

Silviu Ghegoiu

**WALDENSIANS AT THE TURN OF THE FIFTEENTH
CENTURY IN THE DUCHY OF AUSTRIA.
PERCEPTION OF HERESY AND ACTION AGAINST
HERETICS**

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

Budapest

May 2008

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Silviu Ghegoiu

(Romania)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements

of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

Chair, Examination Committee

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I, the undersigned, **Silviu Ghegoiu**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 26 May 2008

Signature

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I want to thank my supervisor Gábor Klaniczay for his advice and patience during the period I worked on this thesis. I am grateful to Cristian Gașpar for helping me with the Latin translation of the sources, and to Judith Rasson for her correction of my English grammar and style. My gratitude goes also to Ovidiu Ghitta, who encouraged me to go on this field of study, and to Maria Crăciun and Adrian Andrei Rusu for supporting me before coming to Budapest. Last, but not least, I appreciate the friendship of all my colleagues and especially I want to thank Tanja Tolar and Edina Ádám for letting me know that I'm not the only one stressed out.

INTRODUCTION

Refusing to take oaths, rejecting the Church's authority, preaching in hidden places, abhorring the killing, and many others, such were the markers by which an inquisitor identified a Waldensian heretic. If these were more a myth than a reality then the research on Waldensianism should shift altogether. Looking with an attentive eye at the sources the historian can find actual facts among constructed images and stereotyped refutations. My intention is to bring together the perceptions and the realities that can be traced among them.

1. An overview of the literature on Waldensianism

The history of Waldensianism has received substantially less attention than that of Catharism, being a much quieter dissenting movement than the latter, but nevertheless important. Still, with its almost generalized Western European dispersion in the later Middle Ages, few books can be considered as standard reference.¹

More intense preoccupations among scholars of Waldensianism have been related to local developments, like the works of Gabriel Audisio and Christine Thouzellier on the

¹ The most important until today remains Jean Gonnet and Amedeo Molnár, *Les Vaudois au Moyen Âge* (Turin: Claudiana, 1974) (hereafter: Gonnet and Molnár, *Les Vaudois*). Other works include Gabriel Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent: Persecution and Survival c.1170-c.1570*, tr. Claire Davison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) (originally published in French in 1989 as *Les 'Vaudois': naissance, vie et mort d'une dissidence (xiiie-xvie)*) (hereafter: Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent*); Amedeo Molnár, *Storia dei valdesi*, vol. 1: *Dalle origini all' adesione alla Riforma* (Turin: Claudiana, 1974); Grado G. Merlo, *Valdesi e valdismi medievali* (Turin: Claudiana, 1984); Euan Cameron, *Waldenses: Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

regions of Provence and Languedoc,² of Grado Giovanni Merlo for Piedmont,³ or that of Peter Segl related to the Waldensians and Cathars in Austria.⁴ Although these studies brought a great deal of information about details of Waldensian life in different places, there has been a need for a more integrated approach.

Such subjects as the ethics of the Waldensians, or their practice of medicine were tackled in the 1980s by scholars like Romolo Cegna and Peter Biller.⁵ This path of research still requires historians to make the necessary connections between the anthropological and sociological approaches and the bulk of data preserved not only in the inquisitorial accounts and treatises, but also in the literature and correspondence of the Waldensians themselves.

The other major field of research that pertains to my current investigation is the inquisition; or the *repression of heresy*, as Richard Kieckhefer asserts. He notes that there was no such a thing as *the Inquisition*,⁶ because it existed only as mere offices, or functions of carrying out the inquisitorial justice, and did not as an institution as such, not even institutions, as was later the case in the sixteenth century. Others followed suit, like

² Gabriel Audisio, *Les vaudois du Luberon: Une minorité en Provence (1460-1560)* (Mérindol: Association d'Etudes Vaudoises et Historiques du Luberon, 1984); idem, *Une grande migration alpine en Provence (1460-1560)* (Turin: Deputazione subalpina di storia patria, 1989); Christine Thouzellier, *Catharism et valdésisme en Languedoc à la fin du XIIe et au début du XIIIe siècle*. Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Paris, Série "Recherches," Vol. 27 (Paris, 1965).

³ Grado G. Merlo, *Eretici e inquisitori nella società piemontese del Trecento* (Turin: Claudiana, 1977).

⁴ Peter Segl, *Ketzer in Österreich: Untersuchungen über Häresie und Inquisition im Herzogtum Österreich in 13. und beginnenden 14. Jahrhundert*, Quellen und Forschungen aus dem Gebiet der Geschichte, vol. 5 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1984).

⁵ Romolo Cegna, *Fede ed etica valdese nel quattrocento* (Turin: Claudiana, 1982); Peter Biller, "Curate infirmos: The Medieval Waldensian Practice of Medicine," *Studies in Church History* 19 (1982): 55-77 (republished in idem, *The Waldenses, 1170-1530: Between a Religious Order and a Church* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2001) (hereafter: Biller, *The Waldenses*), 49-67); idem, "The Preaching of the Waldensian Sisters," in *La prédication sur un monde dissident: Laïcs, femmes hérétiques...(XIe-XIVe)*, Actes du 9e colloque du Centre d'Études Cathares / René Nelli Couiza, 26-68 août 1996 sous la direction de Beverly M. Kienzle, *Heresis* 30 (1999): 137-68 (republished in idem, *The Waldenses*, 125-58); and the other articles from Biller.

⁶ Richard Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy in Medieval Germany* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1979) (hereafter: Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*), 3-10.

Edward Peters, who argued for the existence of a “myth of the Inquisition,”⁷ or Bernard Hamilton, although he does not subscribe to the suggestion of abandoning the term itself completely.⁸ These considerations may and must be taken into account when dealing with the history of the repression of any dissenting group, but maintaining close contact with both perspectives of those involved: the inquisitors and accused alike.

Concerning the inquisition in the southern German lands, some work was done from the late nineteenth century, starting with Herman Haupt⁹ and Wilhelm Preger,¹⁰ who not only collected valuable materials from the inquisitions that left them, but also presented analyses that still hold up today. Paul Bernard¹¹ gave his interpretation of documents from the fourteenth century, but not enough to surpass the work done by Haupt. Later, Alexander Patschovsky and Kurt-Victor Selge made significant impacts on the perception of heresy in thirteenth-century Austria and on fourteenth-century Bohemian Waldensianism.¹² An important contribution also had Peter Biller, with his

⁷ Edward Peters, *Inquisition* (New York: Free Press, 1988) (hereafter: Peters, *Inquisition*), 1-7, 122-315, cited in Henry Ansgar Kelly, “Inquisition and the Prosecution of Heresy: Misconceptions and Abuses,” *Church History* 50, No. 4 (1989) (hereafter: Kelly, “Misconceptions”): 440.

⁸ Bernard Hamilton, *The Medieval Inquisition* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), 9, cited in Kelly, “Misconceptions:” 440.

⁹ Herman Haupt, “Waldensertum und Inquisition im südöstlichen Deutschland bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts,” *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 1 (1889): 285-330 (hereafter: Haupt, “Waldenserthum” I); and idem, “Waldenserthum und Inquisition im im südöstlichen Deutschland zeit der Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts,” *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 3 (1890): 337-411 (hereafter: Haupt, “Waldenserthum” II).

¹⁰ Wilhelm Preger, *Ueber das Verhältnis der Taboriten zu den Waldesiern des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Abhandlungen der historischen Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 18. (Munich, 1887) (hereafter: Preger, *Ueber das Verhältnis...*).

¹¹ Paul P. Bernard, “Heresy in Fourteenth Century Austria,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 10 (1956): 50-63 (hereafter: Bernard, “Heresy”); and idem, “Jerome of Prague, Austria and the Hussites,” *Church History* 27 (1958): 3-22.

¹² *Quellen zur Geschichte der Waldenser*, ed. Alexander Patschovsky and Kurt-Victor Selge, Texte zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte 18 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1973) (hereafter: *Quellen zur Geschichte der Waldenser*); Alexander Patschovsky, *Der Passauer Anonymus. Ein Sammelwerk über Ketzer, Juden, Antichrist aus der Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae historica, vol. 22 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersmann, 1968) (hereafter: Patschovsky, *Der Passauer Anonymus*); *Quellen zur Böhmischen Inquisition im 14. Jahrhundert*, ed. Alexander Patschovsky,

Ph.D. dissertation referring to the anti-heretical treatise *Cum dormirent homines*, which changed the view on one of the most important polemical writings of the fourteenth century.¹³

The challenge today is to bring together these new discoveries with the new and less new approaches, in an attempt to understand better Waldensianism and the Waldensians, and their interactions with the inquisitors, and with each other. This is what I am trying to do with the present research.

2. The aim of my research and methodology

The focus of this thesis will be the perception of German-speaking Waldensians and the inquisitorial proceedings against them in the fourteenth century. The geographical scope will be a close look at the inquisition conducted by the Celestine monk Peter Zwicker at the turn of the fifteenth century in Upper and Lower Austria and in the western part of the Kingdom of Hungary.

The sources I will be dealing with are: (1) treatises on heresy and, in particular, on the Waldensian heresy written or compiled in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that were used at the turn of the fifteenth century in the German-speaking lands; (2) inquisitorial protocols from the turn of the fifteenth century in the duchy of Austria and the Kingdom of Hungary; (3) Episcopal and papal letters sent to inquisitors and secular

Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, vol. 11 (Weimar: Herman Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1979) (hereafter: Patschovsky, *Quellen*).

¹³ Peter Biller, "Aspects of the Waldenses in the 14th Century," Ph.D. dissertation (Oxford, 1971) (hereafter: Biller, "Aspects").

rulers concerning this heresy; (4) and secular writings (letters, chronicles) dealing with heretics.

From the treatises, the most relevant for my analysis are the treatise about Waldensians *Cum dormirent homines* written by Peter Zwicker (1395),¹⁴ and the inquisitorial manual *Practica inquisitionis heretice pravitatis* by Bernard Gui (1323-24).¹⁵ The inquisitorial protocols were mostly written by the inquisitor Peter Zwicker during the trials he conducted in 1398 and 1401, both in the Austrian duchies and the Kingdom of Hungary (in Sopron).¹⁶

The questions to be addressed are: What image of the Waldensian heresy did the inquisitors have? Did they apply some patterns of errors in identifying Waldensians? If yes, what were they, and to what extent did they apply them? Along with these questions there are other particular questions that can be asked regarding the social background the suspects of heresy came from, the relation between the accused and the inquisitors, and so on.

The treatises about the Waldensian heresy will give a clear picture of the general (or official) perception of the Waldensian heretics. I will make a close reading of them, focusing on the recurring patterns that characterize, in the authors' view, the Waldensian heresy, and on the techniques and questions suggested for use by the inquisitors. Looking

¹⁴ The treatise was published by Jacob Gretser, *Lucae Tudensis episcopo Scriptores aliquot succedanei contra sectam Waldensium* (Ingolstadt, 1613); republished in *Maxima Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum*, ed. M. de la Bigne, 28 vol. (Lyons: de la Bigne, 1677-1707), vol. 25, 277G-299C (hereafter: Gretser, *Lucae Tudensis*). Analysis of the treatise in Peter Biller, "The Anti-Waldensian Treatise 'Cum dormirent homines' of 1395 and Its Author," in idem, *The Waldenses*, 237-69 (hereafter: Biller, "Cum dormirent homines"); idem, "Waldensians in German-speaking Areas in the Later Fourteenth Century: The View of an Inquisitor," in idem, *The Waldenses*, 271-91 (hereafter: Biller, "An Inquisitor's view"); see also Biller, "Aspects."

¹⁵ Bernard Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur*, ed. and tr. Guillaume Mollat, 2nd ed., (Paris: Société d'Édition 'Les Belles Lettres,' 1964) (hereafter: Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur*, ed. Mollat).

¹⁶ Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 401-11; J. Ignaz von Döllinger, *Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters*, vol. 2 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1890) (hereafter: Döllinger, *Beiträge*), 346-51.

at the treatises and the inquisitorial protocols dealing with the Waldensian heresy and heretics, I will try to define the patterns of errors an inquisitor applied in his proceedings to identify those suspected of the Waldensian heresy, and the patterns of questioning taken from the inquisitorial manuals.

To get a view of the character of inquisitorial trials, I will describe their main evolution and particular events that occurred along the way, looking for information about the suspect's background, his or her inquisitorial history or anything relevant for a better understanding of his or her situation. I will compare the data from the treatises and from the protocols in the last chapter, which deals with the trials conducted by Zwicker.

The data I will be dealing with is made up primarily of words and phrases that characterized the Waldensian heresy and the Waldensian heretics regarding their beliefs, practices, activities and social status. There is also the data concerning the trials themselves and their conduct by the inquisitors, with reference to the questions that were asked. The recurring words and phrases will make up the patterns on which I will be able to draw the proper conclusions.

CHAPTER 1.

WALDENSIAINS IN FOURTEENTH-CENTURY SOUTH GERMAN LANDS

The Waldensians, originally called the Poor of Lyons, kept alive the principles of poverty, preaching and close connection to the Scriptures over the centuries as the movement initiated by the layman Waldes of Lyons grew exceedingly, through missionary zeal, throughout Western, Southern and Central Europe.¹⁷ Already moving in an underground environment from the middle of the thirteenth century, having lost its proselytizing energy, the movement continued during the fourteenth century usually in the lower strata of society within close communities supported by the sect's traveling leaders – the *magistri*.

In this chapter I will deal with the evolution of the Waldensian movement in the fourteenth century across the southern German lands. The emphasis will be on the Austrian Waldensians prior to inquisitor Peter Zwicker's activity around the turn of the fifteenth century and at the beginning of the fifteenth.

¹⁷ About the general history of Waldensianism see Gonnet and Molnár, *Les Vaudois*; Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent*; Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) (hereafter: Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*), 147-171; Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent, c.1250–c.1450*, vol. 2 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967) (hereafter: Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*), 452-485.

1.1. The successful Waldensian continuity

In the German territories – southern Germany, eastern Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and the adjacent regions – the Waldensians were strongly embedded within the society, with links going as back as the middle of the thirteenth century.¹⁸ This was a situation that required close attention and strong action from the Roman Church. At times it did take a look to investigate and punish heresy, but the overall impression is that the long-term results of the inquisitorial activity against Waldensianism were inconclusive.

Many causes for the success of the Waldensian movement can be enumerated: social, economic and political; within the sect and outside it. From the church's perspective, heresy was due to the work of the devil,¹⁹ and any success it had might have been regarded as demonic. Nevertheless, the prelates of the Church, especially those who were active as inquisitors, realized the role the Waldensian leaders played in strengthening the sect,²⁰ and tried to win them for orthodoxy.

On the political level, from the thirteenth century, the papacy and the emperor were in continuous opposition, leaving little time for preoccupations other than emitting interdicts and waging wars. The weakness of the central power during the imperial vacancy and the presence of prelates more favorable to the empire in Germany left the Waldensian movement barely touched.²¹ In the fourteenth century, when the political unrest was somewhat eased, the anti-heretical efforts increased during the period between

¹⁸ Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 156. For this continuity in Bohemia see also Patschovsky, *Quellen*, 81-82. For the strength of the Waldensians in South German lands see Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*, 468; also Biller, "Cum dormirent homines," 239; Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent*, 68.

¹⁹ Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 4.

²⁰ Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 58; Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 157.

²¹ Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 148; see also Haupt, "Waldenserthum" I.

the Council of Vienne (1311-12) and the Council of Constance (1414-18).²² This did not affect substantially the Waldensian movement, however.

Socially, the Waldensians formed communities of peasants or craftsmen from villages, small towns or even big towns. They tended to have leading roles in their villages and belong to the middle class, at the wealthier level rather than the poorer one.²³ At this point even the *magistri* were simple people, a trait characteristic of the later Waldensian movement from the end of the thirteenth century after its initial urban development in Lyon and in northern Italy.²⁴ Lacking a strong education, they were still literate in vernacular and sometimes in Latin, although the *topos* of *ydiote et illiterati* persisted in the polemical treatises against them.²⁵

In the late fourteenth century in Germany, Waldensians received financial support from wealthy persons involved in the cloth trade especially in cities like Augsburg and Strasbourg. Many of them held Waldensian beliefs inherited from their parents, grandparents, or even from earlier times. These traders helped expand Waldensianism among German-speaking communities during their travels across Central Europe, but this expansion occurred earlier, in the thirteenth century, together with the German

²² Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 9.

²³ Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 153; Gonnet and Molnár, *Les Vaudois*, 148. The outdated impression that Waldensianism spread exclusively among the poor (see for instance Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*, 453, 483) has been strongly challenged, mainly by the discoveries made by Patschovsky and I. Hlavaček in Bohemia around the inquisition led by Gallus of Neuhaus (Jindřichův Hradec) between 1335 and c.1353. See Patschovsky, *Quellen*, for the results of their investigation.

²⁴ Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent*, 36-37.

²⁵ Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*, 453, 484. The *magistri* would have known at least the art of oration and, if they were not taught in Latin, they definitely knew how to read and write in the vernacular. For an extended discussion on the subject see *Heresy and Literacy, 1000-1530*, ed. Peter Biller and Anne Hudson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) (hereafter: Biller and Hudson, *Heresy and Literacy*). For Waldensian literacy see Alexander Patschovsky, "The literacy of Waldensianism from Valdes to c.1400," in *ibid.*, 112-136; Peter Biller, "The *Topos* and Reality of the Heretic as *illiteratus*," in *idem*, *The Waldenses*, 169-190 (hereafter: Biller, "The *Topos* of *illiteratus*").

colonization in Bohemia, and further east.²⁶ Together with the attested presence of Waldensians in Pomerania, Silesia, Moravia, and, at the turn of the century, western Hungary, there are hints that the movement reached even further to the east, to Poland, and Transylvania.

For Poland, the pope sent letters to clerics and secular authorities on two occasions to: (1) establish an inquisition in the diocese of Cracow (1318) with a preventive character; (2) warn the archbishop of Gniezno about incursions of the Waldensians across the Oder (1327).²⁷ The close vicinity with the active Waldensians from Pomerania and Silesia might have had an impact, at least along the border.²⁸ Then there are the two names, Nicholas and Johann from Poland, found in a list of twelve captured *magistri* from 1391.²⁹ Although this is not a clear indication of Waldensian presence in Poland, the fact that they were *magistri* suggests that they had at least a community to look after in their home place.

For Transylvania there are letters from Pope John XXII, dated October 1, 1326 and February 1, 1327, in which he asked the prior of the Dominicans in Hungary to appoint inquisitors because heretics had entered the kingdom coming from Germany, Poland and surrounding areas. Among these letters, two concerns Transylvania proper, one sent to Thomas, the voivode, and another to Solomon, the count of Braşov, asking

²⁶ Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 149. For the expansion see also Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent*, 65, 69-73.

²⁷ Gonnet and Molnár, *Les Vaudois*, 147; *Regesta diplomatica necnon epistolaria Bohemiae et Moraviae*, vol. 3 (1311-1333), ed. Josef Emler (Prague, 1890), 178-181; *Vetera monumenta Poloniae et Lithuaniae historiam illustrantia*, vol. 1, ed. Augustin Theiner (Rome, 1861), 297 ff.

²⁸ Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*, 463-464; Paweł Jacek Kras, "Heretics in the Christian Society. A Study in the Concept of Heresy and the Image of the Heretic in Late Medieval Poland," MA Thesis (Budapest: Central European University, 1993), 21-28. See also idem, *Husyci w piętnastowiecznej Polsce* [Hussites in fifteenth-century Poland], (Lublin: Tow. Nauk. Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1998).

²⁹ Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 367-369. See Peter Biller, "The 1391 Lists of Waldensian 'Magistri.' Three Further Manuscripts," in idem, *The Waldenses*, 233-236 (originally published in *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi* 103 (1982): 51-55) (hereafter: Biller, "The 1391 Lists").

them to give help to the inquisitors.³⁰ Taken into consideration the aforementioned context of Waldensian expansion, I incline to believe that these references, at least in the case of the Transylvanian officials, are to German-speaking groups of Waldensians who reached the easternmost part of the Kingdom of Hungary.

The widespread presence of Waldensians in Central Europe can be seen as a success story. This made Robert Lerner state that “there were more German-speaking Waldensians in the fourteenth century than there were heretics of any sort whatever from any other language group.”³¹

1.2. The Austrian lands

The first indication of a strong Waldensian presence in Austria is the account of Passau Anonymous (1260/66)³² relating to an inquisition conducted in Lower Austria, which shows the presence of Waldensians in 42 places in these territories along the Danube’s southern bank, and a Waldensian “bishop” at Anzbach, c. 40 km west of Vienna. The anonymous author also mentions the existence of ten Waldensian *scholae*, where the formal teaching of Scriptures was given to believers.

From the beginning of the fourteenth century there are accounts of inquisitions conducted in Steyr, Krems, and elsewhere (including Vienna), in 1311 and 1313-1315, with some heretics burnt at the stake in Krems. Then, between 1327 and 1341

³⁰ *Documente privind istoria României, veacul XIV, C. Transilvania* [Documents Relating to the History of Romania, Fourteenth century, C. Transylvania], vol. 2 (1321-1330) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1953-1955), 212-214, 384-385.

³¹ *Rapports, Comité international des Sciences Historique, XVI Congrès international des Sciences Historiques*, I (Stuttgart, 1985), 360-2, cited in Lambert, *Medieval History*, 156.

³² Patschovsky, *Der Passauer Anonymus*. See Haupt, “Waldenserthum” I: 285; Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 149-150; Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*, 459, 476; Gonnet and Molnár, *Les Vaudois*, 148-149; Preger, *Ueber das Verhältnis...*, 30.

inquisitions are reported in Klosterneuburg, Steyr, Eng, and Lorch, although not all of them testify to the certainty of the Waldensian identity of those charged with heresy.³³

Between 1360 and 1370, Duke Albert III of Austria asked inquisitor Henry of Olomouc to conduct a series of trials in Steyr.³⁴ The accounts of his inquisition are lost, but there are later testimonies about some results of his activity, with some Waldensians abjuring the heresy.³⁵ A significant fact is that in this period, the 1360s, and around 1374, there are accounts of *magistri* converted to Catholicism, of whom some enrolled in missionary activities among their former communities.³⁶

The list of arrested *magistri* already mentioned, from September 4, 1391,³⁷ gives one name of an Austrian Waldensian leader, Johann, a woolworker (*lanifex*) from the village of Dickhartz near Krems, who was once sentenced to wear the heretic sign of the cross in Regensburg,³⁸ but relapsed and returned to Waldensianism. The text gives the occupations of the *magistri* – three peasants, two cobblers, two blacksmiths, one cloth-shearer, and others. Moreover, it is specified that the majority of these men were *illiterati*,³⁹ and the charges against them were specific for the Waldensian heresy: private preaching, denial of the existence of purgatory, lay confession, rejecting of the Church sacraments, and others.

³³ Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 53-54; Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*, 476-77; Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 150-52; Bernard, “Heresy,” 50-57; Haupt, “Waldenserthum” I: 304-6, 309-15.

³⁴ Bernard, “Heresy,” 58; Gonnet and Molnár, *Les Vaudois*, 150, erroneously give the name of the location as Styria.

³⁵ Haupt, “Waldenserthum” II: 404. See also Gonnet and Molnár, *Les Vaudois*, 150, 153. I will deal with these cases in the last chapter.

³⁶ Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 58; Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 156-157; Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 355-62.

³⁷ See page 12 above. The partial Latin text is in Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 367-369. Several manuscripts have preserved this list, both in a shorter version, as is the case with this one, and also in a longer version. For details see Biller, “The 1391 Lists,” 233-236. Bernard, “Heresy,” 59, takes the account as referring to the presence of *magistri* in Austria which he interprets as an indication of a major convention of the Waldensian at that time.

³⁸ Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 367: ...*item lanifex quidam Johannes de Dickhartz villa sita circa Chrems in Austria qui fuit Radispone et portavit crucem de heresi convictus nec vero deficit.*

³⁹ Ibid., 368. About the *topos* of *illiterati* see Biller, “The *Topos* of *illiteratus*.”

Under the new Bishop of Passau, Georg von Hohenlohe (1388-1423), a new wave of inquisitorial activity emerged in Upper Austria.⁴⁰ Although no inquisitorial records are preserved, evidence of an inquisition against Waldensians appears in some incidents reported in 1393, one from September 8 involving a group of people who, out of anger, burned a barn belonging to a priest who had received the inquisitors in his house. As a warning, they also hanged a half-burned brand and a bloody knife on the town gates.⁴¹ This might have been a sign of a rebellious attitude some Waldensians took over time, fatigued by the ongoing persecutions they were subjected to.

⁴⁰ Haupt, “Waldenserthum” II: 372-373; Bernard, “Heresy:” 59-60, interprets Haupt’s documents as referring to Martin of Amberg (of Prague) as appointed inquisitor in Steyr in 1391, but this was not the case. Also, in note 1 on page 60 Bernard voices his suspicion about Haupt’s supposed inference that Martin of Prague was assisted by the inquisitor Peter Zwicker in this 1391 inquisition, and believes that he (Haupt) ascribed a later document of Martin and Peter to the present inquisition (Haupt, “Waldenserthum” II: 404-405). The truth is that Haupt did not ascribe the document to the year 1391, but let it undated. I will deal with it in the next chapter. For further information on Martin’s inquisitorial activity, see Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 55, esp. note 13.

⁴¹ Haupt, “Waldenserthum” II: 372-373; Bernard, “Heresy:” 60. Haupt speaks about two acts of violence involving setting fire to a priest’s belongings, one in 1393 and another in 1395. The incident in this case is thought by Bernard to refer to the year 1393, rejecting the interpretation of Henry C. Lea in *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, vol. 2 (New York, 1900-1902), 399, who places the incident in the year 1395 based only on some general accusations of acts of violence committed in that year, included in the report of the inquisitor Peter Zwicker. See also Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 64.

CHAPTER 2.

THE PERCEPTION OF AND THE ACTION AGAINST HERETICS

The main objective of this chapter is to present the two elements of the process for dealing with heretics, namely the image churchmen had of religious dissenters and the trials the inquisitors were to conduct against them. I will try to show the interconnections between them, emphasizing the reciprocal influences on one another.

2.1. The Perception: The Treatises

Speaking about the perception of heretics I will deal with the image orthodox churchmen and thinkers had of heretics and their heresies, discussing aspects concerning their doctrines and practices and those concerning psychological traits and behavioral patterns. Some historians called this complex of perceptions as the *topos* of heresy in the Middle Ages.⁴² This image (or the images) of heretics had deep roots in early Christianity, going as far back as the times of Saint Paul. One prophetic passage of his is enough to illuminate this issue:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of

⁴² For perceptions of heresy see R. I. Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994) (hereafter: R.I. Moore, *The Origins*), 8-20; and Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 3-5. About the heresy-*topos* see Biller, "An Inquisitor's view", 275-279; also Herbert Grundmann, "Der Typus des Ketzers in mittelalterlicher Anschauung," in *Kultur- und Universalgeschichte Festschrift für Walter Goetz* (Leipzig, 1927), 91-107 (hereafter: Grundmann, "Der Typus des Ketzers"); Dietrich Kurze, "Zur Ketzergeschichte der Mark Brandenburg und Pommerns vornehmlich im 14. Jahrhundert," *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands* 16/17 (1968) (hereafter: Kurze, "Zur Ketzergeschichte"): 52-62; and Alexander Patschovsky, "Waldenserverfolgung in Schweidnitz 1315," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 36 (1980): 149-158.

devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.⁴³

One item that appears here, which was always considered through the centuries as a sign of heresy, is the refusal to eat meat. Even Augustine, denouncing Manichaeism, speaks about them refusing to eat meat.⁴⁴ Then this item was taken again by diverse writers in the high Middle Ages to remark on contemporaneous heresies, the writings of Augustine helping them perpetuate these stereotypes. In the thirteenth century the Cathars were said to observe the same practice, along with others mentioned earlier.⁴⁵ These patterns of heretical practice and doctrine were perpetrated during the Middle Ages in various writings dealing with heresies, one author picking out some items from another, and so on.⁴⁶ The writings themselves, treatises or *summae*, give historians, although in a biased and distorted way, the largest amount of information about medieval heresies and heretics.

2.1.1. *Treatises against heretics*

These literary works were written by ecclesiastical or even lay figures with enough education and knowledge about heresies in general, or one heresy in particular, to inform and advise other churchmen, and especially inquisitors, about the characteristics of

⁴³ 1 Timothy 4: 1-3. *The Bible*, King James Version.

⁴⁴ R.I. Moore, *The Origins*, 8.

⁴⁵ This issue appears in many tracts and treatises dealing with the Cathars. Two such examples from the middle of the thirteenth century are given by James Capelli in *Summa contra haereticos* and by Rainerius Sacconi in *Summa de Catharis et Pauperibus de Lugduno*, in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages. Selected Sources Translated and Annotated*, ed. Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) (hereafter: Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*), 306 and 330.

⁴⁶ Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 3-4; Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur*, ed. Mollat, vol 1, xvi-xxv.

different heresies. They described the heretical doctrines and gave arguments to combat them, and the procedures an inquisition required in the case of different heretics. In the operations of an inquisition, among the concerns of the inquisitor were those of identifying heretics and having a basis on which to build proper interrogations.⁴⁷ As I will show later, these were closely connected during the trials.

According to Wakefield and Evans,⁴⁸ three groupings of these polemical writings can be distinguished, based on their contents:

- a. “full-scale” tracts – tracts describing the heresy and its arguments, also giving a refutation of these arguments based on scriptural and philosophical references;
- b. tracts giving only lists of biblical texts under headings for use in the defense of orthodox doctrines, with no descriptions or heretical arguments;
- c. tracts which describe heresies only, without any attempt at rebuttal.

From the total number of treatises extant today, more than half were written between 1200 and 1250, and about one third deal only with the Cathars and about two thirds with both Cathars and Waldensians.⁴⁹ Usually, the information included in the treatises was collected from the confessions of converts to orthodoxy, the writings of heretics themselves, and from the systematic interrogation of suspects and witnesses.⁵⁰ But, as stated above, information was also transmitted from one work to another when it came to general traits of heresy. Also, the fact that identical statements about one heresy can be found in various treatises has led some historians to conclude that the treatises

⁴⁷ Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 59-62.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* I will deal with the interrogation procedures at the end of this chapter, where I will also analyze the connections between the treatises and the questions used in trials.

corroborate each other, and this was seen as a sign of reliability of these sources. Other historians, though, starting with Herbert Grundmann,⁵¹ argued that the general view on heretics was a stereotyped one.⁵² The conclusion generally accepted today, regarding these similarities, is that the authors of these tracts were borrowing information from one another or were working from a common source.⁵³ But either way, this supports Grundmann's argument.

Evidence for these two methods appeared in research on the treatises from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The most popular tract of the thirteenth century was the one entitled *Adversus Catharos et Valdenses* of the Dominican friar Moneta of Cremona, written around 1241 (before 1244).⁵⁴ This is the most complete polemical work of the period, and its five books deal primarily with the Cathars, giving only brief attention to the Waldensians in the fifth book. Studying this *summa* in connection with others, historians discovered that it has many passages in common with the one of James Capelli, *Summa contra haereticos* (written around 1240),⁵⁵ even though Capelli uses a much moderate tone and at times refutes the popular rumors about Cathars.⁵⁶ One example of the connections between the two tracts is a long passage about the "customs" of heretics which appears in the same wording in both treatises.⁵⁷ Whether these

⁵¹ See his article on the issue "Der Typus des Ketzers."

⁵² Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 61; Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 4.

⁵³ Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 61. See also Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur*, ed. Mollat, vol.1, xviii-xiv; Biller, "An Inquisitor's View," 272-273.

⁵⁴ The only edition is *Monetae Cremonensis adversus Catharos et Valdenses libri quinque*, ed. Thomaso A. Ricchini (Rome, 1743). Translated passages in Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 307-329.

⁵⁵ The edition of Capelli's *Summa* in the appendix of Dino Bazzocchi, *La Eresia catara: Saggio storico filosofico con in appendice 'Disputationes nonnullae adversus haereticos,' codice inedito de secolo XIII della biblioteca Malatestiana di Cesena* (Bologna: Licinio Cappelli, 1919, 1920). Translated passages in Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 301-306.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 301.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 302-303, note 14.

similarities are due to Moneta borrowing from Capelli, or from both using a common source is not yet settled.

2.1.2. *Treatises against Waldensians*

The polemical writings dealing with Waldensians give the majority of information that historians have about this dissenting group. The treatises are substantially fewer than those dealing only with Cathars, or with those mainly. One can see also in this case the connections between the tracts, and, because of the longer period of time the Waldensians activated, the treatises show either the evolution of the heresy from century to century, or the perpetuation of the stereotyped characteristics of the early Waldensians up until the end of the fourteenth century.

One of the first treatises preserved is from around 1190, written by Bernard of Fontcaude. *Adversus Waldensium sectam liber*⁵⁸ is a work based on the material provided by a debate between delegates of the Poor of Lyons, on the one hand, and of the Roman Church, on the other. The main parts of the treatise are grouped around these issues: (1) the error of the Waldensian refusal to obey the prelates of the Church and the pope; (2) the arguments for and against their lay preaching; (3) various other points of doctrine challenged by the followers of Waldes.⁵⁹ From the issues debated, the ones specific to Waldensians were the lay preaching, even of women, and the denial of purgatory. This

⁵⁸ *Bernardi abbatis Fontis callidi, ordinis praemonstratensis, Adversus Waldensium sectam liber*, Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina 204, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1841-1857), coll. 793-840. The prologue and the headings are given in Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 211-213.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 211.

treatise is a proof of the early practice of debates between churchmen and heretics. Later, the inquisitors refused this practice to the heretics under examination.⁶⁰

A very detailed account about Waldensians is found in the work of Stephen of Bourbon, *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilis* (written between 1249 and 1261), although it is not as detailed as the tracts on Cathars.⁶¹ His exposition is an account of the origins of the sect as he had heard it from others and features of doctrine and practices which he encountered during his activity as inquisitor in the valleys of the Saône and Rhone between 1232 and 1249. Among different characteristics described are also the usual Waldensian ones: denial of purgatory; lay confession, consecration and absolution of sins (although here the inquisitor found divergences among these Waldensians); denial of Church authority; rebuttal of the death penalty and of killing in general; and condemnation of Church chanting and its offices.

One specific trait is noted at the beginning of Stephen's description of the Waldensian characteristics: the refusal to take an oath. Because this is important in my analysis of the inquisitorial procedures, I will take a closer look at it:

...I have come to know through much questioning and from confessions under oath, written verbatim from the lips of the Perfect as well as of their believers, and also from witnesses testifying against them. They believe that every lie is a mortal sin and an oath is the same. However, I have heard some of them say that under fear of death it is permissible for those who are not perfected to lie and to take oaths. They themselves do lie and commit perjury, nor do they think it a sin, since they excuse and disguise their lies by wiles and sophistries.⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid., 60.

⁶¹ The newest edition is in Stephanus de Borbone, *Tractatus de diuersis materiis praedicabilibus (prologus et prima pars)*, ed. J. Berlioz and J.-L. Eichenlaub, 2002, Library of Latin Texts (CLCLT) by CTLO (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers n.v., 2007) (www.brepols.net; accessed 20 May 2008); see also Albert Lecoy de la Marche, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues tirées du recueil inédit d'Etienne de Bourbon, dominicain du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Société de l'histoire de France, 1887) (hereafter: Lecoy, *Anecdotes historiques*). Translated passages in Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 208-210, 346-351.

⁶² Lecoy, *Anecdotes historiques*, 292; Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 346.

Taking an oath in front of the inquisitor was required for all witnesses and all suspects. As Waldensians refused in principle to take oaths, they were more easily identifiable from the bulk of heresy suspects. Realizing this as inconvenient, it seems that the Waldensians, instructed perhaps by their *magistri*, tried to escape convictions by taking false oaths regarding their beliefs. In doing so, although they considered the oath, and especially a false one, a deadly sin, they were given permission for a number of false oaths, granted they would do penance for them.⁶³ Evidently, the last remark of the author in the passage cited above is malicious, for if they indeed considered it not to be a sin, they would not have been so reluctant to take an oath.

Another treatise from the thirteenth century dealing with Waldensians is the work of one Passau Anonymous (c.1260/66).⁶⁴ He analyses shortly the Waldensian tenets regarding the sacraments of the Church and gives scriptural references for refutation of these. For them, only those without sin, even a woman, could consecrate the Eucharist, and its validity depended on words spoken in vernacular.⁶⁵ One feature stands out as uncharacteristic for the thirteenth-century Waldensianism – the rebaptism by imposition of hands, which was a trait of Catharism.⁶⁶

Among the treatises about Waldensians is also the description of Bernard Gui in his work *Practica inquisitionis heretice pravitatis*, finished in 1323-1324, and known as the *Inquisitor's Manual*. It is a compilation of diverse materials which had an important impact on the inquisitions of the fourteenth century.⁶⁷ I will speak about the compilation itself below, focusing now only on the section dedicated to the Waldensians from the

⁶³ Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur*, ed. Mollat, vol.1, 70; Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 400.

⁶⁴ *Quellen zur Geschichte der Waldenser*, 77-103; Patschovsky, *Der Passauer Anonymus*.

⁶⁵ *Quellen zur Geschichte der Waldenser*, 82; Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*, 459.

⁶⁶ *Quellen zur Geschichte der Waldenser*, 81.

⁶⁷ Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur*, ed. Mollat, 2 vol.; Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 373-445.

fifth part of Gui's work. Among his sources for the Waldensian heresy, two stand out as the most important. For the account of the origins and early history of the sect, Gui followed Stephen of Bourbon's description.⁶⁸ The other source was the work of the Franciscan (Pseudo-)David of Augsburg, *De inquisitione hereticorum*,⁶⁹ but Gui made some changes in the information provided by this treatise and also added his own observations drawn from his own experience as an inquisitor.⁷⁰

His description of the Waldensian heresy is detailed, the focus being on several characteristics of Waldensianism, such as the ritual or method for celebrating Mass; a community life organized around visitations and common meals; and the ways in which the Waldensians tried to escape conviction in trials. Concerning the sacrament of the Eucharist, he presents it as being void for Waldensians if the priest celebrating the Mass is a sinner. Their belief was that every righteous man, even a lay man or woman, can perform the consecration of the body and blood of Christ.⁷¹

Regarding the oath, Gui emphasizes that the Waldensians considered it to be sinful, because God forbade it. But, he states that:

...these Waldenses relax the prohibition on oaths by permitting any of their number to swear in order to avoid or prevent his own or another's death, and also to keep from betraying his associates or revealing the secrets of his sect. For they say that the unforgivable crime and sin against the Holy Spirit is to betray any perfected member [=magister] of their sect.⁷²

⁶⁸ See note 61 above.

⁶⁹ Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur*, ed. Mollat, vol. 1, xxii-xxiii; Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 374. Treatise edited by Wilhelm Preger, *Der Traktat des David von Augsburg über die Waldesier*, Abhandlungen der historischen Klasse der königlichen bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaft 14 (Munich, 1878) (hereafter: Preger, *Der Traktat*).

⁷⁰ Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 374-375.

⁷¹ Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur*, ed. Mollat, vol. 1, 42; Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 390.

⁷² ...*ipsi Valdenses dispensant in juramento ut possit inter eos quis jurare pro morte sua vel alterius vitanda seu evadenda et etiam ne alios complices prodatur aut secretum secte sue revelet. Dicunt enim esse crimen inextinguibile et peccatum in Spiritum Sanctum prodere aliquem de secta sua perfectum*. Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur*, ed. Mollat, vol. 1, 40 (The bolded words are those borrowed from David of

Another aspect that requires attention appears along with this problem of taking false oaths. If they believed, instructed by their *magistri*, that is an “unforgivable crime and sin” to betray the leaders, how does this fit with the accounts of converted *magistri* testifying against their *credentes*?⁷³ Starting from an instruction that may have helped the Waldensian communities to remain strong for decades, protecting the leaders who gave the impulse for the religious life of these communities, then faced with the conversion of these leaders, and even more, with their betrayal, the Waldensian communities were indeed in a crisis, as Richard Kickhefer has argued.⁷⁴

2.1.3. Peter Zwicker’s Treatise

At the end of the fourteenth century a tireless inquisitor in the German-speaking territories, Peter Zwicker, the provincial of the Order of the Celestines, wrote a treatise considered to be “the most important literary text on the Waldensians from the later Middle Ages.”⁷⁵ The treatise, entitled *Cum dormirent homines*, was for a long time passed over by historians in their investigation of medieval heresy. The main reason for this was its unclear authorship, and until recently, it was generally considered by those who knew about its existence, to be the work of one Peter of Pilichdorf, a secular

Augsburg’s treatise, Preger, *Der Traktat*, 208); English translation in Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 389. See also note 63 above.

⁷³ For the period between 1360s and 1390s there are accounts of Waldensian *magistri* converted to Catholicism in the German areas, who collaborated with the inquisitors by divulging some names of their previous coreligionists, some of these converts even engaging in missionary activities among their former communities. The remaining Waldensians realized the danger these converts posed to their privacy and safety, and in a few instances some of them retaliated by killing renegade *magistri*. Kickhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 57-58.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 53-73.

⁷⁵ Biller, “Cum dormirent homines,” 237. Gretser, *Lucae Tudensis*.

clergyman and member of the University of Vienna.⁷⁶ After putting together information from the forty-five manuscripts extant and from sources relating to both Peter Zwicker and Peter of Pilichdorf, Peter Biller concluded that there was no doubt that Zwicker was the author.⁷⁷

Written in 1395, when Zwicker was at the beginning of his activity as inquisitor in Austria,⁷⁸ the treatise gives information about the Waldensians' history and their geographical distribution north of the Alps, the state of the inquisition against Waldensians in these areas, and also an extensive list of precisely formulated doctrines and their refutations based on biblical passages.⁷⁹ There are, of course, stereotyped views of the heretic, the Waldensian in this case, but they are not dominant, primarily because much of the information Zwicker had was first-hand, drawn from his previous inquisitorial activity in Brandenburg and Pomerania at the beginning of the 1390s.

The polemical treatise does not follow the standard descriptions of Waldensians of the literary tradition of this type of writings.⁸⁰ There is, as was the case with James Capelli,⁸¹ an interest in rejecting the extreme, Luciferan, stereotypes of Waldensians about licentious practices. The account of Waldensian history relies, although in a biased way, on Waldensian literature itself, and their doctrines were drawn from the statements of Waldensians in trials.

⁷⁶ Biller, "Cum dormirent homines," 243, 247-251.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 253-261.

⁷⁸ I will discuss his activity in the region in the last chapter.

⁷⁹ Biller, "Cum dormirent homines," 240.

⁸⁰ Idem, "An Inquisitor's View," 271.

⁸¹ See page 19 above.

One strong influence, argues Biller, was the *Adversus Catharos et Valdenses* by Moneta of Cremona,⁸² which shares with the treatise of Zwicker the model of rebutting heresy on scriptural grounds and a particular model of text organization. Also, many themes discussed appear in both treatises, like the denial of purgatory, the non-invocation of saints, the rejection of ecclesiastical chanting, of images, of excommunication, and of oaths. All these led Biller to conclude that Zwicker had direct access to Moneta's treatise in a region (north of the Alps) where it was rarely found, judging from the paucity of the extant manuscripts from there.⁸³

Central to Zwicker's polemic is the argument that the preaching of the true faith should be open and manifest, like in the Roman Church, and not secret as the Waldensians do. That is why the Church of orthodoxy and catholicism is the true church, and not the Waldensian sect.⁸⁴ The *magistri*'s preaching was only to their followers, and they were not engaged in evangelizing among Catholics. Nevertheless, they were continuously on the road, visiting community after community of *credentes*.⁸⁵

An example of the first hand experience of the inquisitor is seen in his remarks about the views Waldensians held on the sacraments of the Church. He points out that they did not reject them, and the norm was to preach and hear confessions, not to consecrate the Eucharist. This statement is in accordance with sources from the later fourteenth century dealing with German-speaking Waldensians, primarily the polemical

⁸² Biller, "Cum dormirent homines," 258-261; idem, "An Inquisitor's View," 276. On Moneta's treatise see page 19 above.

⁸³ Biller, "Cum dormirent homines," 258-261.

⁸⁴ Idem, "An Inquisitor's View," 276.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 281.

letters written by Waldensians and ex-Waldensians in the 1360s and 1370s, and the accounts of the trials Zwicker conducted in Stettin from 1392 to 1394.⁸⁶

Thus, the treatise appears as a well documented, up-to-date account of German-speaking Waldensianism at the end of the fourteenth century in Central and Northern Europe. It can also be taken as an example of the complicated “relationship between the literary-theological stereotype of the heretic and the observation of reality which this stereotype could frame.”⁸⁷

2.2. The Action: The inquisitorial procedures

Here I will focus on the inquisition as it was supposed to be conducted in order to obtain palpable results: conversions and information about heretics. The inquisitors’ main concern was to correct heretical beliefs and diminish the number of the heretics down to eradication,⁸⁸ and, having this in mind, any information about heretics, their beliefs, practices, and social contexts was useful in tracking down the dissenters. As conversions were preferred to condemnations,⁸⁹ inquisitorial procedures emphasized the need for a confession and an abjuration of heresy. This was achieved following specific steps, which I will discuss below.

⁸⁶ Biller, “Cum dormirent homines,” 246.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 240.

⁸⁸ R.I. Moore, *The Origins*, 20. See also Peters, *Inquisition*; James B. Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society: Power, Discipline, and Resistance in Languedoc* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997) (hereafter: Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*).

⁸⁹ As seen above in note 73 on page 24, the information provided by the converted *magistri* was priceless. See also Irene Bueno, “Two Inquisitors of the Declining Catharism,” MA Thesis (Budapest: Central European University, 2005) (hereafter: Bueno, *Two Inquisitors*), 44-45. Two methods were employed by the inquisitors in order to bring the heretic back in the Church: *persuasio* and *coercitio*. On this subject see Raoul Manselli, “De la *persuasio* à la *coercitio*,” in *Le Credo, la morale et l’inquisition en Languedoc au XIIIe siècle*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 6 (Toulouse : Privat, 1971), 175-197; and Peters, *Inquisition*, 40-73.

The inquisition (*inquisitio*) was a type of criminal prosecution different from the secular and canonical forms of *accusatio* and *denunciatio*. It implied thorough investigation of the person accused of heresy and of the witnesses.⁹⁰ From the many inquisitions of the Middle Ages, the material preserved can be grouped in two categories: (1) short protocols of the trials, written by notaries, which summarized the findings of an inquisition; (2) complete records of the trials, which included all the questions and all the statements of the people involved.⁹¹ These protocols give a picture of how the suspects and witnesses were interrogated, and the sequence of an individual inquiry: the oath; the interrogation, with questions divided into three sections: (a) about the background of the subject, (b) about their relationship with the sect, (c) about the beliefs of the sect; the abjuration, if the subject was willing to do so; and the imposing of penance.⁹² The records, on the other hand, due to their format, show what questions the inquisitor used, and what answers were given. Through these one can identify the inquisitor's main concerns and the knowledge he had about the characteristics of specific heresies, either from personal experience, or from the treatises he read.⁹³ In addition, some works circulated that dealt with the technical details of the inquisition: questions to be asked, formularies of oaths and sentences, and so on.

In the fourteenth century the treatise almost every inquisitor used, directly or indirectly, was Bernard Gui's *Practica inquisitionis heretice pravitatis* (completed in 1323-1324).⁹⁴ In the preface to the final part Gui gives some general advice and remarks

⁹⁰ Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Inquisitions and Other Trial Procedures in the Medieval West* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2001), vii.

⁹¹ Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 62-63.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 63.

⁹³ R.I. Moore, *The Origins*, 18.

⁹⁴ Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur*, ed. Mollat, 2 vol.; Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 373-445. See page 22 above.

about the proper proceeding of a trial. At one point he underlines an important aspect that inquisitors should be aware of:

Because modern heretics endeavor and seek covertly to disguise their errors rather than openly confess them, even men versed in the Scriptures cannot prove their guilt, because they manage to escape by verbal trickery and carefully contrived subtleties. The result of this is that [those heretics] are further encouraged by observing how they thus elude learned men, slipping cleverly out of their hands by the sly cunning and tortuous ambiguity of their replies.⁹⁵

Here the author stresses a problem inquisitors had, especially with the Waldensians, when the ones interrogated managed to escape conviction by either denying errors or by giving skillfully elaborated answers. Reading the accounts of trials, there is a sense that the game of manipulation through questions and answers was played on both sides, and many times the unsuccessful were the inquisitors.⁹⁶

Another issue he tackles is that there is no one “method of questioning, investigation, and examination to be employed for all heretics of the various sects, but for each, whether there be one or many, a particular and suitable method ought to be utilized,” depending on different conditions, such as the health, the status, or the social background of the subject under investigation.⁹⁷ Gui advises the inquisitors not to use the same pattern of questions over and over again, even though he gives a set of questions to be used in the case of every heresy, in the order mentioned above.⁹⁸ This was so as not to give the heretics an opportunity to learn this pattern from their own experience or from others, thus to avoid answers that were not incriminating.

⁹⁵ Gui, *Manuel de l’Inquisiteur*, ed. Mollat, 4-6; Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 377.

⁹⁶ Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, 163. He suggests that this was the rule, and not the exception.

⁹⁷ Gui, *Manuel de l’Inquisiteur*, ed. Mollat, 8; Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 378.

⁹⁸ See page 28 above. Jean Gonnet and Amedeo Molnar describe the influence of the manuals and of questionnaires as “a little stereotyped,” in Gonnet and Molnar, *Les Vaudois*, 125.

Comparing the descriptions of heresies and the set of questions and procedures to be used in a trial from treatises such as the *Inquisitor's Manual*, historians arrived at certain conclusions. First of all, there was the possibility that interrogations might have been carried out by inquisitors with “misconceptions derived from the polemical literature.”⁹⁹ In this case, the inquisitor might have taken standard beliefs of one heresy and applied them to the pattern of questions he was asking, neglecting nuances in the answers that might have indicated a different heresy. This was a concern for Grundmann also, who argued that the confessions in a trial might have been based on questions imbedded with precisely formulated doctrines.¹⁰⁰

Secondly, the question lists provided in treatises could have been used to “stamp” various articles of belief on people with different beliefs in actuality.¹⁰¹ That is why Bernard Gui stressed the necessity of variation and adaptation to each individual interrogated. In the next chapter I will take a closer look at a series of trials in order to see, among other things, if such adaptation was what Peter Zwicker employed in his trials or not.

⁹⁹ Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 62; see also Gabriele Zanella, “Tra eresia e metodologia,” in Idem, *Hereticalia. Temi e discussioni* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sul’ Alto Medioevo, 1995), 205; Bueno, *Two Inquisitors*, 34.

¹⁰⁰ Herbert Grundmann, “Ketzerhörere des Spätmittelalters als quellenkritisches Problem,” *Deutsche Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 21 (1965): 519-575, cited in Biller, “Cum dormirent homines,” 239.

¹⁰¹ Biller, “Cum dormirent homines,” 255; see Robert Lerner, *The ‘Heresy’ of the ‘Free Spirit’ in the Later Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 4-5.

CHAPTER 3.

INQUISITION UNDER PETER ZWICKER IN THE DUCHY OF AUSTRIA AND SOPRON

In this chapter I will present and analyze some of the trials Peter Zwicker conducted in Austria and Hungary at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century. Putting the available information in the contexts already presented in the previous chapters, I will try to reveal the extent to which an inquisitor applied the patterns of errors to his suspects and similarities in the Waldensians' behavior.

Peter Zwicker, a Celestine monk from Wormditten in Prussia, was the prior of the convent of Oybin near Zittau in Upper Lusatia and provincial of his Order for Germany.¹⁰² He started his inquisitorial activity at Erfurt in 1391, alongside Martin of Amberg (or of Prague), after which he went to Stettin where he conducted a large-scale inquisition in search of Waldensians from Brandenburg and Pomerania between 1392 and 1394. There, as the remaining documents reveal, he tried 443 suspects for Waldensianism, none of whom was burnt at the stake, unlike the results of his later achievements in Austria.¹⁰³ In 1395 he was called by Duke Albert III to act as inquisitor in Austria, where he resided until his death. After the turn of the century, he also engaged

¹⁰² Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 345; Biller, "Cum dormirent homines," 254-55. For his activity see Gonnet and Molnár, *Les Vaudois*, 150, 152-54; Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 55-56, 64-65; Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*, 460-64, 478-80; Kurze, "Zur Ketzergeschichte."

¹⁰³ Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 64; see also Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*, 480.

in inquisitions in Sopron (1401), Hartberg in Styria (c.1401-c.1404), possibly Vienna (1403), and Buda (1404).¹⁰⁴

His activity, together with those of other two inquisitors in the German lands (Martin of Amberg and Henry Angermeier), was different from the usual ones commissioned by the pope or bishops. They were self-motivated itinerant inquisitors, who responded to local calls for the repression of heresy or went to different places on their own initiative and used the episcopal authority only in need.¹⁰⁵ This freedom of movement might be one of the explanations for their success.

3.1. Setting the inquisitorial stage

Zwicker installed his tribunal in Steyr, Upper Austria, in 1395. There he co-operated with the local authorities in organizing the trials, having at his side the castellan of Steyr, Heinrich of Jelkingen, and the Benedictine parish priest, Frederick, who acted as Zwicker's deputy, and allowed Zwicker and his inquisitorial aides (*familia*) to live in his house. Near Steyr was the Benedictine monastery of Garsten, with a rich library, where Zwicker could have found all the necessary materials needed for his treatise *Cum dormirent homines*, written towards the end of the year.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 365-80, 401-11; Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 305-10, 330, 346-51; see also Gonnet and Molnár, *Les Vaudois*, 152-53; Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*, 478-80; Peter Segl, "Die Waldenser in Österreich um 1400: Lehren, Organisationsform, Verbreitung und Bekämpfung," in *Friedrich Reiser und die 'waldensisch-hussitische Internationale: Akten der Tagung Ötisheim-Schönenberg, 2. bis 4. Oktober 2003*, ed. Albert de Lange und Kathrin Utz Tremp. (Heidelberg: Verlag regionalkultur, 2006), 161-188.

¹⁰⁵ Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 55-56; Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 158.

¹⁰⁶ Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 370-71; Biller, "Cum dormirent homines," 256; idem, "An Inquisitor's View," 271, 286; Bernard, "Heresy," 60.

On August 29 of the same year, Duke Albert III died, and the inquisition was delayed until the following year.¹⁰⁷ At the end of 1395 Zwicker wrote an open letter addressed to the clergy and the new duke, Albert IV of Austria (Austria proper), and to his cousins, dukes William of Inner Austria (Carinthia, Styria and Carniola), and Leopold IV of Further Austria.¹⁰⁸ He warned them about the danger of the Waldensian heresy,¹⁰⁹ which, he wrote, had survived there for one hundred and fifty years.

At the beginning of the letter he stated that in September 1395, the Waldensians acted violently, setting fires in the region, and started to spread in the region, especially after the death of Albert III.¹¹⁰ After this introduction he gives a list of eighty-nine tenets ascribed to the Waldensian heretics, which can be grouped as follows: (1) the practice of lay confession; (2) denial of the authority of the pope and of the bishops; (3) denial of the primacy of Peter among the apostles; (4) the belief that the Church was damned from the day it began to accumulate possessions under Pope Sylvester; (5) denial of the validity of confirmation, substituted by the laying-on of hands; (6) denial of the existence of Purgatory; (7) the claim that any house may serve as place for gathering of the church, consecration being unnecessary; (8) denial of the validity of a priest's consecration of the Eucharist; (9) a rejection of using liturgical music at religious services; (10) a refusal to venerate holy images and relics; (11) denial of the usefulness of pilgrimages to holy places; (12) opposition to the concept of monasticism; (13) rejection of the authority of emperors, kings, princes, margraves, landgraves, dukes, barons, judges, jurors, and other

¹⁰⁷ Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 373; Bernard, "Heresy:" 60.

¹⁰⁸ Jean Bérenger, *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1273-1700*, tr. C.A. Simpson (London: Longman, 1994), 61-62; Günther Hödl, *Habsburg und Österreich: 1273-1493: Gestalten und Gestalt des österreichischen Spätmittelalter* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1988), 147-156.

¹⁰⁹ Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 305-311. See also Biller, "An Inquisitor's view," 271-272.

¹¹⁰ Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 305: *contumaciter incepit cum violentiis incendiorum et terroribus homicidiorum non tam occulte dilate stare quam contemptibiliter et temerarie dominari maxime post obitum dolentissimum serenissimi principis et domini domni Alberti*. (From MS Regensburg X, 5).

officials; (14) opposition to the crusades against Saracens and other infidels; (15) denial of the teachings of Augustine, Jerome, Gregory and Ambrose; (16) the claim that they, the Waldensians, were the only true Christians.¹¹¹

What is relevant is that Zwicker's list was compiled before the inquisition actually started in Steyr, the inquisitor knowing or suspecting already what kind of heretics he would be dealing with. In any case, he was well informed about Waldensian tenets, since he had spent almost two years questioning Waldensians in Stettin. All items he enumerates are known from the beginnings of Waldensianism or from the thirteenth century, with some variations. Concerning the Austrian Waldensians, there are other polemical writings which indicated the need for intense action against them in the Austrian lands:¹¹² (a) a polemic that looks similar to Zwicker's letter;¹¹³ (b) another polemical work in a manuscript from the monastery of Windberg, in Lower Bavaria;¹¹⁴ and (c) a treatise by Johannes Leser in a manuscript from the monastery of Klosterneuburg near Vienna,¹¹⁵ in which, after enumerating the Waldensian tenets, the author attempts to refute them through biblical quotations.

The chronicle of Prevenhuber gives information about some events relating to the inquisition in the year 1397.¹¹⁶ It is mentioned that more than a thousand persons were arrested in Steyr and condemned to wear the penitential cross on their garments, or were given into the hands of the secular powers and sentenced to prison for life or even burnt at the stake. According to Prevenhuber, in Früxenthal, near Steyr, eighty to one hundred

¹¹¹ Ibid., 306-11. Grouping made by Bernard, "Heresy:" 61.

¹¹² Bernard, "Heresy:" 62.

¹¹³ Ibid., 62; Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 344-345 (The author does not give the signature of the MS).

¹¹⁴ Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 304-305 (MS Windberg 163).

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 351-355 (Döllinger does not give the signature of the MS).

¹¹⁶ Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 374. The text is in Valentin Prevenhuber, *Annales Styrenses* (Nürnberg, 1740), 73.

persons were burnt as heretics.¹¹⁷ Another chronicle, that of Veit Arnpeck, mentions that more than one hundred persons were burnt in Steyr.¹¹⁸ Even though the numbers might have been smaller in reality, this evidence indicates intense activity of the inquisition of Peter Zwicker in Steyr and around the town in these years, and 1397 seems to be the most important in terms of the inquisition's success.

3.2. Cases from the inquisitions in Steyr and Sopron: 1395-1398, 1401

There are extant sentences of a number of cases from Zwicker's inquisition and other related materials that he used in his trials. These are usually found together but may be dispersed in various manuscripts, and form what historians called the *Processus Petri* compilation; sixteen of the manuscripts also include the treatise *Cum dormirent homines*.¹¹⁹ From these three protocols from Steyr, one from Hartberg, and one from Sopron are published.¹²⁰

In one of the protocols from Steyr, a sentence from 1398 refers to a widow named Kunegundis from Au, near Garsten, who denied that in the year 1395 she had become a Waldensian.¹²¹ Then in 1398 she was suspected of falling into heresy and was taken to Steyr to be questioned under oath. Eventually, the widow made an open confession that she did not believe in Purgatory, in the sacraments, and in the intercession of the saints. This is a typical case for a Waldensian trial, with a denial of belonging to the heresy on

¹¹⁷ Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 374.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. The text of the chronicle is in *Scriptores Rerum Austriacarum*, ed. Hieronymus Pez, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1721, 1725), 1244.

¹¹⁹ Biller, "Cum dormirent homines," 253-54.

¹²⁰ Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 346-51; and Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 404-11.

¹²¹ Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 374-75, with the Latin text in the Annex 2, no 2, 405-8.

the part of the suspect, and an open confession about his or her beliefs, after persistent interrogations.

The next sentence¹²² refers, among others, to two other widows, Els Fewr from Dambach in the parish of Garsten, and Geisel from Lueg bei St. Michael in the parish of the monastery of Seitenstetten. They had been sentenced once, in the time of Zwicker's predecessor, Henry of Olomouc, after denying being heretics, to wear the penitential cross on the front and back of their clothes. One of them, Els, was born into the heresy, and lived in it for sixty years.¹²³ Her case requires more attention, because she abjured the heresy in the 1360s, and then in 1391, relapsing every time. And at the time of this last trial, she argued with her parish priest about fasting and the vigils of saints' days, suggesting that one should pray only to God and not to saints. Not repenting after the first trial, she was sentenced by the inquisitor to wear the penitential cross for the rest of her life, and also to circumambulate the church on seven Sundays in a row, to be beaten with rods by her parish priest, and to lie on the threshold of the church for people to step when entering and exiting the church until the priest told her to stand up and go.¹²⁴ The other widow, Geisel, also born within the sect and living in it for forty years, was sentenced to wear the penitential cross for twenty years and to make a circumambulation of the church on one Sunday.¹²⁵

¹²² Ibid., 371-72, 376, with the Latin text in the Annex 2, no 1, 404-405. This is the disputed account mentioned at the page 15 above, note 40. While Haupt gives the text under a title that comprises both the names of Zwicker and of Martin of Prague, the text itself and Haupt's comment (371-2) make no reference to Martin. From comparing the texts, it appears that both are from the same period.

¹²³ Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 371-72, 376; Biller, "An Inquisitor's View," 290.

¹²⁴ *...ideo per totum tempus vite tue penitebis in cruce et ad maiorem tue conversionis consequendam gratiam septem dominicis diebus immediate in parochia tua in Garsten ante presbyterum debes ecclesiam circuire et per eum virgis fortiter cedi et cum ecclesiam post circuitum reintrare volueris, debes sub ianua per transversum te prosternare, ubi ab intrantibus et exeuntibus poteris conculcari, quousque presbyter surgere te mandabit.* Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 404; Ibid., 371-72.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 405, 372.

In the same protocol, Dietrich Wagner, from Grieglern is also mentioned, who lived thirty-two years in heresy from his birth and who was sentenced to wear the penitential cross for eight years and to circumambulate the church in front of the congregation with a rod¹²⁶ in his right hand and a candle in his left. Another sentence refers to a boy only ten years old, named Salomon from Schwaming, born into heresy, who was sentenced to wear the cross for only two years.¹²⁷ Furthermore, Heinrich from Dörfl, thirty years old, being born into the heresy, was sentenced to wear the cross for six years and to make a pilgrimage to Rome.¹²⁸ This group of people seems to have one major element in common, except being accused of heresy, namely, they were all born in the heresy. This gives an image of how strong Waldensianism was there at the time, and how it was spreading, not by preaching in gatherings to strangers, but rather within the family, from one generation to another. This familial transmission of Waldensian beliefs may explain the continuity they had over the centuries.¹²⁹

Another protocol from Zwicker's inquisitorial activity in 1398¹³⁰ refers to three people who were investigated at the end of January. Jans from Peug, in the parish of Garsten, was charged especially with perjury, because he had denied being a Waldensian half a year before, but he was now found to be indeed a heretic, and sentenced to penance *in scandalum publice*¹³¹ at the church of St. Aegidius in Steyr. Also, as a sign of his stubbornness and his multiple perjuries, he was sentenced to wear a mocking cap with an image painted on it representing a peasant with the devil pulling his tongue while he was

¹²⁶ It is not clear from the text what kind of rod it was, and for what purpose the inquisitor required this.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ See page 10 above, and also note 18 for details.

¹³⁰ Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 346-351. See also Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 376-377.

¹³¹ This might have been public exposure on a scaffold of some sort.

taking an oath.¹³² This was intended to symbolize his persistence in lying, being for that a puppet in the hands of the devil.

The second sentence preserved from this protocol is that of a woman named Dyemuth, a lodger in the house of Methel from Hausleithen in the parish of Sierning.¹³³ The house owner denounced her as a suspect of heresy, and when she was cited for trial, initially she did not come. On January 24, 1398, however, she appeared and strongly rejected any attempt of the inquisitor to make her swear to tell the truth. The inquisitor presented her with different passages from both the New and the Old Testaments which would show the benign character of the oath, even its necessity in a trial. The woman refused to take an oath, but admitted that she belonged to the Waldensian sect and that she had confessed to its “heresiarchs” (the *magistri*).¹³⁴ In a desperate attempt to make her swear, the inquisitor said that if swearing were a sin, it would fall on his soul, but if there were anything false in what she swore to, it would be at the expense of her soul. The account does not give the sentence, but it is implied that the woman did not repent, and this suggests that she was given into the hands of the secular authorities and executed.

Among the usual issues that appear in these sentences concerning the accused, the oath and the recognition of being Waldensian after a long interrogation, there is one aspect that gives insight into the inquisitor’s methods. This was the disposition Zwicker had to take the supposed sin of taking an oath on him in an attempt to earn his suspect’s confidence. This is an example of the flexibility in interrogation suggested by inquisitors

¹³² Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 348. See also Bernard, “Heresy,” 62.

¹³³ Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 350-351.

¹³⁴ *Item confessa es in eodem examine, te fuisse haeticam Waldensem pluries Haeresiarchis cofessam. Ibid.*, 351.

like Bernard Gui,¹³⁵ and from the extant material from Zwicker's activity in Stettin, studies have shown that he varied his questioning.¹³⁶

Another person investigated on this occasion was Gundel, from the parish of Holzapfelberg bei Weistrach.¹³⁷ He was initially excommunicated for not appearing at the investigation when he was cited long before, being suspected of heresy. When he eventually appeared before of the deputy of the inquisitor, the parish priest Frederick, in Steyr on July 21, 1397, he had received a penance to wear a white cross on his clothes. Gundel was suspected of relapsing into heresy, however, by Heinrich of Jelkingen, the castellan of Steyr, who had been delegated by the dukes Albert IV and William to help the inquisitor in his mission.

Before the inquisitor, on January 27, 1398, the accused tried every trick not to swear, and at some point, admitting that he wanted to swear, he said that he would rather swear on the inquisitor's soul than on his own. In the meantime, he pulled the castellan aside and told him that he would not swear on his own soul, but on the inquisitor's because the inquisitor was more learned than he, and if there were a sin in swearing, should fall on the inquisitor's soul, otherwise he would not swear.¹³⁸ Eventually, he did swear on his soul, and received a penance, even though he previously had shown great contempt for it, as Peter Zwicker noted in his sentence.

¹³⁵ Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur*, ed. Mollat, 8; Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 378. See page 27.

¹³⁶ Biller, "Cum dormirent homines," 255; *Quellen zur Ketzergeschichte Brandenburgs und Pommerns*, ed. Dietrich Kurze, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin 45, Quellenwerke 6 (Berlin, 1975) (hereafter: *Quellen... Brandenburgs und Pommerns*).

¹³⁷ Döllinger, *Beiträge*, 348-350.

¹³⁸ ...intelligo te quod vis iurare in animam meam non tuam, tu velut volpis astuta rete venationis nostrae volens transsilire, et non praevalens nostris argumentis obvolutus anxius et quomodo evaderes nesciens, D. Castellanus praedictum ad partem recepisti et sibi in conclavi dixisti, quod in animam Inquisitoris, denotando nostram, iurare velis, quia ipse, videlicet Inquisitor, literatior esset quam tu, et si quid peccati in ipso iuramento foret, in ipsius Inquisitoris animam redundare deberet, non iurantibus. Ibid., 350.

The interesting aspect of this case, beyond the well crafted argumentation of the accused in front of the inquisitor and the fact that he was a recidivist, is the relationship between Gundel, the accused, and Heinrich, the accuser. One would be interested to find out what Gundel was trying to do when he pulled aside and chatted in private with the one who not only accused him, but would eventually decide his fate if the sentence were not favorable for him. Maybe his intention was to convince the castellan to drop the accusation or at least not to bring more witnesses against him; or maybe they were just old acquaintances, and in spite of their differences (even as great as an accusation of heresy), they still felt the need to chat about the situation. But a more intriguing and relevant explanation would be if Gundel knew about the interrogation of Dyemuth three days before and wanted to escape by the means the woman refused: swearing on the inquisitor's soul. This would imply that both parties involved, inquisitor and accused, were ready to adapt to any situation in order to get what each of them wanted.

The last case to be presented here is the one from Sopron, where Peter Zwicker and Martin of Amberg conducted an inquisition in 1401, having authority over the entire archbishopric of Esztergom and especially over the diocese of Győr. The sentence dated January 9, 1401,¹³⁹ concerns all the Waldensians in the vicinity of Sopron. Through this sentence a large number of people were given penances to wear the penitential cross, and to make other penances imposed by the Church. Together with this group of people, another, different, one was taken into consideration. It was decided that the graves of deceased heretics were to be opened and their bodies burnt at the stake. Also, all the

¹³⁹ Haupt, "Waldenserthum" II: 401-3, 366-67. About the context of the Waldensians in Sopron, see also György Székely, "A Huszitizmus és a Magyar nép," *Századok* 3 (1956): 350-58.

houses in which the religious meetings of the Waldensians had taken place were to be destroyed and never re-built.

This sentence is evidence of the seriousness with which these inquisitors treated heresy. For them, it was like a disease which had to be cleared out even by bringing down houses or by burning the corpses, an image that is surely connected immediately with the burning of dead bodies affected by plague half a century before.

The data presented in this chapter show some major characteristics of Waldensian heretics that Peter Zwicker encountered in his inquisitorial activity. These were: (1) obstinacy in not taking an oath during the trial; (2) relapsing, even though one repented from heresy one or more times; (3) and the transmission of Waldensian beliefs and values within the family. These are sure facts, and if they overlapped, more or less, the image inquisitors had about Waldensians this resulted in deepening the stereotypes about them. Maybe not all the common features of these Waldensians were paralleled in the treatises like that of Peter Zwicker, but they were relevant enough to be taken into consideration in future trials and treatises.

CONCLUSIONS

The general perception of Waldensianism remained almost the same from the beginnings of the movement, with some additions and some small changes. Waldensians were considered to be opposed to the Church, its authority and its sacraments, and if they had the same sacrament of Eucharist, this would always be officiated differently, in a heretical way.¹⁴⁰ Important issues for Catholic polemicists were also lay preaching, lay confession, denial of Purgatory, opposition to oath taking, abhorrence of killing, and many others.

For practical reasons, the inquisitors gave lists of errors that were supposed to help identify a Waldensian heretic, taking them from personal experience in interrogating Waldensians or from older or contemporaneous polemical treatises. Many of these writings had in common not only the same errors, but also the same organization.¹⁴¹ In most cases, these lists of errors were transposed into the questionnaires drawn up for the inquisitorial process. They were put there as guidelines and it was even suggested that the inquisitor should not stick to the letter, but should adapt himself to the situation.

One case of such adaptation is provided by the inquisitor Peter Zwicker. After spending some time in Stettin, getting a great deal of information about Waldensians, he went to Steyr already prepared to face the challenges. He used his experience more than the manuals to obtain what he wanted. Taking the eventual sin of swearing on his soul to earn the confidence of the accused, he let himself become vulnerable; vulnerability which

¹⁴⁰ See Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages*, 459.

¹⁴¹ Biller, "Cum dormirent homines," 258-261.

others tried to take advantage of.¹⁴² Nevertheless, his inquisitorial campaign was a success, and either by conversions or by capital punishments, the Waldensian community in Upper Austria was weakened.

From the accounts Zwicker left it seems that people were honest in stating their beliefs or in abjuring them, although the problem of relapsing was one of the important traits of Austrian Waldensians. The best example is Els Fewr,¹⁴³ who relapsed at least two times before the last trial, when she refused to repent. This is evidence of the sincere faith in the Waldensian values some of the accused had. No matter how difficult it was for them to go through all the trials, all the public hostility,¹⁴⁴ and the death penalty for that matter, they remained convinced that they were right and theirs was the path to salvation.

Another way of opposing the conformity imposed by the inquisitors was the violent resistance. By setting on fire the households related to the inquisitors' presence, the Waldensians were ready to defend their positions by all means. We may consider them a class of their own, one who rejected the authority of the Church and who put itself outside the society, a clear example being their refusal to take oath, a cornerstone of the feudal order.¹⁴⁵

The conclusion I arrived at from all this information is that the line between perception and reality was as blurred then as it is now. An inquisitor might have had an idea about what he would find in a place full of heretics and tried to conduct his inquisitorial activity following secure lines to discover the Waldensians. But he might

¹⁴² See the cases of Dyemuth and Gundel on pages 38-40 above.

¹⁴³ See page 36 above.

¹⁴⁴ Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 68-69. It was suggested that this popular hostility towards heretics may have been provoked by the heretics' aversion to the orthodox Christians.

¹⁴⁵ Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent*, 57-58.

also have attempted to adapt himself to the reality, or at least to a reality he perceived on the spot, from case to case. The adaptation, however, was on both sides. The accused Waldensians tried not only to escape conviction by giving evasive answers or simply by not presenting themselves at the court, but some also tried to use the inquisitor's own words in defending themselves, in a game of manipulation played on either side.

Although not so clear from the examples analyzed, the overlapping of perceptions and actual beliefs may speak about the strength of Waldensianism. If the list of errors the inquisitor had matched almost completely with the testimonies received, granted they were unforced, this means the Waldensian movement and its tenets were well known and the perceptions were not so stereotyped. It also means the tradition preserved and transmitted through generations within families and close communities remained basically unaltered for more than a century if not for more. Their strength also resided not in their numbers¹⁴⁶ but in their dispersion over large areas in Central Europe, moving from one place to another due to persecution or economic needs. This movement may have contributed to their survival up until the sixteenth century, when the majority of the Waldensians aligned to the Reformed Churches.¹⁴⁷

In my research I have tried to bring together the perception an inquisitor had about Waldensians and Waldensianism and the reality he encountered during trials. Also, by comparing the standard inquisitorial procedures with the actual events that occurred during trials (as much as the short protocols offer about them) it reinforced the idea stated above that Zwicker was a skilled inquisitor who adapted himself to the situation.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Kieckhefer, *Repression of Heresy*, 61-62.

¹⁴⁷ Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent*, 161-188.

¹⁴⁸ Biller, "Cum dormirent homines," 255; *Quellen... Brandenburgs und Pommerns*.

In future research one could analyze Zwicker's inquisitorial protocols in relation to the local Austrian social environment, the trades and education of the local people, together with the ecclesiastical environment. On the other hand, for a better understanding of the relations between perception and actuality, historians should assemble this kind of information from different inquisitorial accounts from the same period and/or the same region, or different accounts from different periods and/or different regions. One approach would be to concentrate on the more adaptable inquisitors and their accounts, looking for questions and answers that depart from the model and analyzing them in the light of the knowledge about their social and religious contexts.

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APPENDIX

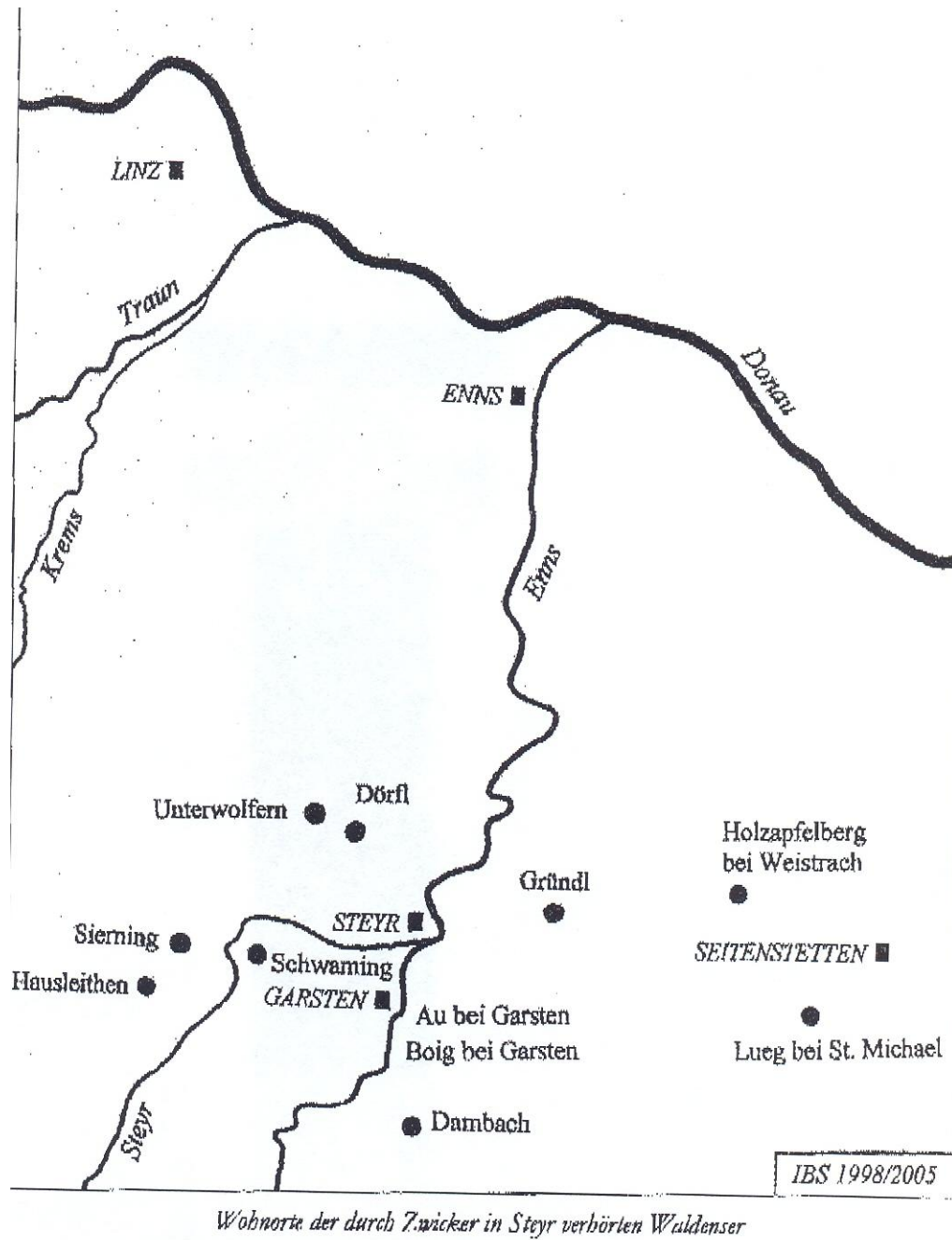


Figure 1. Map of the region of Steyr with places of Waldensian presence

Peter Segl, "Die Waldenser in Österreich um 1400: Lehren, Organisationsform, Verbreitung und Bekämpfung," in *Friedrich Reiser und die 'waldensisch-hussitische Internationale': Akten der Tagung Ötisheim-Schönenberg, 2. bis 4. Oktober 2003*, ed. Albert de Lange und Kathrin Utz Tremp. (Heidelberg: Verlag regionalkultur, 2006), 174.