

Heretical Self-Defence in the Middle Ages:
Text, Law, Subterfuge, Flight and Arms
University of Nottingham

Abstracts

Session 1: Late-antique and early-medieval Models

'North African Donatism: Fighting against the heretical assimilation'

Carles Buenecasa Perez, University of Barcelona

Donatism was nothing but a schism, and its theology was not so different from Catholicism. That's why, in Africa, Donatism was widely widespread. Catholic bishops decided that, demonstrating to the emperors that Donatism was an heresy, they could impose on Donatists the strict legislation against heretics. Augustine of Hippo has played a significant role in this process, and the arguments he used were multiple. First of all, the bishop of Hippo developed theological and ecclesiological concepts, like the uselessness of the baptism given by those who are out of the Church, the lack of theological fundament for rebaptism, etc. Equally, he carried out a deep historical research to remind the Donatists the origins of their own schism (several lies behind the election of Cecilianus, the innocence of Felix of Abthugni...), and to denounce Donatists's violences (the rupture of ecclesiastical unity, circoncillions's assassinations...). Then, once Catholic bishops had proved the heretical condition of Donatism, imperial power could promulgate several edicts for its repression from 405.

Donatists felt very mistreated by their opponents so they reacted in many and diverse ways. The only problem is that most of our sources are the Catholic ones, so there are not too much objectives. Augustine insists in the fact that the main Donatist reaction was violence againgt catholics, but can we really admit this?

'Gottschalk of Orbais: the quest for Gottschalk's models'

Bojana Radovanović, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institut für Mittelalterforschung

'Heretical self-defence in the Pseudo-Dionysius'

Alan P. Darley, University of Nottingham

The mysterious figure of Pseudo-Dionysius was probably a heterodox Origenist and monophysite theologian from 6th century Syria, yet he successfully deceived the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches for 900 years into believing he was a first century disciple of the apostle Paul. This paper explores how he managed to pull off this ruse through appealing to the commonly accepted authority of Scripture, through concealing his more overt heterodox teachings within a secret oral tradition and through the use of pseudonymity. In my evaluation I point out that Dionysius' success at avoiding condemnation and persecution this paper came at a price, namely that the subsequent 'receptions' of the Pseudo-Dionysius within orthodoxy 'corrected' his teachings to such an extent that his original message is shrouded in obscurity.

Session 2: Attack as self-defence in the fifth-century *Praedestinatus* of Arnobius the Younger

'The best defence is a good offence: Arnobius the Younger's *Praedestinatus* and the debates on predestination in mid-fifth century Rome'

Raúl Villegas Marín, University of Barcelona

Arnobius Junior's *Praedestinatus* is one of the most amazing and intriguing works of Late Antique Christian literature. The scant evidence available concerning Arnobius suggests that he was a prominent figure in the Christian circles of mid-fifth century Rome, well connected to the Roman church and the ascetic, aristocratic *milieux* of the *Vrbs*. Yet, at some point of his career, Arnobius was accused of heresy (Pelagianism) on the grounds of his critical stance regarding Augustine of Hippo's views on predestination to salvation. To counter these accusations, Arnobius composed the *Praedestinatus*, an heresiological treatise in three books, filled with fallacies and falsehoods, aimed at discrediting his adversaries by presenting them as members of a "Predestinarian sect". This paper aims at analysing the heresiological devices used by Arnobius to present himself as a champion of orthodoxy and to turn the accusation of heresy back to his accusers.

'I cut its neck with its own sword': Heretical Self-Defence in the *Praedestinatus*

Richard Flower, University of Exeter

This paper explores the anonymous *Praedestinatus*, a fifth-century Latin text sometimes attributed to Arnobius the Younger. Written soon after the death of Augustine of Hippo in 430, it presents a response to the great bishop's views on predestination, which are here disassociated from him and labelled as the heresy of the 'Praedestinati'. This does not, however, take the form of a straightforward theological tract or a piece of disputation literature: instead, the first of the *Praedestinatus*' three books is an extensive heresiology of ninety different sects from throughout history, including, in its ninetieth chapter, Augustine's own beliefs. The purpose of this paper is to explore the novel manner in which the author of the work uses this particular type of attack for self-defence. By the 430s, the heresiological form was becoming well established as an authoritative means of classifying and combatting religious deviance, with Augustine's own *De Haeresibus* being a significant example. The *Praedestinatus* engages both with the norms and expectations of the genre and also with Augustine's work specifically, simultaneously plagiarising his treatise and claiming to surpass through superior scholarship. By examining this rare example of a heretical heresiology, it also becomes possible to suggest wider interpretations of the power dynamics represented by this form of literature.

Session 3: The thirteenth-century Bosnian Church

'The anti-heresy Crusades in 13th-century Bosnia. Patterns of heretical self-defense'

Yuri Stoyanov, SOAS, University of London

'Court of King Stjepan Tomaš (1443-61) between the Roman and the Bosnian faith'

Pawel Cholewicki, Central European University

My presentation will discuss the reconfigurations that took place on the Bosnian royal court during the reign of its penultimate king, Stjepan Tomaš, a period of major progress of Catholicism in this country. The heretical Bosnian Church secured its position as a spiritual pillar of the political power in Bosnia after translocation of its "canonical" Catholic bishopric to Đakovo in the mid thirteenth century. The Franciscan vicariate introduced to Bosnia in 1339/40 challenged that position and the two organizations engaged each other in a competition to dominate the ruler's court. Kotromanić dynasty pressed by variety of factors developed the policy of confessional balance "between the Roman and the Bosnian faith", keeping both, the friars and the heretics in their entourage for almost a hundred years. However, the major political upheavals of the 15th century in South-eastern Europe led to the ultimate triumph of Catholicism and Stjepan Tomaš was left with no other choice than to expel the heretics. I will analyse the unfolding of the process that led to the expulsion through the contemporary normative, narrative and correspondence sources and I will discuss

measures and methods that the Bosnian Church took in order to adopt to new unfavourable changes.

Session 4: Catharism, Violence and Self-Violence

Crusader Or Quisling?: William I Of Baux, the Albigensian Crusade, and the question of heresy in Provence

Gregory Lippiatt, University of East Anglia

The experience of early thirteenth-century Provence is usually considered as a footnote to the conflicts of the Albigensian Crusade and subsequent inquisitions against heresy. However, the region played a role in both, if less thoroughly documented. But were accusations of heresy a response to actual religious dissidence east of the Rhône or convenient tools to pursue foreign conquest and local rivalries? The career of William of Baux, prince of Orange, provides an intriguing perspective on this question. Enmeshed in indigenous networks of support and conflict, William threw his lot in with the crusaders who descended on the Midi in 1209, only to be killed by the citizens of Avignon nine years later. This paper will examine how William's involvement in the Albigensian Crusade illuminates Provençal reactions to the crusade. Was he a convinced opponent of heresy, a cynical manipulator of the conflict for his own interests, or simply trying to get out ahead of the coming storm? How central was the question of heresy to the conflict east of the Rhône? An examination of both sides will reveal strategies of resistance to and co-option of heretical persecution and the wider neogregorian programme of reform in the early thirteenth century.

'Cathars and the military response to the Albigensian Crusade'

Sean McGlynn, Strode College

This paper will examine Southern France's military response to the Albigensian Crusade against the region's Cathars. That a pacifist heresy could elicit a full military mobilisation against the crusade obviously entails a discussion of the roles played by the lords of the region, such as Counts Raymond VI and Raymond VII of Toulouse. The bitter nature of the war has often been explained in terms of the uncompromising clash between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, but I will argue that the main causal factors were ones of culture and identity. The massacres and atrocities perpetrated by both sides will be explained more in these terms and also of the military imperative than in religious ones. Thus the paper will argue that the defence of the Cathars was more the consequence of temporal considerations than spiritual ones and therein lay their best hope.

'The ultimate flight: revisiting the Cathar Endura'

David Zbiral, Masaryk University

Session 5: Lollards

"They seek him here...": the many identities of Henry Wiredrawer'

Andrew Hope

One means of evading prosecution by the authorities for engaging in proscribed activities or holding proscribed beliefs was the adoption of pseudonyms. The incentives to do so were maximised since penalties for a first offence could be comparatively light and those for a second offence severe. In the various prosecutions for heresy in England in the early 16th century occur the names, across many south and midland counties, of Henry Wiredrawer, Henry Milner, Henry Miller, and Henry Tuck. It is now possible to show with confidence that these are all the same person. This paper will

examine how through abjurations and name changes one outspoken Lollard heretic was able to enjoy a long and well-travelled career, and escape the ultimate penalty for his dissent. This paper will detail his movements, what was known about him by the authorities, and how they, and subsequent historians failed to realise this was a single individual. It will also suggest that his case was not unique, and that it has implications for our understanding of Lollardy as both geographically widespread and possessing a measure of coherence and self-consciousness.

'Resistance, self-defence or sticking up for your friends?: a discussion of purgation in fifteenth-century lollardy trials'

Esther Lewis, University of Nottingham

The outcome of a heresy trial is often seen as a conclusive decision as to the heretical status of the individual on trial. If heresy is a legal category, then an individual can only be called a heretic by the historian if they are found guilty of this crime by a court. However, when the context of an individual case is considered, important questions about detection, resistance and the power of an abjuration to change a dissenter's true beliefs come to light. This paper considers the only surviving case of a heresy trial in fifteenth-century Bristol that ended with a purgation. The case study concerns a group who were incarcerated following the Oldcastle Revolt in 1414. After being arrested and tried, they were ultimately able to purge themselves. This paper will discuss the context of this trial through an exploration of the group's social networks. It will think about self-defence through social connections and offer some preliminary thoughts about the effectiveness of the Bishop of Bath and Wells detection and investigation of heresy in the early fifteenth century town.

'Scripts for defense?'

Fiona Somerset, University of Connecticut

Session 6: Late-Antique and Early-Medieval heresy in the Byzantine Empire

'Reconstructing heresy from the opposition: the Macedonians, alias *Pneumatomachi*'

Mattia C. Chiriatti, Universidad de Alcalá de Henares

Very little is known about Macedonianism, school of thought fostered by Macedonius the first, patriarch of Constantinople, who, during emperor Constantius' age, formulated a doctrine according to which the Holy Spirit was subordinated to the Father and Son, and, therefore, not consubstantially bound. Anathematized by the First Council of Constantinople, the few sources at our disposal to analyze in depth its content derive directly from its antagonists: Athanasius, Didymus the Blind and Basil, among others. Starting from these testimonies, the main goal of this paper is to reconstruct Macedonian doctrine and demonstrate how it strived to defend its ideological position against the constant attacks of the Orthodox belief. Within this theological framework, a particular emphasis will be put on the dichotomy *heresy/orthodoxy*, trying to establish a general overview on the theological conflicts during the fourth century and how a specific terminology for "heresy" was built.

The pen and the sword: Paulician responses to persecution during the ninth century

Carl Dixon, University of Nottingham

For intermittent periods during the ninth century, the East Roman Empire persecuted the Paulicians, a newly appeared heresy based in north-eastern Asia Minor. Paulician reactions to these persecutions were varied. Persecution in the 810s caused them to reimagine conceptions of their history and their relationship with the empire. Following further persecution in the 840s, they fled the empire and formed a military alliance with the Emirate of Melitene. From here they would raid

the empire for three decades. This paper will examine Paulician resistance against the empire, focusing particularly on textual production. It will consider the development of distinctly Paulician ways of explaining persecution, focusing on the narrative of the *Didaskalie*, which was codified shortly after the persecutions of the 810s. This narrative, which was based on the *Acts of the Apostles*, cast Paulicians in the role of an apostolic Christian community who resisted hostile Roman authorities. The paper will explore the relationship of sin, schism and persecution within this narrative, arguing that the Paulician reinterpretation of scriptural texts allowed them to make sense of their persecution swiftly, without significant influence from Roman authorities and discourses.

Turning towards Heresy: Bogomils and self-defence

Maja Angelovska Panova, Institute of National History, Skopje

Session 7: Inquisition and Manipulation in the Later-Medieval Languedoc

'Pro heresi fugitiva: dissident women and the flight from inquisition in the late Middle Age'

Irene Bueno, University of Bologna

'Law and popular pressure'

Derek Hill

This paper will consider how the mature medieval inquisition in South-West France was subject to pressure at elite and popular levels and how the inquisition's behaviour adapted as a result. At times there could be violent collective action against the inquisition (e.g. Carcassonne, Albi); but the norm was acquiescence in the inquisition's activity. This acquiescence was possible because inquisitors and most of society shared values within which they could co-exist. But this co-existence had to be constructed. A prudent inquisitor had to judge carefully the acceptability of his actions to local opinion, both elite and popular; respond to particular pressures; and retain political support, while at the same time maintaining the inquisition's values. Sources are not open about this process but the evidence can be seen throughout the inquisition's surviving written products. The paper will look at the evidence, principally in the Languedoc from 1271 to 1330, of the inquisition's mutability and adaptability in response to societal pressure.

Session 8: Hussites

'A Frankfurter amidst the Heretics: new perspectives on Hussite success during the anti-Hussite Crusades (1419-1433)'

Mark Whelan, Royal Holloway, University of London

'The technique of interrogation and the strategy of defense in the 1332 enquiry into the life and mores of Schweidnitz Beguines'

Pavel Kras, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

Between 7-12 September 1332, the refectory of the convent of Friars Preachers in Świdnica (Germ. *Schweidnitz*) in Lower Silesia witnessed the interrogations of 16 women on the life and mores of a religious community calling themselves "the hooded nuns" (*moniales Capuciatae*). The interrogator was John of Schwenkenfeld OP (*Johannes de Svenkinfelt*), a papal inquisitor for the Dioceses of Wrocław (Germ. *Breslau*) and Lubusz (Germ. *Lebus*) and, at the same time, a lector in the local Dominican convent. When John of Schwenkenfeld assumed his inquisitorial office remains unknown, but most certainly it was between 1327 and 1330. The proceedings against the Schweidnitz "hooded nuns" community is the first inquisitorial assignment of John of Schwenkenfeld recorded in historical sources. This paper attempts to examine the technique of interrogation employed by the papal

inquisitor and the strategy of defence adapted by the Beguines of Świdnica in order to defend their community against malicious testimonies of former sisters.

Session 9: Reflections of Orthodoxy

'Swimming the sea of joy or fixed deep in the muck: self-defence and its limits in Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls*'

Justine Trombley, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies

Marguerite Porete, condemned to the stake in Paris in 1310 for composing her mystical treatise *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, is often seen as a figure of quiet defiance. Re-circulating her work despite express orders not to do so and refusing to confess to her inquisitors, she can appear as someone unwilling to compromise the vision of spiritual life which she laid out in her book. Her *Mirror*, however, is full of explanations, qualifying statements, and clarifications which show a desire to answer criticisms and to show that its ideas did not contradict orthodoxy. These passages can be seen as both Marguerite's self-defence in the context of her struggles with authorities, and also the *Mirror's* own self-defence as it continued to circulate anonymously after its author's execution. Now, new manuscript evidence shows how some readers responded to these explanations and argued against these defences. This paper discusses both aspects. It first examines what these textual defences reveal about Marguerite's intentions for her book and her actions before and during her trial. The paper will then move to reception, examining how these defences were later attacked and engaged with in the *Mirror's* wider anonymous reception, and how they could both succeed and fail in convincing readers of the *Mirror's* 'innocence'. Overall, the paper engages with larger questions of textual and mystical authority and how the ambiguity of heresy and orthodoxy could both help and hinder an author's self-defence.

'Early Waldensian bridges over troubled waters: accusations of heresy, defence with the models of saints'

Pekka Tolonen, University of Turku

Session 10: Inquisition and Manipulation in the Later-Medieval Languedoc

'Oral communication and evasion of inquisitorial authority in 13th Century Languedoc'

Saku Pihko, University of Tampere

In Languedoc, during the heresy persecutions of the 13th century, information was the key to effective subterfuge for suspects wanting to evade the authorities. Important information about, for example, shifting loyalties and impending arrests was communicated mainly through talk, but the dissemination of this information in the communities under inquisitorial scrutiny was difficult to control. Anyone could hear anything, and it depended on the individual how this information was perceived and subsequently used. Due to this, talk was a double-edged sword, as the same utterance could just as well lead to the arrest of a key suspect, or blunder the inquisitors attempts altogether. The potential success or failure of heretical self-defence often hung in a delicate balance, which could quickly shift as a result of a single whisper or town gossip. Inquisitors looking to disrupt the communication networks of heresy suspects were very interested in this kind of talk. What can their records tell us about the role of oral communication in attempts to evade inquisitorial authority during heresy persecutions, and what kinds of implications does this have on our picture of the social organisation of suspected heretics in 13th century Languedoc?

'Hereticales and heretici : resistance to the inquisitorial persecution in Languedoc (1230-1330)'

Julien Théry-Astruc, Université Lyon II Louis Lumière