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## **The evolution of the orthodox view of the Eucharist in the light of Western European anti-heretical texts of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this article is to illustrate the change in the perception of the Eucharist in Western Europe through an analysis of medieval anti-heretical texts regarding heresies from the years 1000–1150. This period witnessed heated discussions regarding the sacrament of the Eucharist resulting from the Berengarian controversy and the Gregorian Reform. An analysis of the various descriptions of heresy shows how the frequency of accusations of rejection of the Eucharist increases during the period under study, and how they expand to include other aspects of the celebration of the sacrament. The article is divided into two sections corresponding to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, respectively, and subsections containing analyses of individual cases.

**Keywords:** heresy, Eucharist, Berengar of Tours, Gregorian Reform

### **Introduction**

**T**he beginning of the second millennium is often considered to be a time of the revival of heresy in Western Europe. This is not entirely true and it is easy to find records of heretics before the year 1000. However, these sources mostly concern individuals. As the new millennium begins, not only it is possible to spot more often mentions of individual “eccentrics” or “intellectuals”

(Russell, 1965) but also small organized groups of dissidents. Interestingly, the number of the mentions decreases significantly between 1050 and 1100, only to increase again thereafter. To this day, scholars have argued about the reason for such a sudden “revival” of heresy in the West. Most often they link it either to the reform of the Church, the changes related to the turn of the millennium, or Bogomil missions (Lambert, 2002, pp. 14–40).

The 11-century anti-heretical sources are very diverse in terms of type, volume and the errors ascribed to the heretics. The texts describing the heresies of the 12<sup>th</sup> century are larger in volume, nevertheless, despite their lengthiness, they do not convey as much precise information about the doctrine of the heretics. More space is devoted to descriptions of the shameful practices of heretics and the orthodox refutation of errors than to descriptions of the beliefs of the dissidents, which are conveyed quite succinctly.

It is a paradox that texts describing heresy are often a better source of knowledge on the elements of the writer's orthodox faith than a fair account of the doctrine of heretics. This transmission of faith is reflected at various levels. The most obvious way to convey the orthodox creed was to include a personal confession of faith, which sometimes accompanied an earlier description of heretical errors. This creed sometimes took the form of a sermon delivered to heretics. Polemical treatises can be also placed on the same level, as by their very premise they presuppose a refutation of heretical errors and a presentation of orthodox faith. Meanwhile, indirectly, the orthodox faith of the writer can be interpreted by looking at what he considers to be heretical. Such a source can sometimes be taken as a negative: what the writer believes to be an error allows us to assume that the opposite of the error is orthodoxy for him.

The 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries were a time of most acute changes in the theology of the Eucharist in the history of Western Christianity (Macy, 2012, p. 365). The beginning of this period is marked by the Eucharistic controversy of the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century which sparked debates concerning the nature of the presence of Christ's flesh and blood during consecration. Treatises written in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries dwelt on further issues concerning the presence of Christ in the sacrament: the performative role of the words of consecration, the celebrant's chastity or the necessity of ordination to consecrate the Host (Macy, 2012, pp. 384–385).

In this article, it is intended to look at how the Eucharist marked its presence in descriptions of heretics' errors. How often does it appear in relation to the overall number of errors alleged against heretics? With time, did the accusation of a heretical attitude to the Eucharist appear more frequently, and is it possible to discern a difference in the number before and after the Eucharistic controversy, as well as before and after the apogee of the Gregorian Reform?

How did the nature of the alleged errors related to the Eucharist change: did heretics reject the sacrament altogether or was it practised incorrectly and by unordained persons? This article is an attempt to show that indeed, all these changes are reflected in the descriptions of heresies from 1000–1150 in Western Europe. Only sources describing heresies will be treated here and not the Eucharistic treatises, as the main purpose of the latter was to repudiate error by an elaborate orthodox explanation of faith. The analysis will stop in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century; this is due to the emergence of Cathars and the Waldensians, which by their nature and impact differ considerably in scale from the preceding heresies.

With the period under study in mind, 85 mentions were analysed: 37 for the 11<sup>th</sup> century and 48 for the 12<sup>th</sup> century, corresponding to eighteen and fourteen cases of heresy, respectively.<sup>1</sup> It was then checked how often the accusation of heretics rejecting the sacrament of the Eucharist or other charges related to the sacrament appear in the sources, such as a celebration of Mass without priestly ordination, a celebration of the Eucharist in an unorthodox manner or a belief that unworthy priests cannot consecrate the Host. Allegations of this nature appear in a total of 23 texts describing 15 cases of heresy, representing 26% of all sources and 50% of incidents, respectively. Of special interest, however, is the distribution of these allegations over time. For the years 1000–1050, we can determine only 6 such mentions (16%) and only 4 cases (23%). By contrast, in 1100–1150 the numbers change dramatically: 17 source mentions (35%) and as many as 11 cases (79%). The increase in the number and percentile of mentions and cases is evident.

<sup>1</sup> For the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the following cases were examined (if the number of studied mentions is higher than one it is specified in the brackets): mad heretic Leutard; learned heretic Vilgard; heretics from Sardinia; heretics from Spain; antibaptists from Conques; arians of Poitou; Manicheans in Aquitaine, in Toulouse and in Charroux; heretics described in Ademar of Chabannes' Sermones; learned heretics of Orléans (12 mentions); ascetic heretics at Arras (2); heretics in Périgord; heretics at Monteforte (2); heretics from northern Italy and Greece; heretics at Châlons-en-Champagne (2); heretics denounced at the synod of Rheims in 1049; heretics killed at Goslar (6). For the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the following cases were examined: heretics at Ivois (2); Tanchelmists (8); heresy of Manasses, disciple of Tanchelm; Manicheans near Soissons; wandering preacher Henry the Monk (9); an unidentified group of heretics from the South France; Petrobrusians (2); heretics at Liège (3); Arnoldists (2); ascetic group at Cologne (2); Donatist heretics at Cologne; Eudo of Stella (14); Manicheans at Agen. Sources relating to the Berengarian controversy were not included in the calculations. The analysis was based on data collected for an interactive map and dataset Early heresy: heresy cases in the West, c. 1000 – c. 1150 (Hinz-Wieczorek, Ondrejka & Zbíral, 2023).

## 11<sup>th</sup> century

### Orléans heresy (1022)

On 28 December 1022, a dozen or so heretics were burnt during a synod in Orléans. The event is covered in thirteen sources. However, only three of them provide information on the heretics' unorthodox attitude to the Eucharist. The first one is a letter from John of Ripoll to Abbot Oliba. It is a source contemporary with the events, as it was written within a year of the synod (Bautier, 1975, p. 65). However, the information provided by John about heretics is laconic. The description of their attitude to the Eucharist is limited only to the charge that heretics rejected the consecration of the body and blood of Christ (Jean de Ripoll, 1969). The second source, Ademar of Chabannes' *Chronicon* was written in the late 1020s. In the passage on the synod of Orléans, Ademar did not provide any precise information on the doctrine of the heretics. Interestingly, however, the author mentioned some magical powder from incinerated human bones in the heretics' possession, the consumption of which caused permanent conversion to heresy (Ademarus Cabannensis, 1999, p. 180). The magical powder described by Ademar resembles a sort of heretical counter-Eucharist, which purpose is to strengthen one in heresy, just as Christians are strengthened in virtue by the true sacrament.

The last source is the cartulary of Saint-Père-de-Chartres compiled by a monk named Paul. He presents, after an act of donation of Arefast, a Norman knight and later a monk at Saint-Père, the story of his involvement in the discovery and suppression of heresy in Orléans. In the early 1020s, Arefast's chaplain went to Orléans for educational purposes. However, upon his return, Arefast started to suspect him of heresy. Concerned, he decided to consult Fulbert of Chartres, as to the steps he should take. He did not meet him at Chartres, but a sacristan, Evrard. The latter advised him to go to Orléans and get close to the canons' milieu, feigning a desire to learn the truths they preached. However, in order not to fall genuinely into erroneous teachings, he ordered him to receive Holy Communion daily and to make the sign of the cross frequently. The heretics were soon captured, and Arefast contributed greatly to their punishment.

The cartulary text describes the entire event in great detail and conveys the exact doctrine of the heretics. The sacrament of the Eucharist occupies an important place in the entire description. Its importance is first highlighted when Evrard of Chartres instructs Arefast to receive Holy Communion daily to uphold his faith (Guérard, 1840, p. 110). Once again, it appears in the list of errors cited by the author and in the accusation pronounced by Arefast.

In both passages, it can be seen that the heretics' rejection of the sacrament of the Eucharist is related to Docetism, as they do not recognize either the Virgin Birth, the Passion on the Cross or the Resurrection of Christ (Guérard, 1840, pp. 111, 113).

The Eucharist is presented for the third time in the cartulary in a way similar to that of Ademar of Chabannes'. Namely, Paul describes orgies that the heretics allegedly had, from which children were born, later killed in a bestial manner and their ashes consumed by the followers of the heresy (Guérard, 1840, p. 112). The monk himself noted the similarity between the heretic ritual and the Catholic sacrament, concluding that the heretics held the sacrilegious ashes with reverence close to that of Christians when dealing with the body of Christ. Notably, a popular motif found in Eucharistic miracles from this period was the miraculous apparition of an infant at the moment of the consecration of the Host. A description of such a miracle is found, for example, in the *Acta Synodi Atrebatensis* (Gerardus Cameracensis, 2014, p. 34). Given this motif, the heretics' use of a real child in their communion is even more reminiscent of the Catholic ritual *à lenvers*. Michael Frassetto supposes that the description of the heretical rituals may not be a mere invention of Paul and Ademar, but an act of diabolising the Eucharistic ritual practised by the heretics (Frassetto, 2005, pp. 5–6, 9).

The account of Paul of Chartres devotes an unusually large amount of space to the Eucharist. Most likely, this is not a coincidence, as the account was written around 1080, at the time of the official end of the thirty-year-long Eucharistic controversy, which, nevertheless, still aroused considerable debate. Berengar of Tours, a central figure of the dispute, maintained that Christ was present in the Eucharist only symbolically. This statement met with opposition from Church authorities and other thinkers who believed that the historical body of Christ was present in the Eucharist. It must also have been an engaging subject at Chartres, where in his youth Berengar of Tours received his education from Bishop Fulbert. Paul of Chartres may have feared a combination of Berengar's views with Fulbert's teaching and the school of Chartres. The fact that it was the bishop of Chartres that Arefast wanted to ask for advice and that the sacristan instructed him to receive Holy Communion daily, deflects the suspicion of heresy from Chartres. Indeed, Berengar's name did not appear once in the source, nor did the author write directly about the actual transformation of the communicants into the body and blood of Christ. The imprecision of the language, however, is a testament to the era; the term *substantialiter* was not yet in common use at the time (Purday, 1973, pp. 101–110) and was unlikely to have been used by Paul. In the source, the error of the heretics is presented more as an aftermath of Docetism than

a disbelief in the real presence of Christ. Berengar was not mentioned either, since the events did not concern him and took place a quarter of a century before the outbreak of the controversy. There is no denying though that the general interest in the Eucharist increased at this time. This was undoubtedly the reason why it occupied such an important place in the account of Paul of Chartres.

### **Eucharist in the *Sermones* of Ademar of Chabannes**

Although Ademar wrote about various heretics several times in his *Chronicon*, he never accused them of an openly heterodox view of the Eucharist. Nevertheless, he mentions the existence of such heretics in his sermon *De Eucharistia* (Bon, 2009, pp. 21–102). The Angoulême monk did not pinpoint what their heresy would exactly consist in and proceeded straight to present the orthodox interpretation. As with the description of the heretics of Orléans, he also mentioned the existence of the magic powder in heretics' possession. He went on to quote the Gospel of John in defence of the Eucharist and stated that anyone who denied the sacrifice on the altar was a heretic. Ademar was also convinced that the Eucharist was imperative for the salvation of the human race and that the sacrifice on the altar itself was a memorial of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and was accomplished through invisible sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Also in *In Sinodo Sermo de Oratione Dominica ad Missam* he mentions some heretics rejecting the Mass (Bon, 2009, p. 380).

### **Heretics at Arras (1025)**

During the synod of Arras in early 1025 Gerard, Bishop of Cambrai-Arras delivered a sermon to some recently caught heretics, during which he dwelt on various elements of the orthodox faith. We do not know how Gerard selected the set of issues of faith presented during the sermon and to what extent it was shaped by the actual belief system of the heretics. However, they must have held some heterodox view of the Eucharist because the source mentions it. Bishop Gerard also repeated this information in his letter to Bishop R., where he listed the errors of faith professed by the dissident group (Frédéricq, 1889, p. 2).

The Eucharist found an important place in Gerard's sermon, being the second issue he discussed after the sacrament of baptism. Gerard began by providing information that the heretics before him were opposed to the Eucharist (Gerardus Cameracensis, 2014, p. 27). However, this is the only information we learn about the attitude of the heretics to the Eucharist, al-

though the bishop still dwelt at length on the importance of the sacrament. At no point, however, did Gerard emphasise that any of the unorthodox views of the Eucharist were part of the belief system of the heretics of Arras. Perhaps Gerard wanted not only to refute existing errors of the heretics but also possible future contestations of the Eucharist. The sermon was probably addressed more toward orthodox Christians to strengthen their faith and prevent them from falling into the snares of potential heresy, than to actual heretics. This reasoning is supported by the fact that the sermon was written sometime after the synod and the heretics had never heard it in this form (Gerardus Cameracensis, 2014, p. XXXI).

Gerard began the passage on the Eucharist by stating that it was an unfathomable mystery, a sacrament uniting Heaven and Earth, offering salvation, and recalling the Passion of Christ. He stated that the transformation of communicants into the true body and blood of Christ took place through the invisible power of the Holy Spirit, although they retained the properties of bread and wine (Gerardus Cameracensis, 2014, p. 27). In support of his theses, the bishop quoted numerous passages from the New Testament, from which he also derived the conviction that the ritual should be celebrated as often as possible as it offered salvation and eternal life (Gerardus Cameracensis, 2014, p. 28). Gerard emphasised again that the sacrament was a great mystery, initially incomprehensible even to the apostles who could not imagine how they were to eat the body of Christ. Namely, they understood literally the words of their master and were horrified by the thought of eating his members. Bishop Gerard explained that the body of Christ was not actually eaten and torn apart with the teeth, but that it was received spiritually (Gerardus Cameracensis, 2014, p. 29).<sup>2</sup> Gerard also reflected on the question of the infinity of Christ's body, which, despite the daily sacrifice of the Mass, never ended. Here, the bishop referred to the moments in the life of Christ, showing the singularity of his body from the moment of the incarnation, and concluded that it simply had other divine properties: it did not diminish with time, nor was it limited to a single place (Gerardus Cameracensis, 2014, p. 30). Gerard concluded by citing three Eucharistic miracles attesting to the real presence of Christ in Holy Communion (Gerardus Cameracensis, 2014, pp. 31–34).

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<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, in 1059, at a synod in Rome, Berengar was forced to take an oath stating that Christ's flesh was really present in the Eucharist, through which he was sensually touched, broken by the priest and ground by the teeth of the faithful. This oath is also found in the *Decretum Gratiani*; however, medieval theologians had a lot of trouble defending this position, usually explaining that it was the accidents of bread that were subject to mechanical damage while the substance remained intact (Macy, 1999).

## Heretics at Montforte (1028)

The Eucharist appears in an unusual way in a description of the heretics of Montforte by Landulph Senior in the *Historia Mediolanensis*. The captured heretics were interrogated by Aribert, Archbishop of Milan. However, when Aribert asked about their attitude to the Eucharist, his question was completely ignored by the heresiarch and the issue was not raised again. It is noteworthy, however, that the archbishop's question was asked in the form of a *credo* and emphasised two important aspects of the Eucharist: the real presence of the body of Christ and the importance of priestly ordination for the consecration to take place (Landulfus Senior, 1942, pp. 68–69).

Landulph's chronicle was written in the times of Pataria movement, of which the chronicler was an opponent. Yet in spite of some similarities between the views of the Pataria supporters and the Montforte heretics, Huguetta Taviani defended the authenticity of the account of Landulf who most likely used a source contemporary with the event (Taviani, 1974, p. 1251). Aribert's orthodox interpretation also corresponds to the state of the pre-Gregorian Church, which insisted that, despite his sinfulness, the priest could still consecrate the communicants (Taviani, 1974, p. 1250).<sup>3</sup>

## Périgord (1<sup>st</sup> half of 11<sup>th</sup> century)

In the second quarter of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the heretic followers of the *vita apostolica* appeared in the Périgord area. Their system of beliefs and practices was described in precise terms in a letter written by Heribert the monk to an unknown addressee. The source suggests that the heretics had a negative attitude toward the Mass, and considered the communion wafer to be no more than a piece of bread. They attended Mass only to camouflage their true faith, and they secretly spat out the received Host (Lobrichon, 1987, p. 442).

## 12<sup>th</sup> century

### Heretics in Ivois (ca. 1112/1122)

Information about the heretics of Ivois (today's Carignan) is provided in two sources: the *Gesta Treverorum* (Pertz, 1848, pp. 193–194) and the *Annales*

<sup>3</sup> It should be made clear that after the Gregorian Reforms and even today, the sinfulness of the priest is not considered an obstacle to the celebration of the sacrament, which is performed *ex opere operato*. At the time of the Gregorian Reforms, however, the subject was widely debated, and simoniac priests were often considered to be improperly ordained and therefore unable to celebrate the sacraments.



*Trevirenses* (Frédéricq, 1889, pp. 21–22). The heretics were detected somewhere between 1112 and 1122. Early on, the author of the *Gesta* listed a catalogue of the heretics' errors, among which was the rejection of the belief in the real presence of Christ in the Host (Pertz, 1848, p. 193). Moreover, he accused them of holding secret meetings but failed to specify their nature, making it unclear whether he meant impious meetings like those described by Paul of Chartres, or simply heretical masses. The *Annales Trevirenses* relate similarly about the heretics' disbelief in Christ's real presence. Interestingly, however, the author of the *Annales* linked their error directly to the "pernicious and absurd heresy" of Berengar of Tours and named it "Berengar's poison" (Frédéricq, 1889, p. 21). Naturally, the accusation of the heretics of a connection with Berengar was unfounded. Berengar did not have any serious followers or continuators, although some of his views were shared by his disciples and later thinkers (Macy, 1990). What was aptly linked, however, was the belief in the figurative presence of Christ in the Eucharist with Berengar's beliefs.

The *Gesta* relate that the captured heretics had to listen to a sermon by Bruno, Bishop of Trier, on the errors of faith. The bishop based his argument on the writings of St Augustine, according to whom the body of Christ, though truly present in the Host through the agency of the Holy Spirit, is not gnawed by the teeth of the faithful, and that Christ himself is in it of his own accord for the salvation of the world (Pertz, 1848, p. 194). After the bishop's instruction, as other heretics had escaped, the remaining one was put to the trial of the Eucharist, that is, the very sacrament he was undermining. The heretic was required to receive communion if he truly believed in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but if his faith was heterodox, he would be committing a sacrilege. The heretic made an act of repentance and received communion, but soon afterwards it became clear that his conversion was only apparent and his unworthy reception of the Host spelled doom for him (Pertz, 1848, p. 194; Frédéricq, 1889, p. 22).

### **Tanchelmists (ca. 1112–1124), Arnoldists (ca. 1137–1155)**

As many as four sources from the period give accounts of Tanchelm's heretical attitude towards the Eucharist. The most comprehensive of these is the Letter of the Canons of Utrecht, addressed to Frederick, Archbishop of Cologne. The letter informed that Tanchelm had just been captured by the archbishop and the canons asked not to release him but to subject him to appropriate punishment; a description of the wickedness he committed in Utrecht followed suit (Jaffé, 1869, pp. 296–300). The canons accused Tanchelm of anti-clericalism

and Donatism. His supporters believed that a celebrant's chastity was a prerequisite for the validity of the sacrament, and they considered themselves the chosen representing the true Church. Tanchelm's anti-clericalism was also anti-sacramental in nature. The heretic believed that priests had no role in the consecration of the Host and that the sacrament itself should be called a pollution rather than a sacrament. The authors of the letter then referred to St Augustine and his statement that a priest's sins were irrelevant to the validity of the sacrament. The canons then mentioned again that Tanchelm forbade his faithful to participate in the Eucharist (Jaffé, 1869, p. 297).

The *Vita* of Norbert of Xanten also mentioned the attitude of Tanchelm's supporters to the Eucharist. While different versions of the *Vita Norberti* vary, they convey the same information concerning the sacrament of the Eucharist. According to the texts, Tanchelm's followers rejected the saving power of the Eucharist and the existence of the priestly state (Frédéricq, 1889, pp. 22–24). A very similar entry to that from the *Vita* is found in the *Sigeberti Gemblacensis Continuatio Praemonstratensis* (Pertz, 1844b, p. 449).

In the sources, Tanchelm's rejection of the sacraments was clearly linked to his general anti-clericalism and application of the principle that a priest's chastity affects the validity of a sacrament. Tanchelm's argument was a by-product of the Gregorian Reforms warning against receiving sacraments from unworthy priests. In its extremity, this view led to a Donatist attitude towards the validity of the sacraments, of which Tanchelm became an advocate (Macy, 1984, p. 55). Like Tanchelm, Arnold of Brescia also had a negative attitude towards the Roman Church. Of the sources from the period, only one mentions his negative attitude toward the Eucharist. However, this is a very laconic record, more of a slander, which completely fails to inform about the nature of Arnold's error (Otto Frisigensis, 1912, p. 133).

### **Manichaeans near Soissons (ca. 1114)**

Only one source provides information about the Soissons heretics discovered around 1114, namely the *De vita sua sive Monodie* by Guibert of Nogent. Guibert attributed a variety of errors to them, like Docetism, rejection of infant baptism and rejection of the Eucharist. Heretics were also said to have gone so far as to refer to the mouth of the priest consecrating the host as the mouth of hell, although they sometimes received the sacrament as camouflage (Guibert de Nogent, 1981, pp. 428–430). Guibert then listed other errors of the heretics, including accusation of sexual promiscuity. The author gave a detailed description of a heretical orgy, which in many respects was identical to Arefast's account of the heretics of Orléans. Also, a child conceived in this way was then

bestially burnt, and from its ashes the heretics made bread which they treated as their Eucharist (Guibert de Nogent, 1981, p. 430). By resorting to the word "Eucharist," Guibert made clear how great a similarity he saw between the orthodox sacrament and the heretical ritual.

The heretics depicted by Guibert were not indifferent towards the Eucharist. Not only did they reject the sacrament, but they even felt repulsion (*exhorrent*) toward it, manifested by the fact that they were unable to eat anything during the day after consuming it. Perhaps this loathing of the Eucharist was a product of Guibert's imagination, according to which heretics could not have an indifferent attitude toward one of the Church's most important sacraments, and indeed required a counter-Eucharist, reinforcing their heresy as the true Eucharist reinforces faith and is salutary to the human soul. Moreover, in the end, the heretics were thrown into the water by order of the bishop who, before the ordeal, had them receive Holy Communion so that they would be saved through the body of Christ (Guibert de Nogent, 1981, p. 434).

### **Synod of Toulouse (1119)**

In 1119, the synod of Toulouse condemned heretics who rejected the sacraments of the Church, including the Eucharist (Frédéricq, 1889, p. 29). The accusation was very general and was not directed against any specific group of heretics. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the main blade of criticism was aimed at the opponents of the Eucharist. This condemnation was drafted in almost identical terms in canon 23 of the Second Lateran Council.

### **An unspecified group of heretics from the South (1130s)**

No source openly accuses Henry the Monk of a heretical view of the Eucharist, although various texts inform of his anti-clerical and anti-sacramental attitude.<sup>4</sup> For a long time, it was considered that the anonymous treatise *Contra hereticos et schismaticos* was written against the Henricians. However, although it repeats whole passages from Guillaume Monachi's treatise *Contra Henricum*

<sup>4</sup> For example, in a letter to the Count of Toulouse, Bernard of Clairvaux reported on the anticlerical and anti-sacramental attitudes of the Henricians and lamented that many of the faithful in the county were thus left without the sacraments and died in sin, without confession or the strengthening power of Holy Communion (Bernardus Clarevallensis, 1977, p. 125). The importance of the Eucharist for the Abbot of Clairvaux was further emphasized in Conrad of Eberbach's *Exordium*, in which Bernard converted to the true faith a Cistercian monk who did not believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist (Conradus Eberbacensis, 1994, pp. 77–78).

*Schismaticum et Hereticum* in many places, it also contains much that is new, including a chapter on the Eucharist. It is unsure whether the treatise was directed against an unidentified group of heretics or it was a text of universal use against any dissidents who might have preached any of the listed errors (Zerner, 2014, pp. 83–84).

From the source, we learn of two Eucharistic errors of the anonymous heretics. Firstly, they believed that the Eucharist could not be consecrated by a sinful priest, and secondly, that the sacrament was not restricted to a church and could be celebrated anywhere (Zerner, 2011, pp. 264, 268). In response, the author emphasised the importance of the Eucharist, stating that through it the human body is strengthened and the soul nourished (Zerner, 2011, p. 264). To ridicule the Donatist postulate of the heretics, he reduced it to absurdity. The Anonymous wrote that it was impossible to come across anyone without sin thus, according to heretic reasoning, the sacrament of the Eucharist could never be consecrated. The author resorted in his argument to the authority of Carolingian writers: Pope Nicholas I and Paschasius Radbertus who unanimously agreed that the sinfulness of the priest did not affect the validity of the sacrament (Zerner, 2011, p. 267). Anselm of Laon is another authority cited by the Anonymous. The author argued that eucharistic change could only occur when three conditions were met: it had to be performed by a properly ordained priest, it could only take place in the church, and the appropriate words of consecration had to be spoken. The next section of the treatise discusses how communion can be received by the faithful: sacramental, real or sacramental-real, by which it emphasises the importance of the recipient's intention and faith, as opposed to the priest's state of purity. The chapter concludes by extolling the gifts the faithful receive when they properly receive communion (Zerner, 2011, p. 270).

### **Petrobrusians (ca. 1119–1139)**

Peter the Venerable described the attitude of Peter of Bryus' followers to the Eucharist in two intrinsic sources. These are the *Contra Petrobrusianos* treatise and an accompanying letter. We can learn very little about the attitude of heretics to the Eucharist from the letter. However, Abbot of Cluny devoted a great deal of attention to the sacrament in the treatise, and although its content was inspired by the heresy of Peter of Bruys, it was also written to strengthen ordinary Christians in their faith (Petrus Venerabilis, 1968, pp. 3–4), and thus contains a detailed orthodox interpretation of the Eucharist.

Petrobrusians believed that the change of the communicants into the body and blood of Christ was impossible since it had only taken place once,

at the Last Supper (Petrus Venerabilis, 1968, p. 87). Thus, they denied priests the power to consecrate the Host. In response, Peter appealed to arguments from the Scriptures and everyday life, since his adversaries did not recognise Catholic authority.<sup>5</sup> The Abbot of Cluny began by comparing the heresy of Petrobrusians to Berengar's error but saw it as something worse, as the heretics of his time not only rejected the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist but believed that the ritual itself was unnecessary and meaningless (Petrus Venerabilis, 1968, p. 88). Peter, on the other hand, defended the assumption that the Church could not exist without the Eucharist. He then moved on to a series of arguments defending the ritual of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The abbot invoked the authority of the Old Testament, in which numerous examples show how the sacrifices offered by the Jews pleased God (Petrus Venerabilis, 1968, pp. 90–93). Peter then referred to Christ's words at the Last Supper, by which he urged that sacrifices be made in remembrance of him (Petrus Venerabilis, 1968, pp. 100, 112). He also referred to St Paul's letter to the Corinthians and the Acts of the Apostles to prove that from the earliest centuries, Christians had been meeting to commemorate the Last Supper (Petrus Venerabilis, 1968, pp. 114–116).

Peter then took up the question of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The Abbot of Cluny invoked the argument of the omnipotence of God, who can do things that are impossible for the human mind to comprehend. He cited God's various transformations as described in the Old Testament and the one performed at Cana of Galilee. Peter also referred to the phenomena of the visible world, with different kinds of daily transformations: water into ice or wine into vinegar (Petrus Venerabilis, 1968, pp. 102–111). Most importantly, he stated that the Eucharist was a saving sacrament, the mere adoration of which would not have such miraculous properties as eating it (Petrus Venerabilis, 1968, pp. 122–123).

### **Heretics at Cologne (1143)**

The most important source for the events in Cologne in 1143 is a letter from Evervin of Steinfeld to Bernard of Clairvaux. Evervin described two recently discovered groups of heretics, both with unorthodox views on the Eucharist. The first one, while not rejecting it entirely, celebrated it their way, by reciting the Lord's Prayer over bread and wine (Evervinus Steinfeldensis, 1859, col. 678). Evervin conveyed that, through their prayer, the heretics changed the com-

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<sup>5</sup> For a more detailed study of Peter the Venerable's orthodox interpretation of the Eucharist and other issues raised in the treatise, see the monograph by Dominique Iogna-Prat (2013, pp. 237–335).

municants into the body and blood of Christ. However, Evervin's information about the heretics' consecration of bread and wine should be considered as a transference of the monk's belief to that of the heretics, for whom the consecrated bread was rather a symbolic meal celebrated in commemoration of the Last Supper (Jiménez-Sánchez, 2001, pp. 33–34).

The other group had a completely negative attitude toward the Eucharist. They believed that the Eucharistic change could not take place at the altar because no Catholic priest was properly ordained and the Roman Church itself had lost the prerogatives that Jesus had given to Peter (Evervinus Steinfeldensis, 1859, col. 678). We can only conclude from this laconic record that the heretics most likely believed that no one could consecrate the Host because no one was not worthy enough. Evervin did not report that the heretics had any kind of Eucharist of their own, so they could have abandoned it altogether in their evangelical puritanism. The monk was also concise and said nothing about his attitude to the Eucharist. Nevertheless, this would not have been expected of him after a letter in which he asked St Bernard for advice and did not need to defend his orthodoxy.

### **Heretics at Liège (1145)**

At a similar time, around 1145, the heretics at Liège were also discovered. In his letter to Pope Lucius II, the Church of Liège mentioned in the most laconic terms the heretics' attitude to the Eucharist, namely stating that they considered it useless (Frédéricq, 1889, p. 32). As the letter is more of a report, no orthodox commentary by the authors on the Eucharist or other errors of the heretics is included. However, at this point, it is also worth mentioning that from this area and time comes information about riots in the diocese of Cambrai, during which some of the bishop's opponents broke into churches where they profaned hosts and destroyed crosses and effigies of Mary (Waitz, 1883, p. 244). Nevertheless, this record seems to represent an element of the struggle of the laity against the bishop and his prerogatives rather than the actual anti-sacramental attitude of the dissidents (Russell, 1965, p. 82).

### **Eudo of Stella (ca. 1145–1148)**

No source on Eudo mentions his attitude to the Eucharist, although the anonymous *Sigeberti Continuatio Gemblacensis* (Pertz, 1844a, p. 389) and the *Balduini Ninovensensis Chronicon* (1880, p. 532) convey that Eudo was said to have celebrated Mass unordained. In the *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, on the other hand, William of Newburgh did not mention heretical masses at all. Rather,

he described the spiritual meals that Eudo's faithful constantly had to take, and which hardened them even more firmly in heresy. Perhaps, by writing about the devil's meal and tricks, William was indirectly passing on information about an unorthodox mass (William of Newburgh, 2015, p. 88). There is also another passage in the Chronicle highlighting the importance of the Eucharist to William: a knight wishing to convert Eudo told him that this was possible by receiving Holy Communion (William of Newburgh, 2015, p. 90).

## Conclusions

When comparing the sources from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, considerable differences emerge regarding the significance accorded to the sacrament of the Eucharist. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, this was an error rarely attributed to heretics. This can be explained in two ways. Firstly, heretics were unlikely to have an incorrect view of the sacrament, and secondly, the writers' eyes were not trained to look for this error in the dissidents. Moreover, the right circumstances probably had not yet arisen to contest the nature of the sacrament, as well as to object to the priests celebrating it, since discussions on this subject only emerged with the Eucharistic controversy and the Gregorian Reforms. This is reflected in the way the Eucharist was described in the sources: the vocabulary used by the writers in defence of the Eucharist is imprecise, the description of the sacrament itself very general, and the characteristics of the error of the heretics unknown and left to conjecture.

As the 12<sup>th</sup> century began, not only did the number of sources providing information on the attitude of heretics to the Eucharist change, but also the nature of the errors alleged. Heretics were not only accused of lack of faith in the real presence of Christ in the communion but, more often, their anti-clericalism was indicated. The texts provide information about celebrating mass without ordination or reciting the Lord's Prayer instead of the words of consecration. There are mentions of purely anti-clerical attitudes and statements that the success of the consecration of bread and wine is closely linked to the purity of the priest.

On top of this, heretics were subjected to Eucharistic trials or attempts were made to persuade them to convert by receiving communion. Pseudo-Eucharistic rituals were not uncommon: heretics would meet in clandestine assemblies or were accused of consumption of a diabolical substance which in its properties took the form of the negative of Holy Communion.

Arguably, as interest in the Eucharist increased, not only was this error noticed more often in heretics, but it was also attributed to them, or the de-

scription of their beliefs was expanded with what a specific heresy might have looked like. It is more likely, however, that the descriptions of heretics' errors faithfully corresponded to the belief systems of the dissidents, and that any demonization was the result of some scriptural tradition or a degeneration of elements that existed in reality. Clearly, the growing interest in the sacrament of the Eucharist evident in the form of emerging theological treatises, the growing veneration of the Host or the increasing role of the priest, found reflection in the anti-heretical texts of the period.

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