

## Appendix

### Contexts and Sources

#### The Rise of Heresies and Catholic Responses

From the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, there arose dozens of heretical groups in western Europe, all of which advocated views that differed considerably from one another and from orthodox doctrine. Of greatest interest here are the "popular" heresies, so called because they appealed to a considerable number of laymen (and some clergy) eager for reform, that stand in contrast to the more obtuse, learned "academic" heresies of, for example, Abelard or the Porretans.<sup>1</sup> Popular heresies tended to be concerned with issues of symbolic or pragmatic intent, such as clerical sinfulness, iconoclasm, and Church ritual. When the adherents of such heresies discussed more-abstract issues, they tended to do so in relation to practical matters, as the baptism debates illustrate.

The popular heresies of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries commonly focused on the Bible, primarily the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, and generally applied a highly literal interpretation of Scripture. Accordingly, the heresiarchs and their followers rejected worldly possessions or power and chose to lead a life of apostolic poverty. The eleventh and twelfth centuries are often perceived as having witnessed a revival in spirituality among clergy and laity, a renewed piety of which these early heresies and the Gregorian reforms are considered examples. Anticlericalism, based on the belief that contemporary clergy were generally immoral and on the rejection of certain sacraments, especially baptism, were among the heretical positions spread by wandering preachers in the early twelfth century. Later heretics, especially the Cathars, added a strong antipathy to the Catholic Church and its rituals and an even stronger dualist hatred of the material world, which they considered evil and unclean.

Even in the earliest cases of popular heresies of the high Middle Ages, infant baptism became an important point of controversy between its Catholic defenders and heretical opponents. The earliest high-medieval evidence of major doctrinal differences espoused by a group of predominantly secular men and women began to appear in the first half of the eleventh century in chronicles and Church councils throughout western Europe, particularly in northern France. While the heretics who appeared soon after the year 1000 in Châlons and Orléans were only incidentally described as opponents of infant baptism, the proceedings of a council

at Arras in 1025 provide much more detail concerning heretical opposition to the ritual.<sup>2</sup> According to the council's decisions, Bishop Gerard of Arras-Cambrai strongly condemned the beliefs of a small community of heretics preaching in Arras.<sup>3</sup> Although few in number, the heretics of Arras employed arguments that would be echoed by many later heterodox groups: that the child does not and cannot consent or play an active role in the baptismal ceremony and that the ritual is thereby rendered invalid.

An increase in the number and variety of heretics over the course of the twelfth century brought with it a strong Catholic reaction and gave rise to a new genre, the antiheresy polemic. Throughout the century, works depicting real or imagined debates between heretics and the orthodox appeared with increasing frequency, originating primarily from monastic communities. Other, later polemics, products of the scholastic world, provided a point-by-point refutation of the controversial beliefs of one or more heretical groups. By the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century, the polemics, following a shift from a monastic to a university setting, took on clear characteristics of scholastic disputation, a shift that is reflected most clearly in the list of mid- and late-twelfth-century authors, from the abbots Peter the Venerable and Bernard of Clairvaux to the scholastics Alan of Lille and Prepositinus of Cremona.<sup>4</sup>

Two primary heretical arguments developed in opposition to infant baptism. The first, advocated by the early-twelfth-century heretics, denied original sin and claimed that the infant was innocent and not in need of baptism. This doctrine, based on Pelagian beliefs that Augustine had vociferously opposed in the 410s, advocated a positive view of the child's nature. In contrast, the second argument against infant baptism agreed with Catholics that the child was sinful—owing not to original sin but to an evil inherent to the material world—and therefore in need of baptism but able to be baptized only after his own profession of faith. This view, a dualist doctrine based on Manichaean traditions that saw an irresolvable contradiction between the pure spiritual realm and the corrupt world of the flesh, focused on negative images of the child and of human nature. Orthodox writers were thus forced to navigate between the two heretical frameworks, neo-Pelagian and neo-Manichaean, and the paradoxical imagery of childhood they invoked.

It is in their attacks on individual leaders that the polemics of the 1130s and 1140s differ most markedly from the later sources, which are characterized rather by ambiguous references to collective groups of heretics. Such a contrast reflects the nature of early-twelfth-century heretical movements organized around one or two charismatic individuals, who created what Brian Stock has called "textual communities" based on highly idiosyncratic interpretations of the Gospels.<sup>5</sup>

Around 1112 in the region of the French Alps, Peter of Bruys, the first charismatic heretic to receive considerable attention from opposing Catholic writers, began to preach publicly against the immorality of Catholic clergy. He had gathered enough of a following by the early 1130s that Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, was moved to write a lengthy letter opposing his tenets shortly before the heresiarch was killed by offended Catholics, circa 1132.<sup>6</sup> The abbot of Cluny devoted the lengthy first part of his polemic to a defense of infant baptism, a practice attacked by the heretic Peter and his followers, known as the Petrobrusians, on the grounds that the child could not believe through his own faith but, as was said, only through the faith of another.

While the Peters railed against each other in the Rhône region, another heretic had established himself to the northeast and was preaching similar anticlerical doctrines. In Le Mans and elsewhere, the wandering preacher Henry of Lausanne invoked the Pelagian argument against the baptism of children, claiming that it was unnecessary and that children could be saved without it. Around 1134, a monk, known to us only as William, wrote a treatise purporting to document a public debate between the author and the heretic Henry, in which William invoked Augustine and accused Henry of denying original sin and thus of being a Pelagian.<sup>7</sup> Ten years later, Henry was still active, despite censure at the Councils of Toulouse (1119) and Pisa (1135) and his temporary return to the Church and to monasticism, and had attracted a considerable following, who became known as the Henricians. The danger that Henry posed to orthodoxy was recognized by many, particularly Bernard of Clairvaux, who denounced Henry in a letter dated 1145.<sup>8</sup> The Cistercian abbot, whose dislike of so-called scholastic heresy (Abelard and Gilbert de la Porrée being his most famous opponents) is well known, was so concerned about the spread of popular heresy in the mid-twelfth century that he organized a preaching campaign in the south of France, especially Toulouse, where Henry exercised considerable influence. Bernard completed the tour with much success and, just before leaving for Languedoc, composed—in the midst of his sermons on the Song of Songs—several sermons devoted to combating heresy, including one addressing the question of infant baptism.<sup>9</sup> In the same years (1145–46), one of Peter the Venerable's correspondents, Hugh of Amiens, archbishop of Rouen, also wrote a treatise against unspecified contemporary heretics and provided a lengthy defense of infant baptism and particularly of the infant's need for the faith of another.<sup>10</sup>

The mid-twelfth century witnessed the emergence not simply of the personality-based heresies of the Petrobrusians and Henricians but of a well-organized heretical church opposed to Rome and thought to be of eastern origins, the sect soon to be called Cathars.<sup>11</sup> A German prior from Steinfeld wrote

to Bernard of Clairvaux, describing a highly ascetic and dualist sect that rejected the material world and claimed to represent the true Church. Catharism spread so quickly that, ten years after the death of Bernard, the monk Eckbert of Schönau wrote a series of sermons against a group of German dualists whom he identified as Cathars.<sup>12</sup> His polemical treatise, remarkable for its emotional, angry, and sometimes ironic rhetorical style reminiscent of Peter the Venerable's letter, contains a considerable amount of material on infant baptism, including an elaborate historical analysis of the salvation of children.

Italy also witnessed a rise in heresy during the later twelfth century. Based in Piacenza was a small sect consisting of followers of the teachings of one of the city's consuls, Hugo Speroni, who began to preach a doctrine of predestination circa 1175. His highly idiosyncratic ideas have been preserved in a refutation of them by an acquaintance, Vacarius, a professor of Roman law, with whom Speroni had studied in Bologna. Another Italian heretical group, the Passagians in Lombardy, based their beliefs on a literal reading of the Old Testament and a strict observance of Mosaic law, including the ritual of circumcision. The first references to them are dated to the 1180s, and a lengthy and often copied polemic written in the style of a scholastic *disputatio* appeared sometime just before 1200. This *Summa contra haereticos* was once attributed to Prepositinus, or Prévostin, of Cremona, chancellor of the incipient university at Paris from 1206 to 1210, and certainly came from an academic milieu, consisting generally of a heretical doctrine, its refutation, and a statement of correct doctrine on each subject.<sup>13</sup>

But perhaps the most famous area for heretical activity in the later twelfth and early thirteenth centuries was southern France, especially Languedoc. There, dualist Cathars established an entire hierarchy and church antagonistic to the local Catholic clergy, who were generally viewed by many, whether orthodox or heretic, as immoral and incompetent. Concentrated in Albi, a southern French town near Toulouse, the Cathars became known as the Albigenses, and by 1209 they were considered powerful and dangerous enough to warrant a military campaign led by Simon de Montfort to silence them. Before the outbreak of the Albigensian Crusade, the Cathars of Languedoc were already a large enough presence to occasion public debate (Lombers, 1165), censure by the Third Lateran Council (1179), and extensive discussion in the most influential high-medieval antiheresy polemic, Alan of Lille's *De fide catholica*, written between 1190 and 1202.<sup>14</sup> Alan wrote the treatise at the end of his life, after he had left Paris to join the Cistercians and to live and teach in Montpellier, not far from the center of French Catharism, about which his polemic includes much information. The Albigenses opposed infant baptism on the grounds that all humans, being part of

the material world, were inherently evil until they willingly and knowingly rejected this world and took up the *consolamentum*, a Cathar ritual of initiation comparable to baptism and ordination.

In southern France, there also arose the heretical group known as the Waldenses, the followers of Peter Waldes, who called themselves the Poor of Lyons. Around 1170, Peter rejected his life as a cloth merchant and gave away his possessions in order to live a more pious life and to begin a career of public preaching, despite his lack of training in theology. Condemned for lay preaching, the Poor Men of Lyons were labeled heretics, even though Waldes aspired to be recognized by Rome. Their doctrines were refuted in the polemical literature, beginning with Alan's *De fide*. Several of Waldes' followers returned to orthodoxy, renamed themselves the Poor Catholics, and trained to debate with and preach against their former leader. Both groups can be seen as a continuation of the earlier religious revival that at the end of the twelfth century concentrated on a more active lay involvement in religious life. An associate of the Poor Catholics, Ermengaud of Béziers, wrote the polemic *Contra haereticos* between 1200 and 1210; it focused on the Cathars but included some material on the Waldenses.<sup>15</sup> Ermengaud's toponymic indicates that he wrote in and/or came from the region closely associated with Catharism and from a city that was infamously sacked by the crusaders not long after the text's composition.

The years around 1200 were active ones for heretics and Catholics alike; antiheresy polemics appeared with greater frequency and became systematized. Alan of Lille was the first to gather and refute different heretical views on each contested doctrinal issue. But the turn of the century also brought with it a stronger awareness of the need for Catholic responses. In a famous letter of 1202, Innocent III entered the fray in a response to complaints by the archbishop of Arles about dualist heretics who argued against infant baptism on the grounds that children could not perform the acts of charity demanded by Scripture.<sup>16</sup> Innocent also devoted a sermon to heretical views on the baptism of children and during the Fourth Lateran Council gave official reaffirmation to the validity of the ritual.<sup>17</sup> Sometime before 1212, the grammarian Ebrard of Béthune wrote his *Liber antiheresis*, which deals predominantly with Cathars but also addresses the issue of infidels in western Europe, especially Jews and Muslims.<sup>18</sup> His text is a bit idiosyncratic—unusual in a period when the polemic was becoming standardized—and includes a remarkable collection of biblical quotations illustrating both the moral worth and the sinfulness of children.

In the years after the Albigensian Crusade, the primary geographical focus of Catholic concern shifted away from southern France and toward Italy. By the

1230s, Gregory IX had established the Dominican Inquisition, which was greeted with antagonism and violence, particularly in Piacenza. There, in 1235, Salvo Burci, a layman, responded to Cathar antagonism with *Liber supra Stella*, a detailed and surprisingly learned (though grammatically flawed) polemic in response to a Cathar treatise *Stella*.<sup>19</sup> Fifteen years later, another Italian layman, known only as George, wrote a polemic in the form of a debate between a Catholic and a "Manichaean," actually a dualist of the Bagnolese sect, an Italian variant on Catharism.<sup>20</sup>

The mid-thirteenth-century orthodox, and especially Dominican, concern with identifying and preaching against heresy is illustrated by the appearance of the longest and the shortest of the antiheresy polemics, both written by or for Dominicans. In the early 1240s, the Dominican friar Moneta of Cremona wrote a massive volume in which he collected doctrines from different factions of the Cathar and Waldensian sects.<sup>21</sup> This, the most extensive thirteenth-century polemic, includes important information on the fate of unbaptized children. In contrast to Moneta's text, the shortest polemics consist simply of a series of lists in the form of one heretical doctrine after another followed by a quick reference to a biblical passage that could refute it. The *Brevis summula contra herrores notatos hereticorum*, written around 1250, was one such compilation and was meant for use by Dominicans and others whose role it was to convert heretics.<sup>22</sup> The *Summula* proved to be a useful tool in the fight against Cathars who rejected the Church Fathers, the Old Testament, and sometimes every book of the New Testament except the Gospels.

The antiheresy polemics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries reflect the changing contexts in which different heresies spread. That the earlier heresies were often local and based around a single charismatic leader is suggested by the often more rhetorical, idiosyncratic, and *ad hominem* elements of the earlier writings. Such twelfth-century writers as Peter the Venerable, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Eckbert of Schönau wrote from monastic milieux and for the most part were well-known and powerful figures in their local communities. By the end of the twelfth century, the genre developed into highly organized and increasingly practical manuals for combating the rise of more-powerful heresies, which were better organized, now explicitly anti-Catholic, and rarely led by a single charismatic personality. The writings of Alan of Lille and pseudo-Prepositinus reveal their scholastic origins in their style and organization, which are based on the academic *disputatio*. With the coming of the mendicants and a more coherent Catholic response to Catharism, the polemics became more standardized and programmatic, often well organized and clearly meant for reference during actual debates or inquisitorial procedures. Despite the changes in context, style, and

purpose, each of the polemics mentioned above, from the highly emotional diatribes of Peter and Eckbert to the rational and analytic *questiones* of pseudo-Prepositinus and Moneta, contains a considerable amount of material on infant baptism and the nature of the child.

### Notes:

**Note 1:** The amount of material that refers to heretical opposition to infant baptism is considerable. However, most of it consists of brief references in chronicles or council decisions, and it is not extensive enough for analysis. There are other, mainly theological texts—such as Robert de Courson or Guillaume d'Auvergne, *De universo*—that include much material on infant baptism but make only the briefest allusions to heretical movements. [back](#)

**Note 2:** For the eleventh-century heretical movements and their views on baptism, see the brief references in Jean Musy, "Mouvements populaires et hérésies au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle en France," *Revue historique* 253 (1975): 62–63. [back](#)

**Note 3:** Council of Arras, 1025, Mansi, v. 19, col. 425–30. [back](#)

**Note 4:** The attribution to Prepositinus is generally considered erroneous, but the document nonetheless is a product of a scholastic environment, consisting of *disputationes* over the interpretation of biblical *auctoritates*. [back](#)

**Note 5:** See chap. 2 of Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983). [back](#)

**Note 6:** *Petri Venerabilis contra Petrobrusianos hereticos*, ed. James Fearn (Turnholt, 1968), *CCCM*, pp. 4–5, 12–55, or the older edition in *PL* 189.719–850. Cited hereafter as Petr. Ven. A large part of the discussion of infant baptism consists of a lengthy defense of the abbot's use of the Old Testament. On Peter of Bruys and the Petrobrusians, see Jean Leclercq, *Pierre le Vénérable, Figures monastiques* (Paris, 1946), app. 1, "La théologie du traité 'Contre les Pétrobrusiens,'" 357–67. [back](#)

**Note 7:** Ed. in Raoul Manselli, "Il monaco Enrico e la sua eresia," *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 65 (1953): 44–63 [back](#)

**Note 8:** Bernard of Clairvaux, Epistola 241, probably 1145, Ad Hildefonsum comitem Sancti Aegidii, de Henrico haeretico, *PL* 182.434–36. Cited hereafter as Bern., Ep. 241. [back](#)

**Note 9:** Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermo LXVI in Cantica, *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* 36–86, vol. 2 of *S. Bernardi opera*, J. Leclercq et al., eds. (Rome, 1958), 1183–185, or *PL* 183.1098–99. Hereafter cited as Bern., Sermo 66. See J. C. Didier, "La question du baptême chez S. Bernard et ses contemporains," *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis* 9 (1953): 191–201. [back](#)

**Note 10:** Hugh of Amiens, archbishop of Rouen (d. 1164), *Contra haereticos sui temporis sive de ecclesia et ius ministri libri tres* (written 1145–46), *PL* 192.1255–98. Discussed in Manselli, "Per la storia dell'eresia: Studi minori," *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 67 (1955): 235–44. [back](#)

**Note 11:** For a larger view of many dualist heresies, see P. Alphandéry, *Les idées morales chez les hétérodoxes latins au début du xiii<sup>e</sup> siècle*, vol. 16, fasc. 1 of the series Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Etudes: Sciences religieuses (Paris, 1903). On the Cathars, see E. Broeckx, *Le catharisme: Etudes sur les doctrines, la vie religieuse et morale, l'activité littéraire et les vicissitudes de la secte cathare avant la croisade* (Hoogstraten, 1916), 273–76. [back](#)

**Note 12:** Eckbert of Schönau, *Sermones tredecim contra haereticos* (dated 1163–67), *PL* 195.11–98. Eckbert is better known for the vita of his sister, Saint Elizabeth of Schönau. [back](#)

**Note 13:** *The "Summa contra haereticos": Ascribed to Praepositinus of Cremona*, ed.

Joseph N. Garvin and James A. Corbett (Notre Dame, 1958). Hereafter, Prep. For a brief description of the text, see G. Lacombe, *La vie et les oeuvres de Prévostin*, vol. 1 of *Prepositini Cancellarii Parisiensis (1206–1210) opera omnia*, Bibliothèque Thomiste 2 (Kain, 1927), 131–52. [back](#)

**Note 14:** Alan of Lille, *De fide catholica contra haereticos sui temporis* (written 1190–1202), *PL* 210.307, 345–51, bk. 1, chaps. 39–43. For a detailed study of the *De fide catholica*, see C. Vasoli, "Il 'Contra haereticos' di Alano di Lilla," *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 75 (1963): 123–72. [back](#)

**Note 15:** Ermengaud of Béziers, *Contra hereticos* (written 1200–10), *PL* 204.1235–72. [back](#)

**Note 16:** Innocent III, Epistola Arletanensi Archiepiscopo, 1202, *Decretales Gregorii IX*, lib. 3, tit. 43, cap. 3, *Maiores ecclesiae causas*. Referred to hereafter as Innocent III to Arles. [back](#)

**Note 17:** Innocent III, Sermo VII, dominica III in adventu Domini, *PL* 217.341. [back](#)

**Note 18:** Ebrard of Béthune, *Liber antiheresis* (written before 1212), in *Maxima bibliotheca veterum patrum* 224, 1525–84. [back](#)

**Note 19:** Salvo Burci's treatise remains unpublished. My reading is from the sole manuscript, Florence, Laurenziana, Mugellanus (de Nemore) 12, infant baptism material on fols. 104ra–107ra. The prologue has been edited by Ilarino da Milano, "Il 'Liber supra Stella' del piacentino Salvo Burci contro i Catari e altre correnti ereticali," *Aevum* 16 (1942): 272–319, *Aevum* 17 (1943): 90–146, and *Aevum* 19 (1945): 281–341. [back](#)

**Note 20:** George, *Disputatio inter catholicum et paterinum hereticum*, 1240–50; and Edmond Martène and Ursin Durand, *Thesaurus novum anecdotorum* (Paris, 1717), 5:1705–11. [back](#)

**Note 21:** *Monetae Cremonensis adversus Catharos et Valdenses libri quinque* I (Descriptio fidei haereticorum), ed. Thomas A. Ricchini (Rome, 1743), 283–88. [back](#)

**Note 22:** Several of these reference manuals are edited in Célestin Douais, *La Somme des autorités à l'usage des prédicateurs méridionaux au XIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1896). The *Brevis summula* and *Compilatio auctoritatum de sacramentis ecclesiae* contain sections devoted to the defense of infant baptism. In his introduction, Douais acknowledges the difficulty of locating these texts either geographically or chronologically, but he does provide evidence that they were used in the fight against a dualist heresy with tenets identical to the those of the southern French Cathars and that the texts seem to originate in the same location, probably for use by Dominicans and Poor Catholics. [back](#)