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**CROSSROADS OF  
BOGOMILS AND  
CATHARS?  
(12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> century)**

**NEW LIGHT ON THE  
DISSIDENT “CHURCH OF  
THE LATINS” IN  
CONSTANTINOPLE\*<sup>1</sup>**

A)

An almost mysterious shroud has for a long time covered the dissident “Church of the Latins” in Constantinople in the thirteenth century. Even nowadays, few sources are available about it. It is still quite generally assumed that was the religious community for West European, gnostic Christians, who had settled in the Latin Empire as a result of the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204). However, a few studies from the last decade reveal a few other aspects of this rather unknown, dissident Latin Church and its purported predecessor in the twelfth century. This evokes a few penetrating questions that will be dealt with in this article:

What is the relationship with the Greek-speaking religious community of the Bogomils? Has the Latin church of Constantinople

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\* I am thankful to Willy Vanderzeypen (Baraigne – France) for his corrections and for the virtually unending stream of suggestions as well as to Michel Gybels (Belcastel – France) for critically reading the first version of the text.

<sup>1</sup> This text has been prepared for a communication during the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Sofia, Bulgaria, August 2011. I have been fully surprised by the interest in this subject during the Congress. The long stream of e – mails which I received afterwards, especially from Lilyana Yordanova, inspired me to make some - hopefully - clarifying changes and additions in the original text.

been able to play any role in the development of Catharism in the West? What is the reason that this Latin Church does not appear in any records of the Inquisition, although its existence was known or may have been known?

This contribution has been divided in two parts: A & B. In the first part I will deal with the dissident Church in the 12<sup>th</sup> century; part B focuses on this community in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

## I

On 13 April 1204, emperor Alexios V of Byzantium had to bow his head to the supremacy and violence of the western allies during the Fourth Crusade. To the dismay of the initiator of the crusade, pope Innocent III (1198 – 1216), Constantinople fell into the hands of the crusaders after manipulations of Venice. Western rule, headed by count Baldwin IX of Flanders, took over the helm from the Byzantine emperor: the Latin Empire of Constantinople was born. The legitimate emperor, Alexios V, absconded and the Flemish count was crowned as the first Latin emperor of Constantinople on 9 May 1204: Baldwin I. At its largest, the Latin Empire consisted of Bythinia (approximately current West Turkey), Thrace, the region south of the river Maritsa, including the current Bulgarian town of Plovdiv and the greater part of the current Greek mainland, except Epirus in the northwest. Most Aegean and Ionic isles came under Venetian rule. Although the Latin Empire of Constantinople ended in 1261, parts of the Peloponnese and Attica (Athens and the surrounding urbanised region) remained in western hands until the Turkish conquest of the Balkans. Venice kept the Greek isles under its control much longer.

The western “occupation” of Constantinople had already lasted for some decades when, around 1250, the Dominican heresy hunter and chief inquisitor of Lombardy, Rainerius Sacconi, recorded in his “Summa” all the sixteen Cathar and Bogomil churches known to him.<sup>2</sup> Of the five “overseas” (read: Bogomil) churches mentioned by him, two were found in Constantinople: “the church of the Latins” and “the church of the Greeks in the same place”. In this context, in the Greek-

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<sup>2</sup> Rainerius Sacconi, *Summa de Catharis et Pauperibus de Lugduno*, in *Un Traité néo-manichéen du XIIIe siècle*, ed. A. Dondaine (Rome 1939), 64-78. The “Summa” was translated into Dutch by Michel Gybels, *Rainerius Sacconi en de Summa de Catharis, Als Catars E – magazine 3 (2005)*, 13-22.

speaking Byzantine Empire, “Latins” was a common designation of West Europeans.

In this article, I would like to focus the spotlight on the almost “forgotten” dissident Latin church of Constantinople and the roots that this community must have had in the twelfth century. This will almost naturally lead to the fascinating, yet complicated chapter about the common ground between Bogomils and Cathars.

Concrete information about a dissident Latin church in Constantinople is extremely scarce in the historical sources. Apart from the abovementioned Sacconi, only his colleague Anselm of Alessandria refers to it.

Even prominent researchers are often brief about this “church of the Latins”. Obolenski<sup>3</sup>, for instance, confined himself to a single sentence, while Stoyanov<sup>4</sup>, a few decades later, was also very brief: “Sacchoni clearly differentiated the Constantinople Greek church, whose bishop had earlier been Nicetas, from the Ecclesia Latinorum in Constantinople which is usually viewed as a dualist order set up to minister to the Cathars in the Latin empire of Constantinople in the wake of the Fourth Crusade (1202-04).” Only Hamilton extensively deals with the essence of this dissident Latin Church and its genesis in a series of fascinating articles.<sup>5</sup>

### Dissident community of 5000 souls

\* The only further remark that Rainerius Sacconi made about the Latin church of Constantinople was that (around 1250) it counted “hardly fifty members”. This should be interpreted in the sense that it had fifty perfecti or *bonshommes*. At first sight, this is not an impressive number, but in the research about Catharism this is usually multiplied by a factor a hundred to be able to approximate the size of the entire

<sup>3</sup> Obolenski, D., *The Bogomils*, Twickenham 1972, 158: “The ‘Ecclesia Latinorum de Constantinopoli’, which must have arisen as a result of the Fourth Crusade and the establishment of the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204), was doubtless founded by those Cathars who had come to Byzantium with the crusading army.”

<sup>4</sup> Stoyanov, Y., *The other God*, (New Haven and London 2000), 196-97

<sup>5</sup> The articles are summarised in the introduction to the work of Hugo Eteriano, *Contra Patarenos*, eds. Hamilton J., S. and B. (Leiden 2004), 1-102. In the footsteps of Hamilton, also Lambert extensively deals with “the heretical Latin Church”: Lambert, M., *The Cathars*, Oxford 2000, 37.

community of souls: therefore, 5000 souls, but probably more<sup>6</sup>. Sacconi wrote his Summa at a moment when Catharism had already passed its peak some time ago. Some dissident churches had even wholly disappeared like that of Northern France and of Agen. During the period before 1250, more than 5000 souls may well have been members of the dissident Latin religious community.

Sacconi's treatise should be read with a critical mind. He himself mentioned that he had been a Cathar deacon for seventeen years. His treatise was also his doctoral thesis, with which he wanted to make a career within the Dominican inquisition. He therefore put his best foot forward to prove that he had dissociated from his past and did not have a hidden agenda.

\* Also the second informant, Anselm of Alessandria, inquisitor of Milan and the region around Genoa, is not undisputed in historiography. He made up quite a bit and sometimes seems to confuse things. Moreover, it should be remarked that he wrote about matters that had occurred more than a century before.

In a treatise from 1266<sup>7</sup>, this Anselm is more communicative about the Latin church than his colleague Sacconi: "Shortly afterwards, Greeks from Constantinople, which neighboured Bulgaria at a distance of approximately three days travel, went to the latter country as merchants, and because their numbers increased, they appointed on their way back to their homeland a bishop, called the bishop of the Greeks. Subsequently, French people went to Constantinople, intending to conquer land there. And they discovered this sect. As their numbers increased, they appointed a bishop who was called the *bishop of the Latins*. Next, certain people from Slavonia, that is, from the region called Bosnia, went to Constantinople as businessmen. On their way back home, they preached and, as their numbers had increased, they appointed a bishop who was called the bishop of Slavonia or of Bosnia. After some time, also the French who had gone to Constantinople, returned to their fatherland and preached and because their numbers increased, they appointed a bishop of France..."

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<sup>6</sup> Hamilton B. & J., *Christian dualist heresies in the Byzantine world c. 650 - c. 1405*, (Manchester 1998), 51

<sup>7</sup> See: A. Dondaine, La hiérarchie cathare en Italie II : Le Tractatus de hereticis d'Anselme d'Alexandrie, *AFP* ( 1950) 234-324 ; also in: Wakefield W. and Evans A., *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, ( New York, London 1969),168

If we believe and correctly interpret these often-quoted words of Anselm of Alessandria, the preaching of the Bogomil-Cathar word in Northern France (“francigene”) was purportedly started by the repatriated members of the dissident Latin church in Constantinople. “Because the French in Constantinople were converted by Bulgarians, the heretics are called Bulgarians in the whole of France,” he added.<sup>8</sup> *Who were those French; when did they arrive in Constantinople “to conquer land”? But above all: when did they begin to proclaim their dualistic religious ideas, with which they must have become acquainted within the Latin church of Constantinople, in their homeland?*

### **Hildegard of Bingen**

- It is quite generally assumed that this concerns returned French crusaders. However, this idea needs some refinement. I will come back to this later<sup>9</sup>.

- Anselm of Alexandria is inconclusive about the exact time of this “conquering land”. Many historians try to link this “conquering land” with one of the crusades. Hamilton<sup>10</sup> thinks of the period of the First Crusade, 1096-1099. For Wakefield & Evans, for instance, it is, beyond discussion that it refers to the Second Crusade: 1146-1147.

Hamilton motivates his dating with the historical fact that the First Crusade was partly launched to reclaim parts of Asia Minor from the Turks. Subsequently, a wave of Bogomil influence came to the West with the returnees, which purportedly resulted in the genesis of the Catharisms in 1101.

Hamilton based his dating on information that Hildegard of Bingen had supplied about the beginning of the Catharisms. It appears from a report of one of her visions, written by herself – and from Hamilton’s very ingenious interpretation of it – that the Catharisms began to blossom in 1083 or in 1101. 1083 cannot be combined with Anselm of Alexandria’s words; 1101 can.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Dondaine, “Et quia francigene seducti fuerunt primo in Constantinopoli a bulgaris, vocant per totam Franciam hereticos bulgaros”, 308

<sup>9</sup> Infra, p. 8

<sup>10</sup> Hamilton, B., “Dualist Heresy in the Latin Empire of Constantinople,” in *Religious Quest and National Identity in the Balkans*, ed. Celia Hawkesworth et al. (London 2002) 69-77

<sup>11</sup> Hamilton, B., “Wisdom from the East”, in *Heresy and Literacy, 1000-1350*, ed. P. Biller and A. Hudson, 38-61 (Cambridge 1996), 42-45 and Ph. Timko, Hildegard of Bingen against the Cathars, *The American Benedictine Review* 52 (2001): 191-205

The question remains whether the *magistra of the Rupertsberg* had sufficient knowledge about the Cathars to serve as such an important source in this context.

Although she gave little information about the teachings of the Cathars, she demonstrated in many sermons to have been eminently informed about their comings and goings. Hildegard of Bingen also seems to have known the fundamental theological counterarguments that were brought in position against the Cathars by prominent members of the ruling church: Bernardus of Clairvaux, Everwin of Steinfeld and Eckbert of Schönau.<sup>12</sup> It is less known that this usually irenic seer harshly described in her Cologne sermon how the heretics were put to a terrible death by the worldly powers, for which they themselves chose as “rabid wolves”. “We even do not find such a harsh and repressive approach with Bernardus of Clairvaux, who never called for violently attacking heresy. He was a man who would rather like to guide the heretics back to the Church of Rome by the word and by preaching.”<sup>13</sup>

### Catharisms as a multiple phenomenon

The Bogomil expansion in the West still raises many questions. The strong influence of the Bogomils on the western heresies of the eleventh century, assumed for a long time,<sup>14</sup> and on the origin of the Catharisms (plural, sic!) in the twelfth century is recently strongly weakened by modern research.

A recent example of this is the fascinating and pioneering dissertation “Les Catharismes” by the French historian Pilar Jiménez. “There was a time, not so long ago, when the history of Catharism was simple and clear: Catharism was a phenomenon that came from outside and was imported from the Orient. For one historian this occurred in the beginning of the eleventh century, for another halfway the twelfth century. Characteristic of Catharism were the dualistic teachings that

<sup>12</sup> Kienzle, Beverly, “La dénoncation de l’hérésie, l’Exégèse d’Hildegarde et sa prédication contre l’hérésie”, in *Écrire l’histoire d’une hérésie, actes du Colloque Mémoire du catharisme* (Mazamet 12 et 13 mai 2007) 45

<sup>13</sup> Gybels, M., *Ketterijen in middeleeuws Europa, de strijd voor een eigen religieuze identiteit Heresies in mediaeval Europe, the struggle for their own religious identity*, (Zoetermeer 2011), 73

<sup>14</sup> For a very painstaking discussion of the influence of Bogomilism on the religious developments in the West in the eleventh century, see: Taylor, Claire, *Heresy in Medieval France, Dualism in Aquitaine and the Agenais, 1000-1249*, ( Woodbridge 2005), passim

were until then unknown in the Latin world,” she wrote on the back cover of her book.<sup>15</sup> However, on the basis of careful reading of a large collection of “documents that go back to the Carolingian period of the ninth century and that deal with the Christian society,” Jiménez suggests “a genesis of the Catharisms as a multiple phenomenon that arose from western Christianity. Thus the path of a dualistic way of thinking developed, the dissident expression of which stemmed from a process of rationalisation that was at cross purposes with mediaeval Christianity.”

If we summarise Jiménez incompletely: the cradle of the Catharisms did not stand in the Orient, but in the West! The Cathars continued to build mainly on thought models that had developed within Carolingian society.

\* Jiménez’ book signifies a new step in the research of an autonomous history of the origin of the Catharisms. Yet, the Bogomil influences – ably treated by the French historian – remain and above all the correspondences with Bogomilism. It couldn’t be otherwise, because both the Catharisms as well as Bogomilism bear witness to the dualistic religious conviction that this visible world is the creation of Evil. Ultimately, both had their roots in the gnosis and in gnosticism<sup>16</sup> and this means that we should always take the mutual connecting lines very seriously.

I would like to adopt Jiménez’ approach of Catharism as a multiple phenomenon, that has to be identified constantly according to period and circumstances. It should be noted that she hardly quotes from the articles by B. Hamilton, one of the most able advocates of the connecting line Bogomils – Cathars. The publication *Contra Patarenos*<sup>17</sup> from 2004, with the most complete and topical introduction about the history of the Bogomils, is even missing in her bibliography.

Let us now return to the dating of the origin of the Catharisms and the role the Bogomil “missionary activities” from Constantinople played in it. Hamilton believes that this process began around 1100, as we have seen. Couliano, who considers the Bogomils the source of and the model

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<sup>15</sup> Pilar Jiménez – Sanchez, *Les Catharismes, modèles dissidents du christianisme médiéval XIIe – XIIIe siècles*, (Rennes 2008)

<sup>16</sup> See Van Niekerk, D., “The Bogomils, Mediaeval Gnostics or crypto-heretics?”, *Glasnik* 54 1-2, 25 - 34

<sup>17</sup> See note 3

for the Cathars<sup>18</sup>, ascertains that Bogomilism – and in the context of his argument, this refers to gnostic, Christian dualism<sup>19</sup> – was already rooted in North Italy, Provence and Central France at the beginning of the twelfth century<sup>20</sup>. This tunes in with our working hypothesis that the Catharisms began to develop since 1100 and has been started under influence of missionary activity from Constantinople.

### **Incubation period**

It may be thrown in my face now that there are hardly any sources from the period 1100-1140 referring to a form of Catharism. I do absolutely not want to interpret the very peculiar document of Guibert of Nogent about the Manichaeans near Soissons (1114) as Cathar<sup>21</sup>.

I nevertheless strongly doubt whether the beginning of Catharism should be dated in 1143. That is, when the monk and dean Everwin of Steinfeld wrote his famous, remarkably restrained letter to Bernardus of Clairvaux about the heretics of Cologne, who had so strongly impressed him. Currently, this is generally considered the first, undisputed source of Catharism.<sup>22</sup> If this is really true, the Catharisms have certainly spread very rapidly. Isn't it more natural that a long initial period was needed, a kind of incubation period, during which for instance the Greek texts were translated into Latin (and vice versa) in Constantinople, which could then have been used in the West during the preaching of the (dualistic) word.

A provisional conclusion crops up:

*On the basis of the preceding, there is the possibility that early in the twelfth century a dissident Latin church of Constantinople must have existed, from which the impulse to the Catharisms has been given.*

### **Years of familiarity with Greek**

We move our vision to the dissident churches of the “Greeks and Latins” of Constantinople again. They may have been crucial for the

<sup>18</sup> Couliano I., *The Tree of Gnosis, Gnostic Mythology from Early Christianity to Modern Nihilism*, (San Francisco 1992), 235

<sup>19</sup> Stoyanov, 389, fn 15

<sup>20</sup> Couliano, 214

<sup>21</sup> Wakefield & Evans, *Heresies*, 101-105

<sup>22</sup> For the content of the letter and the commentary on it, see the excellent article by Brenon, A., “La Lettre d'Evervin de Steinfeld à Bernard de Clairvaux de 1143: un document essentiel et méconnu”, *Heresis* 25 (1995), 7-28

translation of Greek Bogomil rituals into Latin. It is quite strange that this topic is only sporadically included in modern research.

According to Hamilton<sup>23</sup>, the members of the Latin Church fulfilled a key role in these translations, and not only in the translations but also in the propagation of the faith in the West, by the way. He absolutely does not believe that the Bogomil/Cathar teachings were brought to the West by returning crusaders or merchants. According to him, there may have been many contacts between the West and Byzantium during the twelfth century, but it requires specialist linguistic training to translate religious texts and to convey religious knowledge.

I fully agree with Hamilton: many years of inner experience and familiarity with the texts are required for an ably translation of the Bogomilian texts. Not until then will the translation do power for the reader. This training and inner experience cannot be expected of merchants, travellers or crusaders.

Moreover, their vocabulary was quite different, Hamilton argues. Only people, who stayed in the Byzantine Empire for a considerable time, were capable of developing the necessary expertise. He substantiates this statement analogously to the famous mediaeval sacred story about Barlaam and Josaphat, the translation of which into Latin was also done in Byzantium. Under the pretext of a sacred story, this was actually a description of the life of Prince Gautama the Buddha. It clearly bears the traces of Manichaeans in Asia, who were still found there until the twelfth century<sup>24</sup>. The text was very popular with the Occitan Cathars<sup>25</sup>. In the preface to this Byzantine edition of Barlaam and Josaphat<sup>26</sup>, we can read that the translator was sixty years old and that he carried out the translation “from Greek into correct Latin *during the thirty-first year of his stay in Constantinople*”.

<sup>23</sup> Hamilton, *Wisdom from the East*, 58

<sup>24</sup> U. de Volder, R. Ostyn and P. Vandepitte, *Het reisverhaal van Willem van Rubroek, de Vlaamse Marco Polo: 1253-1255 (The travel story of Willem van Rubroek, the Flemish Marco Polo: 1253-1255)*, Heemkundige Kring “De Roede van Tielt”. Local History Circle “The Rod of Tielt”, (Tielt 1984), 114-15

<sup>25</sup> Nelli, René and Lavaud, René, “Le Roman Spirituel de Barlaam et Josaphat”, in *Les Troubadours, I*, (Paris 1978) 1071-1221

<sup>26</sup> There is a remarkable doctoral thesis about Barlaam and Josaphat by the Belgian philosopher Marie-Madeleine A. van Ruymbeke Stey, *Au confluent du catharisme et du bogomilisme, le Barlam et Jozaphas occitan, approche culturelle et sémiologique*, Ohio 1997. She shows that research on the history and the transition from east to west of the story of Barlaam and Josaphat brings a few remarkable correspondences between Bogomilism and Catharism to light.

Only under such circumstances and after such a long familiarity with Greek, translations on that level appear to be possible.

### **Westernisation of Bogomilism**

With this knowledge in mind, we once again look at the abovementioned text of Anselm of Alessandria about the Latins: "Subsequently, French people went to Constantinople, intending to conquer land there. And they discovered this sect. As their numbers increased, they appointed a bishop who was called the *bishop of the Latins*. [...] After some time, also the French who had gone to Constantinople, returned to their fatherland and preached and because their numbers increased, they appointed a bishop of France..."

Therefore, this fragment might be read in the sense that Westerners might have lived in twelfth-century Constantinople, who were able to translate Bogomil texts into Latin and maybe Latin texts into Greek. In view of the long, necessary training, the first Cathar-Bogomil missionary activity in the West will certainly not have taken place by returned crusaders (too little linguistic training), but by members of the church of the Latins in Constantinople. If they were Westerners who had lived in Byzantium for a long time, they would certainly not have had any language problem with propagating their faith when they returned to Western Europe.

On the basis of the same fragment of Anselm of Alessandria, Malcolm Lambert<sup>27</sup> arrived at virtually the same conclusions. The contact in Constantinople was crucial. We may reasonably assume that Bogomilism became westernised there. Here they had natural access to the bilingual elements within the population. Here Catharism evolved from Bogomilism and the missionaries were trained who were to transmit the teachings to the West. Westerners converted Westerners! This not only enabled the emergence of a Byzantine, dualistic heresy in the West, but also explains the early, rapid successes of this heresy.

### **Anti-Latin sentiments**

It is undisputable that there was room for a Western church of the Cathar type in twelfth-century Byzantium. Constantinople formed a multicoloured, multi-ethnic society, where over 60,000 western immigrants lived at the Golden Horn in 1181: largely Italians, but also

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<sup>27</sup> Lambert, *Cathars*, 37

Venetians, Norwegians, Germans, English and French. The Greeks referred to them as “Latinoi” or Latins.

The Latins in Constantinople were mainly scientists, diplomats, priests, merchants, mercenaries and pilgrims, who had come to Byzantium and lived there for a shorter or longer period.<sup>28</sup> Each group had its own church at its disposal.

Emperor Manuel I Comnene implemented a policy of rapprochement to the West, mainly to the Italians who might be very useful to him in the defence of his empire. Therefore, the emperor did not put any obstacle in their path. The Venetians, for instance, who had risen to the most important trade partner of the Byzantines, had even three churches at their disposal, the people from Pisa two. Pisa, too, - the hometown of Hugo Eteriano – maintained intensive trade relations with Byzantium. Amongst other things, this was expressed by commercial privileges, exemption of customs duties and the right to their own section with chairs in the Hippodrome, a kind of skyboxes avant la lettre therefore, and in the church of Aya Sofia.

These privileges as well as the presence, often experienced as arrogant, of above all the Italians were a thorn in the flesh of the native population.<sup>29</sup> After emperor Manuel’s death, the dissatisfaction got free rein. In 1182, this culminated in a bestial pogrom of the Orthodox population in the Italian districts of the city, during which the Roman Catholic priests and monks had to pay for it.<sup>30</sup> The representative of the pope, Cardinal John, was beheaded and his head was dragged on a rope through the streets by a dog.<sup>31</sup>

From a conversation that the former patriarch of Constantinople, Michael of Anchiale (1170-1177) had with the emperor, it becomes clear how the political top thought about it. He clearly turned against any rapprochement to the Latins and made him understand that he even preferred rapprochement to the Turks over détente with the Latins.

<sup>28</sup> Ciggaar, Krijnie N., *Western Travellers to Constantinople, The West and Byzantium, 962 – 1204: Cultural and Political Relations*, (Leiden 1996)

<sup>29</sup> Runciman, S. *De Goddelijke keizers (The Divine Emperors)*, Bussum 1979, 96: “The inhabitants of Constantinople must have disliked these haughty Westerners, who pompously walked their streets and bazars and enriched themselves at the expense of the local merchants. When they took along their own priests and received permission to build Latin churches, their anger became even larger.”

<sup>30</sup> D.M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: a Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations*, (Cambridge 1992), 107

<sup>31</sup> Carroll, W., *The Glory of Christendom*, (Front Royal 1993), 157

Anti-Latin and pro-Turkish will prove to be a constant factor in the history of Byzantium.<sup>32</sup>

### **Patarenes**

Under these precarious circumstances, it was for Westerners with dissident Christian-ascetic sympathies doubly important to keep a low profile. They knew that they were not popular and they knew that any form of heresy might be punished severely. However, the fact that there were actually heretics amongst the thousands of immigrants may be derived from the peculiar manuscript *Contra Patarenos*<sup>33</sup> by Hugo Eteriano, a scholar of name from Italian Pisa.

Just as his brother Leo the Tuscan, who worked as a translator at the court, Hugo was invited to Byzantium by emperor Manuel I Comnenus to advise him concerning his policy of rapprochement to the Western church<sup>34</sup>. Eteriano was in high esteem with emperor Manuel after the former's dominant contribution during the final debate of the Council of Constantinople in 1166<sup>35</sup> about the longstanding question "The Father is greater than I"<sup>36</sup>. To everyone's surprise, Manuel resolutely took the side of his friend Eteriano, who received the task of drafting the final text. Subsequently, it was chiselled with decorative letters on an enormous, marble plaque that was attached to the wall of the Great Church.<sup>37</sup>

Hugo Eteriano had heard that a group was discovered in Constantinople that secretly went its own way and operated wholly independently from the Orthodox church. In his text, he called the members of this group Patarenes, at the time the usual name for heretics in his hometown Pisa and its surroundings<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Argyriou, R., "Remarques sur quelques listes grecques énumérant les hérésies latines", *Byzantinische Forschungen* 4 (1966), 9 – 30, 18,19

<sup>33</sup> Eteriano's treatise must have been written between 1165 and 1182, the period that he stayed as an adviser in Constantinople on the request of the emperor.

<sup>34</sup> Eteriano, *Contra Patarenos*

<sup>35</sup> Ciggaar, 202 - 3

<sup>36</sup> John 14:28: "If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I."

<sup>37</sup> Kolbaba, Tia, Byzantine Perceptions of Latin Religious "Errors", in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, eds. A.E. Laiou and R.P. Mottahedeh (Dumbarton Oaks 2001) 117 – 143, 138

<sup>38</sup> Quite a few theories abound about the origin of the name Patarenes. The most remarkable one is that of Dujcev, who thinks that the word is derived from *Pater emon*, the Greek opening words of the Lord's Prayer, because the Bogomils (and the Cathars)

\* In the first part of Eteriano's description we read that the Patarenes preached in secret and criticised the clergy. According to them, this latter group lived in sin and this is why the Patarenes stated that the sacraments administered by these priests were invalid and not functional. These accusations corresponded to those of other western dissident groups, which pointed out that the laity felt uncomfortable with receiving the sacraments from priests, of whom it was known that they acted sinfully, particularly in a sexual respect. The Patarenes themselves were reluctant with regard to sexuality. Just as the Cathars, they rejected the sacrament of marriage.

\* The second reproach was that the heretics preached the gospel during secret gatherings.

\* The third objection of Eteriano was that they refused to swear oaths<sup>39</sup>, similar to the Cathars. They did not accept the Old Testament or its traditional, Orthodox interpretation. They did not believe that Christ was really present in the Eucharist.

\* Just like the Bogomils and the Cathars, they disliked images, the cross and the sign of the cross.

So far the accusatory observations of Eteriano.

### **From the second hand**

On closer inspection, it is striking that the Pisa lay theologian wrote in Latin, apparently about "dissidents" who also communicated in Latin about spiritual, liturgical matters. His arguments seem a bit detached and he did not use personal experiences with or impressions of the Patarenes. This may point to two things. Either Eteriano received his information second hand, or he recognised the heresy from his own country and used the old western schemes, which was common at the time. With regard to its content, his manuscript almost literally resembles similar lists against Italian Patarenes.

He was seen as an indisputable expert. Thus the Roman Catholic clergy from Pisa asked him in a letter for advice about the problems with the heretics from this town. Amongst other things, the letter stated that the heretics rejected the resurrection from the dead, as well as the sacrifices for the deceased.

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concentrated on it several times a day. (I. Dujcev, Compte – rendu, *Byzantinoslavica* 19 (1958), 318-19)

<sup>39</sup> Swearing oaths is hardly or not found with the Bogomils. Although it is in the West, and for the first time with the Cathars of Liège (1144).

It does not become clear who gave Hugo Eteriano the order for his investigation. Probably prominent noblemen of the court did so. The emperor himself as an instructor seems to me less probable in this case. The emperor would have followed no doubt the plea of the author to pronounce a severe verdict on the Patarenes: beheading or the stake! Emperor Manuel never carried out this advice, probably because of the abovementioned political situation.

For Eteriano, this has probably been the reason to return to Italy in 1182, where he offered his writing to pope Lucius III (1181-1185)<sup>40</sup>. The latter immediately appointed him as cardinal of the Curia. A few months later Hugo Eteriano passed away. However, there are no indications that this pope responded to Hugo Eteriano's harsh suggestion to attack the Patarenes in Constantinople. He was unable to do so, because the Inquisition did not yet exist and he did not have any authority within the Orthodox Byzantine church.

### Cathars (?)

\* In his anthology, Christian Dualist Heresies<sup>41</sup>, Bernard Hamilton still calls the Patarenes of Constantinople Bogomils. But after further study of Eteriano's work – and five years later – he reached the conclusion that they were Cathars!

They cannot have been Bogomils, because Constantinople was Greek-oriented and *Contra Patarenos* was written in Latin for readers who spoke this language. And if they had been Bogomils, they would have been tracked down much sooner by the church and the worldly authorities. "Moreover," Hamilton says, "A body of anti-Bogomil theology and law already existed in the Byzantine empire."<sup>42</sup> It is a drawback that Eteriano's description does not speak of a dualistic vision and that, for example, also the tradition of the Lord's Prayer is missing. For Hamilton, this is not an obstacle to continue speaking of western Cathars, who acted according to the model of the Italian Patarenes. And what is more obvious than that these Patarenes met in secret in the dissident religious community of the Latins?

<sup>40</sup> Y. Van Buyten & W. Vanderzeypen, *Katharen in Europa* (Cathars in Europe), (Castelnau 2009), 250

<sup>41</sup> Hamilton, *Heresies*, 1998

<sup>42</sup> This refers to the famous Panoplia Dogmatica by the monk Euthymios Zigabenos, written between 1110 and 1120. See Wickert, J., Die Panoplia Dogmatica des Euthymios Zigabenos, *Oriens Christianus* 8 (1910), 278 – 389.

\* The Flemish author Willy Vanderzeypen supplies more munitions for the vision: Patarenes = Cathars. Similar to Hamilton, he also adapted his opinion after some time. In April 2009<sup>43</sup>, he still called Eteriano's description of the group "too general and too stereotypical" to be able to qualify them as Cathar. However, a few months later, he recanted<sup>44</sup>: "In view of the size of the Italian population in Constantinople and the fact that primitive Cathars had settled in their hometowns Venice, Pisa and Genoa around that time, it is likely that Italian preachers or believers were present among the masses. Indeed Eteriano did not speak of dualism, and this makes identification uncertain. The teachings of duality were not properly elaborated there until the thirteenth century."

\* A. Roach, too,<sup>45</sup> did not say more about the absence of dualistic religious ideas and did not preclude that those whom Hugo Eteriano referred to as Patarenes were those "who are called Bogomils by modern historians in the Orient and Cathars in the West." "It is possible that Hugh's heretics were members of 'the church of the Latins of Constantinople', as described by Rainierius Sacconi a century later."

*Although the identification is not wholly watertight, the conclusion may be that at least one dissident religious group with a Cathar signature already existed in Constantinople during the second half of the twelfth century.*

## B)

### ***The dissident "Church of the Latins" in Constantinople and its absence in the Inquisition Records (13<sup>th</sup> century)***

#### **Absent from the inquisition records**

We hardly know anything from the records of the Inquisition either, because the followers of this church have, remarkably, never been persecuted. Hamilton has consulted the papal archives<sup>46</sup> in this respect and did not find any letter that refers to persecution of dualists in the

<sup>43</sup> Y. Van Buyten & W. Vanderzeypen, *Katharen*, 250

<sup>44</sup> W. Vanderzeypen, e-mail message to author, December 29, 2009

<sup>45</sup> Roach, A., "The competition for souls : Sava of Serbia and consumer choice in religion in the thirteenth century Balkans", *Glasnik* 50,1 (2007) 1 – 34, 10, fn. 19

<sup>46</sup> The archives are complete since 1216

Latin Empire of Constantinople.<sup>47</sup> “It is true that the government under Baldwin II was weak and was afraid to track down the heretics amongst the Latin population, but that the pope did not try to intervene is surprising,” Hamilton says. The fact that two important inquisitors were apparently aware of the Latin church, makes him look at those facts “with disbelief”.

The idea forces itself that the pope of Rome was simply not aware of the existence of this Cathar church in Constantinople, although the Latin Empire of Constantinople came into his sphere of influence during the thirteenth century and two inquisitors reported about it! Apparently, those reports never reached the pope.

*This raises questions about the mode of operation of the Inquisition. Was this the well-oiled machine as is always assumed?*

### **Military service in Constantinople**

For an answer, we must jump to the Inquisition in French Quercy, about which we know a lot of concrete details since the publication of Jean Duvernoy<sup>48</sup> from 2001.

The inquisitor in the Quercy, Pierre Cellan, was a Dominican and within his order, he was not unimportant. He was one the first to be converted by Dominicus in Toulouse and gave his order a significant financial injection during its initial stage. In the Quercy, he did his work as an inquisitor virtually alone. He had only the help of a secretary.<sup>49</sup> Cellan seems to have worked cautiously and imposed three “main sentences”: going on a pilgrimage, supporting the poor and bearing crosses. However, for healthy and strong men, he had a special task in store: joining the army of the militarily rather ramshackle Latin Empire of Constantinople for two, three or even eight years!

The following example illustrates how Cellan dealt with the punishment and its motivation in 1241: “Étienne Galtier received bonshommes, accompanied them, listened to their preaching more than once, although he cannot remember how often, worshipped them several times, ate with them several times, gave them something of his

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<sup>47</sup> Hamilton, *Dualist Heresy in the Latin Empire of Constantinople*, 74

<sup>48</sup> Duvernoy, Jean, *L’Inquisition en Quercy. Le registre des pénitences de Pierre Cellan 1241 – 1242*, (Castelnau la Chapelle), 2001

<sup>49</sup> A. Roach, “Penance and the Making of the Inquisition in Languedoc”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 52 (2001), 409 – 433 en A. Albe, “L’hérésie Albigeoise et l’Inquisition en Quercy”, *Revue de l’Histoire de l’Église de France* 1 (1910), 271 – 293, 412 – 428 en 468 - 472

possessions and believed that they were good people. He will stay in Constantinople for two years and bear crosses on his shoulders, the size of a palm leaf. He will set out this year, on the first Sunday of the Advent.”<sup>50</sup> There was even a supporter of the Cathars in the town of Gourdon-en-Quercy, Piere de las Oleiras, who was supposed to go into exile in Constantinople for comparable “offences”. Nothing was mentioned about his return in the verdict.<sup>51</sup>

### **Religious exile**

A Cathar or a supporter of the Cathars sent to Constantinople by an inquisitor? But wasn’t there a Cathar church?

Apparently, Cellan in the South of France knew nothing about it. Otherwise, he would not have imposed this punishment on 93 other (!) Cathars living in the Quercy. The convicted Cathars from the Quercy certainly do not seem to have met with a religious exile!

What should we think of the long journey to Constantinople? En route, they passed through regions where they may have received a warm welcome from their dualistic fellow brothers, for instance in Dalmatia, Bosnia, Macedonia and Bulgaria. Particularly if they took the well-known Via Egnatia to Constantinople – via Ohrid and Bitola –the encounters with the Bogomils there may have been like balm for their souls<sup>52</sup>.

### **Inquisition in the Latin Empire?**

*How was it possible for the abovementioned lack of information to arise and how could it happen that the dissident Latin church of Constantinople wholly escaped the pope’s repressive attention?*

\* The answer is probably to be found in the organisational structure of the Inquisition. The papal Inquisition was very unbureaucratic and centralist during the thirteenth century. Each inquisitor was personally responsible to the pope, but there was not a coordinating office. The result was that there was little exchange of

<sup>50</sup> Duvernoy, *Quercy*, 31

<sup>51</sup> Duvernoy, *Quercy*, 38, 39

<sup>52</sup> R. Mihajlovski, Bogomils on the Via Egnatia and in the valley of Pelagonia: the geography of a dualist movement, (in press). The article was to be published in *Heresis 2009*, the scientific magazine of the Centre d’Études Cathares in Carcassonne, but the publication has been delayed because of the regrettable dissolution, for economic reasons, of the CEC. I would like to thank Dr. Mihajlovski for granting permission to look at his article.

information and that people must have worked at cross-purposes<sup>53</sup>. Moreover, the papal policies – if they at all existed – were applied inadequately or were sometimes ignored due to all kinds of intrigues.

A striking example of this can be found in the relationship of pope Innocent IV to the Dominican inquisition around 1250<sup>54</sup>. In 1246, the pope requested the inquisitors via his legate to be a bit more lenient towards heretics, who reconciled themselves with the Roman faith.

Repeated papal requests for moderation fell on deaf ears with the Dominicans.

In March 1249, the penitentiarius was ultimately personally ordered by the pope to convert, mitigate and even nullify sentences. Two inquisitors from Narbonne got a slap because of their excessive way of life. Unlike the abovementioned Pierre Celan in the Quercy<sup>55</sup>, who had only one secretary at his disposal, the inquisition pair from Narbonne apparently provided itself with a great deal more “comforts” that were questionable.

The Dominicans<sup>56</sup> became furious about the papal interference: two inquisitors returned to their monastery. For more than six years, the Dominican order obstinately refused to partake of the Inquisition....

\* A second reason for the lack of persecution in the occupied Latin Empire of Constantinople is to be found in the field of church politics. Since 1204, after the occupation, Rome was predominantly focused on restoring the unity with the Orthodox Church, to reclaim the Greek Church property from the Latin prelates as soon as possible and to make the Greek clergy pledge loyalty to the pope of Rome as quickly as possible.<sup>57</sup>

This evoked violent counter-reactions with the Orthodox clergy, who regularly spoke out very condescendingly about the Western prelates in detailed, infamous writings. One of the most remarkable pamphlets is that of the former metropolitan of Cyzicus, Constantin

<sup>53</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, third edition, eds. F.L. Cross en E.A. Livingstone , Oxford, 1997, 836 - 837

<sup>54</sup> For this topic, I was mainly guided by: Vanderzeypen W., Paus en Dominicanen in onmin (Pope and Dominicans at variance), *Als Catars E – magazine* 18 (2010), 47 - 51

<sup>55</sup> Infra, 13, fn 53

<sup>56</sup> Dossat, Y., *Les crises de l' Inquisition toulousaine au XIIIe siècle (1233-1273)*, (Bordeaux 1959), exhibit no. 14

<sup>57</sup> Beck, Hans-Georg, *Vom Umgang mit Ketzern, der Glaube der kleinen Leute und die Macht der Theologen*, (München 1993), 84-85

Stilbès<sup>58</sup>, from around 1213. Stilbès describes 104 grievances against his Western colleagues.

The irritations were so large that in Western eyes, the Bogomils were considered more devout than the Orthodox Greeks: (grievance 59) “They call the Bogomils the most religious amongst the Greeks.” In other words: the Latins respected the Bogomils more than the orthodox clergy!

For the Orthodox, church authorities, this was obviously an insult with a vengeance! It seems that with Stilbès and his followers the irritations about the prelates from the West were much larger than their worries about the presence of purported heretics of Cathar type in the Latin Empire of Constantinople.

Apart from that, who would have had the energy to persecute these “heretics”: the occupying forces or the Western prelates themselves? None of these possibilities seems to be obvious. In such a climate, possible papal persecution of the Cathars in the Latin Empire could absolutely not get off the ground.

It seems that the Cathars in the Latin Empire “profited” most from the occupation. During the thirteenth century, Constantinople was able to develop into a haven for western Cathars. Ironically, some of them were sent there by the Inquisition itself, as “punishment” for their support of Catharism in Western Europe!

### Conclusions

- *There are strong indications that the dissident Church of the Latins in Constantinople must not only have existed during the thirteenth century, but already since the beginning of the twelfth century. During the twelfth century, the Western Patarenes (or Cathars) in Constantinople may have belonged to it. They were probably Italian merchants (Pisa, Genoa, Venice) who had taken along their Cathar bonshommes. Who else would have been able to administer the consolamentum to them?*
- *In their hometowns, these heretics of the Cathar type were referred to by the ancient Latin name of “Patarini”. Obviously, this name was taken over, and was slightly graecicised.*

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<sup>58</sup> Darrouzès, Jean, Le mémoire de Constantin Stilbès contre les Latins, *Revue des études byzantines*, 21 (1963), 50 – 100, 76

- *During the thirteenth century, this community was also partly nourished by Occitan Cathars who were exiled to Constantinople by the Inquisition.*
- *The small church of the Cathar westerners in Constantinople, the Latins, was able to develop undisturbed, because it was wholly overlooked by the papal persecution policy. This is also the reason why we have so little evidence about it.*
- *The “Ecclesia Latinorum” may have been an important pivotal point between Bogomils and Cathars. For instance, members of this church may have been very suitable to translate the Greek Bogomil texts into Latin, with which the Cathars were more familiar, and to take on the propagation of the true, Living Word in Western Europe.*
- *This Latin church of Constantinople still existed in 1250. Here we believe Rainerius Sacconi, who had, after all, been a Cathar deacon for 17 years. This would mean that this church must have existed for almost a century and a half.*

Some restraint is fitting with regard to these conclusions, because verifiable sources are scarce. Therefore, anyone wanting to study the relationship between Bogomils and Cathars, should in future take the dissident church of the Latins in Constantinople into consideration more explicitly. It is almost unthinkable that Bogomilism and Catharism did not have contact in this special, dissident church!

We are waiting for new sources in order to be able to write the next chapter about the crossroads of Bogomils and Cathars.

Dick VAN NIEKERK

## CROSSROADS OF BOGOMILS AND CATHARS? (12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> century)

### NEW LIGHT ON THE DISSIDENT “CHURCH OF THE LATINS” IN CONSTANTINOPLE<sup>59</sup>

- summa r y-

In the historiography of Bogomils and Cathars, the so called Church of the Latins in Constantinople, was only mentioned in one breath with the other dissident community in the Byzantine capital: the Greek Bogomil Church.

Even nowadays, few sources are available about the “Ecclesia Latinorum”. It is quite generally assumed that it was the religious community of the Latin Christians who, having attained true insight in Bulgaria, had settled in the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204 – 1261).

However, it seems that this view needs to be revised. A few studies from the last decade cast another light on the dissident church of the Latins. There are ever more indications that this religious community already emerged during the twelfth century and that this church must have had strong ties with the large community of Italian merchants in Constantinople during the second half of the twelfth century.

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<sup>59</sup> This text has been prepared for a communication during the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Sofia, Bulgaria, August 2011. I have been fully surprised by the interest in this subject during the Congress. The long stream of e – mails which I received afterwards, especially from Lilyana Yordanova, inspired me to make some - hopefully - clarifying changes and additions in the original text.