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The Virgin Mary in Cathar Thought

by SARAH HAMILTON

The central Middle Ages in western Europe witnessed both a significant growth in the cult of the Virgin Mary and the rise of the dualist heretical movements known as the Cathars. Whilst the Cathars' dualism meant they denied any role for the Virgin Mary in the incarnation, nevertheless they often assigned her an important place in their beliefs. This article explores the considerable affinities which existed between contemporary orthodox doctrines and heretical teachings on Mary and, through a case study of the Disputatio inter catholicum et paterinum hereticum, *examines the close relationship between anti-Cathar polemic, orthodox biblical exegesis and heretical belief.*

I

In April 1321 Raymonde Testaniere appeared before Jacques Fournier, bishop of the southern French diocese of Pamiers.[1] She recounted the tale, which according to her was well known in the community of Montaillou, of what had occurred on the deathbed of the Cathar believer

AFP = *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum*; *Glossa ordinaria* = *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria: facsimile reprint of the editio princeps Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81*, intro. Karlfried Froehlich and Margaret T. Gibson, Turnhout 1992; *HH* = *Christian dualist heresies in the Byzantine world, c. 650–c. 1450*, ed. Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton with Yuri Stoyanov, Manchester 1998; *Moneta* = *Monetae cremonensis adversus catharos et valdenses libri quinque*, I: (*Descriptio fidei haereticorum*), ed. T. A. Ricchini, Rome 1743; *WEH* = W. L. Wakefield and A. P. Evans, *Heresies of the high Middle Ages*, New York 1969

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[1] Her testimony is briefly considered by E. Le Roy Ladurie in his classic study of Fournier's register, *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French village, 1294–1324*, trans. Barbara Bray, London 1978, 223. For an important critique of Ladurie's methodology see M. Benad, *Domus und Religion im Montaillou: katholische Kirche und Katharismus im Überlebenskampf der Familie des Pfarrers Petrus Clerici am Anfang des 14 Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen 1990, passim, and at pp. 173–4 for his comments on this passage. See also the more general critique by L. E. Boyle, 'Montaillou revisited: *mentalité* and methodology', in J. A. Raftis (ed.), *Pathways to medieval peasants: papers in medieval studies*, Toronto 1981, 119–40.

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Guillemette Belot ten years earlier. As a good Cathar *credens* Guillemette had sought, and been given, the Cathar rite of the *consolamentum* on her deathbed. Having been received into what she believed to be the true faith, and thus assured of salvation, she was understandably upset when the Catholic priest arrived to give her the Latin last rites and cried out: 'Sancta Maria, Sancta Maria, the devil is coming.'[2]

Raymonde's interrogator was interested in the story only as evidence for Guillemette's heresy; seemingly neither he nor Raymonde found anything unusual in her report of a dying Cathar's appeal to the Mother of God for aid against the forces of Latin orthodoxy. Yet it was a commonplace of orthodox accounts of the doctrines of those dualist heretics known to modern historians as Cathars that they denied the Virgin Mary any role in their belief system.[3] According to the Lombard inquisitor, Raniero Sacconi, writing half a century earlier, *c.* 1250, it was possible to detect dualists, whichever sect they belonged to, because 'never do they implore the aid or intervention of angels or the Blessed Virgin Mary, or of the saints nor fortify themselves by the Cross'.[4] Raniero Sacconi was not the only orthodox writer to point out the contempt expressed by the Cathars for the cult of the saints, including that of the Virgin Mary. Anselm of Alessandria, also a Dominican inquisitor in Italy, writing perhaps fifteen years later, made a similar observation about the beliefs of the Bagnolense sect: 'No Cathar fasts on the vigil of any of the

[2] 'Item dixit quod fama fuit in dicta villa quod dicta Guillelma Belota mortua fuit en landura et quod Bernardus clerici fecerat eam sic mori. Item dixit quod fama fuit et communiter fuit dictam in dicta villa quod quando Ramundus Cifre, rector de Camuraco portans corpus Domini intrauit domum dicte Guillelme Belote et eam communicaret in dicta infirmitate, dicta Guillelma videns eum dixit: "Sancta Maria, Sancta Maria, le diable ve!"': *Le Registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier, êveque de Pamiers (1318–1325)*, ed. Jean Duvernoy, Toulouse 1965, i. 462. Raymonde Testaniere, a non-Cathar, was employed in the Belot household from 1304 to 1307; she had two sons by Bernard Belot who refused to marry her, choosing someone else instead.

[3] The term Cathar is used in this article as shorthand to refer to central medieval western dualist heretics; its use does not imply that all these medieval dualist heretics should be regarded as members of one body. Any historian of medieval heresies faces problems of nomenclature. First, those pithily summarised by Malcolm Lambert: 'As Catharism spread, names for the new heresy proliferated', *The Cathars*, Oxford 1998, 43. Second, both the doctrinal differences between different sects, and the geographic separation of different communities, must be considered; these issues are discussed more fully later in this article. Third s/he must also acknowledge the views of Mark Pegg that there was no such thing as Catharism; Pegg's conclusions are based on the inquisition testimony of thirteenth-century southern French heretical believers who appear not to have been aware of an organised heretical alternative to the Latin Church and instead only referred to the 'good men and women': *The corruption of angels: the great inquisition, 1245–6*, Princeton, NJ 2001.

[4] 'Nunquam etiam implorant auxilium vel patrocinium angelorum, sive beatae Virginis, vel sanctorum, neque muniunt se signo crucis': Raniero Sacconi, *Summa de catharis et pauperibus de Lugduno*, ed. A. Dondaine, in *Un Traité néo-manichéen du XIIIe siècle: le liber du duobus principiis suivi d'un fragment de rituel cathare*, Rome 1939, 66. The translation is taken from *WEH*, 332.

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saints, nor of the apostles, nor of the Blessed Virgin, but he says that the harlot, the Roman Church, instituted vigils, and did so for profit.'[5] Both men were writing about their experience of Catharism in northern Italy in the mid-thirteenth century, and Raniero's account, in particular, is highly valued by historians as he was a Cathar perfect before becoming a friar.[6] But the *exempla* compiled by Stephen of Bourbon (d. *c.* 1261), the Dominican inquisitor of Lyons, for use in preaching against the heretics suggest that the Cathars' criticisms of the Virgin Mary were also a bone of contention in France.[7] According to Stephen, friars ought to teach that Mary should be specifically praised because she made possible Christ's coming and thus humanity's redemption from sin.[8] In support of this he cited the *exemplum* of the cleric whose tongue the Albigensian heretics had cut out; this clerk then visited the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Cluny where he prayed that, if the Virgin restored his tongue, he would praise her freely; she did and he kept his side of the bargain.[9] His devotion to Mary was seemingly interpreted by Stephen as a response to the heretics' criticism of her cult.

The Cathars' rejection of Mary derived from their view 'that the devil made this world and all the things which are in it'.[10] They thus did not believe in the future resurrection of the (material) body.[11] A common belief in the evil of all earthly matter united the two main heretical groupings in the west, the moderate and absolute dualists, as did its logical outcome, that Jesus Christ, as the representative of the good spiritual god, had not therefore become human.[12] Moderate dualists taught that the good god created Lucifer, who rebelled against god's authority, and was cast out from heaven; on being cast out it was Lucifer who fashioned both the material world and

[5] 'Item nullus catharus ieiunat vigiliam alicuius sancti, neque apostolorum, neque beate Virginis, sed dicit quod meretrix ecclesia romana constituit vigilias, et hoc propter lucrum': Anselm of Alessandria, *Tractatus de hereticis*, ed. Antoine Dondaine, in 'La Hiérarchie cathare en Italie, II: Le 'tractatus de hereticis' d'Anselme d'Alexandrie OP; III: Catalogue de la hiérarchie cathare d'Italie', *AFP* xx (1950), 308–24 at p. 313 (repr. in idem, *Les Hérésies et l'inquisition XIIe–XIIIe siècles*, ed. Y. Dossat, Aldershot 1990, no. IV).

[6] Anselm's career is recounted by Dondaine in 'La Hiérarchie cathare, II-III', 259–62. On Raniero's career see Dondaine, *Un Traité néo-manichéen*, 57–8. For Raniero's heretical background see his own account: 'Ego autem frater Ranerius, olim haeresiarcha, nunc Dei gratia sacerdos in ordine Praedicatorum licet indignus': *Summa*, ibid. 66.

[7] Jacques Berlioz, 'La Prédication des cathares selon l'inquisiteur Étienne de Bourbon (mort vers 1261)', *Heresis* xxxi (1999), 9–35.

[8] A. Lecoy de la Marche, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues tirés du recueil inédit d'Etienne de Bourbon, dominicain du XIIIe siècle*, Paris 1877, 97.

[9] Ibid. no. 109, 97.

[10] 'Communes opiniones omnium Catharorum sunt istae, scilicet quod diabolus fecit hunc mundum et omnia quae in eo sunt': Raniero Sacconi, *Summa*, 64.

[11] 'Item omnes Cathares negant carnis resurrectionem futuram': ibid.

[12] For Cathar understanding of the Incarnation, amongst other aspects of Cathar doctrine, see Bernard Hamilton, 'The Cathars and Christian perfection', in Peter Biller and Barrie Dobson (eds), *The medieval Church: universities, heresy and the religious life: essays in honour of Gordon Leff*, Woodbridge 1999, 5–23 at pp. 10–12.

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the first man from matter which the good god had left behind.[13] Christ was sent by the good god to the evil world, and assumed flesh from the Blessed Virgin Mary but he did not take a human soul.[14] In contrast, the absolute dualists believed in two co-eternal principles of good and evil, locked in perpetual conflict, and in two parallel worlds, one good, ruled over by the good god, whilst this earthly world was the dominion of the evil god. Thus 'the Son of God did not acquire human nature in reality but only its semblance from the Blessed Virgin, who they say was an angel. Neither did he really eat, drink or suffer, nor was He really dead and buried, nor was His resurrection real, but all these things were in appearance only'.[15] All Cathars based their teaching about Christ on the New Testament, which they read in substantially the same text as orthodox Latin Christians, although they understood it in different ways.[16] Taking an essentially docetic approach to the Incarnation Cathars of all kinds are widely reported to have thus denied Christ's humanity and therefore a role for Mary in the salvation history of mankind.

How, therefore, should we interpret Guillemette's dying appeal to the Virgin? Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie interpreted it in his study of the community of Montaillou as evidence for the syncretism between pagan, orthodox and heretical beliefs which he identified in the Pamiers depositions.[17] This apparent discrepancy between the doceticism ascribed to the Cathars in thirteenth-century accounts of their belief, on the one hand, and this evidence for the devotion of one peasant woman in the early fourteenth century on the other, also fits into the pattern of the decline and corruption of Cathar belief in the isolated communities of early fourteenth-century Languedoc identified by earlier scholars.[18] But the work of Jean Duvernoy and Malcolm Lambert has demonstrated that the evidence from the Autier revival of Languedocian Catharism in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries

[13] Raniero Sacconi, *Summa*, 76–7.

[14] 'Item dicunt quod Christus non assumpsit animam humanam, sed fere omnes credunt eum assumpsisse carnem de beata Virgine': ibid. 76.

[15] 'Item quod dei filius non assumpsit humanam naturam in veritate sed eius similem ex beata Virgine, quam dicunt fuisse angelum, nec vere comedit nec vere bibit nec vere passus est nec vere mortuus et sepultus nec eius resurrectio fuit vera, sed fuerunt haec omnia putative': ibid. 71 (English trans. *WEH*, 338). Cf. 'Credunt etiam isti B. virginem Mariam caelestem fuisse et non habuisse corpus humanum, sed caeleste, non huius creationis transitoriae et animam, atque spiritum, ad custodiam animae deputatum. Dicunt etiam, et credunt, quod in uterum Mariae descendit Christus a patre missus in suo corpore, et anima, et spiritu, et nihil aliud traxit de Virgine, quam id, quod portaverat in ipsam.': *Moneta*, Lib. I, praef., p. 5a.

[16] Bernard Hamilton, 'Wisdom from the east: the reception by the Cathars of eastern dualist texts', in Peter Biller and Anne Hudson (eds), *Heresy and literacy, 1000–1530*, Cambridge 1994, 38–60 at pp. 49–52.

[17] Ladurie, *Montaillou*, 288–326.

[18] J.-M. Vidal, 'Les Derniers Ministres d'albigéisme en Languedoc', *Revue des questions historique* lxxix (1906), 57–107; M. Roquebert, *Les Cathares: de la chute de Montségur aux dernier bûchers (1244–1329)*, Paris 1998.

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cannot be interpreted as representing a decline in the purity of Cathar doctrine.[19] In the light of their research, can we therefore dismiss the dying woman's appeal as evidence for the failure of Cathar teaching?

In order to answer this question this article investigates the evidence for the role ascribed to the Virgin Mary in accounts of the beliefs of western dualist heretics produced in the period *c.* 1200 to *c.* 1320.[20] Whilst previous scholars of Cathar belief, notably Jean Duvernoy and Gerhard Rottenwöhrer, have touched on dualist attitudes to Mary, they have done so only within the context of studying Cathar beliefs as a whole and they were both concerned to establish how far the evidence for Cathar belief is consistent across a range of sources.[21] They did not investigate the nature of the sources for dualist Mariology in depth, nor the affinities between heretical teachings about Mary and contemporary orthodox doctrine which are the primary concerns of this article. But it also has a second purpose which is to explore how anti-Cathar polemic was constructed by orthodox writers through a study of their sources, for the twists and turns of the evidence for just one strand of Cathar belief have interesting implications for modern understanding of the complex relationship between heresy and orthodoxy.

II

The docetism attributed to the Cathars was at odds with two important developments in the orthodox spirituality of their time. The central Middle Ages witnessed a significant growth in the cult of the Virgin Mary at all levels of society in the medieval west at the same time as increased emphasis was placed on Christ's humanity in both the Christian liturgy and in art.[22]

[19] Jean Duvernoy, 'Pierre Autier', *Cahiers d'études cathares* xlvii (1970), 9–49; Lambert, *The Cathars*, 230–71.

[20] Unfortunately there is an absence of detailed sources for Cathar belief in the twelfth century.

[21] Jean Duvernoy, *Le Catharisme: la religion des cathares*, Toulouse 1976, 82–9, 112–19, 322, 334–41, 346, 352, 372; Gerhard Rottenwöhrer, *Der Katharismus*, Bad Honnef 1982–93, i. 46, 50, 58, 86–7, 90–101, 112, 152, 165, 178–9, 191, 195, 211, 213–15, 221, 234–5, 243, 249, 266, 306, 320, 328, 331, 333, 340, 367, 369, 379, 385, 393, 404, 423; ii. 579, 671, 718, 737–9; iii. 32–3, 42, 47–8, 51, 83, 122, 158, 197; iv/1, 117–19, 301–2, 316, 353, 405, 417, 450–1; iv/2, 36, 101–6, 166, 188, 196. Kathrin Utz Tremp's article on the evidence for Marian belief as recorded in Jacques Fournier's register concentrates on Waldensian rather than Cathar belief: '"Parmi les hérétiques …": la Vierge Marie dans le registre d'inquisition de l'évêque Jacques Fournier de Pamiers (1317–1326)', in Dominique Iogna Prat, Éric Palazzo and Daniel Russo (eds), *Marie: le culte de la Vierge dans la société médiévale*, Paris 1996, 533–58. The work of Charles Schmidt remains a useful summary of much of the material: *Histoire et doctrine de la secte des cathares ou albigeois*, Paris 1849, ii. 39–43.

[22] On Mary's cult in general see Hilda Graef, *Mary: a history of doctrine and devotion*, London 1963–5 (combined edition 1985); Marina Warner, *Alone of all her sex; the myth and cult of the Virgin*

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Representations of the crucified Christ, for example, moved away from depicting Him as a triumphant, royal figure, presenting him instead as a man suffering very real pain.[23] Although these orthodox developments appeared independently both of each other and of dualist heresy, modern scholarship has demonstrated the extent to which the orthodox response to dualism involved promotion of the doctrine of the Incarnation and of the cult of the Virgin in both east and west. In Constantinople, in the second half of the eleventh century, the popularity of a new image-type of the Virgin, her hands raised in intercession with a medallion on her chest containing the Christ Child, representing the Incarnation, has been linked to the action taken by the new emperor Alexius I Comnenus (1081–1118) to promote orthodoxy in the face of the perceived threat from Bogomilism.[24] The spread of this new iconography promoting the doctrine of the Incarnation was thus, in part at least, a reaction to the emphatic rejection of it by the dualist Bogomils.

A century later in the west, faced with the challenge from Catharism, both the Franciscan and Dominican friars followed in the Byzantines' footsteps and chose to promote belief in Christ's humanity and devotion to his mother in their preaching.[25] St Francis of Assisi's own *stigmata* are a testament to the former, as was his promotion of the custom of the Christmas crib.[26] And in his writings Francis testified to his devotion to the Mother of God: his salutation to the blessed Virgin Mary, for example, is found in almost all the early manuscripts and its attribution to Francis is accepted as authentic.[27] The Dominicans also had a special affection for the Mother of God. Stories circulated from as early as 1231 attributing the order's distinctive black and

Mary, 2nd edn, London 1990. For evidence of the growth of the cult in the central Middle Ages see, for example, the increased popularity of the *Ave Maria* prayer in the eleventh and twelfth centuries: Graef, *Mary*, 230–1. The compilation of the miracles of Our Lady of Rocamadour in the 1170s was seemingly independent of the threat from Catharism but testifies to the growth of her cult in south-western France in this period: M. Bull, *The miracles of Our Lady of Rocamadour: analysis and translation*, Woodbridge 1999, 65–6. On this see now R. Fulton's *From judgement to passion: devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200*, New York 2002.

[23] Colin Morris, *The papal monarchy*, Oxford 1989, 303.

[24] Bissera V. Pentcheva, 'Rhetorical images of the Virgin: the icon of the "usual miracle" at the Blachernai', *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* xxxviii (2000), 34–55.

[25] For the notion that affective piety, based on Christ's humanity, was in part an answer to Christian dualism and anti-sacerdotal heresies see Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Jesus as mother and abbot as mother: some themes in twelfth-century Cistercian writing', in her *Jesus as mother: studies in the spirituality of the high Middle Ages*, Berkeley, Los Angeles–London 1982, 110–69 at pp. 130–1.

[26] For the argument that Francis's emphasis on Christ's humanity and on the Incarnation was conceived, in part, as a counter message to that of Catharism see Kajetan Esser, 'Franziskus von Assisi und die Katharer seiner Zeit', *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* li (1958), 225–64; Lambert, *The Cathars*, 171–3.

[27] *Salutatio*: *St Francis of Assisi: writings and early biographies: English omnibus for the sources of the life of St Francis*, ed. M. A. Habig, London 1972, 135–6. See also the *Office of the passion* which begins with the antiphon, 'Holy Virgin Mary': ibid. 141.

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white habit to a dream in which the Virgin presented it to a member of the order, the Blessed Reginald.[28] The Dominican liturgy demonstrated their Marian affiliations as well: the Friars Preacher introduced the practice of singing the *Salve regina* at the conclusion of compline, a service that was open to the public.[29] This practice began in Bologna, a hotbed of dualist heresy.[30] Bologna was also home to a lay confraternity dedicated to the Virgin Mary whose aims included the suppression of heresy and which was one of several Dominican anti-heretical associations founded in the middle third of the century.[31] Anti-heretical credentials cannot be established with any certainty for the first instance: the Dominican preacher, sometime inquisitor and martyr, Peter of Verona, assassinated by Cathars in 1252, established the Society of the Virgin in Milan in 1232, perhaps choosing the patronage of Christ's mother as part of a deliberate counter-attack against the Cathars who denied Christ's humanity.[32] The link was made clearer in that founded in Bologna between 1234 and 1252 'ad extirpationem et abolitionem nefarie sordis et confusionem filiorum diffidentie'.[33] In 1244 Peter of Verona established the Compagnia Maggiore della Vergine Maria in Florence to fight

[28] C. Warr, 'Religious habits and visual propaganda: the vision of the Blessed Reginald of Orléans', *Journal of Medieval History* xxviii (2002), 43–72.

[29] William R. Bonniwell, *A history of the Dominican liturgy, 1215–1945*, 2nd edn, New York 1945, 149–64. According to Humbert of Romans, the friars also recited the office of the Blessed Virgin Mary in their dormitory before attending matins and commemorated the Virgin Mary every Saturday, ibid. 134, 145. From 1318 the weekly Mass to the Virgin was celebrated as a solemn mass: ibid. 224.

[30] Jordan of Saxony recounts how when, as the first provincial of the province of Lombardy, he visited Bologna he encountered a certain friar, Bernard, who was troubled by an evil spirit, and it was in order to exorcise this spirit that the community first chose to sing the antiphon *Salve Regina*, and that 'From this monastery the pious and salutary practice spread over the entire province of Lombardy and finally throughout the whole order' ('qua de domo eadem per omnem postmodum cepit Lombardie frequentarii, et sic demum in universum ordinem hec pia salutaris invaluit consuetudo'): *Libellus de principiis ordinis praedicatorum*, ed. H. C. Scheeben, in *Monumenta ordinis fratrum praedicatorum historica* xvi, Rome 1935, 77–82 at pp. 81–2.

[31] On these congregations in general see G. G. Meersseman, *Ordo fraternitatis: confraternite e pieta dei laici nel medioevo*, Rome 1977, esp. 'Le congregazioni della vergine', at vol. ii. 921–1117. See also N. J. Housley, 'Politics and heresy in Italy: anti-heretical crusades, orders and confraternities, 1200–1500', this JOURNAL xxxiii (1982), 193–208.

[32] On Peter of Verona A. Dondaine, 'Saint Pierre Martyr: études', *AFP* xxiii (1953), 66–162, is still essential, but for a revision of Dondaine's views see G. G. Merlo, 'Pietro di Verona – San Pietro Martire: difficoltà e proposte per lo studio in un inquisitore beatificato', in *Culto di santi: istituzioni e classi in età preindustriale*, ed. S. Boesch Gajono and L. Sebastiani, Rome 1984, 471–88. On the confraternities he established see G. G. Meersseman, 'Études sur les anciennes confréries dominicaines, II: Les confréries de Saint-Pierre Martyr', *AFP* xxi (1951), 51–96. Peter founded two confraternities in Milan: the Society of the Faith, intended to support direct action against heresy, and the Society of the Virgin, intended to defend the faith. See also L. K. Little, *Liberty, charity, fraternity: lay religious confraternities at Bergamo in the age of the commune*, Bergamo–Northampton, Mass. 1988, 52.

[33] Meersseman, 'Études', 67–8.

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heresy at the behest of the inquisition versus the pro-imperialist *podestà* whom he had accused of heresy.[34] In 1265 another Dominican, Friar Pinamonte de Brembate, drew up the statutes for what was to become the leading confraternity of Bergamo, the Congregation and Fraternity of St Maria de Misericordia, 'founded in honour of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Blessed and Glorious Virgin Mary Mother of God and all of the saints, for the confirmation and exultation of the holy Catholic faith and for the confounding and suppression of heretics and of all heretical depravity'.[35] Whilst the Franciscans did not maintain overtly anti-heretical confraternities, they shared the Dominicans' commitment to bringing the fight against heresy to the laity: entry into the Franciscan third order was forbidden to all heretics and suspected heretics.[36] In Italy by the mid-thirteenth century the cult of the Virgin had therefore become firmly associated with the forces of orthodoxy in their fight against heresy.

The role played by Mary in the mendicants' fight against heresy poses a problem for anyone wishing to investigate dualist heretical attitudes towards the Mother of God. Almost all the evidence for the beliefs of these heretics was either composed by or mediated through their opponents, particularly the Dominicans, and Dominican writers such as Raniero Sacconi thus had a vested interest in presenting heretical beliefs, including those about the Virgin, in dialectical opposition to their own. Raniero's assertion that the dualist heretics rejected the cult of the Virgin has therefore to be placed in the context of his devotion to the Virgin, as a Dominican, and his commitment to the battle against heresy as an inquisitor. Moreover, as Raniero Sacconi reveals later in his account, thirteenth-century dualist Italian Mariology was more complex than his initial comments suggest: according to him, absolute dualists believed the Virgin Mary to be an angel.[37]

[34] Daniel R. Lesnick, *Preaching in medieval Florence: the social world of Franciscan and Dominican spirituality*, Athens, GA.–London 1989, 84.

[35] 'Incipit consortium seu congregatio sancte Misericordie domini nostri Iesu Christi et gloriose virginis Marie. In nomine domini Dei omnipotentis patris et filii et spiritus sancti amen. Hec sunt acta seu ordinamenta congregationis et fraternitatis sancte Misericordie, ad honorem domini nostri Iesu Christi et beate et gloriose virginis Marie matris Dei et omnium sanctorum, ad confirmationem et exaltationem sancte fidei catholice et ad confusionem et depressionem hereticorum et omnis heretice pravitatis': Little, *Liberty*, 111 (English trans. at p. 58). Although the Misericordia originally stored the materials for their almsgiving in a storeroom attached to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, the confraternity's link with Mary is not just serendipitous but the result of a deliberate choice, because members met at the cathedral church of San Vincenzo (ibid. p. 59).

[36] 'The rule of the third order', *St Francis of Assisi* (ed. Habig), *c.* 32, p. 174. This did not, however, prevent at least one suspected heretic, Dominico di Pietro Rosse, from joining the Order of Penitents in Orvieto; Dominico was one of eighty-seven citizens condemned as heretics or supporters of heretics by two Franciscan inquisitors between 1268 and 1269: R. M. Stewart, '*De illis qui faciunt penitentiam*': *the rule of the secular Franciscan order: origins, development, interpretation*, Rome 1991, 75.

[37] Raniero Sacconi, *Summa*, 71.

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Before investigating how widely this belief was ascribed to dualist heretics, the polarised nature of the evidence for dualist beliefs currently used by scholars must be acknowledged. On the one hand from northern Italy accounts of dualist belief survive written by their Catholic opponents, principally Raniero Sacconi, Anselm of Alessandria and Moneta of Cremona; on the other, there is the inquisition deposition evidence from the Languedoc, which at best records how dualist teachings were received and interpreted by their followers, and at worst the expectations of their interrogators.[38] Any attempt to reconcile these two geographically and generically disparate types of source is fraught with methodological difficulties.[39] The relationship of the different dualist sects discovered in the Rhineland, northern France, the Languedoc and north and central Italy to each other, and to the Byzantine dualist heretics known as the Paulicians and Bogomils, is complicated and imperfectly understood, especially as much recent work has emphasised the localised nature of many of the western dualist sects.[40] Some of these problems will be overcome once a thorough investigation has been made of the Italian inquisition material, which is currently under-utilised by historians of Cathar belief, probably because it is dispersed across local archives.[41] Until that day comes, rather than embarking on another problematic comparison of the Languedocian and Italian material, what follows is a detailed consideration

[38] J. Given, 'The inquisitor of Languedoc and the medieval technology of power', *American Historical Review* xciv (1989), 336–59, and 'Social stress, social strain and the inquisitors of medieval Languedoc', in S. C. Waugh and P. D. Diehl (eds), *Christendom and its discontents: exclusion, persecution and rebellion, 1000–1500*, Cambridge 1996, 67–85. On the particular problems associated with the inquisition evidence for Cathar belief see Pegg, *Corruption*, and 'On Cathars, Albigenses, and good men of Languedoc', *Journal of Medieval History* xxvii (2001), 181–95.

[39] Here the work of Mark Pegg is particularly helpful in demonstrating the disparities between the versions of Cathar belief and accounts of the sects' structures reported by *credentes* and recorded in the Languedocian inquisition deposition evidence and the systematic accounts provided by inquisitors in the north Italian *summae*: Pegg, *Corruption*. For the view that this disparity may in large part be due to genre see Bernard Hamilton's review of Pegg's book in the *American Historical Review* cvii (2002), 925–6.

[40] On Cathar origins see the recent summary by Malcolm Barber, *The Cathars: dualist heretics in Languedoc in the high Middle Ages*, Harlow 2000, 21–33. For a more detailed consideration of the origins of these sects see the works of R. I. Moore, especially *The origins of European dissent*, 2nd edn, Oxford 1985, for the argument that the Cathars owe a good deal to innate dualist tendencies within western societies; and for the most sophisticated version of the argument that the Cathars owe a great deal more to eastern dualism see Hamilton, 'Wisdom from the east'. On the localised nature of western heresy amongst other work see the studies by Barber, *The Cathars*; A. Brenon, *La Vrai Visage du catharisme*, 2nd edn, Portet-sur-Garonne 1995; Pegg, *Corruption*; and Carol Lansing, *Power and purity: Cathar heresy in medieval Italy*, Oxford 1998.

[41] The honorable exception in the anglophone world is, of course, the work of Carol Lansing and her students.

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of the beliefs about Mary attributed to the dualists in one text which provides important background to the works of the north Italian inquisitors.

III

The 'Disputation of a catholic against the heretics' is a treatise composed in north Italy between 1210 and 1234, probably 1210 × 1216.[42] It was therefore composed earlier than the three well-known inquisitors' *summae* of Moneta of Cremona, who was based in Bologna and wrote *c.* 1240, Raniero Sacconi, writing in Lombardy *c.* 1250, and Anselm of Alessandria, the Genoese inquisitor, writing *c.* 1265. Written as a debate between a Catholic and a heretic, in a series of formal exchanges the Cathar, who is referred to as a Manichee, sets out the grounds for his beliefs about particular doctrines and the Catholic refutes them. The Cathar appears to be an absolute dualist.[43] Both sides, but especially the Catholic, cite extensively from the New Testament. It used to be thought that this tract was composed by Bishop Gregory of Fano (1241–4), in the March of Ancona, but in his 1940 study of the *Disputatio*'s manuscript history Ilarino da Milano demonstrated that this attribution, which occurs in only one manuscript, was a scribal misattribution made due to the fact that the work preceding it in the codex was Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*.[44] In 1947 Père Dondaine showed that it was instead composed by a layman, George, and his argument is supported by Carola Hoécker's researches.[45] The implications of the lay authorship of the *Disputatio* will be explored later, but its manuscript history reflects its importance to the Catholic authorities in their battle against heresy. It survives in at least three recensions and in some fifty-three manuscripts, which were widely disseminated by the friars preacher throughout France, Italy, central Europe and the Low Countries; its circulation is thus comparable to the most numerous of the *summae*,

[42] Carola Hoécker, *Disputatio inter catholicum et paterinum hereticum: Untersuchungen zum Text, Handschriften und Edition*, Florence 2001, pp. xxix–xlii. Hoécker's critical edition replaces that edited by Edmond Martène: *Disputatio catholici contra haereticos*, ed. E. Martène and U. Durand, in *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*, Paris 1717, v. 1705–58. [43] Hoécker, *Disputatio*, p. li.

[44] Ilarino da Milano, 'Fr. Gregorio, OP., vescovo di Fano e la "Disputatio inter catholicum et paterinum hereticum"', *Aevum: rassegna di scienze storiche linguistiche e filologiche* xiv (1940), 85–140 at pp. 111–12. The attribution to Gregory of Fano was made by Schmidt, *Histoire*, ii. 230–1, 311. On the significance of Schmidt's work see Bernard Hamilton, 'The legacy of Charles Schmidt to the study of Christian dualism', *Journal of Medieval History* xxiv (1998), 191–214.

[45] Antoine Dondaine, 'Le Manuel de l'inquisiteur (1230–1330)', *AFP* xvii (1947), 85–194 at p. 177 (repr. in his *Les Hérésies*, no. II); Hoécker, *Disputatio*, pp. xxix–xxxv.

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that of Raniero Sacconi which survives in at least fifty-one manuscripts.[46] The *Disputatio*'s popularity owes a good deal to its utility as a didactic weapon in the war against heresy; it provided orthodox preachers with the ammunition with which to counteract heretical teaching on a range of issues. Its very success suggests that it is well worth examining for what it tells us about orthodox perceptions of Cathar Mariology and the sources for Catholic rhetoric against dualist teaching.

Chapter v deals with Christ's humanity, which the heretic rejects as false and fanciful.[47] It begins with the Catholic citing sixteen New Testament texts to prove that 'Christ truly was a mortal man, had true flesh and a human soul' because he was afraid of death.[48] But the heretic rejects these proofs of Christ's humanity on the following grounds:

> If you believe Mary was a woman, pray tell who was her mother and who was her father? This (information) is not found in the entire Gospels because Mary was an archangel since the genealogy of Christ is not recorded through Mary but through Joseph, because the evangelists were not able to discover those from whom Mary was born.[49]

This argument from silence that Mary was an archangel upsets the Catholic, who replies:

> O stupid one, it is not the custom of divine scripture to record the genealogies through women but through men; and wives take their relationship and tribe from their husbands in the Old Testament just as she did from Joseph. Mary's father truly was Joachim, her mother Anna. For not everything is written in the Gospel but only that which is sufficient for salvation. For it is not written who was the mother or father of Philip but we believe that he had parents. Thus we prove that Mary was not an angel because angels are not able to be perturbed, but she was upset when greeted by the angel. Also angels do not have relations, but Mary had. Hence it is said by the angel: 'Behold your cousin Elizabeth' etc.[50]

[46] Hoécker, *Disputatio*, pp. lxxv–cliii. On the manuscripts of Raniero's *Summa* see Dondaine, 'Le Manuel', 173, and C. Thouzellier, *Un Traité cathare inédit du début du XIIIe d'après le liber contra manicheos de Durand de Huesca*, Louvain 1961, 35.

[47] 'De humanitate Christi, quam Catholicus confitetur veram, Paterinus dicit falsam et fantasticam': Hoécker, *Disputatio*, 31.

[48] 'Hiis probamus Christum vere hominem mortalem fuisse, veram que carnem habuisse, humanamque animam, per quam tristabatur timens mortem': ibid. 32.

[49] 'Si credas Mariam fuisse feminam, dic que fuit mater eius, et quis pater? In toto evangelio istud non invenies, quia fuit Maria archangelus. Unde non texitur genealogia Christi per Mariam sed per Ioseph, quia evangeliste non potuerunt reperire a quibus genita sit Maria': ibid. 32–3.

[50] 'O stulte, non est consuetudo divine scripture ut per mulieres genealogia texatur, sed per viros; et viri in veteri testamento tantum de sua cognatione et tribu uxores accipiebant, maxime iusti sicut Ioseph. Pater vero Marie fuit Ioachim, mater eius Anna, quia in evangelio non omnia scripta sunt, sed tot sunt ibi quot ad salutem sufficiunt. Non enim scriptum est de matre Philippi nec de patre sed tamen creditis ipsum parentes habuisse. Probamus autem,

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This exchange captures the tone of the ensuing debate which continues with the heretic citing from the account of the marriage at Cana in John's Gospel (ii.4) where the evangelist reported that, when told by His mother that there was not enough wine, Jesus said to Mary, 'Woman what have I do with thee?', in order to prove that He had nothing in common with her, and that therefore she was not His mother.[51] The Catholic responds by offering a different interpretation of this text, namely that it refers to the fact that Christ derived the power to turn water into wine not from the flesh of His mother but from the power of His eternal father. But the heretic then adduces further texts to prove that Jesus Christ did not regard Mary as his mother:

> When it was required Jesus said of his relations, 'Who is my mother and who are my brethren?' And extending his hand to his disciples he said, 'Behold my mother and my brothers, for whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.'[52]

The Catholic castigates him for being impious; Christ was merely praising the disciples of the Lord, not denying his mother. The Manichee responds by citing from Luke how when a woman is reported to have said, 'Blessed is the womb that bare thee and the paps which thou hast sucked', Christ did not wish to hear this but replied 'Yea rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.'[53] The Catholic replies that the phrase 'Yea rather' refers not only to her who carried him being blessed, making the blessed mother holy, but the phrase also refers to all those who hear and believe the word of God and are therefore blessed.[54] The Manichee responds with yet another text, this time from John (xvii. 16) when Christ said 'I am not of this world', from which he deduces 'therefore he was not born of a woman'.[55] The Catholic replies that Christ said '"I am not of this world", that is of worldly men, just as he says about the Apostles: "You are not of this world, just as I am not of this world."' Therefore just as the Apostles were from the world, because they were born of women, but they were not of the world, that is worldly, so with Christ. Christ is truth, but truth

quod Maria non fuit angelus, quia angelus turbari non potest, sed ipsa turbata fuit in salutatione angeli. Similiter angeli non habent consanguineos, sed Maria habuit. Unde dictum est ab angelo: "Ecce Helisabeth cognata tua etc. [Luc. i.36]"': ibid. 33.

[51] '**Manicheus ad Catholicum**: Ad nuptias invitatus est Iesus dixit Marie "quid michi et tibi est mulier?" Ergo nichil cum ea commune habebat. Ergo non fuit mater eius.': ibid; cf. John ii.4: 'Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier? Nondum venit hora mea'.

[52] '**Manicheus**: Cum requireretur Iesus a parentibus dixit, "Que est mater mea, et qui sunt fratres mei? Et extendens manum ad discipulos suos ait: Ecce mater mea et fratres mei. Quicumque enim fecerit voluntatem patris mei, qui in caelis est, hic meus frater et soror et mater est"': ibid. He cites Matt. xii. 48–50.

[53] '**Manicheus**: Dicenti, "Beatus venter qui te portavit, et ubera, que suxisti", noluit hoc audire dominus, sed respondit: "Quin immo beati qui audiunt verbum dei et custodiunt illud"': ibid. 34; cf. Luke xi. 27–8.

[54] Ibid. 34.

[55] Ibid.

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is not deceived, he is not able to deceive. Therefore Christ was not a phantom.[56]

The lay author of the *Disputatio* was writing in the first decades of the thirteenth century, before the successful establishment of the inquisition, and there is other evidence that his near-contemporaries, frustrated at the ineffectualness of the clergy in the face of heresy, were taking anti-heretical teaching into their own hands;[57] a little later, in 1235, Salvo Burci, a layman from Piacenza, composed the *Liber suprastella* in order to refute a Cathar work called the *Stella*.[58] These two laymen were not alone in recognising the importance of biblical exegesis to Cathar preaching in the early thirteenth century, but they were the first to respond to the need for pragmatic texts which would provide orthodox preachers with the authorities and arguments needed to counter Cathar preaching.[59] As such their work testifies to the vibrant learned culture available to laymen in the Italian cities of the early thirteenth century.[60] Although it has been suggested that the argumentative format adopted by the author of the *Disputatio* reflects the oral disputes which took place between orthodox and Cathar preachers in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, this format, of proposition and counter-proposition, was very common at the time.[61] Alan of Lille's *Quadripartita* (1170 × 1202), for example, presents the heretics' position, together with its scriptural basis, followed by the orthodox critique and rebuttal, and Moneta followed a similar approach in his *Summa* (*c.* 1241).[62]

[56] Ibid.

[57] Hoécker, *Disputatio*, pp. xl–xli.

[58] C. Bruschi, 'Liber qui Suprastella dicitur: primi rilievi testuali sulla struttura e sulla tecnica polemica', *Bollettino della Società di studi Valdesi* clxxix (1996), 95–108, and '*Detur ergo Sathane*: il tema della *vindicata* nel *Liber suprastella* di Salvo Burci', *Mélanges de l'École francaise de Rome: moyen âge* cxii (2000), 149–82. For this point see Lorenzo Paolini, 'Italian Catharism and written culture', in Biller and Hudson, *Heresy*, 83–103 at p. 100. See now Dr Bruschi's edition of this work: *Salvo Burci, Liber Suprastella*, Rome 2002.

[59] For examples of the Cathars' use of biblical texts in their preaching see the extracts from a genuine late twelfth-century Cathar work included in the anti-Cathar treatise attributed to Durand de Huesca: *Traité cathare anonyme languedocien*, ed. C. Thouzellier, Louvain 1964, on which see now the work of Pilar Jiménes Sanchez: 'Le "Traité cathare anonyme": un recueil d'autorités à l'usage des prédicateurs cathares', *Heresis* xxxi (1999 for 1996), 73–100.

[60] Paolini, 'Italian Catharism', 84.

[61] For the suggestion that it echoes contemporary oral debates see *WEH*, 289; for the suggestion that the *Disputatio*'s author was responding to written heretical texts see Paolini, 'Italian Catharism', 100.

[62] Alan of Lille's *Quadripartita editio contra hereticos Waldenses, Judeos et paganos*, *PL* ccx. 305–430; Moneta of Cremona's *Summa* (*c.* 1241) presents a systematic analysis of Cathar doctrine, together with an orthodox refutation, under a series of headings which set out the heretics' teaching on a particular issue, and the texts they use to support it, before outlining the orthodox position, for example, 'Nunc videamus de Matre Christi, de qua falso loquuntur illi, qui duo principia ponunt, dicentes quod carnem caelestem habuit; Angelus enim fuit, ut asserunt, nec sexum habebat foemineum, nec foemina erat in veritate, sed putabatur: sicut Dei Filius Jesus Christus alius Angelus fuit secundum eos, qui per aurem Mariae intravit in

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The *Disputatio*'s report of the Cathars' arguments about the Virgin closely follows those attributed to them by both Alan of Lille and Moneta: one of the main arguments for Mary's heavenly nature reported in the *Disputatio* appears in both their treatises. The earliest attribution to the Cathars of the argument that Mary cannot have been human because the Bible makes no reference to her parents is in Alan's *Quadripartita*.[63] According to Alan the heretics say that Christ assumed a heavenly body and that Mary was created in heaven because she had neither a father nor a mother.[64] The words are different but the sentiments are the same as those attributed to the heretics by the author of the *Disputatio*. Moneta of Cremona, writing sometime after the *Disputatio*, but at much greater length, follows its author in reporting that the heretics support their view that Mary was not human because the Evangelist does not report her genealogy but only that of Joseph.[65] Moneta also echoed the author of the *Disputatio* in reporting the Cathars as citing the text, 'Quid mihi et tibi est mulier' (John ii. 4) in support of their argument that Christ, although born of the Virgin, did not take substance from her body.[66] But the wording, although closer to that of the *Disputatio*, precludes any direct textual relationship between the two. Scholars have investigated the relationship between these two particular texts in some detail, but Carola Hoécker's thorough study suggests that there are no direct parallels between Moneta and the *Disputatio*, and this is certainly the case with the passages under discussion

eam, et per aurem eius exivit. Ad destructionem huius errore sufficeret quod nullum testimonium habent …': *Moneta* iii.2, p. 232a.

[63] This reference was first noted by Schmidt, *Histoire*, ii.40 n. 4.

[64] 'Opinio quorumdam haereticorum qui dicunt quod Christus assumpsit corpus coeleste, et quod beata Maria in caelo fuit creata, et quod nec patrem nec matrem habuit. Hoc etiam affirmant quod in nulla Scriptura inuenitur beatam Virginem patrem et matrem habuisse': *Quadripartita* i.33, *PL* ccx. 335.

[65] 'Objiciunt tamen nobis, et quaerunt isti. Si Maria foemina fuit: dic, quae fuit mater ipsius, et quis pater. Et ego quaero a Te o Haeretica, si Philippus Apostolus fuit homo, sicut nos: dic etiam Tu, quis fuit pater eius, et mater? Non est enim scriptum; et tamen Tu credis eum de patre et matre generatum. Item quaerit Haereticus. Si Maria fuit foemina, et parentelam habuit, quare Evangelistae non texuerunt genealogiam Christi per Mariam, sed per Joseph? Ex hoc vult dicere, quod non potuerunt hoc facere Evangelistae, quia non inveniebant a quibus genita esset, et hoc ideo, quia non erat huius generationis, ut dicit, sed male. Nam Evangelistae ideo non texuerunt eius parentelam per Mariam, quia non est mos divinae Scripturae parentelam texere per foeminas sed per viros': *Moneta* iii.2, pp. 232b–233a.

[66] 'Dicunt etiam, et credunt, quod in uterum Mariae descendit Christus a Patre missus in suo corpore, et anima, et spiritu, et nihil aliud traxit de Virgine, quam id, quod portaverit in ipsam. Et dicunt quod suo tempore exivit, et natus est de corpore Mariae, nil tamen de ipsa assumens, propter quod credunt etiam illud Joan. 2. v. 4 dictum a Christo: "Quid mihi et tibi est mulier?" quasi diceret ut perverse intelligunt, nihil de te habui': ibid. i, pref., p. 5a.

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here.[67] Correlations of this sort between different *summae* have, however, led scholars to conclude that such treatises provide independent evidence as to both the nature of orthodox polemic against heresy and also Cathar doctrinal teaching.[68]

They have not, apparently, recognised the degree to which their authors drew on earlier patristic sources for both their views of heretical teachings and orthodox refutations of them. This will become clear if we focus on the arguments outlined in the *Disputatio*. For example, the Catholic's interpretation of the text 'Quod mihi et tibi est mulier?' (John ii.4), as referring to that fact that Christ was both God and man, but as God He had no mother, and that in denying His mother He was merely asserting His divinity, can be traced back to Augustine's commentary on that text. In answer to the question why Christ appeared not to acknowledge His mother in this passage, Augustine wrote that some people,

> setting aside the authority of the Gospel, and saying that Jesus was not born of the Virgin Mary, are accustomed to attempt to draw from this an argument in support of their error, asking, 'How could she be His mother to whom He said, "Woman what have I to do with thee?"' We must answer them therefore and declare why the Lord spoke thus, lest in their raving they should imagine that they have discovered something destructive of sound belief, by which the chastity of the virgin bride may be corrupted, that is the faith of Christ may be defiled.[69]

Later Augustine attributes this teaching to the Manichees.[70] But Augustine explains that in denying His mother Christ did not deny His virgin birth but rather asserted His divinity: Mary was the mother of His humanity, but the miracle at Cana was derived from His divinity. Therefore He only appeared to deny His mother.[71] At His death, on the cross, He acknowledged her as his mother, for

[67] Hoécker, *Disputatio*, pp. lx–lxx. For the suggestion that both authors drew on similar sources see S. Wessley, 'The composition of Georgius, 'Disputatio inter catholicum et paterinum', *AFP* xlviii (1978), 55–61.

[68] This is the methodology followed with varying degrees of sophistication by Schmidt, *Histoire*; Duvernoy, *Le Catharisme*; and Rottenwöhrer, *Der Katharismus*.

[69] 'derogantes Evangelio, et dicentes quod Jesus non sit natus de Maria Virgine, hinc argumentum sumere conarentur erroris sui, ut dicerent, Quomodo erat mater eius, cui dixit, "Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier?" Respondendum ergo est eis, et disserendum quare hoc dixerit Dominus; ne sibi aliquid adversus sanam fidem insanientes invenisse videantur, unde sponsae virginis castitas corrumpatur, id est, unde fides Ecclesiae violetur': *Tractatus in ioannis evangelium* viii.2, *PL* xxxv. 1452–3.

[70] 'Et primum hoc videte, ne forte quomodo invenerunt Manichaei occasionem perfidiae suae, quia dixit Dominus, "Quid mihi et tibi est mulier" …': ibid. 1455.

[71] 'Cur ergo ait matri filius, "Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier? Nondum venit hora mea." Dominus noster Jesus Christus, et Deus erat et homo: secundum quod Deus erat, matrem non habebat; secundum quod homo erat, habebat. Mater ergo erat carnis, mater humanitatis, mater infirmitatis quam suscepit propter nos. Miraculum autem quod facturus erat, non

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at a certain hour in a mystery He does not acknowledge her; and again, at a certain hour, which was not yet come, in a mystery He does acknowledge her. For he acknowledged her at the time when that which she had brought forth was dying. For not That was dying by which Mary was made, but That which was made of Mary; not the eternity of the divine nature but the weakness of the flesh was dying.[72]

Several scholars have alerted us to the influence that Augustine's accounts of Manichean belief and doctrine had on ecclesiastical writers' descriptions of medieval heresies.[73] There is no need, however, to assume that the author of the *Disputatio* had access to copies of Augustine's tracts on John for his account of heretical teaching because Augustine's interpretation was cited in the marginal gloss for this verse in the standard reference work for thirteenth-century biblical exegesis, the *Glossa ordinaria*. The *Glossa* attributed the belief that Christ denied Mary to unspecified heretics. The interlinear gloss made the orthodox interpretation, as presented by Augustine, clear:

'Woman what I have to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.' It is the opportunity to show the nature which I have from you but divine nature is shown through miracles and human nature through the passion.[74]

The inclusion of Augustine's interpretation in the *Glossa ordinaria* means that it would have been available to any reasonably well-educated thirteenth-century cleric.[75] When the text of the *Disputatio* is compared with that of Augustine it becomes clear, however, that, whilst the *Disputatio* follows the tone and argument of Augustine's debate, it is not a straight copy. It is therefore possible, but unlikely, that the author of the *Disputatio* confronted the issue afresh; instead it seems probable that he was influenced by the terms of this well-known debate.

secundum infirmitatem; secundum quod Deus erat, non secundum quod infirmus natus erat. Sed infirmum Dei fortius est hominibus [1 Cor. i.25] Miraculum ergo exigebat mater; at ille tanquam non agnoscit viscera humana, operaturus facta divina; tanquam dicens, Quod de me facit miraculum, non tu genuisti, divinitatem meam non tu genuisti: sed quia genuisti infirmitatem meam, tunc te cognoscam, cum ipsa infirmitas pendebit in cruce, hoc est enim, "Nondum venit hora mea". Tunc enim cognovit, qui utique semper noverat': ibid.

[72] 'Sed ad quamdam horam in mysterio non agnoscit; et ad quamdam horam quae nondum venerat, in mysterio rursus agnoscit. Tunc enim agnovit, quando illud quod peperit moriebatur. Non enim moriebatur per quod facta erat Maria, sed moriebatur quod factum erat ex Maria: non moriebatur aeternitas divinitatis, sed moriebantur infirmitas carnis': ibid. 1455–6.

[73] Moore, *Origins*, 8–20, 26–8, and *The birth of popular heresy*, London 1975, 5–6; E. Peters, *Heresy and authority in medieval Europe*, Philadelphia 1980, 13–56; H. Grundmann, 'Oportet et haereses esse: das Problem der Ketzerei im Spiegel der mittelalterlichen Bibelexegese', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* xlv (1963), 129–64, esp. pp. 148–52.

[74] 'Id est oportunitas ostendendem naturam quam ex te habeo sed ostensa divina per miracula ostendent et humana natura per passionem': *Glossa ordinaria*, iv. 228.

[75] B. Smalley, 'Glossa ordinaria', in H. R. Balz, S. G. Hall and others (eds), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, Berlin–New York 1984, xiii. 452–7.

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Some of the other points reported in the *Disputatio* and other tracts have a similarly familiar tinge to them. Thus the heretics' first objection to Mary, namely that none of the Evangelists give an account of her genealogy, had been anticipated five centuries earlier by Bede. In his commentary on Luke Bede answered the question as to why we are given Joseph's and not Mary's ancestors as follows: 'because it is not the custom to give female generations'.[76] The *Glossa ordinaria* for Christ's genealogy through Joseph at the beginning of Matthew makes the same point: 'Why is the descent of Christ from David deduced through Joseph when Christ was not of the seed of Joseph? But it is not the custom of Scripture to set out the order of women in generations; and therefore it was traced not through Mary but through Joseph, since both Joseph and Mary were from the same tribe.'[77] In the *Disputatio* the heretic cited Luke xi. 27–8 to argue that Christ himself rejected his association with his mother, and the *Glossa* refers to those heretics who wrongly use this text to reject the true humanity of Christ, and proceeds to demonstrate that this text describes as blessed both Mary and all those who hear the word of God.[78] The marginal gloss in the *Glossa ordinaria* for John viii. 23, the verse cited by the Manichee in support of his view that Christ did not assume human flesh, further suggests that there is a relationship between traditional exegesis and Cathar thought, as presented in this text. For the *Glossa* reports that Christ's words appear stupid, but should be interpreted as referring to the fact that he will come through death to glory and subdue the flesh.[79]

It is unclear from this analysis whether the author of the *Disputatio* was responding to genuine heretical beliefs or whether he was merely recycling what he had learnt from his reading of the *Glossa ordinaria* and even, perhaps, the Fathers themselves and attributing them to the heretics.[80] Although there are parallels between the position attributed to the heretics, together with supporting texts, and that attributed to them in other anti-heretical works, such comparisons do not necessarily help us escape from the textual

[76] 'Hoc verbum propter illos posuit, qui eum ex Joseph sicut alii homines generantur, rebantur esse progenitum. Unde si quem mouet, cum Maria de Spiritu sancto genuerit Christum, et Joseph illius non vere, sed putative pater appelletur, cur non Maria potius quam Joseph, quae nihil ad eum pertinere videbatur, generatio describatur, sciat primum non esse consuetudinis Scripturarum ut mulierum in generationibus ordo texatur': *In Lucae evangelium expositio*, *PL* xcii. 361A.

[77] 'Quid ad Christum generatio ex David deducta ad Joseph, cum Christus non ex semine Joseph? Sed non est consuetudo scripturarum ut ordo mulierum in generationibus texatur; et ideo non per Mariam, sed per Joseph inducitur, cum de una Joseph et Maria tribu fuerint': *Glossa ordinaria*, iv. 6.

[78] Ibid. iv. 183.

[79] 'Stulta verba quasi si de morte diceret non possent eum sequi ad mortem. Dicebat ergo non de morte sed de gloria ad quam ibat per mortem unde illis carnalibus subdit': ibid. iv. 245.

[80] On the significance of the *Glossa ordinaria* as a reference work making available patristic exegesis for twelfth-century exegetes see Margaret Gibson, 'The place of the *Glossa ordinaria* in medieval exegesis', in her *Artes and the Bible in the medieval west*, Aldershot 1993, no. xv.

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framework which their authors inhabited into the 'real world' of heretical preaching.[81] But it is hard to dismiss these sections of the *Disputatio* as mere textbook accounts of dualist heresy, grounded solely in late antique anti-heretical polemic, because the heretic, whilst he is presented as rejecting the truth of the Virgin Birth, and citing classic New Testament texts in support of this belief, is also presented as ascribing an important role to Mary in his mythology: her role in the salvation of mankind was not dismissed but rather she was viewed as an archangel.[82] This is not a doctrine found in accounts of late antique Manicheeism. But where did the Cathars get their interpretations of biblical texts from? The works of M. R. Harris and Bernard Hamilton suggest that, whilst the Cathars derived the texts of their rituals from their eastern counterparts, the Occitan version of the New Testament, at least, was probably derived from the Vulgate.[83] We should therefore allow for the possibility that a careful reading of the *Glossa ordinaria* may itself have been a source for the heretics' own interpretations of Scripture.[84] For those *perfecti* from both northern Italy and the Languedoc who attended the schools of northern France *c.* 1200 almost certainly knew the *Glossa* as did their lay opponents.[85] Yvo of Narbonne reported that Cathars from the cities of Tuscany and Lombardy were studying logic and theology at the Paris schools in the early thirteenth century.[86] That they were joined by their Languedocian counterparts is suggested by Pilar Jiménez Sanchez's argument that the sections of the late twelfth-century Cathar treatise included in the anti-heretical treatise attributed to Durand de Huesca show the Cathars to have been capable of the logical, grammatical approach to exegesis pioneered by Peter Abelard in the early twelfth

[81] Moneta of Cremona, for example, attributes to the heretics the argument that Mary was not human because the Evangelists do not give an account of her genealogy, but only that of Joseph: *Moneta* iii.2, pp. 232b–233a.

[82] A similar belief is attributed to the heretics by Moneta of Cremona, ibid. iii.2, pp. 232–4.

[83] M. R. Harris, 'The Occitan epistle to the Laodiceans: towards an edition of Ms. PA 36', in *Miscellanea di Studi Romanzi offerta a Giuliano Gaisca Queirazza*, ed. A. Corgnagliotti and others, Alexandria 1988, i. 428–46; Hamilton, 'Wisdom from the east'. Whether the whole Cathar Bible was derived from Vulgate awaits further research.

[84] It is unclear whether the author of the *Disputatio* was responding to an oral or, as Paolini suggests, a written tradition of biblical exegesis: 'Italian Catharism', 100. Paolini cites the reference to a heretical biblical gloss in Martène's edition of the *Disputatio*: 'sed quod de glossa tua vis addere, non accipio', col. 1734. But Hoécker has not found any support for this reading in the manuscript tradition, where the passage reads 'sed quod de bursa tua vis addere non recipio', suggesting an oral tradition of heretical exegesis: *Disputatio*, 46 and n. 111.

[85] On the educational infrastructure of the Italian Cathars see Paolini, 'Italian Catharism', 96–7.

[86] 'Quod ex omnibus fere civitatibus Lombardiae et quibusdam Tusciae Parisius dociles transmississent scholares quosdam logicis cavillationibus alios etiam theologicis dissertationibus insudantes': Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series lvii/4, 1872–83), 271.

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century.[87] And later in the century Moneta suggested that the Cathars knew and used at least parts of the *Glossa*'s orthodox interpretation on John the Baptist.[88] In other words the tradition of biblical exegesis that was the source for the views attributed to heretics in the *Disputatio* and other orthodox tracts, could have been, and almost certainly was, read and used not only by their opponents but also, albeit in a perverse way, by the heretics themselves.

IV

We find support elsewhere for the *Disputatio*'s claim that dualist heretics viewed Mary as an angel, as one not made of evil matter, of corporeal flesh. Most of this evidence is from thirteenth-century Italy. According to an anonymous account written in the early thirteenth century, the Sclavini, moderate dualists from Dalmatia who instructed the north Italian church of Concorezzo, believed 'that in the time of grace the Son of God (who is Jesus Christ), John the Evangelist and Mary were three angels appearing in the flesh'.[89] In 1229 two Cathar perfects, Andreas and Pietro, abjured their previously held belief that the Virgin Mary was made of superior elements before Pope Gregory IX in a hearing held at the Florentine monastery of San Miniato al Monte.[90] This view also finds support in the account of the Dominican Moneta of Cremona who attributed this view of Mary as an angel to both absolute dualists and moderate dualists, as did Raniero Sacconi.[91] The angelic view of Mary also circulated in southern French absolutist circles: an anonymous description of heresy, composed during the first Albigensian crusade (*c.* 1208–13), records

> They have the daring to assert that the Blessed Mary Mother of Christ was not of this world. For they say in their secret meetings that Christ, in whom they hope for salvation, was not in this world except in a spiritual sense within the body of

[87] Sanchez, 'Un Traité cathare anonyme'. See also Paolini's analysis of Moneta in which he suggests that the Cathars knew various patristic authors, including Augustine, but does not investigate how they knew them: 'Italian Catharism', 97.

[88] 'Ista autem non negamus quia a glossis Sanctorum nostrorum ipse haereticus sumpsit': *Moneta*, p. 279a. Paolini suggests that this was the *Glossa* to Matthew, 'Italian Catharism', 98.

[89] 'Sclavini tempore gratie credunt quod filius dei, scilicet ihesus christus, et Johannes ewangelista et maria fuerunt tres angeli apparentes in carne. Et dicunt quod christus non in veritate carnem suscepit, nec comedit, nec bibit, nec crucifixus, nec mortuus, nec sepultus est, et omnia que secundum humanitatem fecit, non erant in veritate set in apparencia, quia sic videbatur': *De heresi catharorum in Lombardia*, ed. A. Dondaine, 'La Hiérarchie cathare en Italie, I: Le 'De heresi catharorum in Lombardia', *AFP* xix (1949), 306–12 at p. 311 (repr. in his *Les Hérésies*, no. III).

[90] 'Item dicit quod filius dei venit in beatam Virginem Mariam quae erat facta de superioribus elementis et ab ea carnem suscepit et non de istis elementis et descendit de celis cum cxliiii milia angelorum et post mortem descendit ad infernum.': Lansing, *Power and purity*, 180. For an account of the trial see ibid. 84–6.

[91] *Moneta* iii.2, pp. 232–3; Raniero Sacconi, *Summa*, 71, 76.

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Paul … For they say that Paul … brought the Scriptures into this world and was held prisoner that he might reveal the ministry of Christ. For they believe that Christ was born in the 'land of the living', of Joseph and Mary, who they say were Adam and Eve … there he did and said all that was recorded of Him in the New Testament.[92]

In this version, which was also known in Italian circles, the events of the New Testament took place in a parallel spiritual world; Mary did not enter this material world, and Christ only did so when he descended into hell, which they interpreted as referring to this world.[93] The southern French text suggests, therefore, one origin for the mid thirteenth-century assertion that Mary was an angel. The dualist text, the *Secret supper* (also known as the *Interrogatio Iohannis*), provides a broader context for it. This text originated in the Bogomil dualist communities of the Byzantine empire and seems to have reached Italy in the late twelfth century, where it was used by Nazarius, Cathar bishop of the moderate dualist church of Concorezzo, but rejected by his coadjutor Desiderius.[94] It now survives in two manuscripts, one in Vienna, and one from the inquisition at Carcassone which suggests that it circulated within southern France.[95] According to the *Secret supper*, Jesus said, 'When my father thought to send me to this earth, He sent before me His angel, she who is called Mary, my mother that she might receive me through the Holy Spirit. And when I descended I entered and came forth through her ear.'[96]

[92] 'Beatam Mariam matrem Christi non fuisse de isto mundo asserere presumant. Dicunt enim in suo secreto quod Christus, per quem sperant salvari, non fuit in hoc mundo nisi spiritualiter infra corpus Pauli; unde Paulus ipse ait: "An experimentum eius queritis, qui in me loquitur Christus?" Dicunt namque quod Paulus, venundatus sub peccato, attulit scripturas in hunc mundum et fuit incarceratus ut ministerium Christi revelaret. Nam in terra viventium credunt fuisse Christum, natum ex Ioseph et Maria, quos dicunt Adam et Evam, et passum fuisse et resurrexisse et inde ad patrem ascendisse, et omnia fecisse ac dixisse que de ipso scripta sunt in novo testamento': *Manifestatio haeresis albigensium et lugdunensium*, ed. A. Dondaine, in 'Durand de Huesca et la polémique anti-cathare', *AFP* xxiv (1959), 228–76 (repr. in Dondaine, *Les Hérésies*, no. v) at pp. 269–70; trans. *WEH*, 232–3.

[93] Raniero Sacconi cites the teaching of John of Lugio, an absolute dualist belonging to the Albanensian church, which parallels that of the southern French Cathars: 'Item quod Christus natus est ex patribus secundum carnem antiquis supra nominatis, et quod vere assumpsit carnem ex beata Virgine et vere passus est, crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus et resurrexit tertia die, sed putat quod omnia praedicta fuerunt in alio superiori mundo et non in isto.', *Summa*, 75. On the identification of hell with this world amongst absolute dualists, see Raniero who attributes this belief to the church of the Albanenses: 'Item quod infernus et ignis aeternus sive poenae aeternae sunt in isto mundo tantum et non alibi': ibid. 72.

[94] *WEH*, 448; Arno Borst, *Die Katharer* (Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica xii, Stuttgart 1953), 8, 161.

[95] *Le Livre secret des Cathares; Interrogatio Iohannis; Apocryphe d'origine bogomile*, ed. E. Bozóky, Paris 1980.

[96] 'Quando cogitavit pater meus mittere me in mundum istum, misit ante me angelum suum per spiritum sanctum ut reciperet me qui vocabatur Maria mater mea. Et ego descendens per auditum introivi et exivi': *Le Livre secret* (ed. Bozóky), 68; trans. *WEH*, 462.

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This view, that the spiritual, non-human, Jesus was not born in the normal manner, but came forth through the Virgin's ear, was one often attributed to dualist heretics. Like the belief that the Virgin was an angel, the evidence for this belief seems relatively late. It is attributed by the Byzantine writer Euthymius Zigabenus to the Byzantine Bogomils led by Basil discovered in Constantinople *c.* 1100:

> They believe … that he descended from above and crept through the right ear of the Virgin and put on a body which seems physical, like a human body, but in reality is immaterial and divine, and that he went out again as he entered, whilst the Virgin perceived neither entrance nor exit, but simply found him lying swaddled in the cave.[97]

This is the first time this particular belief features in Byzantine descriptions of heretical belief; it is implicit in the reference in an eleventh-century abjuration *formula* used by the Orthodox Church of those Paulicians who think or believe 'that the Lord brought His body from above and made use of the womb of the mother of God like a bag', but no mention is made of aural conception.[98] It does not feature in descriptions of Bogomilism or of the Paulicians before the eleventh century. It only appears in the west in the thirteenth century. However, we should bear in mind that detailed descriptions of Cathar belief only begin to be recorded with the onset of the texts generated by local inquisitors. According to Anselm of Alexandria, the moderate dualist Nazarius 'says that Christ brought His body down from heaven, entered into the Virgin through her ear and emerged from her ear and in His ascension bore the same body'.[99] Nazarius was converted in the late twelfth century by a Bogomil who came from Bulgaria. Therefore the evidence suggests that this belief, together with the belief that Mary was an angel, came from the east. But two centuries later, in England, the Lollards were reported to have described the Virgin as 'but a sack to put Christ in' and 'like a saffron bag or a pudding when the meat was out'.[100] It is therefore at least possible that this was a metaphor which could arise independently in sects with a docetic tendency.

The context in which this belief was recorded was heretical, and it was recorded in terms of deep disapprobation, but, as Charles Schmidt noted over one hundred and fifty years ago, orthodox ideas about the mechanics of

[97] *HH*, 186.

[98] *HH*, 103.

[99] 'Item Nazarius dicit quod Christus detulit corpus suum de celo et quod per aurem intravit in Virginem et per aurem exivit, et in ascensione portavit illud idem corpus': *Tractatus de hereticis*, 311; trans. *WEH*, 362.

[100] J. F. Davis, 'Lollardy and the Reformation in England', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* lxxiii (1982), 217–36, repr. in P. Marshall (ed.), *The impact of the English Reformation, 1500–1640*, London 1997, 37–54 at p. 52.

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the Incarnation were very similar to dualist ones.[101] The fourth-century writer, St Ephraem of Syria (d. 373), said that Christ entered through the ear:

> With the eye Eve perceived the beauty of the tree
> And the advice of the sly one was fashioned in her mind.
> And repentance was the end of the deed.
> With the ear Mary perceived the Invisible One, who came in the voice,
> She conceived in her womb the Power that came to her body.[102]

Ephraem's western contemporary, Zeno, bishop of Verona (363–72), drew a similar parallel between Eve and Mary:

> And because the devil had wounded and corrupted Eve, creeping in by persuasion through the ear, Christ entering by the ear into Mary, cuts out all vices from the heart: and he cures the wound of the woman when he is born by the virgin … so that Adam should be renewed through Christ, Eve through the Church.[103]

That two fourth-century authors, in Syria and north Italy, independently arrived at this depiction of the Incarnation suggests that they both drew on a common tradition within the Church. It was one which was to remain alive within the medieval west. According to the blessing given for the Annunciation in the tenth-century *Canterbury benedictional*, the Virgin, believing the archangel, conceived through the ear.[104] The dualists' literal interpretation of metaphor, in other words, finds parallels in both the western and eastern orthodox traditions.

There are also resonances in the orthodox traditions of the dualists' conception of Mary as an angel. The clerics of the Byzantine Church did not fret about original sin to nearly the same extent as their Latin counterparts, and Mary was, in Byzantine eyes, as pure as the highest angel. The late fourteenth-century writer, Theophanes of Nicea, took this view to its logical conclusion when he placed the *Theotokos* between Christ and the highest angelic order in his depiction of the celestial hierarchy.[105] The Latin tradition, despite having to deal with the consequences of original sin for

[101] Although he noted that the doctrine of aural incarnation was more prevalent in the eastern than western traditions: Schmidt, *Histoire*, ii. 41.

[102] Cited by Graef, *Mary*, 59.

[103] 'Et quia suasione per aurem irrepens diabolus, Evam vulnerans interemerat; per aurem intrans Christus in Mariam, universa cordis desecat vitia: vulnusque mulieris, dum de virgine nascitur, curat … ut legitime Adam per Christum, Eva per ecclesiam renovaretur': Zeno, *Tractatus* I.xiii. 10, *PL* xi. 352B; English trans. Graef, *Mary*, 56–7.

[104] 'quae dum archangelo credidit per aurem concipiens': *The Canterbury benedictional*, ed. R. M. Woolley (Henry Bradshaw Society li, 1917), 90. Charles Schmidt also cites the earlier evidence of Agobard of Lyons's *De correctione antiphonarii*: 'Descendit de coelis missus ab arce Patris, introivit per aurem Virginis in regionem nostram indutus stola purpurea, et exivit per auream portam lux et decus universae fabricae mundi': *Histoire*, ii. 41 n. 3.

[105] Graef, *Mary*, 335–7.

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Mary's humanity, also placed Mary on a level with the angels. The early twelfth-century monk, Guibert of Nogent (d. 1124), wrote: 'As she possessed more than an angel on earth she ought not to have been less than an angel after the bliss of such a birth.'[106] It is perhaps not surprising that such references seemingly disappeared in the late twelth and thirteenth centuries when heresy was at its height. Whilst orthodox traditions never said that Mary was an angel, it is easy to see, given such references, how Cathar belief might have appeared more orthodox than it in fact was.

As I have stressed, the belief that Mary was an angel and that Christ entered through and emerged from her ear were both first recorded in the context of thirteenth-century, Byzantine-influenced western dualism. Bernard Gui, the early fourteenth-century Toulouse inquisitor, however, recorded yet another aspect of dualist belief about Mary in his *Practica*:

> Also they deny that the Blessed Virgin Mary was the true mother of our Lord Jesus Christ or was a carnal woman, but they say that their sect and order is the Virgin Mary, that is true, chaste and virginal repentenance which gives birth to sons of God on the occasion of their reception into this very sect and order.[107]

Gui's immediate source was his interrogation of the Cathar missionary preacher Peter Autier, for a similar view was attributed to Peter in the sentence which Gui imposed on him.[108] But there was an orthodox precedent for this tradition as well: as shown above, Zeno of Verona drew a parallel between Mary and Eve, and between Eve and the Church in the late fourth century. Of the patristic fathers, Ambrose of Milan perhaps most clearly articulated the view that Mary the Virgin Mother should be seen as the Church.[109] And this remained an influential image throughout the Middle

[106] 'quae enim plus habuit in terra quam angelus, non minor angelo esse debuit post tanti beatitudinem partus': *De laude S. Mariae*, *PL* clvi. 561A; English trans. Graef, *Mary*, 224–5.

[107] 'Item, beatam Mariam Virginem negant fuisse veram *matrem Domini Jhesu Christi nec fuisse mulierem carnalem* sed sectam suam et ordinem suum dicunt *esse Mariam Virginem* id est veram penitenciam castam et virginem que generat filios Dei, quando recipiuntur ad eamdem sectam et ordinem.': *Manuel de l'inquisiteur*, ed. G. Mollat, Paris 1926, i. 14; trans. *WEH*, 380.

[108] 'sanctam quoque Mariam matrem Dei et Domini Iesu Christi non esse nec fuisse mulierem carnalem asseris et mentiris. set tuam ac tuorum ecclesiam quam dicis esse veram penitentiam de inpietate ac vanitate sensus tui menciendo confingis, et hanc esse Mariam virginem in tenebris dogmatizas': P. van Limborch, *Historia inquisitionis cui subjungitur Liber sententiarum inquisitionis tholosanae*, Amsterdam 1692, 92.

[109] Graef, *Mary*, 84–6. 'Bene desponsata, sed uirgo, quia est ecclesiae typus, quae est inmaculata, sed nupta. Concepit nos uirgo de spiritu, parit nos uirgo sine gemitu. Et ideo fortasse sancta Maria alii nupta, ab alio repleta, quia et singulae ecclesiae spiritu quidem replentur et gratia, iunguntur tamen ad temporalis speciem sacerdotis': Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam*, ii.7, ed. M. Adriaen (Corpus Christianorum series latina xiv. iv, 1957), 33; cf. Augustine, *De sancta uirginitate*, c. 6, ed. P. G. Walsh, Oxford 2001, 73: 'Sola ergo Maria et spiritu et corpore mater et virgo et mater Christi et virgo Christi; ecclesia vero in sanctis regnum dei possessuris spiritu quidem tota mater Christi est, tota virgo Christi, corpore autem

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Ages probably because, in Caroline Walker Bynum's words, 'it expressed so perfectly the nature of an entity withdrawn from the world (virgin) yet expanding and converting (mother)'.[110] In the twelfth century it was Rupert of Deutz (d. *c.* 1135) who, in the first wholly Marian exegesis of the Song of Songs, described Mary as 'Jerusalem'.[111] Rupert was part of a twelfth-century trend to use maternal imagery to describe concepts such as mother Church and mother tongue.[112] But this view of Mary as an allegory for the true Church is one which has a long history in descriptions of eastern dualist belief, beginning in the late ninth century with Peter the Higoumenos's description of the Paulicians:

> If we force them to confess her (Mary), they speak allegorically, saying, 'I believe in the all-holy mother of God, into and out of whom the Lord went', but they mean the heavenly Jerusalem into which the Lord entered 'as our forerunner', as the Apostle says and do not mean in truth 'Holy Mary, mother of God', nor 'from her the Lord took flesh'.[113]

Euthymius Zigabenus, writing *c.* 1100, wrote that the Bogomils described themselves, 'in whom dwells what they think of as the Holy Spirit', as the Mother of God (*theotokos*). 'They bear the Word of God and give birth to It by teaching.'[114] The Bogomils seem to have brought a certain literalism to their teachings. Just as they interpreted literally the metaphor that the Virgin Mary conceived Jesus through the ear in response to the angel's message, so they adapted the term *theotokos* for their own birth in the spirit.

Despite this eastern evidence from the ninth and late eleventh centuries, Bernard Gui provides the first evidence that western dualists subscribed to this particular allegorical interpretation of the Virgin. But the southern French Cathars need not have derived their metaphorical interpretation of Mary from the eastern Bogomils because the parallel was given a new lease of life by the writings of the late twelfth-century Calabrian abbot, Joachim of Fiore, and his thirteenth-century followers. Joachim viewed Mary as standing not for the universal Church nor 'for the crowd of the monastic profession generally but for that special church of the same monastic profession to which the Lord has more specifically given to choose and to

non tota, sed in quibusdam virgo Christi in quibusdam mater sed non Christi'. Augustine was highly influenced by Ambrose's *De virginitate*.

[110] Bynum, 'Jesus as mother', 127.

[111] 'Nimirum matri suae Hierusalem una est, illi Hierusalem, quae sursum est, quae est mater omnium nostrum, et genetrici suae, scilicet antiquae Ecclesiae electa est, Ecclesiae patriarcharum et prophetarum ac regum justorum, quorum de carne progenita est, quorum secundum fidem benedictionis, quae ad illos repromissa erat, janua vel materia est.': *In cantica canticorum de incarnatione domini*, *PL* clxviii. 936B.

[112] Giles Constable, *The reformation of the twelfth century*, Cambridge 1996, 67. On Cistercian maternal imagery see Bynum, 'Jesus as mother', 110–69.

[113] *HH*, 94.

[114] *HH*, 192.

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love a celibate life'.[115] As Marjorie Reeves makes clear, Joachim's definition of those orders of man which belong to the Spirit varies a good deal within his thought, but his view of Mary as standing for those who chose the celibate life provides a contemporary western context for Bernard Gui's (and Peter Autier's) account of the dualist heretics' Marian interpretation of their own sect.[116]

V

It is therefore not as easy as it initially appeared to distinguish the heretical from the orthodox Marian traditions. Although the evidence about dualist belief in the west is patchy and problematic, it is clear that the Cathars, just as much as the orthodox, believed Mary's role in Christ's work to be important. They both, of course, based their views on the New Testament, although they understood it differently, but unfortunately Scripture says comparatively little about the Virgin. It seems likely, however, that the Cathars, like the orthodox, based their very different biblical exegeses on the anti-heretical patristic texts available to them through the *Glossa ordinaria*. Thus like earlier heretics the Cathars cited the absence of a genealogy for Mary in the Gospels as evidence of her non-human nature, and Christ's rejection of Mary at the marriage of Cana as evidence that she was not his physical mother. It remains possible, of course, that orthodox polemic misattributed these views, derived from the patristics, to the Cathars but the consistent picture given of Cathar belief across a range of sources makes this, in my view, unlikely. Instead, it seems as if the *Glossa* served as a 'repository of heresy' for the Cathars as well as their opponents.[117] It is also clear that Mary was important to Cathar beliefs, just as she was to those of the Catholics, and that heretical Mariology mirrored many aspects of orthodox thought. Catharism was not,

[115] 'secundum quem intellectum, Maria quoque non universalem Ecclesiam, set neque generaliter monastice turbam professionis, set quandam specialem eiusdem monastice professionis ecclesiam cui datum est a Domino specialem celibem eligere et diligere vitam': Joachim of Fiore, *Tractatus super quatuor evangelia*, ed. E. Buonaiuti (Fonti per la Storia d'Italia lxviii, 1930), 32.

[116] Marjorie Reeves, *The influence of prophecy in the later Middle Ages: a study in Joachimism*, Oxford 1969, 136–7. It is worth noting that Peter Autier, Gui's source, had spent time in Italy; it is therefore possible that this doctrine represents a tenet of Italian Catharism *c.* 1300.

[117] I owe this phrase to Robert Swanson who postulates that central medieval anti-heretical writings may have served as a source for the heretics themselves: 'To some extent the literate brought these "unacceptable" versions of Christianity to public notice by deliberately challenging them, in speech or writing. Paradoxically, this could produce a situation where intended refutations were also repositories of heresy: to varying degrees, those responding to unorthodoxy offered vehicles for its dissemination': 'Literacy, heresy and orthodoxy: perspectives and permutations for the later Middle Ages', in Biller and Hudson, *Heresy*, 279–93 at p. 281.

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as orthodox writers thought, alien to Christianity but rather a manifestation of it. Placed in this wider context Guillemette Belot's deathbed appeal to the Virgin in early fourteenth-century Montaillou becomes more understandable and suggests that she may not have been an ignorant peasant but rather a good Cathar.

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