patschovsky pointed out content parallels between the *Error,* the bull

[62] For a detailed study of the manuscript tradition of the *Anonymous*, see Alexander Patschovsky, *Der Passauer Anonymus: Ein Sammelwerk über Ketzer, Juden, Antichrist aus der Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts.* (Stuttgart, 1968).

[63] Both the temporal and spatial proximity of these texts to the *Error Katerorum* is recognized by Patschovsky, "Zur Ketzerverfolgung," 651–65, as well as Müller, Conrad de Marbourg, 75–76, Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss*, 43–44, and Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "Cathares,"* 507–17. What appears significant above all is the label for Burchard's sect, "Alta secta" (a *profound* sect), paralleling the moniker of the Cologne heretics as "the Cathars of the *profound* life." Other indications include the Church jurisdictional connection between the cities Leuven and Cologne, and notices about the sectarians suffocating their own co-members and proclaiming them *martyrs*. Compare *Error Katerorum,* ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 46, and ibid., 48.

[64] For an analysis of the manuscript tradition, see Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss*, 40–42. For another overview of the extant manuscripts see Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "Cathares,"* 507–9.

[65] Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 40. For the edition, see ibid., 46–48.

Vox in Rama, and some passages from the *Gesta Treverorum.*[66] Further, the linking of the Luciferian imagery to Conrad of Marburg's inquisition at Cologne in the early 1230s is testified in the chronicle by the Benedictine Aubrey of Trois-Fontaines, writing shortly after 1240. Aubrey describes a "synagogue of Lucifer," discovered in the city, where a certain *imago* of the rebellious angel served the heretics as an oracle.[67] Finally, no other major persecution of heretics took place in Cologne during the first half of the thirteenth century. Considering all these circumstances there can be no doubt that the *Error Katerorum* originates from the turmoil of Conrad's inquisition. The text opens with the incipit

> Error of the Cathars (*Katerorum*) of the profound life, which the heretic Lepzet exposed in front of the burghers and people of Cologne.[68]

The spelling of the sect's name in the incipit connotes the German word *Kater,* or male cat, which connects the sectarians to the repulsive practices of cat worship. Its first part describes the initiation of a heretic novice as follows: the adept of the sect is allegedly first demanded to "touch the altars of all the saints with his nude posterior," and to renounce the Church sacraments. As soon as he accomplishes this task, he is introduced into the house of the sectarian master, where he meets "a horribly huge black human with a pallid face," and subsequently a giant toad, both of whom he kisses. Thus, he becomes "a brother of the sect."[69]

The link between the devil and a monstrous black man, or "Ethiop,"[70] was widespread, particularly connected to the report by the eleventh-century chronicler Adémar of Chabannes on the Orléans heretics.[71] It is

[66] Patschovsky, "Zur Ketzerverfolgung," 651–65.

[67] *Chronica Albrici,* 931: "Et ultra Coloniam fuit quedam synagoga hereticorum, ubi responsa dabat ymago Luciferi. . . ."

[68] *Error Katerorum,* ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 46: "Error Katerorum de alta vita, quem prodidit Lepzet hereticus in facie burgensium et populi Coloniensis." The adjective "alta" could be equally translated "high."

[69] Ibid.: ". . . occurit ei statura horribilis facie pallido homo niger, quem osculans procedit, et tunc occurit ei bufo maximus admodum urne grossus hyanti ore, quem similiter osculatur, et sic factus frater secte. . . ."

[70] See Rudolf Simek, *Monster im Mittelalter. Die phantastische Welt der Wundervölker und Fabelwesen* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2015), 200–201.

[71] Ademarus Cabannensis, *Chronicon* 3.59 (ed. Bourgain, CCCM 129): "adorabant diabolum, qui primo eis in Etyopis, deinde angeli lucis figuratione ap-

also mentioned in the works by the Cistercian Caesarius of Heisterbach, significantly together with the appearance of a giant toad—although the author never alludes to the practice of kissing the animal.[72] The motif of touching altars with one's nude posterior is reminiscent of another story in Caesarius's work, about a certain depraved heretic from Toulouse, who "emptied his entrails" next to the altar in a church and "cleansed his posterior with the altar shroud."[73] This narrative Caesarius borrowed for his famous collection of exempla *Dialogus miraculorum* from the *Hystoria Albigensis,* a propagandistic chronicle of the first stages of the Albigensian Crusade by another Cistercian, Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay.[74] Though neither motif is exclusive to Caesarius, their occurrence together in a single text strongly indicates the Cistercian's influence on the *Error Katerorum*. This becomes even stronger with the analysis of another vicious ceremony described in the *Error*. It takes place in a certain cellar of the heretics. There, a "bishop or master" of the sect denudes his posterior and inserts a silver spoon inside, which constitutes a heretical "oblation"—apparently an innuendo to a coprophagous practice. Next, the heretics sit down around a column. Subsequently, a black cat comes forth, climbs up this column to a "light" (perhaps a candle), where it raises its tail and exposes its posterior for the heretics to kiss. Then the cat extinguishes the light, and after this signal, the sectarians commit themselves to carnal orgies including sodomy. Thus, as the text concludes, "the mystery of iniquity is completed."[75]

parebat, et eis multum cotidie argentum deferebat"; Martin Bouquet et al., eds., *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France* 10:159.

[72] See Caesarius Heisterbacensis, *Dialogus Miraculorum* 5.5, 5.6 (ed. Strange, 1:284, 286; Fontes Christiani 86/3:974, 980): "daemon quidam in Aethyopis effigie, magnus et nigerrimus," "diabolus in bufonem maximum, ad instar gallinae, se transformans"; see also Hilka, *Wundergeschichten* 1:87, 88.

[73] Caesarius Heisterbacensis, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.21 (ed. Strange, 1:303, Fontes Christiani 86/3:1028): "Juxta altare maioris ecclesiae ventrem suum purgavit, et palla altaris ipsas immunditias detersit."

[74] Petrus Vallis Caernaii, *Hystoria Albigensis,* PL 213:552–54.

[75] *Error Katerorum,* ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 46: "ita consumatur misterium iniquitatis." Cf. 2 Thess 2:7.

The motif of heretical orgies had originated already in the late antiquity, most notably in the works of Augustine.[76] In the high medieval context it first appears in the chronicle by the Benedictine Paul of Chartres in the eleventh century and subsequently in the autobiographical chronicle of another Benedictine, Guibert of Nogent, in the early twelfth century.[77] Once again, it was Caesarius of Heisterbach who raised this accusation against a certain heretical group from Verona.[78] Considering Caesarius's documented interest in the pursuit of the Luciferians, which will be discussed further, we can confirm his influence on the rendering of the fictitious Luciferian ritual as proposed by Hergemöller and Brunn.[79]

The *Error Katerorum,* however, does not end with the description of the heretical ceremony, nor are the sources of its motifs exhausted in the writings by Caesarius. Other sources are to be identified in the second part of the text, which describes the sectarian doctrine. These are the passages which for the most part evoke the Cathars' doctrines—more precisely, their polemical inversion. The heretics allegedly believed that

> God in heaven, worshipped by the Holy Church, is an unjust God, because by unjust force he expelled from heaven their god Lucifer, whom they call their supreme father, who created all that is visible, as they say, and human bodies. They expect him to regain his kingdom at the end of the world by force.[80]

In the core of this statement lies without any doubt an inversion of Cathar dualism. The heretics are said not to detest but to worship the creator of the material world as their god. *Error Katerorum* inverts also a less common but also specifically Cathar mythical motif—the intercourse be-

[76] Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus manichaeorum* 2.7, and *De haeresibus* 46.13.

[77] See n. 9 above.

[78] Caeasarius Heisterbacensis, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.24 (ed. Strange, 1:307–8, Fontes Christiani 86/3:1044).

[79] Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "Cathares,"* 517–19.

[80] *Error Katerorum,* ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 46–47: "Credunt predicti Katari, quod deus celi, quem sancta colit ecclesia, sit deus iniustus, eo quod per violentiam iniustam de celo expulerit Luciferum deum suum, quem vocant supremum patrem suum, qui omnia visibilia creavit, ut dicunt, et corpora humana, quem putant in fine seculi per violentam debere regnum suum recuperare. . . ."

tween the sun the moon; for the Cathars impure,[81] for the Luciferians laudable:

> [They further say] that the sun and the moon will spawn a son, who will be the Antichrist, and with his help, [Lucifer] will defeat Michael and God with his angels will confirm the reign of Lucifer.[82]

The *Error Katerorum* is based massively on the demonization of Cathar teachings, but not exclusively so. To support Lucifer in his struggle, the heretics reportedly underwent harsh penances: Lepzet himself confessed to wearing a *cilicium* (rough goat skin doormat) on his body for five years.[83] These reported efforts to help Lucifer ascend remind one of the case of Lucarde crying for Lucifer, discussed above, but also the private penitential practices performed in order to help the souls of the deceased to be released from purgatory. These practices are not very well documented.[84] The question remains open whether not only knowledge on the part of heresiologists, but also certain features of popular religion could have played a role in the genesis of the Luciferian scheme.

[81] Compare the public exposure of the Cathar heresy by the converts James and Micosmus, probably from the early twelfth century: "They further believe the sun and the moon to be the devil, fornicating each month like a man with a harlot" (Paolo Montanari, ed., "La 'Manifestatio heresis Catharorum' attribuita a Bonaccorso," in Grado G. Merlo, ed., "Storia ereticale e antiereticale del Medioevo: Atti del XXXV Convegno di studi sulla Riforma e sui movimenti religiosi in Italia," *Bollettino della Società di studi valdesi* 179 (1996): 49–76, at 73. For an analogical motif of a monthly intercourse between the sun and the moon, see Dondain, ed., "Tractatus de Hereticis," 312.

[82] *Error Katerorum,* ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 47: ". . . ita quod sol et luna simul unum puerum procreabunt, qui erit antichristus, cui [*sic*] auditorio [Lucifer] vincet Michahel, et deus celi et angeli eius, et firmabit [*sic*] regnum Luciferi." This grammatically awkward sentence has a intelligible parallel in a manuscript from Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 2714, fols. 63v–64r, ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss*, 57. The text combines sentences about the Manicheans from *De haeresibus* by Augustine with a few passages from the *Error Katerorum*, including the one about the spawning of the Antichrist and the conquest of heaven: ". . . sol et luna unum puerum procreabunt, qui erit Antichristus, cuius auditorio [Lucifer] vincet Mychaelem, et deus celi, et eius angeli firmabunt regnum Luciferi."

[83] Ibid., 47.

[84] See Gavin Fort, "Suffering Another's Sin: Proxy Penance in the Thirteenth Century," *Journal of Medieval History* 44/2 (2018), 202–30.

Subsequently, the text switches between brief descriptions of perverse, even violent antinomianism and anti-clerical opinions, partially overlapping with the *Gesta Treverorum*. The heretics are said to detest matrimony and commit incest, paying their own mothers and sisters off from the bond of consanguinity for precise sums of money: they pay 18 pence to the mother, 6 to a sister, 9 to a sister if they desire to abuse her together with the mother. Beside this atrocity and the approval of sodomy, they refuse to fast, reject pilgrimages, and despise the Roman Church as a "Great prostitute," conceiving their own sect as the only true Church.[85] Here for the first time appears a discontinuity in the imagery. While the logic of the connection between Lucifer worship and the atrocities is clear—the heretics worship the master of all evil—the note about their self-perception as the only true Church reflects the ecclesiological exclusivism of many high medieval heterodox movements, including the Cathars and the Waldensians, for all of whom strict asceticism was constitutive, not any degree of libertinism or antinomianism.[86]

The final part of the *Error Katerorum* describes the ordination of a heretic "bishop," apparently a Cathar one. Such a bishop-elect is since his very birth subject to strict dietary prescriptions, nurtured without any meal of carnal origin. As an adult he performs a ritual which consists of the believer's supplications for the "good end" and the salvation of the soul, spoken in German, and the subsequent imposition of the bishop's hands upon the supplicant's head, complemented with the phrase "You are becoming a good man," again in German.[87] This ritual sequence closely resembles the Cathar baptism called *consolamentum,* initiating a

[85] *Error Katerorum,* ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 47.

[86] For a general overview, see Herbert Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter* (Berlin, 1935); Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Oxford, 2002). For an overview of Cathar traditions, see Anne Brenon, *Les Cathares: Vie et mort d'une Eglise chrétienne* (Paris, 1996); and Lambert, *Cathars*. For the Waldensians, see Peter Biller, T*he Waldenses, 1170–1530: Between a Religious Order and a Church* (Aldershot, 2001).

[87] *Error Katerorum,* ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 47–48: *"du werdest ein gut man."*

Cathar believer into the class of "the Perfect," or "the Good men."[88] The whole text concludes with the description of a macabre practice: When the heretics initiate anybody in a state of danger, they let him choose whether he prefers to be counted among "martyrs" or "confessors" in the Kingdom of God, and either suffocate him or let him starve to death according to his choice.[89] In this whole closing section, the discontinuous character of the *Error Katerorum* resurfaces once again. No Lucifer worship is mentioned; to the contrary, the heretics are said to justify their imposition of hands from the New Testament.[90]

As this analysis implies, the *Error Katerorum* is not a coherent text. It mixes obscene and demonic imageries with references to actual heterodox teachings. Crucially, a comparison with the *Gesta Treverorum,* with due attention to the differing genres of both texts, suggests a profound difference with respect to the persecutors' targets. The inquisitor's focus turned from the Waldensian-echoing anticlericalism to the Cathars—not only the concept of (demonized) dualism, but also elements of the Cathar rituals. It has already been argued that Conrad's discovery of any thriving Cathar movements appears unlikely. The substantial difference between the *Gesta Treverorum* and the *Error Katerorum* would then lie in the latter's focus on concepts of heresy, which were completely or almost absent from Conrad's environment, surviving not in reality but merely in the imagination. In the *Error Katerorum,* the concept of Cathar dualism works as a thematic glue pulling together diverse motifs. While some of these motifs accent the false teachings and moral depravity of the heretics, others emphasize the social danger the sect constitutes. Its members are said not only to reject all Church sacraments, notably baptism and the Eucharist, but also to steal the consecrated hosts during mass and burn them, as well as to loathe Holy Water "like a poison," rubbing it from their skin when accidentally sprinkled. They are dangerous not only to souls, but also to bodies, murdering people to please Lucifer. Lepzet himself confessed to thirty murders, the text claims. This symptomatic

[88] This includes the practice of the imposition of hands, which appears to originate from the areas of Languedoc and Lombardy. For an overview, see Barber, *Cathars*, 76–81.

[89] *Error Katerorum,* ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 48.

[90] Acts 8:14,17

focus on the notion of Cathar dualism and on the physical danger the heretics represented calls for due analysis.

THE SHIFT IN THE TARGET

The notions of a sacrilegious and violent heresy place in close parallel two propagandistic campaigns, which took place shortly before the beginning of Conrad's inquisition. The first of these is again the propaganda against the Albigensians, the dualist Cathars from Languedoc. According to its claims, the depraved count Raymond VI of Toulouse not only provided his patronage to the heretics, including the previously mentioned altar defiler, but actively hired mercenaries to raid churches and monasteries.[91]

The second campaign has nothing to do with the Cathars. It was aimed against the rustic rebellion in the region of Stedingen, northwest of Bremen, occurring between 1231 and 1234. The charges against the so-called Stedinger, initially raised at the Bremen archdiocesan synod in March 1231,[92] were elaborated by the pope in June the same year, and importantly in October 1232, when Gregory officially declared a crusade against the rebels.[93] The pontiff repeated their inculpation again in January 1233, and in June of the same year, i.e., at the time when he issued the bull *Vox in Rama*.[94] The Stedinger were said to torture clerics during their raids, "nailing them to the walls . . . to the disgrace of the Crucified," as well as desecrate hosts by trampling. They were also reported to make idols (*simulacra*) for their cultic purposes, seek the advice of demons, and consult soothsayers.[95] In the chronicle of Albert of Stade, written some twenty five years after the affair but, nonetheless, apparently well

[91] Petrus Vallis Caernaii, *Hystoria Albigensis,* PL 213:553.

[92] Hans F. G. J. Sudendorf, ed., *Registrum oder Merkwürdige Urkunden für die deutsche Geschichte* II (Jena, 1849–54), 156–58; Rolf Köhn, "Die Verketzerung der Stedinger durch der Bremer Fastensynode," *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 57 (1979): 75–78.

[93] *Epistulae Saeculi XIII* 1:393–94.

[94] On 26 July 1231, 29 October 1232, 19 January 1233, and 17 July 1233. See *Bremisches Urkundenbuch,* vol. 1, ed. Dietrich R. Ehmck (Osnabrück, 1874), 196–97; *Epistulae Saeculi XIII* 1:393–94; *Osnabrücker Urkundebuch,* vol. 2, ed. Friedrich Philippi (Osnabrück, 1896), 242–43; *Epistulae Saeculi XIII* 1:436–37.

[95] *Epistulae Saeculi XIII* 1:393–94.

informed about the course of the events and quoting the papal letters almost verbatim, the motif of the Stedinger idolatry is specified with a note about the veneration of the demon Asmodeus.[96] The papal letters even contain a reference to the fall of Lucifer, albeit merely metaphorical: the Stedinger leaders persuaded the folk to join their rebellion to drag them into perdition together with themselves, just like the reprobate Lucifer, who, in his grudge against mankind, strives to pull human souls into the lake of fire.[97] The parallels between the narratives about the Stedinger and the Luciferians have misled some scholars, notably Julio Baroja, into placing the two together.[98] Megan Cassidy-Welch assumes that Conrad of Marburg's anti-heretical sermons were in part aimed against the Stedinger.[99] There is, however, no evidence for such a claim. No anti-heretical activities headed by Conrad are recorded for the archdiocese of Bremen, and the inculpation of several noblemen in the late stage of the inquisitor's career directly contradicts the character of the Stedinger rebellion as a rustic upheaval against which the nobility should raise the sword. Nor is Christoph Maier right in assuming that the crusade against the Stedinger was declared purportedly as parallel and complementary to the crusade against the Luciferians.[100] The crusade against the Stedinger, openly declared on 29 October 1232, in fact preceded the declaration of the crusade against the Luciferians by more than eight months. I will argue that the connection between Conrad's inquisition and the Stedinger war went the opposite way. The campaign against the Luciferians was, during its very course, influenced by the propaganda against the Stedinger, and this inspiration was driven by political circumstances.

In order to discuss these circumstances and their impact on the events, it is necessary first to attempt to reconstruct the course of the events themselves, in the first place the chronological sequence of the *Gesta*

[96] *Annales Stadenses*, ed. G. H. Pertz and M. Lappenberg, MGH SS 16 (Hannover, 1859), 361–62. A hostile spirit named Asmodeus is mentioned in the biblical book of Tobit (6:3).

[97] Ibid., 361; *Epistulae Saeculi XIII* 1:393.

[98] Julio Caro Baroja, *The World of the Witches* (Chicago, 1964), 75–77.

[99] Megan Cassidy-Welch, "The Stedinger Crusade: War, Remembrance, and Absence in Thirteenth-Century Germany," *Viator* 44/2 (2013): 159–74, 162.

[100] Christoph T. Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge and New York, 1994), 55.

Treverorum and *Error Katerorum*. When did the inquisition in Cologne take place?

The *Chronica sancti Pantaleonis,* a continuation of the Royal Chronicle of Cologne written in 1237 with later continuation,[101] reports the widespread burning of heretics in the year 1232 and places it in the context of the ecclesiastical investigation of numerous scandals on the part of the Cologne archbishop Henry of Müllenark:[102]

> Many heresies were detected in Germany, and the heretics were punished with flames. The Archbishop of Cologne turned to Rome, to ask for revocation of the investigation carried out against him. After it was suspended, he returned in a few days, and then the situation quietened down.[103]

Although the chronicler reports the persecution of heretics "in Germany," the connection with the archbishop's journey suggests that he in fact refers to particular events in Cologne when he writes about the eventual calming of the situation. The report therefore allows us to contextualize the Cologne persecution to the year 1232—between the Trier affair and the issue of *Vox in Rama*.[104]

[101] See Carl-August Lückerath, "'Chronica Regia Coloniensis' und 'Chronica Sancti Pantaleonis' als Zeugnisse der mittelalterlichen Kölner Historiographie," in Georg Mölich, Uwe Neddermeyer, Wolfgang Schmitz, eds., *Spätmittelalterliche städtische Geschichtsschreibung in Köln und im Reich. Der "Koelhoffsche" Chronik und ihr historisches Umfeld*, Veröffentlichungen des Kölnischen Geschichtsvereins 43 (Cologne, 2001), 57–67. See also Uwe Israel, "Chronica S. Pantaleonis," in Graeme Dunphy, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle* (Brill Online, 2013).

[102] The archbishop was accused of multiple frauds and scandals. The actual root of the affair seems to be the prelate's conflict with the chapter of the Cathedral of St. Peter in Cologne. For an overview, see Michael Matscha, *Heinrich von Müllenark, Erzbischof von Köln (1225–1238)* (Siegburg, 1992), 153–84.

[103] *Chronica sancti Pantaleonis*, ed. Georg H. Pertz, MGH SS 17 (Hannover, 1861), 843: "In Teutonia multe hereses deteguntur, et heretici flammis puniuntur. Archiepiscopus Coloniensis Romam profiscitur, petens revocari inquisitionem contra se missam. Qua suspensa post paucos dies regreditur, et postmodum hec quievit."

[104] Michael Matscha assumes the archbishop was not present in Germany at all between late March and October 1232, on the basis of *silentio fontium* about him from his archdiocese during this whole period. In any case, he is attested to have stayed in Italy at least in May and June that year. Matscha, *Heinrich von Müllenark*,

While Brunn correctly points out that the physical aggressivity and openly blasphemous excesses of the Luciferians differs from the twelfth-century patterns of portraying heresy, he nonetheless overlooks the fact that this dramatic change occurred not at the beginning but in the course of Conrad of Marburg's campaign. Consequently, he is satisfied with the statement that certain individuals, above all Conrad of Marburg and Caesarius of Heisterbach, introduced a heresiological innovation. This explanation, however, needs to be extended with respect to the gradual character of the birth of the Luciferians. It is necessary to ask not merely who introduced the change but also what immediate circumstances motivated it. I will argue that this innovation indeed was a result of deliberations about heresy, but that these deliberations were far from arbitrary. The crucial driving force behind them was of a political character. Namely, it was the tension between two institutions ordered by the pope to suppress the heresy: the emerging papal inquisition and episcopal justice.

THE OPPOSITION

Besides differences in content, the persecutions in Trier and in Cologne contrasted in two other major respects: the extent of Conrad's judicial competence and the stance adopted by the local archbishop. From Trier, where Conrad did not yet operate as an independent judge, there are no indications that Dietrich did not endorse Conrad when he con-

162. There are other indirect indications which allow us to assume that the archbishop returned from Italy in late summer or early autumn 1232. On 12 July 1232, the pope issued a letter to the nobles and people of Cologne, ordering them to maintain and defend the local Church despite their archbishop having been put under investigation; *Epistulae saeculi XIII* 1:380–81. This might well be the actual outcome of Henry's audience at the Holy See. This hypothesis is supported by the course of the events recorded in the chronicle: the next record after the mention of Henry's travel to Rome informs us about the sacking of the town Fritzlar by the Thuringian landgrave Conrad the Younger, which took place during his conflict with the Mainz archbishop Siegfried III of Eppstein on 15 September 1232; *Chronica Sancti Pantaleonis*, 843; *Annales Erphodenses fratrum Praedicatorum*, ed. Georg H. Pertz, MGH SS 16 (Hannover, 1859), 27. It is therefore legitimate to assume that the persecution of heretics hit Cologne in summer 1232.

ducted the archdiocesan synod.[105] In Cologne, according to the *Chronica Sancti Pantaleonis,* the situation quietened after the archbishop Henry's return from Rome.[106] Although the record does not imply Henry's direct intervention against the trials, one can assume at least his reluctance to support them. At this time, Conrad had already become a sovereign judge,[107] with a considerable network of assistants and companions emerging around him. In this network, former heretics that had converted back to the Catholic faith played a prominent role, chiefly a Dominican Conrad Tors, and a certain John, nicknamed "the Executioner of heretics."[108] Certain denunciators were also recruited from the converted heretics: sources mention a vagrant woman Adelheid and her fellow Amfridus. [109]

The apparent tension—even conflict—between this growing inquisitorial initiative headed by Conrad of Marburg and the episcopal authorities has already been pointed out by Lothar Kolmer, together with the observation that it was not exclusive to Conrad's case: another pioneer

[105] It is assumed that the papal letter to the Trier archbishop Dietrich from 19 October 1231, in which the pontiff ordered the prelate to proceed with his anti-heretical fight, was issued in reaction to the archdiocesan synod where the heretics were condemned. See Harzheim, ed., *Concilia Germaniae* III, 540.

[106] Part of the manuscript tradition extends the sentence, noting that "(the hereses) have already been erased" (*Chronica sancti Pantaleonis*, 843, note *d*). Taking into account the context of the chronicle, just a few lines below the criticism of cruel and unjust persecution of "both real and alleged" heretics "across Germany," this note needs to be read as criticism of the inquisition rather than as praise for its effectiveness: many actions taken against the heresy were redundant and cost the lives of the innocent.

[107] The formal independence of Conrad's inquisition from the episcopal justice has been questioned, i.e., by Richard Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy in Medieval Germany* (Philadelphia, 1999), 15. Kieckhefer nevertheless agrees that the bishop's action against Conrad was motivated by their concern about possible "encroachment of their jurisdiction," not reluctance to the persecutions of heretics as such (ibid.).

[108] *Gesta Treverorum continuata* IV, 400; *Chronicon Wormatiense*, 168: "Johannes tortor hereticorum."

[109] The Mainz archbishop Siegfried mentions this Adelheid in his letter to the pope from summer 1233. He portrays her as a false convert, aiming to take revenge on her family which disinherited her. This must nonetheless be viewed in the context of the whole letter, complaining about Conrad's injustice; *Chronica Albrici*, 931–32.

papal inquisitor, Robert le Bougre, experienced similar difficulties, notably in the diocese of Clermont.[110]

In the case of Conrad, the tension between the inquisition and (arch)episcopal justice became most tangible at the archdiocesan synod in Mainz, in March 1233. The synod dealt in extenso with the problem of proliferating heresies. Its statutes contain, amongst numerous procedural specifications, a reminder of the bishop's duty to fight the propagators of errors. In turn they forbid anyone to preach without the local bishop's permission.[111] This prohibition obstructed a substantial instrument of Conrad's inquisition. When Conrad received the papal appointment in October 1231, he was not only entrusted to judge heretics, but also to preach against them, with the promise of indulgences for believers who attended his sermons during a period of twenty days.[112] The statutes of the Mainz synod made explicit what was detectable already in Cologne, 1232—opposition against a new judicial institution paralleling the diocesan tribunals.

Seeking Support

Put into a peculiar position, Conrad of Marburg's inquisition relied heavily on both ideological and institutional support. No such support, however, had been coming from the Holy See. The tasks that the pope assigned to Conrad were not related to his anti-heretical campaign. As the former confessor of the deceased Elisabeth of Thuringia, Conrad had become the head of the initiative for Elisabeth's canonization. In October 1232, Gregory IX ordered him to investigate (*inquirere*) "all legitimate witnesses" of the noblewoman's sainthood.[113] Conrad embraced this role of "inquisitor of sanctity" with just the same zeal as his anti-heretical

[110] Kolmer, *Ad capiendas vulpes*, 120–21. For the source on Robert le Bougre's conflict with the bishop of Clermont, see Giovanni G. Sbaraglia, *Bullarium Franciscanum sive Romanorum pontificum* I (Rome, 1759), 177–79. For an overview of the case, see Haskins, "Robert Le Bougre," 454–55.

[111] Franz Josef Mone (ed.), "Kircheverordungen der Bistümer Mainz und Strassburg aus dem 13. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberreins* 3 (1852): 135–39.

[112] Patschovsky, "Zur Ketzerverfolgung," 643.

[113] Louis Auvray, ed., *Les Registres de Grégoire IX*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1896), 548.

mission and already towards the end of 1232 reported the result of his inquiries to the pope.[114] The positive recognition Conrad enjoyed in Rome is apparent from other papal writings addressed to him. In October 1232, the pontiff ordered Conrad to protect the hospital in Marburg, founded by the landgravine Elisabeth herself.[115] Subsequently, in February 1233, he appointed him as a mediator of peace between the Thuringian landgrave Conrad the Younger and the Mainz archbishop Siegfried, between whom a military conflict took place in late spring and autumn 1232.[116] In this context, it is odd that no known papal letter was issued to Conrad in the matter of heresy between the October 1231 and June 1233—especially given the focus Gregory paid to the problem of heresy in the German speaking lands during this period. After the establishment of the Dominican inquisitorial tribunal in Regensburg in early 1232, the pope appointed other Dominican friars, in Austria, with similar competences (3 September 1232).[117] He subsequently instructed the bishop Berchtold of Strasbourg regarding the proceedings against certain heretical clerics (19 October),[118] and on 29 October, the same day he declared the crusade against the Stedinger, the pope issued a new exemplar of the bull *Ille humani generis* to the Mainz archbishop Siegfried III of Eppstein, reinforcing not the authority of Conrad's inquisition but of the archdiocesan court.[119] Still other exhortations and instructions to proceed against heresy were issued in early 1233—to the count Hartmann of Kiburg (8 January 1233) and generally to the bishops of the German di-

[114] The report by Conrad on the landgravine's sanctity consists of two letters which can be quite plausibly dated to late December 1232. See Kaltner, *Konrad von Marburg*, 188–89. Conrad wrote the first one in official co-authorship with the Mainz archbishop Siegfried and the Cistercian abbot Raymond of Eberbach. The co-authorship was nonetheless merely formal, as Conrad salutes the pope at the end of the letter in singular ("I, Conrad, a humble preacher . . ."); Kalter (ed.), *Konrad von Marburg*, 189–90. The second letter is then conceived as Conrad's testimony on Elisabeth's saintly life, ibid., 190–93.

[115] *Epistulae saeculi XIII* 1:389–90.

[116] 4 February; ibid., 407–8.

[117] Ibid., 388–89.

[118] Ibid., 390.

[119] Ibid., 394–95.

oceses (26 February).[120] Among these writings, not one confirms or reinforces Conrad of Marburg's inquisitorial competences.

Conrad of Marburg was nonetheless still able to acquire some support for his effort, both ideological and institutional, in a more proximate environment. The prominent provider of ideological support turned out to be the Cistercian Caesarius of Heisterbach, already noted for his probable influence on the *Error Katerorum*.

Contrary to Uwe Brunn's assumption,[121] Caesarius' support of Conrad's inquisition was probably not very intimate and remained limited to letters. In an overview of his numerous works, which Caesarius included in a letter to his fellow Cistercian Peter of Marientstatt in the late 1230s, Caesarius entitles Conrad of Marburg's companion, John the Executioner of heretics, as "master"—the title nowhere else ascribed to him.[122] Considering that Conrad was a reputed university master, Caesarius was probably not sure who was running the anti-heretical persecution, not being in personal contact with them. This argument is corroborated by the fact that in a sermon against the Luciferians discussed below, Caesarius praises unspecified Dominicans as the head of the persecution, not Conrad of Marburg. Finally, Caesarius would hardly have participated in Conrad's inculpation of the count Henry III of Sayn, a prolific donor to the Cistercian order, including the monastery in Heisterbach.[123] All these circumstances suggest that Caesarius's contact with the persecutors was limited to correspondence and that his acquaintance with Conrad, indicated in Elisabeth of Thuringia's hagiography written by the monk,

[120] Ibid., 403–4, 413–14.

[121] Compare Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "Cathares,"* 529–31.

[122] Hilka, *Wundergeschichten* 1:6.

[123] For an overview of the foundations of Cistercian monasteries by Henry or Sayn, see Joachim Halbekann, *Die älteren Grafen von Sayn* (Wiesbaden, 1997), 355–78. The count's favour specifically towards the monks from Heisterbach is testified as well. In March 1231 he exempted the monastery from tax duties for properties located in the village Beuel near Bonn; Ferdinand Schmitz, ed., *Urkundenbuch der Abtei Heisterbach* (Bonn, 1908), 129; Alfons Hilka, ed., *Die beiden ersten Bücher der Libri VIII miraculorum,* vol. 3 of *Die Wundergeschichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach* (Bonn, 1937), 55. Caesarius of Heisterbach himself then tells a story in one of his numerous sermons about a certain knight possessed by a demon, who was taken by the count Henry to the monastery and liberated with a touch of the tooth of St. John the Baptist, a relic venerated there; Hilka, *Die Wundergeschichten* 1:100.

was a retrospective stylization.[124] Conrad of Marburg and his companions were seeking ideological support from a renowned literate knowledgeable about the heretics' wickedness and obtained it from Caesarius.

In the overview of his works, the Cistercian recollects two writings, both unfortunately lost: *A Dialogue against the Heretics of this Time,* and a *Letter against the heresy about Lucifer*. The latter he addressed directly to John the Executioner.[125] Besides this letter, Caesarius wrote a sermon against the Luciferians, which can be found among his homilies intended for Lent. It was probably composed in early 1233 and provides further insight into how the Luciferian scheme was gradually being formed from a wide range of imaginings about heresy.[126] According to the sermon, the heretics call their depravity "profound life"—as in the *Error Katerorum*. They are also said to "adore and invoke" Lucifer, and kiss "cats and venomous vermin." They are murderers too, "killing Christians with iron, poison and any other way possible." Finally, they are said to kiss a gross quasi-human figure, introduced explicitly as the Devil.[127]

Caesarius's sermon nonetheless exhibits substantial differences from the *Error Katerorum*. Importantly, unlike the *Error,* which suggests the rationale for Lucifer worship to be rooted in a specific kind of metaphysical dualism, the sermon lacks any explanation of the heretic doctrine. The sectarians are just said to worship Lucifer without any specified reason. Similarly, no notice about sexual atrocities appears

[124] Caesarius Heisterbacensis, *Sermo de translatione sanctae Elisabeth*, ed. Huyskens, *Die Schriften über die heilige Elisabeth von Thüringen,* in vol. 3 of Hilka, *Die Wundergeschichten,* above all 384, where Caesarius is describing the miracles he witnessed at the landravine's tomb in Marburg.

[125] Hilka, *Die Wundergeschichten* 1:6: "Item scripsi contra hereticos huius temporis et errores eorum unum dialogum. . . . Item scripsi epistolam satis longam contra heresim de Lucifero ad peticionem magistri Johannis, tortoris hereticorum."

[126] Uwe Brunn argues reasonably that in the sermon the notice about the emergence of the heresy "two years ago" may refer to specific events of the year 1231; *Des contestataires aux "Cathares,"* 525. Indeed, beside the affair in Trier, the Annals of Marbach also record great persecutions of heretics in this year; *Annales Marbacenses,* 93–94. In agreement with Brunn the sermon may be dated to early 1233.

[127] Hilka, *Die Wundergeschichten* 1:26–27.

here. The absence of both dualism and sexual libertinism is significant given the fact that Caesarius himself wrote against both dualists and orgiastic heretics repeatedly.[128] Here, in contrast, he portrayed the Luciferian heresy solely in terms of violence and devil worship—principal malpractices ascribed to the Stedinger rebels. The closeness of this parallel even led Hergemöller to the conclusion that Caesarius identified the Luciferians, at least partially, with the Stedinger.[129] Such a conclusion is not accurate, however. Caesarius made no innuendo to the Stedinger but to the sect of the *Profound life,* known from the *Error Katerorum,* a text substantially influenced by his older writings, as has been argued. He further praised neither the bishops of the Bremen archdiocese nor the noblemen who took part in the Stedinger crusade as the champions who surpassed heresy, but unspecified Dominicans. The adroit author nonetheless focused, apparently by choice, on the parallels in the social danger that both the Stedinger and the Luciferians allegedly represented. He did so in early 1233, just a few months after the declaration of the crusade against the Stedinger in October 1232 and its subsequent reconfirmation in January 1233. It was also during a time when the episcopal opposition to Conrad's campaign reached its peak, as is apparent from the statutes of the Mainz synod from March 1233. Under these circumstances, Caesarius supported Conrad's campaign with words about demonic manslayers.

Besides this ideological support, Conrad was further able to acquire an influential political ally, well versed in fighting heresy, and, importantly, holding the office of a bishop—the institution seldom favourable to Conrad's inquisition. This powerful man was Conrad II of Reisenberg, the bishop-prince in the north German Hildesheim. Through this person, the connections between the Albigensian and Stedinger campaigns and Conrad of Marburg's inquisition become most salient.

[128] For Caesarius's writings about dualist heretics, see *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.21 (ed. Strange, 1:303, Fontes Christiani 86/3:1028), about the Albigensians, and 5.25 (ed. Strange, 1:308–9, Fontes Christiani 86/3:1046), about a certain heretic "school," where a doctrine about the creation of the material world by the Devil was taught. For Caesarius's account of the orgiastic sect in Verona in *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.24, see n. 78 above.

[129] Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 210–11.

The Hildesheim bishop has already been introduced as the judge in the trial against the provost Henry Minnike from Goslar. This was in fact not his only anti-heretical action. After he completed his university studies in Paris, Conrad of Reisenberg held several ecclesiastical positions, notably the chair of the cathedral dean and papal chaplain in the town of Speyer. As such, he was preaching the Fifth and probably also the Albigensian Crusade in Germany during the late 1210s and was ordained bishop in 1221.[130] After 1230, he took part in the campaign against the Stedinger.[131] Concurrently, he collaborated closely with Conrad of Marburg, as is apparent from the papal correspondence from June 1233, as well as from the fact that he was entrusted with the patronage over the canonization procedure of the landgravine Elisabeth after the inquisitor's death.[132] In his actions against heresy, Conrad of Reisenberg was dealing with concepts present in the Luciferian imagery: Minnike's extravagant beliefs about the Devil's return to heaven and the propaganda against the demon-worshipping defilers from Stedingen. During his studies in Paris and his subsequent preaching career, he must have become familiar with the clerical view on the dualist heretics from Languedoc.[133] The Hildes-

[130] For the bishop's biographical and career highlights, see Pixton, *German Episcopacy,* esp. 303–5. From older scholarship, see Hermann Hoogeweg, "Bischof Konrad II. von Hildesheim als Reichsfürst," in *Zeitschrift des historischen Vereins für Niedersachsen* 64 (1899): 238–65, at 239–50. It should be stressed that Conrad Reisenberg (or Reifenberg) was a prominent intellectual and politician of his age, a *scholasticus,* who was, like Conrad of Marburg, unwarrantedly labelled by Lea as a "fanatic" (*History of the Inquisition* 2:324). This claim is in fact based solely on the bishop's resolute stance against heresy.

[131] He is explicitly mentioned among the prelates entrusted by the pope in January 1233 to take an action against the Stedinger; *Osnabrücker Urkundebuch* II, 242–43.

[132] He eventually collected the reports on Elisabeth's miracles in January 1235, together with the Cistercian abbot Hartmann of Georgenthal. See Albert Huyskens, *Quellenstudien zur Geschichte der hl. Elisaberth, Landgräfin von Thüringen* (Marburg, 1908), 242–62.

[133] Preacher missions had already been taken against them since the late twelfth century, headed chiefly by the Cistercians. See Beverly Mayne Kienzle, *Preaching in the Lord's Vineyard: Cistercians, Heresy, and Crusade in Occitania, 1145–1229* (York, 2001); Pawel Kras, "Jak chwytać lisy w Pańskiej winnicy? Trści antyheretyckie w kazaniach św. Bernarda z Clairvaux i Hélinanda z Froidmont," *Roczniki Historyczne* 80 (2014): 73–94.

heim bishop constitutes a specific connection between Conrad of Marburg's inquisition and four essential heresiologist concepts from which the Luciferian scheme was constructed: metaphysical dualism, mourning for Lucifer, violent defilement, and devil worship.

During the trial against Henry Minnike, this same bishop collaborated with another powerful man experienced in suppressing heresy, specifically that of the Albigensians: the count and cardinal Conrad of Urach (†1227), bishop of Porto and Santa Rufina, a member of the Cistercian order and a papal legate in the German lands during the mid-1220s.[134] The same cardinal also provided his Cistercian brother, Caesarius of Heisterbach, with information about the dualist heretics in southern France, against whom this highborn prelate took a preacher mission in the early 1220s.[135]

To summarize, a triangle of men can be identified: Conrad of Marburg, pursuing the Luciferians; Conrad of Reisenberg, successively taking actions against the Albigensians, the provost Minnike, and the Stedinger; and Caesarius of Heisterbach, writing against the Albigensians and the Luciferians. Conrad of Urach, a prominent opponent of the Albigensian dualists, may also be counted as a ghost member of this cluster. This was the small circle of persons, outlined by Uwe Brunn.[136] I have attempted to specify the key men of this circle, and what notions of heresy they held. I have further tried to show that these men personify the links between Conrad of Marburg and the propagandas against the Albigensians and the Stedinger, campaigns that earned resolute papal support prior to the crisis of Conrad of Marburg's inquisition from 1232 to 1233. With the inquisition obstructed, its target happened to shift gradually, conforming to the character of both of these propagandas. Specifically, it shifted from elements of lived Waldensianism to literary notions of Cathar dualism, and from anti-clerical opinions towards violent aggression. Eventually, it was the elaborate description of a violent and obscene

[134] For an overview of his life and career, see Falko Neininger, *Konrad von Urach: Zähringer, Zisterzienzer, Kardinallegat* (Pandenborn and Munich, 1994). For the source on his involvement in Minnike's case, see Harzheim, *Concilia Germaniae* III, 515–16. For further details about the collaboration between Conrad of Urach and Conrad of Reisenberg, see Neininger, *Konrad von Urach,* 249–51.

[135] Feininger, *Konrad von Urach,* 177–201. For the reference by Caesarius, see Hilka, *Die Wundergeschichten* 1:150.

[136] Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "Cathares,"* 538–40.

form of dualism echoing the Luciferian cult, with the engagement of certain nobles, to which the pope gave an ear.

In spring 1233, Conrad of Marburg wrote to Rome, informing Gregory IX about the disastrous appearance of a new heretical sect in Germany. He did so in official co-authorship with the Hildesheim bishop and the Mainz archbishop Siegfried, the last apparently still looking for a precise position with respect to the ongoing events, hesitant to oppose the inquisitor too openly. Their letter from June 1233 is not extant; it is nonetheless more than probable that its contents vis-à-vis the new German sect largely correspond to the description of the Luciferian sect from the bull *Vox in Rama* with its devil worship, blasphemy, profanation, and orgies, as well as the involvement of certain men in power. The pope did not remain deaf to this report. He responded on 10 June with a letter beginning with the incipit *O Altitudo divitiarum,* in which he confirmed all Conrad of Marburg's competences and ordered him to proceed with his inquisitional mission with the greatest zeal.[137] A few days later, on 13 June 1233, and four days before he confirmed the crusade against the Stedinger, Gregory issued *Vox in Rama*.

Vox in Rama

The incipit *Vox in Rama* denotes a series of sealed papal letters sent to several different recipients: (a) the emperor Frederick II; (b) his son Henry VII; (c) the authors of *O Altitudo divitiarum,* i.e., Mainz archbishop Siegfried, Hildesheim bishop Conrad, and Conrad of Marburg; (d) bishops in the archdiocese of Mainz. The bull was reissued on 23 October 1233, almost three months after Conrad of Marburg's death, for (e) "all the archbishops, bishops, abbots, and prelates in Germany."[138] The body of the text can be divided into four substantial sections. In the opening passages, the pope announces that he was informed by Siegfried, archbishop of Mainz; Conrad, bishop of Hildesheim; and Conrad of Marburg about certain sectarians in Germany, including men in power, who launched "open wars" against the faithful Christians, similar to "vipers tearing apart the maternal womb from inside." They must be

[137] *Epistulae saeculi XIII* 1:429–30.
[138] Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 22–23.

immediately stopped, exhorts Gregory. Otherwise the mother, none other than the Mother Church, would perish.[139] Gregory borrowed the metaphor about heretics as vipers tearing the maternal womb from the emperor Frederick's mandate from Ravenna of March 1232, perhaps aiming to reinforce the utilitarian truce with the monarch, who had not long before been his arch enemy.[140]

The Luciferian ritual described in the text is structured as the initiation of a new heretic, recalling in several motifs the *Error Katerorum*. The ceremony is said to be celebrated at a dark site called "the school." As soon as the novice decides to enter the sect, he is instructed to kiss a giant toad, which appears in front of him. When he pollutes his mouth with the toad's saliva, an even more horrendous creature crosses his path: "A strangely pale human with utterly black eyes, so thin and scrawny, that all his meat has been consumed, and bare bones can be recognized beneath his skin." The novice kisses him too, and after this "ice cold" kiss, "memories of the Catholic faith vanish from his heart forever."[141] After this horror, an opulent banquet is prepared, and as soon as it is finished, a giant cat, big as a medium-sized dog, "climbs down backwards from certain statue." Subsequently,

[139] *Vox in Rama,* ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 25–26: "pia mater ecclesia, filios, quos diabolus mactat et perdit, et quasi consolationem non recipit, quia filii, more vipereo matris viscera lacerantes, ipsam interimere motiuntur."

[140] For an overview of the problematic and unstable political relationship between the pope and the emperor in the 1220–30s, see Knut Görich, "Friedensverhandlungen mit Rücksicht auf den honor ecclesiae. Papst Gregor IX. und Kaiser Friedrich II. im Streit um Gaeta (1229–1233)," in Theo Kölzer - Franz-Albrecht Bornschlegel, Christian Friedl, Georg Vogeler, eds., *De litteris, manuscriptis, inscriptionibus ... : Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Walter Koch. Geschichtliche Landeskunde* 60 (Vienna, 2007), 617–32; Hubert Houben, *Kaiser Friedrich II.: 1194–1250: Herrscher, Mensch und Mythos (*Stuttgart, 2008), 45–60.

[141] *Vox in Rama,* ed. Hergemöller, *Krötenkuss,* 27: "nam dum novicius in ea quisquam recipitur et perditorum primitus scolas intrat, apparet ei species quedam rane, quam bufonem consueverunt aliqui nominare. Hanc quidam a posterioribus et quidam in ore dampnabiliter osculantes, linguam bestie intra ora sua recipiunt et salivam.... Demum novicio procedenti occurrit miri palloris homo, nigerrimos habens oculos, adeo extenuatus et macer, quod consumptis carnibus sola cutis relicta videtur ossibus superducta; hunc novicius osculatur et sentit frigidum sicut glaciem, et post osculum catholice memoria fidei de ipsius corde totaliter evanescit."

> first the novice, then the master, then the others one by one kiss [the cat's] posterior—but only those who are worthy and perfect. The imperfect, who do not consider themselves worthy, receive a blessing of peace by the master [of the sect].[142]

This scene apparently constitutes an allusion to the Catholic Communion, where believers step before the priest one by one and receive the Lord's body from his hands into their mouths. According to Catholic orthodoxy, only those living without a grave sin are worthy to receive the host. Here, the description mixes this ritual prescription with the division of the adherents of the Cathar movement into the Perfect, who have passed the Cathar baptism—the *consolamentum*—and simple believers. Unlike Caesarius's sermon, *Vox in Rama* mixes the allusion to Catharism with the concept of a Catholic ritual, yet in a much less direct form than in the *Error Katerorum*. Knowledge about Cathar rituals may find an echo in the following verbal exchange too:

> When they are back in their places and recite certain prayers, bowing their heads before the cat, the master says: "Spare us!" The next one then asks: 'Who commands this?' Someone else responds: 'The supreme master!' And the fourth one adds: 'And we shall obey.'"[143]

The word "spare!" ("*parce!*") had been used by Cathar believers on particular occasions, notably when supplicating the Perfect to bestow the consolamentum upon them.[144] Considering the context of the ritual, it can be plausibly interpreted as another allusion to Cathar practices. Just as with the term "the Perfect," however, this allusion does not introduce any systematized Cathar elements into the process of the fictitious ceremony but simply constitutes a single motif among many others. The

[142] Ibid.: "Ad convivium postmodum discumbentibus, et surgentibus completo ipso conviviis [*sic*], per quandam statuam, que in scolis huiusmodi esse solet, descendit retrorsum ad modum canis mediocris cattus niger retorta cauda, quem a posterioribus primo novicius, post magister, deinde singuli per ordinem osculantur, qui tamen digni sunt et perfecti, imperfecti vero, qui se dignos non reputant, pacem recipiunt a magistro."

[143] Ibid.: "Et tunc singulis per loca sua positis dictisque quibusdam carminibus ac versus cattum capitibus inclinatis, 'parce nobis', dicit magister, et proximo: 'Qui hec precipit' respondente ac tercio dicente: 'Summus magister', quartus ait: 'Et nos obedire debemus.'"

[144] For details, see n. 26.

echoes of Cathar ritual practices in *Vox in Rama* remain rather sporadic, and similarly to the *Gesta Treverorum* and Caesarius of Heisterbach's sermon, show that the phantomic Luciferians were not just demonized Cathars. The knowledge of Catharism represented but one source, albeit an important one, of numerous motifs found in Luciferian imagery.

In the centre of the ritual stands a motif paralleled in older narratives demonizing the heresy, yet never described in such vivid detail—the appearance of the Devil in a body able to interact with the heretics physically, talking to them, and making some sort of pact with his minions:

> From an obscure corner of the schools (*sic*), which the most wretched people never lack, a human figure comes forth, from the waist up shining and brighter than the sun, as they say, yet below furry like a cat. Its blaze illuminates the whole place. Then the master tears a part of the novice's clothing, and passes it to the shining one, saying: 'Master, what was given to me, I give to you.' The shining one responds: 'You have served me well and will serve me more and better. What you gave me, I entrust into your custody.' As soon as he pronounces this, vanishes away.[145]

This horrendous hybrid creature apparently represents Lucifer, the light-bearer, himself. The described pact resembles the traditional topos of selling one's soul to the devil, originating from late ancient legends about the saints Cyprian and Theophilus, with especially the latter being enormously popular during the Middle Ages, repeated, among other cases, in the rumours spread about the pope Sylvester II or, more proximately, about certain Besançon heretics described by Caesarius of Heisterbach.[146] In this case, however, the pact is made not between Lucifer and the novice, but between Lucifer and the master of the sect, who literally hands the passive novice to the devil. This specification corresponds with the high medieval perception of heretical leaders, who grip the souls of simple folks and sweep them away from the mother Church. Here, once

[145] *Vox in Rama*, 28: ". . . de obscuro scolarum angulo, quo non carent perditissimi hominum, quidam homo procedit, a renibus fulgens et sole clarior, sicut dicunt, deorsum ispidus sicut cattus, cuius fulgor illuminat totum locum. Tunc magister excerpens aliquid de veste novicii, fulgido illi dicit: 'Magister, hoc mihi datum do tibi', illo fulgido respondente: 'Bene mihi servisti, pluries et melius servis, toe committo custodie, quod dedisti', et his dictis protinus evanescit."

[146] Caesarius, *Dialogus miraculorum* 5.18 (ed. Strange, 1: 296–98, Fontes Christiani 86/3:1008–14).

again, the Luciferian imagery reveals itself as a synthesis of motifs coming from both heresiologist thought and the realm of imagination about diabolical forces. Both these traditions of thought met numerous times before Conrad of Marburg's campaign, but still, never was their blending elaborated in such vivid detail.

In the next part, the bull repeats the accusation of desecrating the Eucharist known from the *Error Katerorum,* which the heretics are said to perform during Easter by stealing the hosts from church masses and throwing them into their latrine. All such atrocities are reportedly performed because of the heretics' belief in Lucifer's eventual conquest of heaven. Unlike their counterpart in *Error Katerorum,* however, the sectarians are not said to praise Lucifer as the creator of bodies but the "heavenly creator"—rudely skewing dualist metaphysics about the heavenly creator of spiritual things and the devil creating unclean matter. This supports what has been suggested—that the Luciferian imagery was not exclusively a form of inverted Catharism. What Conrad of Marburg pursued was a conglomerate of motifs compiled to portray a sect which was horrendous spiritually through devil worship, attacked Catholic worship through blasphemy and profanation, threatened the order of society through the involvement of those in power, and constituted an imminent danger to individual bodies with its physical aggressivity. No Waldensian-like anticlericalism is mentioned in *Vox in Rama,* but an open war against the Church of God, as the bull explicitly declares.[147] Resolute action on the part of both the ecclesiastical and secular arms is required to eradicate such a scandalous movement.

Such action was indeed called for by the pope. In the third part of the document, Gregory promises the suppressors of this sect the plenary indulgence belonging to warriors setting off for the Holy Land—technically nothing less that the declaration of a crusade.[148] Finally, the letters conclude with formal exhortations, which vary depending on the addressee of the respective exemplar.[149] Conrad of Marburg had finally earned absolute support for his inquisition. It was, however, a pyrrhic victory.

[147] *Vox in Rama*, 25.
[148] Ibid., 31.
[149] Ibid., 32.

THE INQUISITOR'S FALL

On 25 July 1233, the high ranked ecclesiastics and secular lords, including Henry VII, the king of the Romans, gathered in Mainz. The assembly was elicited by the appellation on the part of Count Henry III of Sayn, inculpated of heresy by none other than Conrad of Marburg. The motivation behind the inculpation of this powerful aristocrat, as well as a few other noblemen—namely, Henry (II or III) of Solms, who even confessed his guilt at one point,[150] Gottfried of Arnsberg,[151] and the "countess of Loz" (possibly Adelheid von Henneberg, wife of Ludwig III of Loon-Rieneck)[152]—remains obscure. It could have constituted a conscious and bold attempt to approximate further the case of the Luciferians to that of the Albigensians, in which the count Raymond VI of Toulouse was portrayed as a follower and patron of the heretics. It could as well have been led by equally bold political reasoning, given the kinship between the cousins Henry III of Sayn and the Cologne archbishop Henry of Müllenark, reluctant to support Conrad's inquisition and subject to papal investigation. In any case, the count of Sayn refused to submit and confess, and instead made himself ready for defence. He apparently took advantage of the legal mechanism established by the em-

[150] The information from the Annals of the Erfurt Dominicans about the count of Solms lamenting in tears that he had confessed in fear of his life raises the possibility that the inculpated count was the young Henry III, a teenager at the time of the affair, rather than his politically much more experienced father, Henry II; *Annales Erphordenses fratrum Praedicatorum,* 87.

[151] Only regarding this nobleman does there exist a potential yet vague link between his inculpation and his alleged conflict with the Cologne archbishop Engelbert of Berg, from whose assassination in 1225 the count supposedly profited, as is reported by Caesarius of Heisterbach in his Hagiography of Engelbert: Caesarius Heisterbacensis, *Vita et miracula Engelberti,* ed. Fritz Zschaeck, in Hilka, *Wundergestichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach,* vol. 3 (Bonn, 1937), 252. Gottfried of Arnsberg was indeed suspected of participating in the plot against Engelbert but, nonetheless, ultimately acquitted of the charges in 1227; Richard Kipping, *Die Regesten der Erzbischöfe von Köln im Mittelalter III/1* (Bonn, 1913), no. 612; Robert Gramsch, *Das Reich als Netzwerk der Fürsten: Politische Strukturen unter dem Doppelkönigtum Friedrichs II. und Heinrichs (VII.) 1225–1235* (Memmingen, 2013), 147.

[152] See Jan Vaes, *De Graven van Loon. Loons, Luiks, Limburgs* (Leuven, 2016), 149–50.

peror Frederick II in *Confederatio cum principibus ecclesiasticis* (1220): the emperor promised to respect sentences of excommunication pronounced at archepiscopal synods.[153] What the key factors of the success of Henry's appellation were remains uncertain. Joachim Halbekann assumes that high positioned German lords were aware of the Sayn's case constituting a precedent, one that could eventually lead to the inculpation of other noblemen.[154] The Mainz archbishop Siegfried's aversion to Conrad's expanding competences might have played an important role as well. In any case, the council took place with Conrad not as a judge but merely an accuser. After Conrad's witnesses "withdrew" from the trial, the count was proclaimed "a Catholic man, never convicted (of heresy)," and Conrad was admonished to moderate his zeal. As the inquisitor instead started to preach a crusade against certain noblemen once again, he sealed his destiny: on his journey back to Marburg, he was murdered together with his loyal companion, Minorite Gerhard Lutzlelkolb—certainly on the command of some of the aristocrats he had dared to inculpate.[155]

Despite the pope's anger at Conrad's assassination, no crusade against the Luciferians ever took place. On the contrary, at a diet in Frankfurt in January 1234, all the inculpated nobles were proclaimed innocent, and Conrad's methods resolutely rejected.[156] The first inquisitor had earned such a terrible reputation that the Trier chronicler evaluated his campaign as the most vile persecution of Christians since the time of Julian the Apostate.[157] No major anti-heretical inquisition became active in German cities for decades after Conrad's death. The imagery of the Luciferian sect, however, did not die with Conrad of Marburg. It reappeared numerous times as a literary topos of the thirteenth century and a target of persecutions in the fourteenth century, and eventually influenced the late medieval imagination about the Witches' Sabbat.

[153] Also known under the title *Privilegium in favorem principium ecclesiasticorum,* ed. Ludwig Weiland, MGH Const. 2 (Hannover, 1896), 90.

[154] Halbekann, *Die älteren Grafen,* 392.

[155] *Gesta Treverorum continuata* IV, 402. *Annales Erphordenses,* 83–84, *Chronica Albrici,* 932.

[156] *Gesta Treverorum continuata* IV, 402, *Annales Erphordenses,* 85–86; *Chronica Albrici,* 932.

[157] *Gesta Treverorum continuata* IV, 402.

CONCLUSION

The construction of the Luciferian imagery during Conrad of Marburg's inquisitorial mission was characterized by the gradual systematization of various motifs into the scheme of a distinct sect. This tendency culminated in the papal bull *Vox in Rama,* in which the ritual and doctrine of the alleged Lucifer worshippers merged at the compositional climax of their imaginary ceremony: in the apparition of the shining-furry hybrid, Lucifer himself. In contrast to conclusions reached by several scholars, a detailed analysis shows that heresiological knowledge about the Cathars was not the pivotal source of the Luciferian synthesis. I have tried to argue that the true key element was the notion of physically aggressive, blasphemous, and sacrilegious heretics, preceded and inspired by two cases of propaganda: in support of the Albigensian crusade and against the Stedinger rebels.

The course of Conrad's effort was crucially shaped by the struggle for competence, as the pioneer inquisitor's attempt to apply a new procedural framework was opposed by episcopal power. The increasingly dramatic descriptions of heretic atrocities were fuelled by the inquisitor's need to demonstrate the necessity of the new institution and its method—hence the gradual shift from the Waldensians and obscene libertines from Trier, via the demonized dualists of the *Error Katerorum,* to the Luciferians of *Vox in Rama,* these last physically submitting to the devil himself.

Despite the ultimate failure of Conrad's campaign, the imagination about the devil's cult proved itself durable. Significantly, while for the rest of the thirteenth century it constituted merely a literary motif,[158] it once again became the subject of real investigations from the early fourteenth century on. In the phantasmal scenarios of the Witches' Sabbats in the fifteenth century and in the early modern era, the monstrous Devil was still present, presiding over obscene assemblies—and the stakes were burning as well. Further effort is therefore needed to explore the

[158] Notably, the Middle High German wandering poet known under the nickname Der Stricker (The Weaver) lamented in the half of the thirteenth century over the "foolishness" of certain people who believed in Lucifer's future conquest of heaven; Der Stricker, *Kleinere Dichtungen (in Auswahl): Die Kleindichtung des Strickers* 5, ed. Wolfgang W. Moelleken (Göttingen, 1978), 210–11.

relations between stories about certain devil worshippers and the actions taken against them—between the literature and the trial, and between imagination and the institution.

University of Pardubice.