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IF NOT BOGOMILISM THAN WHAT? THE ORIGINS OF CATHARISM IN THE LIGHT OF THE SOURCES

Abstract. Since the end of the twentieth Century the traditional interpretation of Catharism, assuming its Eastern roots and dualist character is the object of a harsh criticism, formulated by the deconstructionist scholars. The moderated version of their new interpretation assumes that dualism didn't play an important role in Catharism, and that the Cathar "dissidence" was not influenced by the Eastern dualist heresies (especially Bogomilism), but appeared independently in the West. According to the radical version Catharism didn't exist at all and contemporary scholars should accept a new paradigm – Middle-Ages without Catharism.

The aim of this article is to examine the source arguments, which stand behind both interpretations – on one side the arguments concerning the contacts of the Cahars with the Eastern dualists, with special attention paid to the time of their emergence and character of these relations, and on the other the arguments concerning Cathar dualist doctrines, which according to the deconstructionists were constructed arbitrarily by the Catholic polemicists, basing on the ancient anti-heretical works, especially anti-Manichaean writings of St. Augustine. The article will try to find the answer to the question if the Cathar doctrines described in the Catholic sources are indeed so closely similar to the Manichaean teachings known from St. Augustine and at the same time so different from the Bogomil dualism. The analysis of the sources will show if the new interpretation is based on the arguments that are strong enough to overthrow the traditional one and if the theory assuming lack of Bogomil influence can be considered as a serious alternative.

Keywords: Catharism, Bogomilism, Medieval dualism, Cathar doctrine, origins of Catharism

Since the time of Charles Schmidt (middle of the 19th century), scholars of Catharism, basing on the testimonies of the sources, underlined the Eastern, precisely Bogomil roots of this heresy. In the 20th century, as the new sources were discovered, scholars of next generations, such as Antoine Dondaine, Arno Borst, Christine Thouzellier, Malcolm Lambert or Edina Bozoky, confirmed and specified the claims of the German scholar, proving, that Catharism appeared under the influence of the earlier, eastern dualist heresies, especially Bogomilism¹. Bernard

¹ C. SCHMIDT, *Histoire et doctrine de la secte des Cathares ou Albigeois*, vol. I–II, Geneve 1849; A. DONDAINE, *La hiérarchie cathare en Italie II*, AFP 20, 1950, p. 275–277; IDEM, *L'origine de l'hérésie*

Hamilton in his research noted also indirect influence of Paulicianism on Catharism, through the radically dualistic Bogomil church of Drugunthia².

Since more than two decades however, this traditional vision of Catharism is questioned by the adherents of the deconstructionist interpretation, who openly try to overthrow it. Revolutionary claims of this school were presented in 1998 in the volume entitled *Inventer l'hérésie?*, edited by Monique Zerner³. Deconstructionist interpretation indeed totally deconstructs our whole knowledge about Catharism, because it denies both its Eastern roots and dualistic character. Its radical adherents (such as J.L. Biget, J. Thery or U. Brunn) even demand to abandon the names Cathars and Catharism, or openly claim, that our traditional perception of Catharism should be replaced with the modified one⁴. Mark Gregory Pegg openly says about the need of a new paradigm – “Middle Ages without Catharism”⁵. In more moderate form, the deconstructionist interpretation denies the Eastern origins of Catharism, but does not reject the relations of the Cathars with the East, usually claiming, that they appeared later, when their heresy was already formed. This moderate option bases on the interpretation, formulated in the 1950s by R. Morghen, later developed also by J. Duvernoy, who claimed that Catharism was an evangelical heresy, that appeared in the West, totally independently from any external influence, and its dualistic doctrine was the effect of a specific exegesis of the Bible⁶. As Ernst Werner has put it – the Cathars had reinterpreted Christianity based on St. John’s Gospel, just like Martin Luther did it later, based on St. Paul’s epistle to the Romans⁷. Moderate deconstructionists accept these claims,

médiévale. A propos d'un livre récent, RSCI 6, 1952, p. 49–59; A. BORST, *Die Katharer*, Stuttgart 1953, p. 89–98, 229–230; C. THOUZELLIER, *Hérésie et croisade au XII^e siècle*, RHE 49, 1954, p. 855–872; M. LAMBERT, *The Cathars*, Oxford 1998, p. 29–37; E. BOZOKY, *Le livre secret des cathares. Interrogatio Iohannis. Edition critique, traduction commentaire*, Paris 2009, p. 26–32, 192–202.

² B. HAMILTON, *The Origins of the Dualist Church of Drugunthia*, ECR 6, 1974, p. 115–124; cf. also: IDEM, *Bogomil Influences on Western Heresy*, [in:] *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle-Ages. Essays on the Work of R.I. Moore*, ed. M. FRASSETTO, Leiden–Boston 2006 [= SHCT, 129], p. 104.

³ *Inventer l'hérésie? Discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l'Inquisition*, ed. M. ZERNER, Nice 1998 [= CEMN, 2].

⁴ J.L. BIGET, *Réflexions sur «l'hérésie» dans le Midi de la France au Moyen Âge*, Here 36–37, 2001, p. 29–51; J. THÉRY, *L'hérésie des bons hommes. Comment nommer la dissidence religieuse non vaudoise ni béguine en Languedoc (XII^e – début XIV^e siècle)?*, Here 36–37, 2002, p. 36, 105; U. BRUNN, *Cathari, catharistae et cataphrygae. Ancêtres des cathares du XII^e siècle*, Here 36–37, 2002, p. 183–200; IDEM, *Des contestataires aux “Cathares”. Discours de réforme et propagande antihérétique dans les pays du Rhin et de la Meuse avant l'Inquisition*, Paris 2006, p. 238–239, 331–333, 342–348.

⁵ M.G. PEGG, *The Paradigm of Catharism; or, the Historians' Illusions*, [in:] *Cathars in Question*, ed. A. SENNIS, York 2016 [= HIMA], p. 21–35, 52.

⁶ R. MORGHEN, *Medioevo cristiano*, Bari 1951, p. 212–224; IDEM, *Problèmes sur l'origine de l'hérésie au moyen âge*, RH 236, 1966, p. 1–16; R. MANSSELLI, *L'eresia del male*, Napoli 1964, p. 76–80, 196; IDEM, *Evangelisme et mythe dans la foi cathare*, Here 5, 1985, p. 5–17; J. DUVERNOY, *Le catharisme. La religion des cathares*, Toulouse 1976, p. 343–346, 363–365, 377–386.

⁷ E. WERNER, *L'évangile de Jean et le dualisme medieval*, Here 12, 1989, p. 15–24.

however they significantly depreciate Cathar dualism, claiming that it did not play an important role in this heresy. Following M. Zerner and her adherents they accept the assumption (as it is in the case of P. Jimenez, J.L. Biget or U. Brunn), that the Cathar dualism had been arbitrarily constructed by the Catholic polemist, before it appeared among the dissidents as the effect of their independent exegesis, developed in the heretical schools. The main aim of the Catholic polemist was to discredit the evangelical dissidents through openly heretical, dualistic doctrine and to justify their persecution⁸. According to this interpretation, when the dualist doctrine was already formed, the Cathars established contacts with the Bogomils – as Anne Brenon says – both groups grew from the same need of the return to the original Christianity, but appeared totally independently⁹.

Already the first look at this concept shows its weaknesses, inconsistency and improbable character. First of all it says that the Cathars formed dualistic doctrine independently and later established contacts with the Bogomils, who existed earlier and accidentally professed very similar doctrine. Second – the Cathars accepted doctrinal concepts constructed by their enemies to discredit them, and later developed these concepts in their exegetical schools. Why would they do this? As J.L. Biget explained – it was the effect of simple psycho-social mechanisms – unfortunately he did not specify what kind of mechanisms he was thinking about¹⁰. The concept that assumes arbitrary construction of the heresy to discredit the Cathars, who in fact were evangelical dissidents, trying to restore early Christianity basing on the Holy Scripture can also be logically questioned. In relation to it an obvious question arises: why would the Catholic polemist impose this dualist doctrine only on the Cathars and not on the Waldensians? And second: if the Cathars originally were not dualists, but evangelical dissidents, then what actually distinguished them from the Waldensians and what was the core of their identity? Besides, if we assume, that the Catholics had arbitrarily constructed

⁸ M. ZERNER, *Introduction*, [in:] *Inventer l'hérésie?...*, p. 7–13; J.L. BIGET, *Réflexions...*, p. 39–44, 46–51; P. JIMÉNEZ-SANCHEZ, *Les catharismes. Modèles dissidents du christianisme médiéval (XII^e–XIII^e siècles)*, Rennes 2008, p. 207–210; 354–376; EADEM, *Catharisme ou catharismes? Variations spatiales et temporelles dans l'organisation et dans l'encadrement des communautés dites «cathares»*, Here 39, 2003, p. 38–39; EADEM, *De la participation des cathares rhénans (1163) à la notion d'hérésie générale*, Here 36–37, 2002, p. 204–217; U. BRUNN, *Cathari...*, p. 183–200; IDEM, *Des contestataires...*, p. 342–364; cf. also: H. CHIU, *Alan of Lille's Academic Concept of the Manichee*, JRH 35, 2011, p. 492–506; J. THÉRY, *L'hérésie...*, p. 98–101.

⁹ A. BRENON, *Les Cathares: Bons chrétiens et hérétiques*, Here 13–14, 1990, p. 115–155; EADEM, *Les hérésies de l'an mil: Nouvelles perspectives sur les origines du catharisme*, Here 24, 1995, p. 21–36.

¹⁰ J.L. BIGET, *Réflexions...*, p. 46–51. Similar opinion was also expressed by P. Jiménez-Sánchez and J. Chiffolleau, cf.: P. JIMÉNEZ-SANCHEZ, *À propos de la controverse sur la nature doctrinale du Nihil cathare*, [in:] *Les Cathares devant l'histoire. Mélanges offerts à Jean Duvernoy*, ed. M. AURELL, Cahors 2005, p. 322; EADEM, *Les catharismes...*, p. 374; M. ZERNER, *Compte rendu des interventions de M. Zerner, J.-L. Biget et J. Chiffolleau*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion. Le «concile» de Saint-Félix (1167)*, ed. EADEM, Nice 2001 [= CEMN, 3], p. 55.

dualistic doctrine and imposed it on one part of dissidents, calling them Cathars, than why would the representatives of the second part of the dissidents – the Waldensians, join this Catholic action of discrediting their evangelical brothers and fought their dualism in disputes and their own polemics, as it was in the case of Durand of Huesca¹¹?

In the light of the above-mentioned inconsistencies it's understandable, that the deconstructionist interpretation is criticized by many scholars, such as M. Roquebert, P. Biller, Y. Stoyanov, or J. Arnold, who accuse its adherents of selective attitude towards the sources and bending the facts to the previously formed assumptions¹². On the other hand, the deconstructionist scholars very often roughly depreciate the claims of the traditional interpretation. M.G. Pegg says, that its adherents dwell in the old paradigm and ignore all new research¹³, while P. Jimenez calls the traditional interpretation “Catholic”, unambiguously suggesting that the religious adherence of the scholars determine the results of their research (it was directed primarily against A. Dondaine)¹⁴. As we can see, there are two irreconcilable interpretations of Catharism – first, developed through at least one and a half of a century, perceiving Catharism as a dualist heresy, rooted in Bogomilism, and second – a bit more than twenty years old that totally rejects all the conclusions of the previous, claiming that Catharism appeared independently in the West and originally was not dualistic in character. In such a situation we should take a closer look at the arguments (especially those taken from the source material), which

¹¹ C. THOUZELLIER, *Controverses vaudoises-cathares à la fin du XII^e siècle*, AHDLM 27, 1960, p. 137–141; P. BILLER, *Goodbye to Catharism?*, [in:] *Cathars in Question...*, p. 298–299.

¹² M. ROQUEBERT, *Le déconstructionnisme et les études cathares*, [in:] *Les Cathares devant l'Histoire...*, p. 127–133; P. BILLER, *Goodbye...*, p. 275–277, 280–304; Y. STOYANOV, *Pseudepigraphic and Parabiblical Narratives in Medieval Eastern Christian Dualism, and their Implications for the Study of Catharism*, [in:] *Cathars in Question...*, p. 174; J. ARNOLD, *The Cathar Middle Ages as a Methodological and Historiographical Problem*, [in:] *Cathars in Question...*, p. 56–77; cf. also: T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité de Bogomilo-Catharisme d'après quatre textes latins analysés à la lumière des sources byzantines*, Geneve 2010, p. 20, <https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:12233> (6 V 2020); J. FEUCHTER, *The 'heretic' of Languedoc: Local Holy Men and Women or Organized Religious Group? New Evidence from Inquisitorial, Notarial and Historiographical Sources*, [in:] *Cathars in Question...*, p. 113–115; 129; D. ZBIRAL, *Pokřtěni ohněm. Katarské křesťanství ve světle dobových pramenů (12.–14. století)*, Praha 2019, p. 74–86.

¹³ M.G. PEGG, *The Paradigm...*, p. 21, 34–35, 52. Throwing serious accusations at his opponents M.G. Pegg himself seems to ignore the criticism directed against his radically deconstructionist claims, denying the existence of Catharism. In 2011 Zdenko Zlatar overtook all the revolutionary claims formulated by M.G. Pegg in his detailed analysis based on the testimony of the inquisitorial sources, cf.: Z. ZLATAR, *What's in a Name? A Critical Examination of Published and Website Sources on the Dualism of the Cathars in Languedoc*, JRH 35, 2011, p. 546–561.

¹⁴ P. JIMÉNEZ-SANCHEZ, *Les catharismes...*, p. 28–47; EADEM, *La vision médiévale du catharisme chez les historiens des années 1950. Un néo-manichéisme*, [in:] *Catharisme. L'édifice imaginaire. Actes du 7^e colloque du Centre d'études cathares / René Nelli, Carcassonne, 29 août – 2 septembre 1994*, ed. J. BERLIOZ, J.-C. HÉLAS, Carcassonne 1998, p. 67.

stand behind both conceptions to determine if the younger one can be treated as a serious alternative to the older.

The deconstructionists in their interpretation of Catharism try to deny by all means its Eastern roots, but to do this, they have to propose a convincing reinterpretation of various source testimonies confirming Bogomil origins of this heresy. Pilar Jimenez presented an explanation, according to which, the Eastern origins of Catharism is a part of a corps of stereotypes, constructed by the Catholic clergymen to discredit the dissidents by attributing to them the connections with the negatively perceived East – a place of the crusaders defeat¹⁵. Very similar is the opinion of J.L. Biget, who claims that the East was perceived extremely negatively as a source of all the heresies¹⁶. According to M. Zerner the idea of the Eastern origins appeared already during the times of Gregory IX, when the relations of papacy with Bulgaria deteriorated¹⁷. However, because all these scholars are obviously aware of the fact, that the contacts between the Cathars and the Bogomil East cannot be totally denied, so – as it was said above – they shift the beginnings of these contacts in time, claiming, that they actually appeared later. According to P. Jimenez they were established at the beginning of the 13th century, according to J.L. Biget – during the Fourth Crusade¹⁸. This shift in time, aimed at eliminating the possibility of external influence on the formation of Catharism, is not a new idea. Even much earlier J. Duvernoy claimed that the Cathars did not know the Bulgarian dualism until the end of the 12th century – precisely to the time, when *Interrogatio Iohannis* appeared in the West¹⁹.

Also in this case, serious reservations arise to the theories of the deconstructionist scholars. First it seems, that they forget, that we are talking about the Middle Ages (12th–13th centuries) and not about the 20th century, so the Catholic polemical works were not a part of a propaganda aimed at turning the society against the group that the authorities tried to eliminate. Second – as it was pointed out by T. Drakopoulos – the East at that time was not perceived so negatively as the deconstructionists claim, and connecting it with the “dissidents” would not be an effective tool to discredit them²⁰. Bernard Hamilton on the other hand noticed, that the Catholic authors were not especially interested in the issue of the origins of Catharism focusing rather on religious matters, which proves,

¹⁵ P. JIMÉNEZ-SANCHEZ, *Le catharisme: une origine orientale à deux tendances?*, SIOc 16, 2003, p. 225; EADEM, *Les catharismes...*, p. 122.

¹⁶ J.L. BIGET, *Le Midi hérétique: construction d'une image (vers 1140–1209)*, ReHi 46, 2012, p. 44–45; IDEM, *Réflexions...*, p. 49; IDEM, *Les bons hommes sont-ils les fils des bogomiles? Examen critique d'une idée reçue*, SIOc 16, 2003, p. 160–161.

¹⁷ M. ZERNER, *Du court moment où on appela les hérétiques des «Bougres». Et quelques déductions*, CCM 32, 1989, p. 318–324.

¹⁸ P. JIMÉNEZ-SANCHEZ, *Les catharismes...*, p. 187, 345, 349; J.L. BIGET, *Le Midi...*, p. 40–45.

¹⁹ J. DUVERNOY, *Le catharisme...*, p. 346–347.

²⁰ T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité...*, p. 27.

that the Eastern origins could not have been a tool of a propaganda aimed at discrediting of the dissidents²¹. So as we can see, the deconstructionist interpretation is based on the assumption that the Catholic polemicists have invented the Eastern origins of Catharism, which is based on another assumption that the East was perceived so negatively that connecting some group with it must have resulted with its total discrediting and stigmatization. None of these general assumptions is based on the source material.

What about the second, at the first glance more probable part of this concept, which says that the contacts with the Bogomils appeared when Catharism was already doctrinally formed – so at the beginning of the 13th century or later? To verify this hypothesis we should analyze numerous source testimonies confirming the contacts of the Cathars with the East. First sources mentioning the East as a source of the Cathar heresy appeared very early²². In 1143 Evervin of Steinfeld in his letter to Bernard of Clairvaux quoted the words of the heretics caught in Cologne (whom he had interrogated), who said, that their faith survived since the times of the apostles in Greece and other lands²³. From 1167 we have the acts of the Cathar council of Saint-Felix-de-Caraman, which was led by “papa” Nicetas – Bogomil bishop of Constantinople, who administered to the Cathars the sacrament consolamentum and episcopal ordinations, and at the end instructed them about the organization of the heretical churches²⁴. The same Nicetas appeared also in the anonymous *De heresi catharorum in Lombardia* from the beginning of the 13th century, which mentioned his visit in Italy, and presented him as the representative of the Drugunthian order (*ordo Drugonthiae*), trying to distract the Italian Cathars from the Bulgarian order (*ordo Bulgariae*), which they professed until then²⁵. The same source also says about the visit of a certain Petracius “from across

²¹ B. HAMILTON, *The Cathars and the Seven Churches of Asia*, [in:] *Crusaders, Cathars and the Holy Places*, ed. IDEM, Aldershot 1999, p. 270.

²² The possibility of the Bogomil activity in the West in the 11th century and their influence on the heresies of that time is underlined by the scholars, cf. e.g. C. TAYLOR, *The Letter of Heribert of Perigord as a Source for Dualist Heresy in the Society of Early Eleventh-century Aquitaine*, JMH 26, 2000, p. 313–349; D. CALLAHAN, *Ademar of Chabannes and the Bogomils*, [in:] *Heresy and the Persecuting Society...*, p. 31–42.

²³ EVERVINUS STEINFELDENSIS, *Epistola CDXXXII, ad. S. Bernardum, De haereticis sui temporis*, [in:] *PL*, vol. CLXXXII, col. 187: *Illi vero qui combusti sunt, dixerunt nobis in defensione sua, hanc haeresim usque ad haec tempora occultatam fuisse a temporibus martyrum, et permansisse in Graecia, et quibusdam aliis terris.*

²⁴ *Charte de Niquinta, antipape des heretiques surnommés d'Albigois*, ed. D. ZBIRAL, [in:] *1209–2009 Cathares. Une histoire à pacifier?*, ed. A. BRENON, Loubatieres 2010 (cetera: *Charte de Niquinta*), p. 47.

²⁵ *De Heresi Catharorum in Lombardia*, ed. A. DONDAINE, AFP 19, 1949 (cetera: *De Heresi*), p. 306, *Et iste marcus habebat ordinem suum de bulgaria. Adveniens quidam papasnicheta nomine, de constantinopolitanis patibus in lombardiam, cepit causari ordinem bulgarie, quem marcus habebat. Unde marcus episcopus cum suis subditis hesitare incipiens, relicto ordine bulgarie, suscepit ab ipso nicheta ordinem drugonthie.* Cf. also: *Tractatus de Hereticis*, ed. A. DONDAINE, AFP 20, 1950 (cetera: *Tractatus de Hereticis*), p. 309.

the sea”, who brought new information discrediting Nicetas (claiming that he had committed a mortal sin), which caused a schism among the Italians²⁶. To end the internal conflict the Italian Cathars went to the bishop “from behind the mountains” – so from France – and he ordered that they should choose a new bishop and send him to Bulgaria for ordination²⁷. Finally, after various perturbations the Italian Cathars split into several independent churches, which newly elected bishops were sent to the East – to Bulgaria, Drugonthia or Slavonia for ordination²⁸. Independent French source from the 20s. of the 13th century – *Contra manichaeos* written by Durand of Huesca, a Waldensian converted to Catholicism, confirms the information of the *De heresi*. It says that the Cathars are internally divided and some of them are obedient to the heretics from Bulgaria, some to those from Greece, and others to those from Drugonthia²⁹. In the middle of the 13th century an Italian inquisitor and former Cathar perfect through 17 years – Rainer Sacconi finally explains the situation. Enumerating all the dualistic churches, existing at that time, at the end he says that all of them come from the two main ones – the church of Bulgaria or the church of Drugonthia³⁰. Finally the *Tractatus de hereticis*, written in the 60s of the 13th century probably by the inquisitor Anselm of Alessandria, contain a short mention, which can be described as a summary of the history of Catharism³¹. The author derives the whole medieval dualism from Mani – who

²⁶ *De Heresi*, p. 306: *Preterea alio tempore venit quidam de ultramarinis partibus, petracius nomine cum sociis suis, et quedam retulit nova de quodam symone episcopo drugonthie, a quo origo suscepti ordinis a nicheta processerat. Et dicebat ipse petracius, quod ille simon fuit inventus in conclavi cum quadam, et quia alia contra rationem fecerat.*

²⁷ *De Heresi*, p. 306: *...ille episcopus rationibus utriusque partis auditis et diligenter inspectis, talem protulit sententiam, [...] ut ille episcopus sorte electus iret in bulgariam ordinem episcopatus suscipere; et ut repatriatus, suscepto ordine bulgarie, totam multitudinem illorum reconcilaretur per impositionem manuum.*

²⁸ *De Heresi*, p. 308: *Ipse episcopus [...] misit Johanni iudeo ut iret in bulgariam et compleret que continebantur in sententia, ut esset prelatus in lombardia, omnibus subesse volentibus. [...] quidem de diszennzano, facta congregatione elegerunt quendam sibi episcopum nomine Johannem bellum, et eum miserunt ultra mare in drugonthiam ut ibi ordinaretur episcopus [...] Item quidam de mantua cum suis sequacibus elegerunt quendam nomine Caloiannem sibi in episcopum et, eo in Slavenia misso, post receptionem ordinis, episcopatus officio super eos functus est. Eodem itaque modo, quidam alius, Nicola nomine, a congregatione vincentiorum electus et in Slavania ad ordinem recipiendum missus, post reditum ab eis, episcopus teneretur.*

²⁹ DURANDUS DE HUESCA, *Liber contra manicheos*, [in:] *Une somme anti-cathare. Le Liber contra Manicheos de Durand de Huesca*, ed. C. THOUZELLIER, Louvain 1964 [= SSLo, 32] (cetera: DURANDUS DE HUESCA, *Liber contra manicheos*), p. 138–139: *Nonnuli enim eorum obediunt Grecis hereticis, alii autem Bulgaris et alii Drogovetis. Et ita capita divisa gerentes caudas habent ad invicem colligatas, et ita regnum eorum divisum est et corruptum, et ita teste Christo desolatione dignissimum, et ideo non est Christi.*

³⁰ *Summa Fratris Raineri de ordine fratrum praedicatorum, de Catharis et Pauperibus de Lugduno*, [in:] *Un Traité Neo-Manicheen du 13 siècle, Le Liber de duobus principiis suivi d'un fragment de Rituel Cathare*, ed. A. DONDAINE, Roma 1939 (cetera: *Summa Fratris Raineri*), p. 70: *...Ecclesia Bulgariae et Ecclesia Drugonthiae. Et omnes habuerunt originem de duabus ultimis.*

³¹ On the author and the date of this source cf.: A. DONDAINE, *La hiérarchie...*, p. 235–239.

allegedly spread his teachings in Bulgaria and Drugonthia. From Bulgaria the heresy was brought to Constantinople by the Greek merchants and later the crusaders brought it from Constantinople to France³². To what conclusions do these sources lead us? First it becomes clear, that the deconstructionist theory assuming the construction of the Eastern origins of Catharism by the Catholic polemicists is unsustainable. Undoubtedly it would be much easier for the deconstructionists, if the earliest source was *Tractatus de hereticis*, because it would mean, that its relation became a pattern for the later Catholic authors. But the truth is different, *Tractatus* is the latest source and about the earlier ones we cannot say that they were written with the intention of discrediting the Cathars, through the connection of their heresy with the East. Mentions about the contacts with the East that appear in them are rather fragmentary and accidental and no author uses them to discredit the Cathars. Only combined together they give a clear image of Cathar contacts with the East. Second important thing is that the testimonies of the above-mentioned sources show clearly that the attempts of shifting the beginnings of the contacts with the East forward in time to the 13th century are unjustified. Even if we skipped Evervin's mention about Greece, still the council in Saint-Felix and Nicetas's visit in the West, confirmed by the *De heresi*, would remain. Besides all these sources show clearly that the contacts between the Cathars and the Bogomils cannot be perceived as meetings of equal communities, accidentally professing similar doctrines. They show that the Cathars were totally dependent from the Bogomils in religious matters. From the Bogomils they accepted the sacrament – consolation and episcopal ordinations (as it was in Saint-Felix) and sent their newly elected bishops to the Bogomil churches. The French Cathar bishop did not dare to solve the conflict among his Italian brothers on his own, but sent them to Bulgaria. Finally, the leader of the Italian Cathars – Mark in the time of Nicetas' visit did not profess any independent evangelical doctrine, but was the adherent of *ordo Bulgariae*. It seems that Durand of Huesca was correct when he had said that the Cathars are obedient to the Eastern dualist heretics.

From all the above-mentioned sources undoubtedly the most important are the acts of the Saint-Felix council – a document written by the Cathars themselves, confirming their dependence from the East. As a main counter-argument against deconstructionist interpretation it was questioned by the scholars under

³² *Tractatus de hereticis*, p. 308: *Notandum, quod in Persia fuit quidam, qui vocabatur Manes [...] Et docuit in partibus Drugontie et Bulgarie et Filadelfie et multiplicata est ibi heresis, ita quod fecerunt tres episcopos: Drugontie, alius Bulgarie, alius Filadelfie. Postmodum Greci de Constantinopolim, qui sunt confines Bulgarie per tres dietas, iverunt causa mercationis illuc et reversi ad terram suam, cum multiplicaretur, ibi fecerunt episcopum, qui dicitur episcopus grecorum. Postea francigene iverunt Constantinopolim ut subiungarent terram et invenerunt istam secta, et multiplicati fecerunt episcopum, qui dicitur episcopus latinorum. [...] Postea francigene, qui iverant Constantinopolim, redierunt ad propria et predicaverunt, et multiplicati constituerunt episcopum Francie. Et quia francigene seducti fuerunt primo in Constantinopoli a bulgaris, vocant per totam Franciam hereticos bulgaros.*

the leadership of Monique Zerner, who in 1999 organized a conference aimed at proving that it was a forgery³³. Their starting point was the fact that the original manuscript of this document did not survive and we know it only from the 17th century copy made by G. Besse³⁴. Hypothesis proposed by Zerner that assumed it was a modern forgery was refuted by the formal analysis of this document prepared by the specialists from *Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes*, who were invited to the conference³⁵. Slightly different approach was presented by J.L. Biget, who claimed that the document was forged in the Middle-Ages by the Catholics, trying to discredit the dissidents. According to him the forged document was intended as an incentive (*excitatorium*) to the crusade against the Cathars³⁶. The weakness of this hypothesis lies in the fact that J.L. Biget did not explain how could the alleged Catholic forger have gained precise information concerning Cathar hierarchy in France and Italy, and the borders of the heretical dioceses, which are mentioned in this document, and are confirmed by the later inquisitorial sources. He also did not notice that this document is completely unsuitable for the *excitatorium* because it was not mentioned in any polemical source and it does not contain any information that can discredit the Cathars³⁷. It informs about the visit of Nicetas, who administered the consolamentum and episcopal ordinations to the Cathars and delivered a sermon about the organization of the churches in the East³⁸. The document does not contain even a word about the dualist doctrine that according to the deconstructionists was the main tool of the Catholics in their action of the discreditation of the “dissidents”. J.L. Biget also did not consider *De heresi*, which mentions Nicetas’ visit to Italy, but does not say anything about the Saint-Felix council. If indeed its author has based on the forged acts of this council it is obvious that he would have mentioned this event.

³³ Materials from this conference, entitled “Revisiter l’herésie meridionale: le suppose concile cathare de Saint-Félix 1167” were published in a volume: *L’Histoire du catharisme en discussion...*

³⁴ The document was published in: G. BESSE, *Histoire de ducs, marquis et comtes de Narbonne*, Paris 1660, p. 483–486. More on this source and its significance cf.: D. ZBIRAL, *La Charte de Niquinta et le rassemblement de Saint-Félix: État de la question*, [in:] *1209–2009 Cathares...*, p. 31–32; IDEM, *Pokřtěni...*, p. 99–106.

³⁵ M. ZERNER, *La charte de Niquinta, l’hérésie et l’érudition des années 1650–1660*, [in:] *L’Histoire du catharisme en discussion...*, p. 203–248; EADEM, *Compte rendu des interventions...*, p. 39–40. Zerner’s conception was questioned by David Zbiral, cf.: D. ZBIRAL, *La Charte...*, p. 33–35. On the formal analysis of the document cf.: J. DALARUN, A. DUFOUR, A. GRONDEUX, D. MUZERELLE, F. ZINELLI, *La charte de Niquinta. Analyse formelle*, [in:] *L’Histoire du catharisme en discussion...*, p. 135–199. More on the rehabilitation of the Saint-Felix acts cf.: *Heresy and Inquisition in France, 1200–1300*, ed. et trans. J.H. ARNOLD, P. BILLER, Manchester 2016, p. 16.

³⁶ J.L. BIGET, *Un faux du XIII^e siècle? Examen d’une hypothèse*, [in:] *L’Histoire du catharisme en discussion...*, p. 105–133.

³⁷ On substantive criticism of Biget’s arguments cf.: D. ZBIRAL, *La Charte...*, p. 31, 35–36; T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L’unité...*, p. 126, 143–155.

³⁸ *Charte de Niquinta*, p. 47–48.

The above-mentioned sources, which authenticity was not convincingly questioned by anyone are not the only proofs for the Eastern origins. Another very important arguments for it are the names used to describe the Cathars. In the anonymous sermon from Saint-Vaast d'Arras, written around 1200, the Cathars professing radical dualism are called "Bulgars"³⁹. In 1201 Robert of Auxerre mentioned the heretics, professing the "heresy of the Bulgars" (*heresis Bulgarorum*), and William of Tudela in his Song of the Albigensian Crusade called the Cathars "those from Bulgaria"⁴⁰. The name "Bulgars" was also used by Alberic of Trois-Fontaines writing about the Cathars burned in 1239 by Robert le Bougre⁴¹. The nickname of this inquisitor "Le Bougre" – the Bulgarian was the remainder of his history before the conversion, when he professed Catharism⁴². The name "Bulgari" is also confirmed by many other sources, which do not try to convince the reader (except for the *Tractatus de hereticis*) to the Eastern origins of Catharism, and therefore cannot be perceived as products of the Catholic anti-dissident propaganda⁴³. Obviously Eastern, precisely Greek, roots has also the name *Cathari*, first mentioned in 1163 by Eckbert of Schönau, who said that it was used for the dualist heretics in Germany⁴⁴. It is a very important argument for the Eastern origins, especially in the context of the letter of Evervin of Steinfeld saying about the Greek roots of the Cathar heresy.

Another very important argument for the Eastern origins of Catharism are the Bogomil apocryphal books, used by the Cathars – the *Interrogatio Iohannis* and the *Vision of Isaiah*. The first was brought from Bulgaria in 1190 by Nazarius

³⁹ *Accipite nobis vulpes parvulas, que demoliuntur vineas Domini*, ed. B. DELMAIRE, Here 17, 1991 (cetera: *Accipite nobis*), p. 11.

⁴⁰ *Roberti Autissiodorensis Chronicon*, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, [in:] *MGH.SS*, vol. XXVI, Hannoverae 1882, p. 260, 271; *La chanson de la croisade albigeoise*, vol. I, ed. E. MARTIN-CHABOT, Paris 1931, p. 10: *E li autre legat, ab cels de Bolgaria*.

⁴¹ *Alberici Monachii Trium Fontium Chronicon*, ed. P. SCHEFFER-BOICHORST, [in:] *MGH.SS*, vol. XXI-II, Hannoverae 1874 (cetera: *Alberici Monachii Trium Fontium Chronicon*), p. 944: *In anno isto ebdomada ante pontecosten 6. feria factum est maximum holocaustum et placabile Domino in combustione Bulgrorum, siquidem 183 Bulgri combusti sunt...*; The "Bulgars" persecuted by Robert le Bougre were also mentioned in: *Ex Annalibus S. Medardi Suessionensibus*, ed. G. WAITZ, [in:] *MGH.SS*, vol. XXVI, Hannoverae 1882, p. 522.

⁴² Earlier life of Robert was described by Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, cf.: *Alberici Monachii Trium Fontium Chronicon*, p. 940.

⁴³ The "Bulgars" also known as patarenes are mentioned also by Matthew of Paris, writing in the first half of the 13th century, cf.: MATTHAEUS PARIENSIS, *Chronica Maiora*, ed. F. LIEBERMANN, [in:] *MGH.SS*, vol. XXVIII, Hannoverae 1888, p. 133. The name "Bulgars" was also used in relation to the Cathars by Philippe Mouskes in the 40s. of the 13th century and later by the inquisitor Etienne de Bourbon, cf.: *Ex Philippi Mousket Historia Regum Francorum*, ed. A. TOBIER, [in:] *MGH.SS*, vol. XXVI, Hannoverae 1882, p. 805; ETIENNE DE BOURBON, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues*, ed. A. LECOY DE LA MARCHE, Paris 1877, p. 300.

⁴⁴ ECKBERTUS ABBAS SCHONAUGENSIS, *Sermones contra catharos*, [in:] *PL*, vol. CXCIV (cetera: ECKBERTUS ABBAS SCHONAUGENSIS), col. 13: *Hos nostra Germania, Catharos, Flandria Piphles, Gallia Texerant, ab usu texendi appellat*.

– the bishop of the Italian Cathar church of Concorezzo⁴⁵. On the copy of this book from the archives of the inquisition in Carcassonne we can find a significant notice: *Hoc est secretum hereticorum de Concorezo portatum de Bulgaria, plenam erroribus et etiam falsis latinis*⁴⁶. Various sources confirm as well that the Cathars knew the Vision of Isaiah. It is mentioned in the works of Durand of Huesca, Moneta of Cremona, and in the registers of Jacques Fournier from the 14th century⁴⁷. Of course for the deconstructionist scholars it is not a proof for the Eastern origins of Catharism, but rather for the fact that the Cathars established contacts with the Bogomils at the end of the 12th century. However, even if we ignore the above-mentioned sources, which show that these contacts were established much earlier, and if we follow the deconstructionist logic, still one question will remain: why did the evangelical dissidents, who had constructed their doctrine independently, based on the Holy Scripture, accepted the teachings from the Bogomil apocrypha brought from the East?

After the verification of the first part of the deconstructionist theory, denying the Eastern roots of Catharism it is time to take a closer look at its second part, concerning the dualist doctrine. Its main assumption is (as it was said above) that the Cathars were evangelical dissidents, trying to restore the original Christianity, and their dualist doctrine was arbitrarily constructed by the Catholic authors, based on the ancient anti-heretical works, mainly anti-Manichaean writings of St. Augustine. According to the deconstructionist scholars the Catholic authors tried to create the image of Catharism as doctrinally well-defined counter-church, competitive to Catholicism, thus justifying the persecution against the dissidents⁴⁸. The starting point of this hypothesis was the fact that the Catholic clergymen very often used the name “Manichaeans” in relation to the Cathars or (as it was in the case of *Tractatus de hereticis*) derived Catharism directly from the ancient Manichaeism. According to U. Brunn, the pioneer of this Catholic action of construction of the heresy was German Benedictine abbot Eckbert of Schönau, who in his *Sermones contra catharos*, written in 1163, presented the Cathars as modern Manichaeans and even claimed that they celebrate the Manichaean feast – Bema.

⁴⁵ *Summa Fratris Raineri*, p. 76; *Tractatus de Hereticis*, p. 311.

⁴⁶ More on *Interrogatio Iohannis*, its origins and its use by the Cathars cf.: E. BOZOKY, *Le livre...*, p. 17–27, 176–197.

⁴⁷ MONETA DE CREMONA, *Adversus Catharos et Valdenses libri quinque*, ed. T.A. RICCHINI, Roma 1743 (cetera: MONETA DE CREMONA), p. 218; DURANDUS DE HUESCA, *Liber contra manicheos*, p. 256; *Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier, évêque de Pamiers (1318–1325)*, ed. J. DUVERNOY, vol. III, Toulouse 1965 (cetera: *Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier*), p. 200–201. More on the use of the Vision of Isaiah by the Cathars, cf.: A. ACERBI, *La Visione di Isaia nelle vicende dottrinali del catarismo lombardo e provenzale*, CS 1, 1980, p. 75–122.

⁴⁸ J.L. BIGET, *Réflexions...*, p. 29–51; IDEM, *Les bons hommes...*, p. 161; P. JIMÉNEZ-SANCHEZ, *Les catharismes...*, p. 47; 347; U. BRUNN, *Cathari...*, p. 183–200; IDEM, *Des contestataires...*, p. 184–186; J. THÉRY, *L'hérésie...*, p. 77, 98–101, 107, 117; H. CHIU, *Alan of Lille's...*, p. 495–497; M. ZERNER, *Introduction...*, p. 16.

Moreover – at the end of his work he added an excerpt from the *De haeresibus* of St. Augustine⁴⁹. So at first glance it seems that some foundations for the hypothesis assuming the construction of the heresy indeed exist, the problem is that they are not based on a deeper analysis of the sources. To verify the probability of the deconstructionist hypothesis we should check if the Cathar doctrines described in the sources, are indeed so similar to the doctrines of St. Augustine's Manichaeans, and at the same time, so different from the Bogomil teachings known from the Eastern sources. And finally, if the image of Catharism contained in the Catholic sources can be considered as the image of a counter-church.

Problems with the deconstructionist concept appear when we take a look at the most general issue that is the type of dualism. St. Augustine in his *De heresibus* says clearly that the Manichaeans are radical dualists – they believe in two eternal, opposite principles – the good one, which is the source of all the spiritual beings, and the evil one, which is the source of the 5 elements of darkness that are the fabric of the material world⁵⁰. Meanwhile in Catharism the radical dualism, similar to that of the Manichaeans was only one of two options – the second was the moderate dualism. The latter is confirmed by various sources, beginning with the 12th century, for example Radulf of Coggeshall for France or *Vita haereticorum quam fecit Bonacursus* for Italy⁵¹. From the later sources we know that this type of dualism was professed by the biggest Italian Cathar church from Concorezzo and the church of Bagnolo, and in France its traces can be found in the inquisitorial registers from the second half of the 13th and beginnings of the 14th century⁵². Main assumptions of this type of dualism – the existence of only one God-creator and Satan, who is his creature, a rebelled angel, who forms the visible world and human bodies from the matter created by his father, are exactly the same as in the Bogomil doctrines known from the Eastern sources and the *Interrogatio*

⁴⁹ U. BRUNN, *Des contestataires...*, p. 160, 238–239, 316–333, 342–348; IDEM, *Cathari...*, p. 184–185; ECKBERTUS ABBAS SCHONAUGENSIS, *PL*, vol. CXCIV, col. 16–17, 24.

⁵⁰ AURELIUS AUGUSTINUS HIPONENSIS, *De heresibus*, [in:] *The De Haeresibus of Saint Augustine*, ed. L.G. MÜLLER, Washington 1956 [= PSt, 90] (cetera: AURELIUS AUGUSTINUS HIPONENSIS), p. 84–88.

⁵¹ *Radulphi de Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. J. STEVENSON, [in:] *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*, vol. LXVI, London 1875, p. 124–125; *Vita Haereticorum quam fecit Bonacursus*, [in:] *PL*, vol. CCIV (cetera: *Vita Haereticorum quam fecit Bonacursus*), col. 775–776.

⁵² Cf. e.g. *De Heresi*, p. 310–311; S. PETRUS MARTYR, *Summa contra haereticos*, ed. T. KAPELLI, AFP 17, 1947 (cetera: S. PETRUS MARTYR), p. 325; JACOBUS DE CAPELLIS, *Disputationes nonnullae adversus haereticos*, ed. D. BAZZOCCHI, [in:] *L'eresia catara. Appendice*, Bologna 1920 (cetera: JACOBUS DE CAPELLIS), p. XXVI; MONETA DE CREMONA, p. 5, 110; *Tractatus de Hereticis*, p. 312; *Summa Fratris Raineri*, p. 76. In the inquisitorial sources moderate dualism can be found e.g. in: *Cahiers de Bernard de Caux. Ms Doat XXII B. N. Paris*, ed. J. DUVERNOY, Agen–Cahors–Toulouse 1988, p. 26, 50, www.jean.duvernoy.free.fr/text/pdf/bdecaux.pdf [11 XII 2020]; *Edition and Translation of Doat 25–26*, [in:] *Inquisitors and Heretics in Thirteenth-Century Languedoc*, ed. et trans. P. BILLER, C. BRUSCHI, Leiden–Boston 2011 [= SHCT, 147], p. 264; *Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier*, vol. II, p. 407–408; vol. III, p. 223.

*Iohannis*⁵³. Of course one might say that these assumptions are too general and therefore cannot be a convincing proof for the theory, but the same argument cannot be used against the doctrine described by *Manifestatio haeresis albigensium et lugdunensium* from the beginnings of the 13th century and Pierre des Vaux de Cernay writing in the times of Albigensian crusade. According to these sources, moderate French dualists believed in the existence of only one God who had two sons – Christ and the devil. This doctrine, is characteristic for the Bogomils, it was described by Cosmas the Priest or Euthymius Zigabenus, and for sure the Catholic polemicists could not have found it in the scriptures of St. Augustine⁵⁴.

The theory assuming the construction of the heresy based on anti-Manichaean works of St. Augustine is unsustainable, also when we consider the Cathar radical dualism. Catholic authors usually do not focus on the opposition of light and darkness that was typical for the Manichaeans, although sometimes there are exceptions to this rule, as it is in case of Eckbert of Schönau or Alan of Lille⁵⁵. In the majority of the texts, two co-eternal and opposite principles are characterized, through their relation to the time. Both the French and the Italian sources beginning from the 12th century, mention the opposition between the good, spiritual being, which is eternal and unchangeable, and the evil being, which is changeable and transient⁵⁶. This opposition: eternal-transient, so typical for the radical

⁵³ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, [in:] *Le livre secret des cathares. Interrogatio Iohannis. Edition critique, traduction commentaire*, ed. et trans. E. BOZOKY, Paris 2009 (cetera: *Interrogatio Iohannis*), p. 42–56. Cf. also COSMAS THE PRIEST, *The Discours against Bogomils*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World, c. 650 – c. 1450*, trans. J. HAMILTON, B. HAMILTON, Manchester–New York 2013 (cetera: COSMAS THE PRIEST), p. 126–128. Similarities between the Cathar and the Bogomil myths concerning the creation were also noticed by Claire Taylor, cf.: C. TAYLOR, *Evidence for Dualism in Inquisitorial Registers of the 1240s: a Contribution to a Debate*, HJHA 98, 2013, p. 341–343.

⁵⁴ *Manifestatio haeresis albigensium et lugdunensium*, ed. A. CAZENAVE, [in:] *Die Mächte des Guten und Bösen. Vorstellungen im XII. u. XIII. Jahrhundert über ihr Wirken in der Heilsgeschichte*, ed. A. ZIMMERMANN, Berlin 1977 [= MMed, 11] (cetera: *Manifestatio haeresis albigensium et lugdunensium*), p. 386: *Est autem quedam heresis que de novo prosilivit inter eos, nam nonnulli ex eis credunt, unum tantum esse deum, quem dicunt habere duos filios, Christum scilicet et principem huius mundi, unde habent in evangelio: Homo quidam habuit duos filios*. PETRUS VALLIUM SARNAII MONACHUS, *Hystoria Albigensis*, vol. I, ed. P. GUEBIN, E. LYON, Paris 1926, p. 12. In Bogomilism, the idea of Satan as a son of God appears very early. It is mentioned by many sources, beginning with the 10th century, cf.: JAN EGZARCHA, *Heksameron (fragmenty)*, ed. et trans. M. SKOWRONEK, [in:] *Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne na Balkanach*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, J.M. WOLSKI, Łódź 2015 [= SeCer, 1], p. 63; COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 128; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, *Panoplia dogmatica*, [in:] PG, vol. CXXX (cetera: EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS), col. 129.

⁵⁵ ECKBERTUS ABBAS SCHONAUGENSIS, PL, vol. CXCIV, col. 17; ALANUS DE INSULIS, *De fide catholica contra Haereticos sui temporis*, [in:] PL, vol. CCX (cetera: ALANUS DE INSULIS), col. 308.

⁵⁶ This “time dualism” was mentioned in 1178 in the letter of the Cardinal Peter of Pavia, cf.: *Epistola Petri tituli Sancti Chrysogoni praesbyteri cardinalis, apostolicae sedis legati*, [in:] *Chronica magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, vol. II, ed. W. STUBBS, London 1869, p. 158; at the end of the 12th century by Alan of Lille, cf.: ALANUS DE INSULIS, PL, vol. CCX, col. 308–312; in 1200 in *Accipite nobis*, p. 12; at the

Cathars (later developed in their theological Treatise, the so-called Manichaeon Treatise) does not appear in the works of St. Augustine, but strongly resembles the Paulician radical dualism with its opposition between the good God – the lord of the future and the evil one – the ruler of present times identified with St. Paul's god of this age (*deus huius saeculi*)⁵⁷. The Cathar author of the Manichaeon Treatise identifies matter, which through its changeability tends to nothingness with *nihil* from the prologue of the Gospel of St. John that emerged without God (*sine ipso factum est nihil*). So when this matter, tending to nothingness will finally pass than in the future only one principle will survive – the good God, exactly as it is in the Paulician doctrine⁵⁸.

The Paulician origins of the Cathar radical dualism seem to be quite probable, especially in the light of the conception proposed by B. Hamilton, who argued that it appeared under the influence of the Bogomil church of Drugonthia, which in turn was formed under Paulician influence⁵⁹. It is noteworthy especially when we consider the fact that the famous Nicetas, who presided over the Cathar council of Saint-Felix, and earlier tried to convert the Italian Cathars from *ordo Bulgariae* to *ordo Drugonthiae*, was ordained by Simon – bishop of Drugonthia.

No analogy, or even similarity to the Manichaeon doctrines known from St. Augustine's scriptures, can be found in the Cathar cosmology or anthropology presented by the Catholic authors. In their works (including Eckbert of Schönau) we would not find anything about five elements of darkness and opposed elements of light. The elements mentioned in the polemical works are classical – earth, water, fire and air. In case of anthropology, no polemical source mention the lords of smoke, who according to St. Augustine's *De haeresibus* were the parents of Adam

beginning of the 13th century in: EBRARDUS BETHUNENSIS, *Trias scriptorum adversus Valdensium sectam*, ed. M. DE LA BIGNE, [in:] *Maxima Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum*, vol. XXIV, Lugduni 1677, col. 1540; in the chronicle of William of Nangis: GUILLELMUS DE NANGIACO, *Chronicon*, ed. M. BOUQUET, [in:] *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. XX, Paris 1840, p. 741. Similar characteristics of two opposed principles appears also in the Italian sources, cf.: MONETA DE CREMONA, p. 3; *Brevis Summula*, ed. A. MOLINIER, AMi 22, 1910 (cetera: *Brevis Summula*), p. 200; *Disputatio inter catholicum et paterinum hereticum*, ed. I. DA MILANO, Ae 14, 1940 (cetera: *Disputatio inter catholicum*), p. 130.

⁵⁷ PETRUS SICULUS, *Historia utilis et refutatio atque eversio haeresos Manichaeorum qui et Pauliciani dicuntur*, [in:] PG, vol. CIV, col. 1254. The Paulicians based their conception on the passage from St. Paul's letter to Corinthians (2 Cor 4: 4), cf.: PETRUS SICULUS, *Sermones adversus Manichaeos*, [in:] PG, vol. CIV, col. 1307.

⁵⁸ The characteristics of two opposed principles through their relation to time can be found in many chapters of the *Manichaeon Treatise*, cf.: *Tractatus manicheorum*, [in:] *Un traité cathare inédit du début du XIII^e siècle d'après le Liber contra Manicheos de Durand de Huesca*, ed. C. THOUZELLIER, Louvain 1961 (cetera: *Tractatus manicheorum*), p. 89–90, 98–99, 110. Finally, the author identifies the material being – transient and deprived of love with nothingness (*nihil*), cf.: *Tractatus manicheorum*, p. 102–103: *Si omnes mali spiritus et mali homines, que possunt videri in hoc mundo, nichil sunt, quia sunt sine caritate, ergo sine Deo facta sunt. Non ergo Deus fecit ea, quia sine ipso factum est nichil.*

⁵⁹ Cf. note 2.

and Eve⁶⁰. Eckbert of Schönau said that the Cathars identified human souls with the angels fallen from heaven and honestly added that this doctrine (as many other Cathar ideas) cannot be found in the works of St. Augustine. This remark is especially noteworthy because it shows that Eckbert, who obviously firmly believed that the Cathars were the descendants of the Manichaeans, was honest and did not try to create the false image of this heresy⁶¹. The angelic origin of the human souls, unknown to the Manichaeans, appears in many Cathar doctrines – both radical and moderate⁶². Its roots again can be found in the Bogomil teachings – precisely in the *Interrogatio Iohannis*, but the fact that Eckbert mentioned it in 1163, shows that the Cathars knew it long before this secret Bogomil book arrived to the West. So as we can see, it is another strong argument for the Bogomil origins of Catharism⁶³.

In case of the doctrine of the fall, crucial for the dualists, the situation is analogical as in anthropology. In many polemical works describing both the radical and the moderate Cathar doctrines, Satan is identified with the unjust steward from the Gospel of St. Luke (Lc 16: 1–8), so again we are dealing with a theme that is absent in the Manichaean teachings, but characteristic for Bogomilism⁶⁴. It is mentioned by Cosmas the Priest and *Interrogatio Iohannis*, where Satan – a rebelled angel, acts exactly as the evangelical unjust steward, reducing the duties of the angels to God⁶⁵. The Cathars were so deeply bound with this idea that they did not dare to abandon it even when they accepted radical dualism, where it completely does not make sense, which was noticed by their Catholic opponents⁶⁶.

⁶⁰ AURELIUS AUGUSTINUS HIPPONENSIS, p. 89, 95.

⁶¹ ECKBERTUS ABBAS SCHONAUGENSIS, *PL*, vol. CXCIV, col. 96: *De ea haeresi loquor, quia dicunt nihil aliud esse animas humanas, nisi illos apostatas spiritus, qui in principio mundi ceciderunt a regno Dei; et hos posse in corporibus humanis promereri salutem: non autem nisi inter eos qui sunt de secta eorum. Hoc autem non legitur inter errores Manichaei;* ECKBERTUS ABBAS SCHONAUGENSIS, *PL*, vol. CXCIV, col. 16: *...indubitanter secta eorum, de quibus agimus, originem accepit a Manichaeo haeresiarcha, cujus doctrina maledicta erat et tota venenosa, et radicata est in populo isto perverso. Multa tamen permista habent doctrinae magistri sui, quae inter haereses illius non inveniuntur.*

⁶² In France this doctrine is mentioned by: ALANUS DE INSULIS, *PL*, vol. CCX, col. 316–317; DURANDUS DE HUESCA, *Liber antiheresis*, [in:] *Die ersten Waldenser. Mit Edition des Liber Antiheresis des Durandus von Ossa*, vol. II, ed. K.V. SELGE, Berlin 1967 [= Aki, 37], p. 236; *Manifestatio haeresis albigensium et lugdunensium*, p. 385; *Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier*, vol. I, p. 228, 241; vol. II, p. 33–34, 179, 199, 472, 488–489, 508–509. In Italy: *Vita Haereticorum quam fecit Bonacursus*, *PL*, vol. CCIV, col. 775; *De Heresi*, p. 309–311; S. PETRUS MARTYR, p. 325–326; JACOBUS DE CAPELLIS, p. VII; MONETA DE CREMONA, p. 4, 7, 47, 52, 110–115, 129; *Brevis Summula*, p. 201, 208; *Disputatio inter catholicum*, p. 131–135; *Summa Fratris Raineri*, p. 71, 77.

⁶³ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 52–59.

⁶⁴ *Manifestatio haeresis albigensium et lugdunensium*, p. 385; *De Heresi*, p. 309; MONETA DE CREMONA, p. 4, 110; S. PETRUS MARTYR, p. 325; *Disputatio inter catholicum*, p. 132; *Brevis Summula*, p. 201; *Tractatus de Hereticis*, p. 312.

⁶⁵ COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 126; *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 42–50.

⁶⁶ MONETA DE CREMONA, p. 39–44.

In addition, another Cathar concept – reported by the polemical sources, according to which the fall was caused by the carnal sin – has its analogy in Bogomilism. It appears most often in the moderate doctrines, where Satan has carnal intercourse with Eve, which leads to the enslavement of the angelic element in the material body, but sometimes we can find it also in the radical dualism, where carnal sin is committed by the bodiless angels or spirits (which is illogical). Such a conception was mentioned by Durand of Huesca in the 13th century and later in the 14th by the witnesses interrogated by Jacques Fournier⁶⁷. Also, St. Augustine says that the Manichaeans connect carnal desire with matter and avoid procreation, but he never mentions the idea that the fall of human beings or angels was caused by the carnal sin⁶⁸.

An exact analogy to this specific Cathar doctrine can be found in the Bogomil teachings – not only in the *Interrogatio Iohannis*, but also in the *Panoplia Dogmatica* of Euthymius Zigabenus from the beginning of the 12th century. In both sources the carnal sin was originated by Satan (in *Panoplia* it was Satanael – the son of God), who had carnal intercourse with Eve; later Eve had carnal intercourse with Adam and so people started to reproduce thus enslaving the spiritual element in material body. The significance of this sin is especially underlined in the *Panoplia*, where Satanael, for his sexual intercourse with Eve, was punished with the loss of his angelic shine and the power of creation, although he had not lost them after the rebellion against God⁶⁹. This repulsion to the carnal sin and strict observance of chastity by the Cathar perfecti is honestly mentioned by almost all the Catholic polemicists, which is another strong argument against the hypothesis assuming the construction of Cathar heresy based on St. Augustine's works. Bishop of Hippo in his most commonly known *De heresibus* accused Manichaeans of debaucherous practices, claiming that during their obscene rituals they consume Eucharist mixed with semen and rape their female adepts⁷⁰. So if the Catholic authors indeed have constructed Cathar heresy to discredit the dissidents, then why have they not used these themes? Why have they not used another shocking Manichaean doctrine contained in the *De heresibus*, according to which Christ was identified with the serpent from paradise⁷¹?

⁶⁷ DURANDUS DE HUESCA, *Liber contra manicheos*, p. 236: *Et ipsum [malum deum] dicunt esse ingresum curiam patris celestis ad decipiendos angelos, et quosdam fecisse fornicari credunt, et ob hanc causam patrem dicunt surrexisse contra eum et eum de patria celesti depulisse...*; *Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier*, vol. II, p. 33–34; vol. III, p. 130–131, 406–407. For Italy cf. e.g. *Vita Haereticorum quam fecit Bonacursus*, PL, vol. CCIV, col. 776; *De Heresi*, p. 310; JACOBUS DE CAPELLIS, p. XXVII.

⁶⁸ AURELIUS AUGUSTINUS HIPPONENSIS, p. 93, 97.

⁶⁹ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 60–62; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, PG, vol. CXXX, col. 1298.

⁷⁰ AURELIUS AUGUSTINUS HIPPONENSIS, p. 89–91.

⁷¹ AURELIUS AUGUSTINUS HIPPONENSIS, p. 95.

Confronted with the sources, the deconstructionist hypothesis assuming the construction of Cathar heresy, based on St. Augustine works seems to be highly improbable⁷².

Equally improbable in the light of the sources is also another deconstructionist conception, according to which the Catholic polemist have created the image of Catharism as a well-organized and doctrinally defined counter-church. Even Eckbert of Schönau says that the Cathars are internally divided and profess various doctrines⁷³. Such an opinion is confirmed later in France, by the anonymous *Manifestatio heresis albigensium et lugdunensium* and Durand of Huesca, and in Italy by Rainer Sacconi and Salvo Burci⁷⁴. In the polemical sources we can find many various doctrines – moderately dualistic, radically dualistic, and mixes of these two types. Besides, the Catholics willingly emphasized the divisions among the heretics to prove, that their faith (in the opposition to Catholicism) does not come from God. Considering this, it is really hard to talk about the image of a strong, doctrinally well-defined Cathar church.

The analysis of the sources shows that the deconstructionist interpretation of Catharism cannot be treated as a serious alternative to the traditional one, assuming Eastern, Bogomil roots of this heresy. The latter is based on an extensive source material, confirming both the contacts of the Cathars with the East since the first half of the 12th century and striking doctrinal similarities between Catharism and Bogomilism. The deconstructionist theory is not based on any new discoveries of the sources that could change our perception of Catharism, but rather on a new methodology, proposed by M. Zerner and her collaborators. This methodology rejects all the Catholic sources as unreliable, which is a consequence of the arbitrary assumption that their authors were hostile towards the Cathars and their main aim was to discredit them and justify their persecution. This assumption is presented almost as a dogma, beyond any discussion, and leads to another dogma formulated by Julien Thery, who said that the deconstruction of a clerical

⁷² As C. Taylor and Z. Zlatar point out, the use of the term “Manichaeans” by the Catholic authors in relation to the Cathars was caused by the similarities of general dualist assumptions in both heresies and the lack of the term “dualists” at that time, cf.: C. TAYLOR, *Evidence...*, p. 329–330; Z. ZLATAR, *What's in a Name?...*, p. 559–561.

⁷³ ECKBERTUS ABBAS SCHONAUGENSIS, *PL*, vol. CXCIV, col. 17: *Multi quidem sunt errores illorum, ita ut nemo omnes enumerando prosequi valeat [...]* *Divisi sunt etiam contra semetipsos, quia nonnulla quae ab aliquibus eorum dicuntur, ab aliis negantur.*

⁷⁴ *Manifestatio haeresis albigensium et lugdunensium*, p. 386: *Et sicut sunt diversi ac divisi fide et habitu a ceteris hominibus ita inter se diversas sentiunt hereses*; DURANDUS DE HUESCA, *Liber contra manicheos*, p. 138–139; SALVO BURCI, *Liber supra stella*, ed. I. DA MILANO, Ae 19, 1945, p. 309: *Contra Catharos, qui appellantur Albanenses et Concorricii, qui inter se valde discrepant, videlicet quia unus alterum ad mortem condempnat, dicentes Albanenses adversus Concorricos, se esse ecclesiam Dei, et dicentes, illos fuisse ex ipsis, et a nobis secessi sunt; et e converso Coucorricii vero dicunt illud idem, Summa Fratris Raineri, p. 77.*

discourse should become an imperative⁷⁵. The scholars following this “imperative” focus on questioning the sources, which do not fit to their theory, including the sources of Cathar provenience, as it was in the case of the acts of St-Felix or the so called Manichaean Treatise⁷⁶. While the traditional interpretation of Catharism, assuming its Eastern origins and dualistic character, is based on the analysis of the sources of various provenance – both Western (Cathar and Catholic) and Eastern, in case of the deconstructionist interpretation the conclusions are formed a priori, based on selected and usually very limited source material. Considering this, it seems that the deconstructionist interpretation cannot be perceived as an equal alternative to the traditional one assuming the Bogomil roots of Catharism.

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⁷⁵ J. THÉRY, *L’hérésie...*, p. 107.

⁷⁶ On the conceptions assuming that the Manichaean Treatise is a Catholic forgery cf.: J.L. BIGET, *Réflexions...*, p. 40; M. ZERNER, *Compte rendu des interventions...*, p. 51.

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