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## The Participation of Women Believers and the Family in Later Languedocian Catharism, 1300-1308

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THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN BELIEVERS AND THE FAMILY IN  
LATER LANGUEDOCIAN CATHARISM, 1300-1308

by

William G. Edmundson

A Thesis Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
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Master of Arts  
in History

at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

May 2020

## ABSTRACT

### THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN BELIEVERS AND THE FAMILY IN LATER LANGUEDOCIAN CATHARISM, 1300-1308

by

William G. Edmundson

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2020

Under the Supervision of Distinguished Professor Emerita Merry Wiesner-Hanks

This master's thesis means to contribute to scholarship on the nature of lived Catharism in later medieval Languedoc. The study uses depositions from the inquisition registers of Jacques Fournier and Geoffroy d'Ablis, as well as Bernard Gui's *Liber sententiarum* (book of sentences) to examine and compare how men, women, and families who were friends, relatives, accomplices, believers, and defenders of Cathar *perfecti* (the Cathar spiritual elite) participated in and supported the sect during the "Authié revival" from 1300 to 1308 by means of a case study on the Benet family from Montailou and Ax.

The study argues that although the participation of men and women manifested in different forms, *credentes* (believers) of both sexes were capable of involvement in Catharism to similar degrees, clearly working to perpetuate the sect and support its ministers. In doing so, the study reinforces earlier scholarship on the "family heritage" of later Catharism. The thesis argues that during this resurgence the *perfecti* became dependent on networks of households of believers whose members served as guides, messengers, and advisors to the heretical preachers until the majority of the Authié heretics were burned at the stake after the Carcassonne inquisition from 1308 to 1309, and the final *perfectus*, Guilhem Belibaste, was executed in 1321.

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For my family and friends

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: Background, Historiographical Overview, Sources, and Plan of Work.....	5
An Overview of the Scholarship on Women in Catharism.....	11
Historiography of the Cathar Household and Family .....	22
Sources of the Study.....	30
Vat. Lat. MS 4030; the Fournier Inquisition Register.....	30
BnF MS 4269; the Register of Geoffroy d’Ablis .....	33
British Library Add. MS 4697; the Sentences of Bernard Gui .....	34
The Problem of Sources .....	35
Plan of Work .....	37
Chapter Two: Guilhem and Guillelma Benet I.....	40
Guilhem Benet.....	42
Spreader of Heretical Teachings and Maker of Threats .....	44
Host of Heretics.....	45
An Organizer and Procurer of Heretics .....	47
Guillelma Benet I .....	56
Making Introductions .....	57
Becoming Active .....	59
Perpetuating Heresy and Assuming a Guiding Role .....	62
Conclusions .....	70
Chapter Three: The Benet Sons, Raimond, Bernart, and Pèire .....	73
Raimond Benet.....	74
Raimond’s Keeping of Heretical Company.....	75
Assistant in Heretications .....	77
Sickness, Heretication, and Death.....	79
Bernart Benet.....	80
Bernart and the Heretication of Guilhem Guilhabert .....	81
Bernart’s Capture.....	85
Pèire Benet .....	86
Perhaps a Believer .....	87

Conclusions .....	88
Chapter Four: The Benet Daughters, Alazaïs, Guillelma II, Esclarmonda, and Montanha.....	89
Alazaïs Benet.....	89
Rumored to Have Been a Heretic .....	89
Consorting with Heretics .....	90
Hereticated.....	91
Guillelma Benet II.....	94
Listening to Heretics Preach.....	95
Chapter Five: The Ax Benets, Arnaut, Galharda I, and Galharda II .....	100
Arnaut and Galharda Benet I.....	100
Keeping Heretical Company .....	101
Galharda Benet II .....	103
Rumor .....	103
Defender of the Heretics.....	104
Making the <i>melhorament</i> to and Visiting Heretics.....	105
Assistant in Heretications .....	110
Conclusions .....	116
Conclusion .....	117
Bibliography .....	121
Manuscript Sources .....	121
Printed Primary Sources.....	121
Secondary Sources .....	121

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Ablis           Geoffroy d'Ablis, *l'Inquisiteur Geoffroy d'Ablis et les Cathares du Comté de Foix: (1308-1309)*, ed. Annette Pales-Gobilliard (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), 1984
- BnF            Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
- Doat           Collection Doat. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
- Dmitrevsky    Michel Dmitrevsky, "I. Notes sur le Catharisme et l'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France," *Annales du Midi*, vol. 36, no. 141, (Privat, 1924): 294-311
- f.             folio
- Fournier       Jacques Fournier, *Le Régistre d'Inquisition de Jacques Fournier (1318-1325)*. ed. Jean Duvernoy, Vols. I-III (Toulouse: Edouard Privat, 1965)
- Limborch      Philippus van Limborch, *Historia inquisitionis: cui subjungitur liber sententiarum inquisitionis tholosanae ab anno Christi MCCCVII ad annum MCCCXXIII* (Amsterdam, 1692)
- Montaillou    Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: George Brazillier, 1978)
- Weis           René Weis, *The Yellow Cross: The Story of the Last Cathars' Rebellion Against the Inquisition, 1290-1329* (New York, N.Y: Vintage Books, 2002)



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I must thank the staff and curators of the Vatican Library especially for their extraordinary work on the *digita vaticana* project, which has made the most important manuscript source for this thesis readily available for consultation on-line. I must also thank the staff members at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Golda Meir Library and at the Newberry Library in Chicago for their help with tracking down rare books I thought near-impossible to find. As a historian of Catharism, I must acknowledge the perennial work of Jean Duvernoy who was responsible for the manuscript editions upon which this thesis heavily relied, as well as the work of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, whose *Montaillou* was the inspiration for this thesis.

This thesis was completed with generous financial support from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, for which I owe a great debt of thanks, and whose generosity I will not soon forget.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

On seven occasions from Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup> to Sunday July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1321, Guillelma Benet I<sup>2</sup> from the small southern French village of Montailhou<sup>3</sup> was brought before the inquisitor-Bishop Jacques Fournier in his episcopal chamber at Pamiers. She had been arrested under suspicion of seeing and hearing Cathar *perfecti*<sup>4</sup> (perfect ones, the sect's spiritual elite), believing in their sermons, giving them her goods, hosting them in her home, making the *melhorament* to them, making an agreement with them to be received by them at her death, bringing others to do the same, and concealing others who had committed heretical crimes.<sup>5</sup>

According to established historiography, Catharism was one of many heretical movements that became popular in Latin Christian Europe between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. While the Cathars' origins have long been debated, it is clear they became entrenched in southern France, the Italian Peninsula, northern Germany, and even the Netherlands by the mid-twelfth century.

The followers of the Cathar heresy generally belonged to one of two groups: first, the *perfecti* who received the Cathar *consolamentum* (consolation, a sort of Baptism) as a vocation and

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<sup>1</sup> A note on documentation: All translations from French, Latin, and German in this thesis are my own. Words edited or supplied by me within quotations will be enclosed in square brackets. Words redacted for clarity within quotations will be marked by an ellipsis enclosed in square brackets.

<sup>2</sup> What to call individuals whose names are recorded in Latin when writing in English is a common problem among medievalists. For those whose names are well-known (such as Jacques Fournier or Geoffroy d'Ablis), I use the most common form found in English language literature. While certain studies have transliterated the Latin forenames in the inquisition registers into their modern French equivalents, I find this strategy inappropriate and ahistorical, for the vast majority of individuals with whom this thesis is concerned did not speak French, but Occitan. Therefore, I have transliterated individuals' given Latin forenames to reflect their likely Occitan equivalents according to Anne Brenon's study of Occitan forenames. See Anne Brenon, *Le Petit Livre Aventureux des Prénoms Occitans au Temps du Catharisme* (Loubatières, 1992). For the sake of clarity, for individuals who share the same name, e.g. Guillelma Benet and her daughter, I have assigned numbers reflecting their likely chronological relationship.

<sup>3</sup> Due to its prevalence in English-language literature, I have chosen to refer to this village by its modern French appellation. Throughout the Latin inquisition registers it is referred to as *monte alionis*; in Occitan it is known as *Montalhon* or *Montalion*.

<sup>4</sup> In the pages that follow, I use the term *perfecti* to refer to both men and women, unless specifically referencing women *perfect*, "*perfectae*".

<sup>5</sup> For Guillelma's alleged charges, see Fournier, Vol. II, f. 97d, p. 471.

functioned as heretical ministers, and second, the *credentes* (believers) who often received this sacrament on their deathbeds and otherwise lived lifestyles similar to their Catholic neighbors.<sup>6</sup> While both men and women could theoretically become *perfecti*, the roles women occupied in the sect changed over time. In the thirteenth century, women often assumed roles as *perfectae* (female perfect), blessed bread, taught others how to make the *melhorament* to the heretics, instructed children on matters related to heresy, preached, and allowed themselves to be prayed to by *credentes*. By the fourteenth century, the roles women occupied in the heresy had changed considerably: there were far fewer *perfectae*, and female *credentes* instead played a markedly more important role in supporting and perpetuating the sect.

Pope Innocent III called a crusade to eliminate Catharism (ca. 1209-1229), and ordered various inquisitions following Lateran IV (1215). By the end of the thirteenth century, the Cathar *perfecti* had been driven out of southern France to Lombardy and Sicily, greatly diminishing the threat of heresy in southern France. In 1296, brothers Guilhem and Pèire Authié from Ax (a village about 10km to the south of Montailou, now called Ax-les-Thermes) travelled to Lombardy to become Cathar *perfecti*. When they returned to Ax several years later, they instigated what has been called the “Authié revival”, the last resurgence of Catharism in Languedoc. A network of believers quickly began to form around them, made up of the Bayle, Belot, Benet, Garsende, Gombert, Guilhabert, Mathei, Maurs, Maury, and Rives families. This revival in southern France inspired an inquisition by Geoffroy d’Ablis, based at the town of

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<sup>6</sup> For notable studies on the Cathar *consolamentum*, see Anne Brenon, “Les fonctions sacramentelles du consolament,” in *Heresis* 20 (1993): 33-55; Yves Dossat, “l’Evolution des rituels cathares,” in *Revue de synthese* 23 (1948): 27-30; Jean Guiraud, “Le Consolamentum cathare,” in *Revue des questions historiques* 31 (1904): 74-112; Shulamith Shahar, “Cathars and Baptism,” in *Medieval Christianity in Practice*, ed. Miri Rubin (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 14-20.

Carcassonne from 1308 to 1309, after which the Authiés and several individuals they had hereticated were burned at the stake.

After the council of Vienna in 1312 stipulated that diocesan bishops should oversee inquisition courts, Bishop Jacques Fournier, in collaboration with the Papal Inquisition at Carcassonne in 1318, set up an inquisitorial office at Pamiers to systematically root out the last of the heretical sympathizers from the Ariège region of southern France. Guillelma Benet I, one of the subjects of this thesis, was finally arrested by Fournier in 1321 (after having evaded the Carcassonne inquisition from 1308-1309) and was promptly interrogated. She and her family were deeply involved in Catharism, introduced to their village ca. 1300 by the Authiés returning from Lombardy, and they worked closely with other households of believers to protect the heretical preachers and perpetuate their faith.

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, to investigate the ways in which women *credentes* participated in Catharism during the “Authié revival” after the decline of the *perfectae* (female *perfect*), contextualizing this participation by comparing the roles of women *credentes* to those of male *credentes*; and, second, to build upon this analysis and examine how households and families of Cathar *credentes* prolonged the survival of the sect into the fourteenth century.

To accomplish these goals, this thesis will first provide appropriate context by describing the Cathar movement, the state of scholarship concerning the roles of women in the Cathar heresy, the Cathar family and household, and the sources of the study. Subsequently, the thesis will offer a case-study of the various ways Guillelma I, her husband Guilhem, their children, and extended family members participated in heresy from its introduction to their villages ca. 1300 until Guillelma Benet was sentenced by Bernard Gui in 1321. It will compare and examine the ways

in which each member of the Benet family engaged in heretical activities and worked with various members of other households of Cathar believers to support the Authié heretics.

In doing so, the thesis ultimately argues that although the participation of laymen and women manifested in different forms during the “Authié revival”, *credentes* of both sexes were capable of involvement to similar degrees in heresy and clearly worked to perpetuate it and support its ministers. Likewise, the study confirms and reinforces earlier studies on the “family heritage” of later Catharism, showing how during this resurgence the *perfecti* became dependent on networks of households of believers whose members served as guides, messengers, and advisors to the heretical preachers until the majority of the Authié heretics were burned at the stake after the Carcassonne inquisition from 1308 to 1309, and the final *perfectus*, Guilhem Belibaste, was burned at the stake in 1321.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For more information about the *perfectus* Guilhem Belibaste, see Gauthiér Langlois, “Note sur quelques documents inédits concernant le parfait Guilhem Belibaste et sa famille,” in *Heresis* 25 (1995): 130-134.

## **Chapter One: Background, Historiographical Overview, Sources, and Plan of Work**

As previously mentioned, Catharism was one of many heretical religious movements that arose in Latin Christian Europe between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. In the mid-twentieth century, many historians thought that their beliefs derived from the Balkans, and the dualist sect known as Bogomilism, which itself drew on both Gnosticism and Manicheism. Antoine Dondaine, for example, argued in 1952 that “the western Cathars were sons of the Bogomils, themselves heirs of distant Manichaeism.”<sup>1</sup> Among those believing (with Dondaine) that Catharism derived from Bogomilism include heresiologists Arno Borst, Bernard Hamilton, Claire Taylor, and Steven Runciman.<sup>2</sup> More recent scholarship, however, has shown that Catharism and Bogomilism developed contemporaneously, and that Catharism may not have derived from Bogomilism.<sup>3</sup> Still other recent work suggests Catharism was a local phenomenon that was passed down through family ties.<sup>4</sup> Regardless of their origins, the sect became entrenched in southern France, the Italian peninsula, northern Germany, and even the Netherlands by the mid-twelfth century. In 1184, the sect was declared heretical in Pope Lucius III’s bull *ad abolendam*.

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<sup>1</sup> Antoine Dondaine (O.P.), “l’Origine de l’hérésie médiévale,” in *Rivista de storia della chiesa in Italia* 6 (1952): 47-78, here 78.

<sup>2</sup> See Arno Borst, *Die Katharer* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1953); Bernard Hamilton, “Wisdom from the East: The Reception by the Cathars of Eastern Dualist Texts,” in *Heresy and Literacy, 1000-1530*, ed. Peter Biller and Anne Hudson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 38-60; *idem*, “Bogomil Influences on Western Heresy,” in *Heresy and the Persecuting Society: Essays on the Work of R.I. Moore*, ed. Michael Frassetto (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 93-114; Steven Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee: A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy* (New York: Viking Press, 1961); Claire Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France: Dualism in Aquitaine and the Agenais, 1000-1249* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> See Anne Brenon, “Cathares de l’Est: Les Bogomiles,” in *Le choix hérétique: dissidence chrétienne dans l’Europe médiévale*, ed. Anne Brenon (Cahors: La Louvre, 2006), 109-114.

<sup>4</sup> See Jean-Louis Biget, *Hérésie et inquisition dans le Midi de la France* (Paris: Picard, 2007); Michel Roquebert, “Le catharisme comme tradition dans la Familia languedocienne in Effacement du Catharisme? (XIII-XIV s.),” *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 20 (1985): 221-242; Elie Griffé, *Le Languedoc cathare de 1190 a 1210* (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1971).

Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253), the first chancellor of Oxford university and Bishop of Lincoln, provided the church with what would become the standard definition of “heresy”, stating: “heresy is an opinion chosen by human faculties, contrary to sacred scripture, openly held, and pertinaciously defended.”<sup>5</sup> Therefore, in order for a belief to be considered a heresy, it had to be contrary to the teachings of the Church, reached by human faculties, and be both openly held and defended despite attempts to encourage the believer to recant.

With regard to the Cathars’ beliefs, they held that there were two gods: one good, and the other evil. The good god had been responsible for the creation of the spiritual world, and the evil god responsible for the creation of the material world. They held that the spirits in heaven had sinned in the beginning when they were in heaven and were subsequently driven out. These fallen spirits then became the earthly spirits of humans and animals. When men, women, and animals died on earth, their spirits passed on to another warm-blooded creature (which was about to be born). According to their understanding, the only release for this perpetual spiritual transmigration was the *consolamentum*, which would allow the spirit of the person who had been consoled (the person who was “hereticated”, to use the language of the inquisitors), to enter heaven immediately after death. These beliefs informed other aspects of their theology, including sexual abstinence, abhorrence of any form of killing, and their understanding that it was a sin to eat meat and animal products (except fish).

The Cathars were also vehemently anticlerical and regularly referred to clergymen as “wolves and dogs” (*lupi et canes*). They believed that the Eucharist was not the body of Christ but “only bread”, and that the sacrament of marriage was worthless since, if it produced children, marriage perpetuated the cycle of spiritual transmigration and further trapped heavenly spirits in earthly

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Grosseteste is quoted in Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), at p. 167.

bodies.<sup>6</sup> Although some have investigated whether the Cathars' beliefs were truly Christian (because they drew considerably from Gnosticism and Manicheism), because their beliefs are anchored in the New Testament, their beliefs must be considered Christian, although absolutely different from the orthodoxy of the period.

Although their beliefs were different from those of the Roman Church, nobody in the Middle Ages would have called himself a heretic (*hereticus*) or *perfectus*. The deponents who supported them generally called those who received the Cathar *consolamentum* as a vocation and functioned as heretical ministers as “good Christians” (*boni christiani*), “good men” (*boni homines*), or addressed them individually as “good man” (*bonus homo*), or “good woman” (*bona femina* or *bona mulier*). These same individuals were generally referred to as “heretics” (*heretici*) by the inquisitors.

Those who were not *perfecti* and had not yet undergone the *consolamentum* but supported those that had, and subscribed to their faith, are called by many different names. Generally, these individuals are referred to as *credentes* (believers), *fautores* (supporters), or by more specific terms that depended on the role they played in supporting the *perfecti*, such as *ductores* (guides), *nuncii* (messengers), or *receptatores* (receivers).

To complicate matters, the term “Cathar” is problematic since neither inquisitors nor deponents used this term. It was used to condemn the movement in the papal bull *ad abolendam* in 1184: “*imprimis ergo Catharos et Parinos et eos, qui se Humiliatos vel Pauperes de Lugduno falso nomine mentiuntur, Passaginos, Iosephinos, Arnaldistas perpetuo decernimus anathemati subiacere*” (In the first place, therefore, we lay under a perpetual anathema the Cathari,

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<sup>6</sup> For excellent works on Cathar spirituality, see Bernard Hamilton, “The Cathars and Christian Perfection,” in *Studies in Church History Subsidia* 11 (1999): 5-23; Jean Duvernoy, *Le Catharisme: La Religion des Cathares* (Toulouse: Privat, 1976).



Paterines, and those who falsely call themselves the Humbled or Poor of Lyon, Passagines, Josephines, [and] Arnoldists),<sup>7</sup> but this terminology was not adopted by the inquisition.

Therefore, much scholarly work in recent years has focused on whether the Cathar heresy (and an institutional “Cathar” church) truly existed.<sup>8</sup>

While such complications do indeed exist, I do not think it is necessary to completely resolve the questions about the origins of the Cathars, or of terminology used to refer to them, in order to study and analyze these people and examine their lived religion. I will thus use the term “Cathar” to refer to both the faith and its practitioners, and (following the precedent set by the inquisition registers) I will refer to those who received the *consolamentum* and functioned as heretical ministers as *perfecti* or heretics. I will refer to individuals who supported heresy and its ministers as *credentes* or believers, using other appellations (*ductore*, etc.) when needed for the sake of pointing out an individual’s vocation.

The *credentes* and *perfecti* occupied different roles in the sect, separated by the Cathar rite of *consolamentum*. While they may not have been “ordained” members of the faith, *credentes* often came to meetings where the *perfecti* preached and read from the Gospels. The deposition of Alazaïs Azema from November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1320 describes one such occasion:

A certain evening she herself [Alazaïs Azema] came and entered the house of Raimond Belot, formerly of Montaillou, unaware that there were heretics there, and she found in the said house Guilhem Authié and Pons Sicre, the heretics, sitting by the fire, and present with them were the said brothers Raimond, Bernart, and Guilhem Belot, and Guillelma Belot the mother of the said brothers, and Guilhem Authié the heretic was reading from a book and speaking with the aforesaid individuals (she does not still remember what he was speaking about), but he named the holy Apostles Peter, Paul, and

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<sup>7</sup> For the Latin text of *ad abolendam*, see Lucius III, “Epistolae et privilegia,” *Patrologis cursus completus*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, Vol. 201: 1297D-1298B (Paris: 1841-1864). For an English translation, see Pope Lucius III, “The Decretal Ad Abolendam, 1184,” printed as document 29 in Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 170-173.

<sup>8</sup> See the collection of articles in Antonio Sennis, *Cathars in Question* (York: York Medieval Press, 2016).

John, and then she, arriving, sat on a certain bench with the said Guillelma, and the said brothers sat on another bench, and the heretics on another [...]<sup>9</sup>

At these meetings, if food was served, the *perfecti* would bless bread which was then distributed to those present. The shepherd Pèire Maury describes one such occasion:

And at the beginning [of the meal], in the way he [the heretic] had blessed bread at dinner, he again blessed it at supper, and gave the said blessed bread to him the deponent and the said Bernart. And they quietly said “Bless you, senher”, and he [the heretic] quietly said: “May God bless you.”<sup>10</sup>

The *credentes* would also perform a greeting called *adoratio* (adoration/worship) by the inquisitors. Referred to by believers as the *melioramentum* (*melhorament* in Occitan), the rite was done by kneeling on the ground before the *perfecti* and saying a threefold prayer for mercy and a request that God make the supplicant a good Christian and bring him or her to a “good end”.<sup>11</sup> Guillelma Benet I’s deposition before Jacques Fournier sheds light on this particular practice:

And when she was in the said Belot house she found in the solar<sup>12</sup> of the said house Guilhem Authié the heretic sitting by the bed which was in the said solar, and, kneeling before the heretic were Guillelma Belot and Mengarda, wife of the Pons Clergue formerly of Montailou. And the said heretic was preaching and she the deponent [Guillelma] also genuflecting before him, heard him preaching, and stood there until he had finished preaching; and the said preaching was about the errors of the said heretics. She does not still remember, about which errors, except that she heard him saying then

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<sup>9</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

...quodam sero ipsa per se venit et intravit domum Ramundi Beloti quondam de Alione, nesciens ibi hereticos esse, et invenit in dicta domo iuxta ignem sedentes Guillelmum Auterii et Poncium Cicredi hereticos, et erant presentes cum ipsis dictus Ramundus, Bernardus et Guillelmus Beloti fratres, et Guillelma Belota mater dictorum fratrum, et Guillelmus Auterii hereticus legebat in quodam libro et eciam loquebatur cum predictis (non tamen recordatur ipsa de quibus loquebatur), sed nominabat sanctos Petrum, Paulum, et Iohannem apostolos, et tunc ipsa que supervenerat sedit in quadam bancha cum dicta Guillelma, et dicti fratres sedebant in quadam alia bancha et heretici in alia...

Fournier, Vol I, f. 60a, p. 315.

<sup>10</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Qui etiam hereticus in principio mense, modo quo supra benedixit panem in prandio. Benedixit etiam in cena, et dedit de dicto pane benedicto ipsi loquenti et dicto Bernardo. Et ipsi submisse dixerunt: “Benedicite senher”, et ipse submisse respondit eis: “Deus vos benedicat.”

Fournier, Vol. III, f. 255d, p. 153.

<sup>11</sup> In the pages that follow I will use the Occitan term *melhorament* to refer to this rite.

<sup>12</sup> A ‘solar’ according to Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, was “the first floor above the kitchen, communicating with the ground floor by means of a ladder.” Montailou, 39.

that he and those who err of their sect saved souls. And after the end of the said preaching she the deponent [Guillelma Benet] and the said Guillelma [Belot] and Mengarda [Clergue] made the *melhorament* to the said heretic in the aforesaid heretical way, saying three times: “Bless us, good Christians, pray to God for us”, and the said heretic responded: “May God bless you and lead you to a good end”.<sup>13</sup>

Another common ritual was the *consolamentum* (*consolament* in Occitan), which came in two varieties. First, there was the *consolamentum* that elevated a Cathar believer to the rank of *perfectus* or *perfecta*, and second, the *consolamentum* that was given to the dying, giving them hope of achieving salvation immediately after death and absolving their sins. In either case, the consoled would have been directed not to swear, lie, or eat meat or animal products after receiving the rite.<sup>14</sup> In the period after 1300, the rite of *endura* also became common, whereby a sick and dying individual who had undergone the *consolamentum* would, to avoid tainting their soul, and to go to heaven immediately after death (as well as to speed up the process of dying), starve themselves to death.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et cum fuit in dicta domo dels Belostz invenit in solario dicte domus Guillelmu Auterii hereticum sedentem iuxta lectum quod erat in dicto solario, et flectis genibus coram dicto heretico stabant Guillelma Belota et Mengardis uxor Poncii Clerici quondam de Monte Alionis. Et dictus hereticus predicabat et ipsa loquens flectens etiam genua coram dicto heretico audivit eum predicantem et sic stetit quousque predicacionem finivit; et dicta predicatio erat de erroribus ditorum hereticorum. Non recordatur tamen, de quibus erroribus, nisi quod audivit eum tunc dicentem quod ipse et illi qui errant de secta sua salvabant animas. Et post finem dicte predicacionis ipsa loquens et dicta Guillelma et Mengardis dictum hereticum adoraverunt modo hereticali supradicto, dicendo ter: “Benedicite, bone Christiane, orate Deum pro nobis”, et dictus hereticus respondebat: “Deus vos benedicat et ducat ad bonum finem”. Fournier, Vol. I. f. 98, p. 477.

<sup>14</sup> For instances of the rite of *consolamentum*, see Fournier ff. 37c, 54b, 75a, 80b, 83b, 86b, 88a, 98d, 104a, 105a, 106b, 118b, 119a, 121c-d, 148b, 181c, 216c, 218c, 222a, 265a, 272b, 277b, 295b; Ablis pp. 88-91, 100-103, 118-119, 126-127, 144-145, 148-149, 162-167, 170-173, 176-177, 190-193, 196-199, 204-205, 208-209, 224-225, 228-231, 234-237, 242-247, 262-263, 268-271, 274-275, 282-283, 292-293, 298-303, 204-307, 314-317, 322-323, 342-343, 350-355, 360-361.

<sup>15</sup> For references to the *endura*, see Fournier ff. 40b, 41b, 45d, 52c, 61b, 78b, 95c, 104a, 105b, 106c, 118b, 132c, 203d, 204a, 213a, 217c, 253d, 273d, 277b; Ablis pp. 71-72, 196-197, 226-227, 230-231, 282-283, 304-307. For scholarship on the *endura*, see Jean Duvernoy, “La liturgie et l’Église cathare,” in *Cahiers d’Études cathares* 18/33, (1967); Charles Molinier. “L’Endura, coutume religieuse des derniers sectaires albigeois,” in *Annales de la Faculte de Bordeaux*, III, (1881): 282-299; Costas Tasiamis, Eleni Tounta, and Effie Poulakou-Rebelakou. “The ‘Endura’ of The Cathars’ Heresy: Medieval Concept of Ritual Euthanasia or Suicide?” in *Journal of Religion and Health* 55, no. 1 (2016): 174-180.

## An Overview of the Scholarship on Women in Catharism

The scholarship on the Cathar heresy generally shows us that women's involvement in Catharism changed. In the thirteenth century, women often assumed roles as *perfectae*, blessed bread, taught others how to make the *melhorament* to heretics, instructed children on matters related to heresy, preached, and allowed themselves to be prayed to by believers. By the fourteenth century, in the years of the Authié revival, the roles women occupied in the heresy had changed considerably: there were far fewer *perfectae*, and female *credentes* instead played a greater role in supporting and perpetuating heresy. This section will use studies by historians, including Charles Schmidt, Charles Molinier, Celestin Douais, Michel Dmitrevsky, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Malcolm Barber, Richard Abels, Ellen Harrison, and Anne Brenon, to examine this trend.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Charles Schmidt, Strasbourg Professor of Practical Theology, reinvigorated studies of heresy with his *Histoire et Doctrine de la Secte des Cathares ou Albigeois* (History and Doctrine of the Cathar or Albigensian Sect).<sup>16</sup> Schmidt used the large collection of later copies of (mainly) thirteenth century Toulousain inquisition depositions from the 'Doat' collection (depositions from the thirteenth century) and dedicated about two pages of his work to discussion of women heretics.

Schmidt wrote that *perfectae* “wore a special type of garment, a type of black coat. They were not required to travel like men; sometimes lived alone in huts, sometimes several of them lived together in communal houses, did manual labor, educated young girls, or cared for the sick and poor.” Schmidt explained that: “They had the power to administer the *consolamentum* in extreme

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<sup>16</sup> For articles on the work of Charles Schmidt, see Yves Dossat, “Un initiateur. Charles Schmidt,” *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 14 (1979): 163-184; Bernard Hamilton, “The Legacy of Charles Schmidt to the Study of Christian Dualism,” *Journal of Medieval History* 24, no 2 (1998): 191-214.

cases; but there is not a single example that they also had the right to preach to the people; the Cathars, different in this respect from the Waldensians, left women much more in their natural sphere. Sometimes even the austere rule they had to impose on themselves was dropped for the *perfectae*, and as long as they agreed to receive the *consolamentum* again before their death, they were allowed to re-enter the world.”<sup>17</sup> Although later scholarship would show that Schmidt was inconsistent in his accuracy regarding women heretics during the thirteenth century, his work published in 1849 functioned as a benchmark for later studies of women in heresy.

In 1880, Charles Molinier published his *l’Inquisition dans le Midi de la France au XIIIe et au XIVe siècle* (The Inquisition in the South of France in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries). For this work, Molinier analyzed the records of Geoffroy d’Ablis (BnF MS lat 4269 from 1308-1309) and wrote a short assessment on the involvement of women in the French heresy, describing them as a distinct group among believers.

Molinier notably discussed the depth of their devotion to the sect, writing about how women “stripped themselves of their possessions,” and that “when [women believers] have received from [the hands of wandering preachers] the supreme sacrament of the sect, the [*consolamentum*], so as not to desecrate it, undoubtedly by continuing an existence or [allowing their soul to contract new sins], they submit to the terrible trial of the ‘endura’ and let themselves die patiently of hunger and consumption.” According to Molinier, by the fourteenth century, women for the most part no longer served as ministers, but made up a unique group among believers who harbored wholehearted devotion to heresy and its ministers.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Charles Guillaume Adolphe Schmidt, *Histoire et Doctrine de la Secte des Cathares ou Albigeois* (Paris: J. Cherbuliez, 1849), Vol. II, 95-96.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Molinier, *L’Inquisition dans le Midi de la France au XIIIe et au XIVe Siècle: étude sur les Sources de son Histoire* (Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1880), note 118-119.

In 1891, the historian and later Bishop of Beauvais, Celestin Douais, offered an analysis of Toulouse MS 609<sup>19</sup> in *Les Hérétiques du Comte de Toulouse dans la Première Moitié du XIIIe siècle d'Après l'Enquête de 1245* (Heretics of the County of Toulouse in the First Half of the 13th Century Following the Inquest of 1245) to complement Schmidt's findings from 1849 about heresy in the thirteenth century. He especially described how women *perfectae* blessed bread, taught others how to make the *melhorament* to heretics, instructed children on matters of heresy, preached, and allowed the *melhorament* to be made to them by believers.<sup>20</sup> Douais' analysis of MS 609 and his suggestion that women heretics had indeed preached, contradicted Schmidt's findings from 1849 and led Molinier to publish an article and correct Schmidt in 1907.<sup>21</sup>

In 1924, Michel Dmitrevsky's "Notes sur le Catharisme et l'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France" (Notes on Catharism and the Inquisition in the South of France) was published in *Annales du Midi*. The first section of this article, titled "Les Femmes dans la Secte Cathare", or "Women in the Cathar Sect", took up ten pages—more attention than all previous authors combined had given women heretics. His work was a landmark study that increased awareness of women believers. It was based on BnF MS lat. 4269, Geoffroy d'Ablis inquisition register from 1308-1309 which had been analyzed by Molinier in 1880.

Dmitrevsky began with a broad generalization. "In all religious movements, women have always played a considerable role through their zeal and spirit of dedication. It could hardly be said otherwise in this Cathar sect of the Middle Ages."<sup>22</sup> Regarding their specific activities, Dmitrevsky wrote about how devoted women were to heresy and its ministers. He described how

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<sup>19</sup> Bibliothèque Municipale de Toulouse. MS 609.

<sup>20</sup> Célestin Douais, "Les hérétiques du Comte de Toulouse dans la Première Moitié du XIIIe siècle d'Après l'Enquête de 1245," *Compte Rendu du Congrès Scientifique International des Catholiques Tenu à Paris du 1er au 6 Avril 1891*, 5e section, 5-19, here 14-15.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Molinier, "l'Église et la Société Cathares," *Revue Historique* 94, no. 2 (1907): 225-48, here 241-242.

<sup>22</sup> Dmitrevsky, 294.

they housed *perfecti* exhausted by fatigue and hunger, hid them from the inquisition and helped facilitate escapes, served as their guides during their travels, and assumed roles as intermediaries between them and other believers.<sup>23</sup> According to the findings of Molinier and Dmitrevsky based on BnF MS lat. 4269, although women believers no longer assumed roles as *perfectae* by the fourteenth century, they nevertheless aided the heretical ministers, served as their guides, and perpetuated heretical beliefs.

In the mid-twentieth century, scholars turned away from examining the roles of women in heresy and instead historians began more critically to examine *why* women participated in heresy at all. In 1953, the German historian Arno Borst published his *Die Katharer* (The Cathars), and in 1962 Gottfried Koch published his *Frauenfrage und Ketzertum im Mittelalter: die Frauenbewegung im Rahmen des Katharismus* (The Women's Question and Heresy in the Middle Ages: The Women's Movement in the Context of Catharism). Borst's book was mostly concerned with whether the French heretics were indeed Christian, and it did not comment much about the roles of women in heresy. Koch's *Frauenfrage* was based on Marxist historiography and argued that women's involvement in heresy was an expression of their dissatisfaction with general medieval feudal oppression.

In 1973, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie published his famous *Montaillou: Village Occitan* in which he also discussed the roles of women in heresy. He mentions some women by name, but in general dismisses their importance. He never even mentions the final *perfecta*, Auda, who died ca. 1302. The English translation of his book (1978) describes how Mengarda Clergue, Guilhemea Belot and 'na Roqua' "were the stoutest female militants among the Cathars of Montaillou. The other women influenced by heresy (we know of about ten in all) had been

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<sup>23</sup> Dmitrevsky, 296-297.

swayed by others: their own personal beliefs were not particularly strong, but they had yielded to the urgings of their relatives of friendly *domus* already infected with heresy.” He writes, “another female quartet, less firm perhaps in its convictions, was formed by [Gaia] Clergue, [Guillelma] Maurs, and [Sebèlia] Fort. All four were heretics, great friends and wives of Montaillou farmers, members of the middle or lower class which formed the backbone of the village.”<sup>24</sup> In a later section he elaborates, “Whether there was a specifically feminine system of values is obscured by the fact that the women of Montaillou, with a few notable exceptions, were passive rather than active elements in Cathar propaganda.” He says, “they accepted Catharism rather vaguely, as something come to them from without, fathers, brothers, lovers, friends, employers, cousins or neighbors had compromised or even trapped them into it. Often, except in the case of the matriarchs, the women of Montaillou rallied to the heretic cause only temporarily and superficially; they had no intention of going as far as the stake.”<sup>25</sup>

Despite the fame of Le Roy Ladurie’s work, it has come under considerable criticism in the decades since its release. In his review of *Montaillou*, Leonard Boyle (who later became Prefect of the Vatican Library), wrote, “time and time again the inquisition register of Fournier, Le Roy Ladurie’s one and only (and priceless) source is mangled or misrepresented. A list of these occasions would take up all the space of this journal.”<sup>26</sup> Le Roy Ladurie’s work received even harsher criticism from David Herlihy who wrote “regrettably, in spite of the author’s powerful imagination and impassioned prose, the research which underlays the argument shows distressing marks of haste and carelessness. *Montaillou* contains numerous passages, presumably direct translations from Fournier’s register and conveniently printed in italics. But a comparison

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<sup>24</sup> Montaillou, 251.

<sup>25</sup> Montaillou, 258.

<sup>26</sup> Leonard E. Boyle, Review of *Montaillou, the Promised Land of Error*, *Canadian Journal of History* 14, no. 3 (1979): 455-457, here 456.



of the translated texts with the Latin originals is disconcerting. Many—even most, it would appear from casual scrutiny—are paraphrases, often highly abbreviated, with no indication that ellipses have been made...some paraphrases radically distort the meaning of the text.” The somber conclusion to his review reads, “In *Montaillou* the use he [Le Roy Ladurie] makes of a magnificent document is sloppy and manipulative. Like the harassed heretics who appeared before Jacques Fournier’s tribunal, Le Roy Ladurie gives testimony concerning doings in a medieval peasant village which, regrettably, cannot be trusted.”<sup>27</sup>

In 1979, Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison published their article, “The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism,” which examined women’s activity in the Cathar heresy based on quantitative data derived from inquisition registers from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. They found, in contrast to Le Roy Ladurie’s downplaying the role of women, that of the “719 heretical ministers named in MS 609 [the manuscript which had been investigated by Douais in 1891 on a mid-thirteenth century inquisition], 318, or slightly less than 45%, were women.”<sup>28</sup> They also found that only one out of twenty-six *perfecti/ae* sentenced by Bernard Gui from 1307-1323 was a woman. These figures suggest that women almost completely stopped participating as *perfectae* as time went on. At the same time, however, they discovered about 45% of people sentenced by Bernard Gui from 1307-1323 were women. They explain this by suggesting that “the decline of the *perfectae*-class [after the inquisition had forced the Cathar religion into the role of an ‘underground cult’] produced a body of female believers who were more actively involved in the religion.”<sup>29</sup> Abels and Harrison’s article effectively explains the

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<sup>27</sup> David Herlihy, Review of *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in A French Village, 1294-1324*, *Social History* 4, no. 3 (1979): 517-20

<sup>28</sup> Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison. “The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism,” *Medieval Studies*, 41 (1979): 215-51, here 225.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison. “The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism,” 251.

evolution of women's involvement in heresy from their roles as *perfectae* in the thirteenth century, to the decline of the *perfectae* by the end of the thirteenth century, and finally to the upsurge of support by female *credentes* in the early years of the Authié revival. The authors of the work, however, give greater attention to the thirteenth century inquisition registers, and do not explain as well the ways in which women participated in Catharism during the Authié revival. For their study, the authors examined BnF 9992 (the register of Sentences of Bernard de Caux and Jean de St. Pierre at Toulouse from 1245-1248), and BnF 11847 (the register of the Inquisition at Albi from 1299 to 1300), and BnF 11848 (Gui's *Liber sententiarum*). To discuss the participation of women during Authié revival post-1300, they used statistics derived from Bernard Gui's *Liber sententiarum*, but not the Ablis or Fournier registers.

In 1992, Anne Brenon published *Les Femmes Cathares*, which chronicled the participation of women at all levels within Catharism. She describes Occitan women, Cathar women, the last church in Montailhou, and the daily activities of "the women who lived through Catharism"<sup>30</sup> She describes:

Some, like Arnaut de Lamothe [fl. 1250], received it in conformity with the good practices of their communities; others wondered with their common sense about the Good Men; others still opened their barn and breadbox to illegal strays; or ordered their whole lives in the midst of moral perfection and God's choice; others also did not hesitate to carry the ultimate proof of their religious commitment even to the stake.<sup>31</sup>

Brenon provides an examination of the participation of women in heresy over time, discussing the lives of various *perfectae*, from the twelfth century to the fourteenth, including Aude, the final *perfecta* who died in the very early years of the fourteenth century.

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<sup>30</sup> Anne Brenon, *Les Femmes Cathares* (Perrin, 1992), 61.

<sup>31</sup> Brenon, *Femmes Cathares*, 61.

My only criticism of Brenon's book was that it did not contrast the participation of women with the participation of men. Forty years ago, Natalie Zemon Davis established gender was (and still remains) a relational construct. Davis commented: "it seems to me that we should be interested in the history of both women and men, that we should not be working only on the subjected sex any more than an historian of class can focus exclusively on peasants. Our goal is to understand the significance of the *sexes*, of gender groups in the historical past."<sup>32</sup> Without any element of comparison, Brenon's argument about the sacrifices, sanctity, and participation of women heretics lacks context. In addition, the book focuses disproportionately on the *perfectae* of the thirteenth century. Her chapter on the Authié revival says very little about actual heretical women and instead focuses on the Authié heretics themselves. These are two omissions in the historiography this thesis aims to rectify.

Later in the 1990s, two German historians published books (based on their dissertations) on heretical women. In 1993, Urte Bejick published *Die Katharerinnen: Häresieverdächtige Frauen im mittelalterlichen Süd-Frankreich* (Cathar Women: Women Suspected of Heresy in Medieval Southern France). Her goal was to use concrete individual cases to gain a sense of the lives of women who sympathized with heresy.<sup>33</sup> One of its flaws is that it used short, individual instances and short quotations from primary source material to construct very short essays (sometimes only one page in length) on very complicated concepts such as marriage, abuse, heretical theologies, random encounters between women and the *perfecti*, and their hiding and supplying of the *perfecti*.

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<sup>32</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, "'Women's History' in Transition: The European Case." *Feminist Studies* 3, no. 3/4 (1976): 83-103, here 90.

<sup>33</sup> Urte Bejick, *Die Katharerinnen: Häresieverdächtige Frauen im Mittelalterlichen Süd-Frankreich* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 1993), 15.

In 1996, Daniela Muller completed a study similar to the one Bejick had done three years earlier. Her *Frauen vor der Inquisition: Lebensform, Glaubenzeugnis und Aburteilung der deutschen und französischen Katharerrinnen* (Women Before the Inquisition: Lifestyle, Testimony of Faith, and Judgement of the German and French Cathar Women) offers very short descriptions of the participation of women in German and French heresies and suffers from being disorganized. The first chapter of her book focuses on the history of Cathar women, chapter two explores heretical doctrine, and the third chapter discusses women in court. It discusses the lives and actions of heretic women, given notable attention to women from ca. 1230 to 1270, including Arnalda de Lamothe (the same *perfecta* Brenon had examined in 1992), Garsen de Max, Serena and Gignes de Chateaufverdon, and other heretical sympathizers. However, although women appear twice in the title, in places it reads as if it was simply a history of heresy.

In 2001, Rene Weis published *The Yellow Cross: The Story of the Last Cathars* in which he used Fournier's and Ablis' registers to provide a narrative history of the "Authié revival". He gave an exceptionally detailed narrative reconstruction of the village of Montailou, accompanied with maps which allow the reader to gain an understanding of the geography and spatial organization of the community. Regarding women heretics, he seemed to agree with the findings of Abels and Harrison, writing: "there had been Cathar *Perfectae* (women Perfects) in the period leading up to the fall of Montségur in 1244," and suggests "women played a crucial role in the story of the last Cathars,"<sup>34</sup> but does not elaborate on this statement. Weis discussed individual women and how they interacted with the *perfecti* during the "Authié revival," but otherwise did not make any general claims about their role in the sect.

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<sup>34</sup> Weis, xxiv.

Gwendoline Hancke-Jolliot's *Les Belles Herétiques: Etre femme, Noble et Cathare* (The Beautiful Heretics: Being Women, Noble, and Cathar) was published in 2001. She comments how: "in a new approach, Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison attempt to capture the involvement of the women in numbers, without neglecting the problems that such an assessment can cause. They conclude that women played a greater role in Catharism than in the Catholic Church, but that their participation decreased remarkably [beginning in] the middle of the 13th century." Describing Brenon's work, she writes: "Anne Brenon's book on Cathar women (1992) presents the first global description of women's lives in Catharism. Her book, which reads almost like a novel, is entirely based on sources and gives an image of Cathar women living everyday life in medieval Languedocian society, without the author claiming to prove or deny anything." She also described Bejick's work, saying: "this little book is based only on the registers of Geoffroy d'Ablis and Jacques Fournier and refers only to the late Cathar era when there were no Cathar women left in the strict sense of the word. This study is therefore far from giving a complete picture of the subject and does not add anything new to its content." Breaking from other works of scholarship, her work deals specifically with noble heretic women. The book discusses how "in the second half of the thirteenth century, there were still women noble believers who [took] enormous risks in rescuing the *perfect*. First, these women [donated] food, clothing, and money to the heretics being chased. Then they hosted them, either for a few nights, or an entire month, and, in most cases, they fed them at home with their own money, exposing themselves to the greatest risks."<sup>35</sup> Although she examines *perfectae*, she seems to agree with the general chronology that Abels and Harrison propose.

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<sup>35</sup> Gwendoline Hancke-Jolliot, *Les Belles Hérétiques: être Femme, Noble et Cathare* (L'Hydre editions, 2001), 83.

Most recently, in 2013, John Arnold published a brief but very critical article on “Heresy and Gender in the Middle Ages.” Concluding his historiographical section, Arnold wrote that, “women’s roles within heresy have been noted as similar to women’s roles in medieval social life: denied any formal status of public voice; given some degree of autonomy and power within the domestic sphere, but even there liable to become ‘invisible’ behind mention of a male householder; predominantly playing a supporting or enabling role, rather than being active agents within a group.” Arnold agrees with this assessment, and, like Le Roy Ladurie, downplays the role of women: “women were never predominant in heresy, and in regard to issues of activity and visibility, were usually strongly in the minority—as one might similarly find with orthodox religion.”<sup>36</sup> Arnold’s statements do not with fit with the statistics about women’s involvement in heresy presented by Abels and Harrison, which I find more convincing. The ways in which women involved themselves in heresy cannot be reduced to the oversimplified generalities that Arnold presents.

As much of the extant literature has suggested, women’s involvement in heresy changed from their roles as *perfectae* in the thirteenth century, to the decline of the *perfectae* by the end of the thirteenth century, and finally the upsurge of support by female *credentes* in the early years of the Authié revival. Studies done by Charles Schmidt (1849), Celestin Douais (1891), Malcolm Barber (1977), and Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison (1979) on thirteenth-century manuscripts establish that women participated quite actively in the Cathar heresy of the thirteenth century, often assumed leading roles as *perfectae*, blessing bread, teaching others how to make the *melhorament* to heretics, instructing children on matters related to heresy, preaching, and

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<sup>36</sup> John Arnold, “Heresy and Gender in the Middle Ages,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennet and Ruth Karras (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 496-510, here 501.

allowing themselves to be prayed to by believers. By the fourteenth century, the roles women occupied in the heresy had changed considerably—there were far fewer *perfectae*, and female *credentes* instead played a larger role in supporting and perpetuating heresy, as the studies by Charles Molinier (1880), Michel Dmitrevsky (1924), Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison (1979) on fourteenth-century manuscripts demonstrate.

Despite the number of studies on heretical women, however, only two studies, *Les Femmes Cathares*, and *Die Katharerrinnen: Häresieverdächtige Frauen im mittelalterlichen Süd-Frankreich*, use the inquisition register of Jacques Fournier to discuss the roles of women in Catharism. And despite the fact that Anne Brenon’s book uses Fournier’s register, that book gives more attention to thirteenth-century heretical women using other manuscript evidence. In contrast to earlier scholarly work, this study uses the extraordinarily-detailed Fournier inquisition register to compare the lived religion of men and women Cathar *credentes* in this period. It examines *how* men, women, and families who were friends, relatives, accomplices, believers, and defenders of the heretical preachers, participated in and supported the sect, by means of a case study on the Benet family of Montailou and Ax.

#### Historiography of the Cathar Household and Family

As described above, recent work on the Cathar movement suggests that it was a home-grown phenomenon; Christian in orientation, it may have risen out of local conditions and customs and was passed down and perpetuated through family ties. However, the Cathar “household” changed over time. When Catharism was first introduced to Languedoc, the Cathar “household” consisted of *perfecti*, while “households” of Cathar sympathizers were separate. When Catharism came under persecution in the first half of the thirteenth century, both households of *perfecti* and households of believers were affected, and only the households of believers survived. Because of

this, the *perfecti* became dependent on the services that households of believers could provide: food, protection, and community. By the period with which this thesis is concerned with (1300 to 1308) the households of believers (and networks formed between them) had become indispensable to the survival and support of the *perfecti* after their suppression in the thirteenth century.

In 1880, Charles Molinier published his *l'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France au XIIIe et au XIVe siècle* (The Inquisition in the South of France in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries). Molinier analyzed inquisition documents dating from as early as 1246 (the sentences of Bernard de Caux) to as late as 1309 (the register of Geoffroy d'Ablis, BnF lat. 4269). In addition to describing the condition of women in the heresy, as discussed above, he noted that “for some of the defendants with whom we are occupied, attachment to heretical beliefs resembles a familial heritage.”<sup>37</sup> Several scholars have built upon this suggestion, including Michel Dmitrevsky, Richard Abels, Ellen Harrison, Anne Brenon, and Bernard Hamilton.

In 1924, Michel Dmitrevsky discussed the family within the context of the Cathar sect. Dmitrevsky suggested, “that the cult of Cathar ideas and beliefs was transmitted with surprising ease within families, this is what Charles Molinier already noticed, who speaks of a ‘heretical family heritage’. This statement can be confirmed by a series of examples.”<sup>38</sup> Dmitrevsky describes how practicing the Cathar way of life inspired people to pray to the wandering missionaries, how the conversion of a wife or husband usually resulted in the conversion of their partner, and how the conversion of one or two parents led to the conversion of their children. In instances where both husband and wife were sympathetic to the heretics, they generally helped

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<sup>37</sup> Charles Molinier, *L'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France au XIIIe et au XIVe Siècle: étude sur les Sources de son Histoire* (Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1880), note p. 90.

<sup>38</sup> Dmitrevsky, 303.



one another to avoid the long arm of the inquisition and also encouraged their children to participate in heterodoxy. Being assured that their family members were proper believers, the faithful could support and pray to the *perfecti* with a certain peace of mind.

Discussing the ways in which the conversion of immediate family members encouraged heterodox belief, Dmitrevsky writes that “the way of life of these converts [to heresy] was already an extremely effective way to win over their immediate [relations]. The heterodox zealots followed their rules rigorously. Their whole lives were filled with the ascetic spirit. They endured multiple persecutions with determination. Even martyrdom did not shake their ardent convictions. Such firmness, such fervor, impressed to the utmost anyone who approached them, especially their families.”<sup>39</sup> Similarly, the conversion of a husband or wife often resulted in the conversion of their partner: “the wife’s conversion first caused exasperated opposition from the husband. Often, she would use the hardest means to give up regular [worship] and other forms of abstinence. Finally, he gave in. The fanatical endurance of the stubborn aroused his admiration, and his entry into the cult was only a matter of time.”<sup>40</sup>

Sectarian parents also inspired children to convert, “girls often became Cathars for fear of arousing the wrath of their sectarian parents through their fidelity to the Roman Church,”<sup>41</sup> and “sectarian parents always agreed that their children should embrace Catharism.”<sup>42</sup> Parents also taught their children how to properly make the *melhorament* to the heretics.<sup>43</sup> In instances where husband and wife were both sympathetic to the heretical cause, “they helped each other to

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<sup>39</sup> Dmitrevsky, 305.

<sup>40</sup> Dmitrevsky, 305.

<sup>41</sup> Dmitrevsky, 306.

<sup>42</sup> Dmitrevsky, 306.

<sup>43</sup> Dmitrevsky, 307-308

deceive the inquisition... If the husband fled to escape the inquisitorial pursuit, [his] faithful wife fled with him.”<sup>44</sup>

In ensuring their immediate family were also sympathetic and particularly discreet, he suggests, “sectarians were able to provide assistance to their missionaries with complete peace of mind. Married women, as well as young girls who had not yet left the paternal home, did not pass up any opportunity to be useful to the ‘good men’.”<sup>45</sup> Dmitrevsky suggests that “family members were brought to [the good men] with full reliance on their discretion.”<sup>46</sup>

Despite showing the importance of the Cathar “household,” Dmitrevsky admits that “the close circle of the family was far from being the main source from which Catharism drew its strength. But if we want to be aware of the different factors which fostered its development, we must not forget the great role that the family played in it.”<sup>47</sup> While Dmitrevsky understood the important role that the “family of believers” played in the perpetuation of Catharism, he maintained that it was not a driving force of the movement, despite evidence suggesting the contrary.

In 1998, Anne Brenon explored the idea of the “Cathar family” further, explaining, “serious investigation into Occitan Cathar society shows how, as far back as the generation born in 1180 if not earlier, Catharism was virtually a family heritage, bestowed upon infants in their cradles. One was born a Cathar just as one’s neighbor might be born a Catholic—the family’s religious options were thus conditioning, even if this did not rule out the possibility of a later divergence.”<sup>48</sup> Brenon described how entire families converted to Catharism, using the

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<sup>44</sup> Dmitrevsky, 306.

<sup>45</sup> Dmitrevsky, 309.

<sup>46</sup> Dmitrevsky, 310.

<sup>47</sup> Dmitrevsky, 310.

<sup>48</sup> Brenon, “Catharism and the Family in Languedoc in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries,” in *Urban and Rural Communities in Medieval France: Provence and Languedoc, 1000-1500*, ed. Kathryn Reyerson and John Victor Drendel. (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 291-314, here 295-296.

‘Lamothe’ family as an example, a “family which unanimously shared the same faith: a widowed mother and nine children, all believers—three of them belonging to the Cathar clergy.”<sup>49</sup>

Brenon describes how, at the turn of the thirteenth century, when repression worsened, “families usually went on trying to protect hounded relatives for as long as possible... provided hiding, escorts, and food.”<sup>50</sup> She suggested that “conversely, and this eventually contributed to the demise of Catharism, a family might reject the troublesome dissenter, who was seen as bringing disaster on the household, be it imprisonment or the confiscation of goods. The temptation to denounce a relative in the hopes of saving one’s skin worked like a cancer in some families.”<sup>51</sup>

As time went on, and as persecution became more widespread during the inquisitions of the mid-thirteenth century, “decisions to help Cathar preachers generally became more secretive, even in families of believers.” Women helped people on the run, providing them with food and clothing. Brenon says that during this period, “the number of those living in hiding dropped sharply, as a result of unremitting arrests and executions, less frequently because some were desperately reduced to recanting.”<sup>52</sup>

Brenon writes that “in the final years that preceded the ultimate death of Catharism [during the Authié revival from ca. 1300 to 1321, the sect was] spent and reduced to a tiny number of individual believers, and interestingly, families.” She writes that post-1300, “marriages were carefully arranged between families of believers so as not to let the wolf (that is, a potential informer) into the fold. The Inquisitors’ way of dealing with this at the beginning of the fourteenth century was terrifying: inquiries that rested on lists of names, the use of spies, the

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<sup>49</sup> Brenon, “Catharism and the Family,” 296.

<sup>50</sup> Brenon, “Catharism and the Family,” 307-308

<sup>51</sup> Brenon, “Catharism and the Family,” 309.

<sup>52</sup> Brenon, “Catharism and the Family,” 309-310.

rounding up in some villages of all the inhabitants for questioning. Bernard Gui inflicted collective sentences on whole families.”<sup>53</sup> In the village of Montailou, everyone over the age of twelve was questioned by the inquisition in 1308.

Brenon describes how the resurgence of Catharism in Languedoc after 1300 was largely due to one particular family—the Authiés: Pèire and Guilhem Authié, and Pèire’s son Jacme. She writes: “between 1300 and 1308, a campaign of secret preaching by a new team of determined Good Men, the small church of the Authié brothers, had revived old networks of solidarity and dissident fervor between the Pyrenées and the lower Quercy. This handful of religious men, who desperately tried to increase their numerical strength by encouraging and multiplying vocations and ordinances in the teeth of death, provides a fine example of family loyalties.”<sup>54</sup>

Brenon concludes that the Cathar church was not only “a precursor of the town and village convents from which the mendicant orders emerged, [but] it invented the ideal of salvation at home. However spiritualistic and disembodied the Cathar faith may have been, Cathar religious practice was most pragmatic and ‘close to people’s concerns,’ as one might say nowadays; unlike the Roman church, it did not cut off, in splendid remoteness, a religious elite (of Cluniacs and Cistercians), to whom holiness and salvation were ensured, from the Christian masses who were trapped in the contradictions of this world, where Satan is the lord – everyone agreed on this point. The practices of the Cathar church were those of a church with flexible structures that enabled it to slip smoothly into the mold of family life... Better still than town or village convents, the Cathars instituted monastic communities within the home and salvation within one’s family. Cathar monks and nuns were not seen to be cut off from the profane world they had previously known, from their social background, nor even their families. The social and

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<sup>53</sup> Brenon, “Catharism and the Family,” 309-310.

<sup>54</sup> Brenon, “Catharism and the Family,” 309-311.

family environment appears to have been naturally drawn into the orbit of the church, since salvation was promised to all and the path to salvation was open to all, sooner or later.”<sup>55</sup>

Critically, she suggests that “family bonds and the example set by those one loved added an emotional dimension to the ties between the Christian inhabitants of Occitan villages and the Cathar church... the humblest Occitan Christian was assured of finding in the Cathar church a motherly, fraternal church where one sought salvation in the company of those one loved.”<sup>56</sup>

In 2014, Bernard Hamilton published his article “Perfection and Pragmatism: Cathar Attitudes to the Household” in which he described the changing nature of Cathar households from 1150 to 1320. His main thesis is that “after the introduction of the Papal Inquisition in Languedoc in 1233, the Cathar Church was systematically persecuted and one consequence of this was that its leaders’ conception of what constituted a Cathar household became diversified... [the Cathars] also recognized a new type of Cathar household. This consisted of families of committed believers and their dependents, whose work was seen as vital to the survival of their Church.”<sup>57</sup>

The Cathar household in the twelfth century, as Hamilton describes, “consisted of a group of the perfect, either of men or women, which varied considerably in number in accordance with the size of the house... The Cathar household in theory consisted of the perfect alone.”<sup>58</sup> However, after the crusade against the Cathars (as well as Inquisitorial persecution) in the first half of the thirteenth century, the Cathar elite “established their headquarters in Cremona [in northern Italy] ca. 1250. The surviving communities of perfect from their French diocese joined

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<sup>55</sup> Brenon, “Catharism and the Family,” 313-314

<sup>56</sup> Brenon, “Catharism and the Family,” 314.

<sup>57</sup> Bernard Hamilton, “Perfection and Pragmatism: Cathar Attitudes to the Household,” in *Studies in Church History* 50 (2014): 86-96, here 86.

<sup>58</sup> Hamilton, “Perfection and Pragmatism,” 89.

them there, and the bishops seconded some of their members to undertake the work of ministry in Languedoc. So traditional households of the southern French perfect continued to exist in Lombardy... But in Languedoc at that time the term ‘Cathar household’ came to mean something different.”<sup>59</sup>

During this period of prosecution, “the perfect continued, as far as possible, to maintain their routine of liturgical prayer fifteen times a day, but they relied on believers for the physical necessities of life, particularly food.”<sup>60</sup> Hamilton describes how “in the time of the Albigensian Crusade,” believers had been “made up of people with a variable range of commitment: on the one hand there were men and women who respected the perfect but were not very enthusiastic about imitating their way of life, while on the other hand there were people who intended to become perfect themselves when they could responsibly do so.” Hamilton writes that “the believers were by definition men and women who were convinced that the Cathar faith was true and were prepared to risk their freedom and their property in order to support it. They formed the new Cathar households... They supported the work of the perfect and attended their meetings; and crucially the next generation of perfect was recruited from these families.”<sup>61</sup>

Hamilton maintains, however, “the Cathar Church could not survive without the *perfect*. The Papal Inquisition became more effective in Lombardy in the later thirteenth century, and the hierarchy of the Cathar churches of Languedoc in exile there had been virtually eliminated by 1300,” and concluding, he describes: “this meant that there were no longer any communities in existence in Italy to train southern French perfect,” that “although the existence of households of

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<sup>59</sup> Hamilton, "Perfection and Pragmatism," 92.

<sup>60</sup> Hamilton, "Perfection and Pragmatism," 93.

<sup>61</sup> Hamilton, "Perfection and Pragmatism," 93-94.

Cathar believers undoubtedly prolonged the survival of Catharism in Languedoc,” Catharism nonetheless “died out in France by 1321, when the last known Cathar perfect was executed.”<sup>62</sup>

Charles Moliner had first noticed the “family heritage” of Catharism as early as 1880. In subsequent studies, Michel Dmitrevsky, Anne Brenon, and Bernard Hamilton have generally shown that over time, the *perfecti* (due to persecution) grew increasingly dependent on households of believers and what they offered: food, protection, and community. By the period this thesis is concerned with (1300 to 1308), the households of believers had become indispensable to the survival and support of the *perfecti*.

#### Sources of the Study

Several manuscripts informed this study on the Benet family. First and most importantly, the Pamiers inquisition register of Jacques Fournier from 1318 to 1325 (Vat. Lat. MS 4030); second, the Carcassonne inquisition register of Geoffroy d’Ablis (BnF lat. 4269) dating from 1308 to 1309; and, third, the book of sentences by the inquisitor Bernard Gui from 1307 to 1323 (British Library Add. MS 4697). Other manuscripts discussed throughout the study include the depositions taken by the Toulouse inquisitors Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre in 1245 and 1246 (BN Tse MS Lat. 609), and manuscripts from the Doat Collection at the (BnF, Doat MSS 21-37).<sup>63</sup>

#### Vat. Lat. MS 4030; the Fournier Inquisition Register

According to Jean-Marie Vidal, in 1295, in an effort to suppress local heterodoxy, a new diocese was established by the Papacy with its seat at Pamiers in southern France. Although it

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<sup>62</sup> Hamilton, "Perfection and Pragmatism," 95.

<sup>63</sup> For information on the Doat collection, see Yves Dossat, *Les crises de l’Inquisition toulousaine au XIIIe siècle (1233-1273)* (Bordeaux: Imprimerie Biere, 1959), 37-42, 44-55. Also see Charles Molinier, *L’Inquisition dans le Midi de la France au XIIIe et au XIVe siècle: étude sur les sources de son histoire* (Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1880), 34-40. For a recent publication on Doat vols. 25 and 26 see Peter Biller, Caterina Bruschi, and Shelagh Sneddon, eds, *Inquisitors and Heretics in Thirteenth-century Languedoc: Edition and Translation of Toulouse Inquisition Depositions, 1273-1282* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), especially 1-33.

had been intended to be an inquisitorial seat such as those at Carcassonne and Toulouse, the inquisition of Pamiers ceased under the leadership of its first inquisitor in 1302. A local from the Ariège, in 1307 Fournier became Bishop of Pamiers, and in close collaboration with the Papal Inquisition (at Carcassonne), he set up his own inquisitorial office at Pamiers, systematically rooting out every rumor of heterodox belief. From 1318 to 1325, Bishop Fournier interrogated individuals accused of heterodoxy, and recorded these depositions in his episcopal register.<sup>64</sup> Having been made Bishop of Pamiers in 1317, he then became Bishop of Mirepoix in 1326, was made a Cardinal in 1327, was elected as Pope (Benedict XII), on December 20, 1334, and died in 1342.<sup>65</sup> The inquisition register kept at the Vatican Library (Vat. Lat. MS 4030) is the only extant inquisitorial register volume remaining from the inquisition at Pamiers.

In a recent article, Elizabeth Sherman examined what distinguishes Fournier's register from other inquisition registers that came before it: "Fournier's method of inquiry depended on eliciting responses from the accused through questioning, the expected format of inquisitorial examination; but the focus of his questions and the manner in which he engaged suspects produced lengthy depositions wherein the accused often related the minutiae of daily life as a part of their confession. Simply put, this was an innovation."<sup>66</sup> Sherman describes how earlier inquisition registers such as those from Quercy (1241-1242), Toulouse (1273-1280), Lauragais

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<sup>64</sup> Jean-Marie Vidal, *Le tribunal d'inquisition de Pamiers* (Toulouse : Edouard Privat, 1906), 2-15.

<sup>65</sup> For a collection of articles on the career and work of Jacques Fournier, see *Pope Benedict XII (1334-1342): The Guardian of Orthodoxy*, ed. Irene Bruno (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016). Other works on Fournier include Jean Duvernoy, "A la recherche de la personnalité de Jacques Fournier," in *Septième centenaire du diocèse de Pamiers, 1295-1995: Actes du colloque (8 et 9 septembre 1995)*, (Pamiers : Société historique et archéologique de Pamiers et de la Basse-Ariège, 1997), 9-15; Jean Duvernoy, "Benoît XII et le pays de Foix," in *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 26 (1991): 19-37; Danielle Laurendeau, "Le village et l'inquisiteur," *Histoire Sociétés Rurales* 34, no. 2 (2010): 13-52; Jacques Paul, "Jacques Fournier (1317-1326), un inquisiteur professionnel," in *Les inquisiteurs: Portraits de défenseurs de la foi en Languedoc (XIIIe-XIVe siècles)* (Toulouse : Privat, 2001): 133-140. In German, see Josef Koch, *Der Kardinal Jacques Fournier (Benedikt XII.) als Gutachter in theologischen Prozessen* (Cologne: Bachem, 1960).

<sup>66</sup> Elizabeth Sherman, "Jacques Fournier and Thirteenth-Century Inquisitorial Methods," in *Pope Benedict XII (1334-1342): The Guardian of Orthodoxy*, ed. Irene Bruno (Amsterdam University Press, 2016): 27-56, here 28.



(1256), a second inquisition at Toulouse (1273-1280), and Albi (1299-1300) focused on questions of material support to the heretics, and read (more often than not) as lists of items offered to heretic preachers. She suggested that “by the fourteenth century, heresy had changed in Languedoc. In particular, it had become a much smaller affair. Only fourteen *heretici* were in the area at the time, led by [Pèire Authié], who was responsible for this temporary revival of heresy... In dealing with these small numbers of *heretici*, it is understandable how many of the people in Fournier’s register, unlike those in earlier registers, did not have any significant contact with them or a chance to support them through material gifts.”<sup>67</sup> Put simply, “earlier inquisitors focused on support and interaction, but Fournier broadened his questioning to centre on belief and deeds beyond interaction with heretics to include a whole broad category of immoral acts.”<sup>68</sup>

According to J. M. Vidal, the register itself is a volume measuring 375x260mm, and it contains the minutes of ninety-five depositions. The volume is made up of 325 folios and is written with two columns per page in a medium Gothic script. In the second folio, a table of contents, written in cursive, bears the titles of the proceedings with the indication of the initial and final folios of each. The register of the inquisition of Pamiers begins at f. 6a, and it occupies the rest of the volume.

Each process is preceded by a title setting out the content of the document, e.g. *confessio guillelmi fortis de monte alionis* (the Confession of Guilhem Fort of Montailou). A similar (although often abbreviated) heading is used as the running title on each page. In the margins, one can find brief notes: sometimes sermons, sometimes corrections. At the bottom of some

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<sup>67</sup> Sherman, “Jacques Fournier,” 36-37.

<sup>68</sup> Sherman, “Jacques Fournier,” 38.

pages are catchwords, some of the framed in drawings including geometric figures, animals (goats and fish feature prominently), or human caricatures.<sup>69</sup>

It is likely that Fournier kept the extant volume in his personal library, which later merged into the pope's library when the Pontifical Library of Avignon was brought back to Rome.<sup>70</sup> The register and its contents were published in full by Jean Duvernoy, first in Latin in 1965, and subsequently (and misleadingly) in French in 1978 in which the depositions were translated into the first person. For the purposes of this thesis I have almost entirely relied on the authoritative Latin edition published by Duvernoy in 1965.<sup>71</sup> No complete English translation of the register into English has yet been completed.

#### BnF MS 4269; the Register of Geoffroy d'Ablis

This manuscript contains evidence for the inquisition of Geoffroy d'Ablis at Carcassonne from 1308 to 1309, and is currently kept at the Bibliotheque Nationale de Paris. According to historian Nicholas Sparks, "the manuscript... seems to have derived from an original containing at least 147 folios, but has itself been reduced in size by around one third, now comprising the testimony of seventeen witnesses, spread over fifty-five folios."<sup>72</sup> He describes that "the register shares with that of Fournier a high level of detail when compared to even the lengthiest of earlier deposition material, although d'Ablis' records are somewhat more formal and less flamboyant than those of the bishop of Pamiers. A unique and remarkable feature of this register, which should also be noted, is the appearance of two depositions submitted in writing by the deponents; these appear, apparently unaltered, in the first person singular."<sup>73</sup> The document references many

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<sup>69</sup> Jean-Marie Vidal, *Le Tribunal d'inquisition de Pamiers* (Toulouse: Privat, 1906), 7-15.

<sup>70</sup> See Jean-Marie Vidal, *Le Tribunal d'inquisition de Pamiers*, 14.

<sup>71</sup> Jacques Fournier, *Le Régistre d'Inquisition de Jacques Fournier (1318-1325)*, ed. Jean Duvernoy, 3 vols. (Toulouse: Edouard Privat, 1965).

<sup>72</sup> Chris Sparks, *Heresy, Inquisition and Life Cycle in Medieval Languedoc* (London: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2014), 22.

<sup>73</sup> Sparks, *Heresy, Inquisition and Life Cycle*, 22.

individuals who would later appear in the Pamiers inquisition volumes (including Guilhem Benet). The manuscript was edited and published by Annette Pales-Gobilliard in Latin and French in 1984.<sup>74</sup>

British Library Add. MS 4697; the Sentences of Bernard Gui

The manuscript containing the sentences of Bernard Gui, believed by celebrated historians Charles Molinier, Celestin Douais to have disappeared, has never actually been “lost”. It was edited and published by Philipp van Limborch in 1692 as a supplement to his *historia Inquisitionis*<sup>75</sup> (History of the Inquisition) and according to M.A.E. Nickson is “now Add. MS 4697 in the Department of Manuscripts of the British Museum, where it has been preserved since 1756.”<sup>76</sup> This manuscript contains the sentences of Bernard Gui from 1308 to 1323 and provides the conclusions to many of the depositions that appear in Vat. Lat. MS 4030 (including the final sentence of Guillelma Benet I for her heretical actions). According to Sparks, “[Bernard Gui’s] sentences were given during ‘sermons general’: formal elements of the judicial process and public shows of inquisitorial strength generally held on Sundays at the cathedral church or at the cemetery of St-Jean Martyr at Pamiers.”<sup>77</sup> He notes that it “opens with an alphabetical list of all people sentenced, arranged alphabetically by place, then in the order that names appeared in the register. Both this index and the main text have been annotated with further information on those named and cross-referenced to their appearance in other registers.”<sup>78</sup> In this document one can find many references to a great number of heretical individuals from the Ariège.

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<sup>74</sup> Geoffroy d’Ablis, *l’Inquisiteur Geoffroy d’Ablis et les Cathares du Comté de Foix: (1308-1309)*, ed. Annette Pales-Gobilliard (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), 1984.

<sup>75</sup> Philippus van Limborch, *Historia inquisitionis: cui subjungitur liber sententiarum inquisitionis tholosanae ab anno Christi MCCCVII ad annum MCCCXXIII* (Amsterdam: Henricum Wetstenium, 1692).

<sup>76</sup> Margaret Nickson, "Locke and the Inquisition of Toulouse," *The British Museum Quarterly* (1972): 83-92.

<sup>77</sup> Sparks, *Heresy, Inquisition and Life Cycle*, 22.

<sup>78</sup> Sparks, *Heresy, Inquisition and Life Cycle*, 22.

## The Problem of Sources

According to Nicholas Sparks, “these studies make one thing very plain: the historian cannot – as Le Roy Ladurie did in Montaignou – treat deposition records as if they were direct and uncomplicated narrations of past reality.”<sup>79</sup> As Shulamith Shahar has said, “like all historical sources, the records of the courts of the Inquisition are not without their particular limitations and problems.” The conversations between the inquisitors and the deponents were not carried out in Latin (the language of record), but in the vernacular of the region (Occitan or one of its dialects). Shahar has commented, “evidently [the notary or clerk] often wrote down only those of the questions and answers which seemed to them central and significant... the exchange was scarcely a free dialogue. The power was in the hands of the interrogator, especially if the person before him was already jailed and was brought repeatedly from prison.”<sup>80</sup> And in many cases, after a first draft of a deposition was compiled it would go through multiple rounds of revision. The revised version would then be read back to the deponent (in Occitan).

In 1998, the historian John Arnold examined the “ethics of interrogating subaltern voices.”<sup>81</sup> He suggested that by trying to eliminate the inquisitor’s biases by criticizing the sources, “making the real inquisitor disappear in order that the ‘truth’ of the records can be authorized,” we encounter an ethical problem: “the positions of historian and inquisitor can become worryingly blurred,” and we run the risk of “colonizing the subaltern voice,” that is, reading our own concerns into their words.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Sparks, *Heresy, Inquisition and Life Cycle*, 25.

<sup>80</sup> Shulamith Shahar, *Women in a Medieval Heretical sect: Agnes and Huguette the Waldensians* (Boydell & Brewer, 2001), xv-xvi.

<sup>81</sup> John Arnold, “The Historian as Inquisitor: the Ethics of Interrogating Subaltern Voices,” *Rethinking History* 2 (1998): 379-386.

<sup>82</sup> Arnold, “Historian as Inquisitor,” 381.

This is not to say that the registers of the inquisition are without historical value, rather, they are a rich source of information. As Shahar has suggested, “the court records do not suffer from the limitations and problems, which characterize polemical writings, chronicles and literary sources. The text of the records is not only the story or the whole story of the persons questioned. It is certainly not the whole ‘truth’ about them, but only such ‘truth’ as was uncovered in process of the interrogation, whose relationship to the ‘truth’ about them was uneven, due to the various methods used by the Inquisitors, and the personal differences among the individuals questioned. Yet the written record is dry and matter-of-fact, free from stylistic devices and rhetorical strategies, its purpose being pragmatic and for internal use, rather than didactic or propagandistic.”<sup>83</sup> If read carefully with an understanding of the context in which they were produced and of the biases and positions of each deponent, not simply read transparently, the registers of the inquisition are some of the most important documents of social and religious life left to us from the later medieval period.

It must be noted, however, that the environment in which the depositions were given was an environment of fear. Even Galharda Benet II, when she was cited to appear before the inquisition of Carcassonne in early 1308, told her husband she ought not to lie to the inquisition, even though he himself was a Cathar *perfectus*! Understanding that Catholic villagers (loyal to the Inquisition) would also be brought in to depose, and knowing that one of their many accomplices could reveal their support of the heretics under threat, a deponent might have deposed what they believed to be the truth in order to appeal to the inquisitors’ mercy, and to be committed to the wearing of yellow crosses rather than be imprisoned, or worse. To resolve the problems the registers present, I propose that cross-referencing as many different inquisition depositions (from

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<sup>83</sup> Shulamith Shahar, *Women in a Medieval Heretical Sect: Agnes and Hugette the Waldensians* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2001), xiv.

both Catholic deponents and those loyal to the heretics) as possible will generally point in the direction of truth and allow one to come to the clearest possible understanding of the events of the Authié revival from ca. 1300 to 1308.

### Plan of Work

The purpose of the following chapters is twofold: first, to investigate the ways in which women *credentes* participated in Catharism during the “Authié revival” after the decline of the *perfectae* class, contextualizing this participation by comparing the roles of women *credentes* to those of male *credentes*, and second, to build upon this analysis and examine how households and families of Cathar *credentes* worked together to prolong the survival of Catharism in the fourteenth century.

The second chapter of this thesis, “Guilhem and Guillelma Benet I”, aims to contribute to our understanding of how men and women believers participated in heresy. It will analyze and compare the ways in which Guilhem and Guillelma Benet participated in heresy. The chapter begins to introduce the ways in which families of *credentes* contributed to the survival of Catharism in Languedoc.

The third chapter of this thesis, “The Benet Sons: Raimond, Bernart, and Pèire Benet” explores the heretical activities of Guilhem and Guillelma I’s sons and begins to explore more fully how the ‘family heritage’ of Catharism helped to prolong its survival into the fourteenth century, and how the faith was shared between parents and their children. Building on this, the chapter will discuss how Raimond Benet kept heretical company, assisted Guilhem Belot and Guilhem Benet with the heretication of ‘na Roqua’, and was hereticated at his death. The chapter will discuss how Bernart Benet helped to organize the heretication of Guilhem Guilhabert, was arrested for matters related to heresy, escaped, and was subsequently turned in by his sister-in-

law. Although not often mentioned in the inquisition registers, Pèire Benet also kept heretical company, just as his parents had done.

The fourth chapter, “the Benet Daughters: Alazaïs Esclarmonda, Guillelma II, and Montania”, explores the heretical activities of Guilhem and Guillelma Benet I’s daughters, continuing to explore Catharism’s “family heritage” in the fourteenth century. The chapter will discuss how Alazaïs was actively involved in heresy even right before her death. She was rumored to have consorted with heretics and to have been a believer, and was hereticated at her death by Guilhem Authié. According to the depositions that discuss Guillelma II, it is clear that she frequently listened to heretics preach and held heretical beliefs. Her marriage to Bernart Belot is also interesting, because both partners were Cathar sympathizers, a pattern reflecting the scholarship of Michel Dmitrevsky and Anne Brenon. Montania is only mentioned in one instance as “breastfeeding” and was too young to participate in heresy, and Esclarmonda is only referred to briefly in the deposition of her brother Bernart.

The fifth chapter, “the Ax Benets: Arnaut, Galharda, and Galharda Benet II,” explores the heretical activities of Guilhem’s brother Arnaut’s family in Ax. The chapter discusses how Arnaut Benet was somewhat active in supporting the Cathar ministers. He hosted them in his home, and went around to visit them. Although perhaps not as deeply involved in the heresy as his brother Guilhem or his sister-in-law Guillelma, Arnaut was nevertheless a believer in heretics. Because Galharda Benet I is only referred to in passing in the Ablis register, one cannot, with complete certainty, determine whether she actively participated in heresy or if she was simply in her house while heretics were present.

Galharda II was rumored to have been a believer in the depositions of Guilhem Rodes from Tarascon and the shepherd Piere Maury from Montailou. They said that she made the

*melhorament* to heretics in the houses of Guilhem Gombert, Guillelma Garsen, and Sebèlia d'en Balle. She also attended the wedding of her cousin Guillelma Benet I along with her husband Guilhem Authié the heretic. According to Jacme Garsen, Guillelma was consistently present when the heretics were speaking out against the Roman Church. Guillelma also participated in heretications, having been present at the heretication of Raimonda Rodes from Tarascon, kept watch while Guilhem Roussel was hereticated, and petitioned Sibille Authié and her maternal grandfather, Arnaut Savinhan, to be hereticated by the heretical preachers. The depositions concerning Galharda Benet II demonstrate perhaps the deepest degree to which women could participate in the Cathar heresy during the Authié revival, as she made the *melhorament* to the heretics, was present at various heretications, visited the heretics, was cited by the inquisitor of Carcassonne and was threatened by her husband not to denounce them, asked others if they wished to be hereticated, and also begged her grandfather to be hereticated at his death.



## **Chapter Two: Guilhem and Guillelma Benet I**

Guilhem Benet of Montailou was the husband of Guillelma Benet I, and father of Raimond, Bernart, Pèire, Alazaïs, Montania, Esclarmonda, and Guillelma Benet II. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie described the Benet family as a “a worthy and prosperous family of farmer-stockbreeders in Montailou. But [the family was] ruined by the Inquisition, and their lands confiscated and handed over to the Compté de Foix.”<sup>1</sup> Guilhem was the brother of Arnaut Benet from Ax, who was the father-in-law of Guilhem Authié, a heretic from Lombardy. Because of this connection between the Benet and Authié families, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie commented that, “it was through the *domus* [household] of [Guilhem] Benet that heresy was re-introduced into Montailou around 1300, by the Authiés, back from Lombardy.”<sup>2</sup>

Scholars have shown little interest in the life of Guillelma Benet I. For example, in *The Yellow Cross: The Story of the Last Cathars' Rebellion Against the Inquisition, 1290-1329* (published in 2002), René Weis commented only on her relationship to her children and her age rather than any other aspect of her life, writing: “[Guilhem and Guillelma I] had three sons and four daughters... The relative youth of the Benet children suggests that [Guillelma I], the mother of the household, was younger than either of the neighboring matriarchs [Guillelma Belot and Mengarda Clergue. Guillelma I] may not have been much older than [Béatrix] de Planisolles.”<sup>3</sup> Even Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie in his *Montailou* only offered a one-sentence description of her in his index of the families of the village, having described her as “a village matriarch, sometimes referred to as ‘Benete’.”<sup>4</sup> Le Roy Ladurie’s lack of attention to Guillelma I was

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<sup>1</sup> Montailou, 71.

<sup>2</sup> Montailou, note p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Weis, 27.

<sup>4</sup> Montailou, 364.

probably due to his preoccupying focus on the Clergue family drama (and especially on Pèire Clergue and his many mistresses).

This chapter will draw from the depositions of Alazaïs Azema, Raimonda Belot, Guillelma Benet I herself, Bernart Benet, Bernart and Gaia Clergue, Guillelma Clergue, Alazaïs Faure, Guilhem Fort, Alamanda Guilhabert, Guilhem Marus, Joan and Pèire Maury, Beatris de Planissoles, Joan Pelissier, Bruna Pourcel, Faurèsa den Riba, and Raimonda Testaniere. In doing so, the chapter will discuss how Guilhem was rumored by many to have been deeply involved with the heretics, made death threats against a woman who was threatening to expose the heretics to the inquisitorial authorities, hosted heretics, organized the heretications of his daughter Alazaïs, his goddaughter Esclarmonda Clergue, and an old matriarch of Montailhou, “na Roqua”, and was himself hereticated at his death, working with other families of *credentes* to support the heretical preachers.

The chapter also discusses how when the heretics first arrived to Montailhou from Lombardy, Guillelma Benet I was a passive participant in heresy. She chatted with her husband about the heretics, suggesting to him that she would perhaps like to meet them. And later she spoke with the heretic Guilhem Authié while he stayed in her home. She later became active, however, made the *melhorament* to the heretics at her house and at the Belot house, with and without her husband. In actions characterizing the greater depth of her devotion, she attended the heretications of her daughter Alazaïs, her son Raimond, and her husband Guilhem. She was careful not to speak too freely about heretics around individuals whose faith she was not sure about. Guillelma I assumed a ‘guiding’ role, perpetuating heresy and actively supporting its ministers. Guillelma I came to several of her neighbors and asked them to support the heretics (with varying results). In addition to simply bringing villagers to the heretics and encouraging

her neighbors to donate to them, she also brought the heretics around to perform the *consolamentum*, instructed others how to make the *melhorament* to them, and was directly involved in the heretication of Esclarmonda Clergue. In a final act of solidarity with the heretics, she avoided her summons by the inquisitorial court at Carcassonne, and instead lied about having a terrible fall. The chapter begins to introduce the ways in which families of *credentes* worked together to contribute to the survival of Catharism in Languedoc.

### Guilhem Benet

During Fournier's inquisition, many villagers reported rumors about how Guilhem Benet supported the Cathar preachers. According to the deposition of Beatris de Planissoles of August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1320, referring to events of 1301:

She [Beatris] also said that at the time that she was staying in Montailou and Prades d'Alions, it was rumored and said between believers of heretics that the said heretics frequented the houses of Raimond and Bernart Belot, brothers, who then lived together, and Alazaïs den Riba, sister of the heretic Prades Tavernier, and Guilhem Benet brother of Arnaut Benet from Ax, who were all from Montailou. And it was said that they guided the said heretics and knew their ways.<sup>5</sup>

Raimonda Testaniere (*alias* Vuissane) was employed in the Belot household from 1304 to 1307 by Bernart Belot, by whom she had two children. She was not particularly sympathetic to the Cathar cause and was passed over for marriage by Bernart Belot in favor of Guillelma Benet II. In her deposition before Fournier she reported that she was told by Arnaut Vital that heretics frequented Guilhem's house, corroborating Beatris's testimony. From the deposition of Raimonda Testaniere from April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1322, referring to events of 1304:

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<sup>5</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod illo tempore quo ipsa morabatur apud Montem Alionis et Pradas de Alione, erat tunc fama et vox inter credentes hereticorum quod dicti heretici frequentabant domos Ramundi et Bernardi Belot fratrum qui tunc simul morabantur, et Alazaicis den Riba, sororis den Pradas Tavernier heretici, et Guillelmi Beneti fratris Arnaldi Beneti de Ax, qui omnes errant de Monte Alione. Et dicebatur quod illi conducebant dictos hereticos et sciebant eorum vias.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 40d, p. 233.

He [Arnaut] also said to her [Raimonda] that the late heretic Guilhem Authié frequented the houses of Bernart Benet and his brothers, Guilhem Benet, and Bernart Riba of Montailou.<sup>6</sup>

Pèire Maury, a shepherd from Montailou who had Catharist tendencies, reported that he heard that Guilhem's household was heretical from Guilhem Belot and Guilhem Maury. From the deposition of Pèire Maury given June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1324 concerning events of 1301:

They [Guilhem Belot and Guilhem Maury] also said [to Pèire] that the household of Joan Guilebert was also a believing one, in which there was Joan who they said was a good believer, and Alamanda, his wife; and also the house of Guilhem Benet, [in which Guilhem] was a good believer, and also in the same way was Guilehemeta, his wife, [and] Raimond, their son.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, Raimonda Testaniere, in addition to reporting that Arnaut Vital had told her about heretics frequenting the house of Guilhem Benet, told Fournier that there were rumors that Guilhem Benet had been hereticated at his death, as well as his son Raimond and his daughter Alazaïs. According to her deposition on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

She [Raimonda] also said that there was a rumor in Montailou that Guilhem Benet and Raimond, his son, and Alazaïs, his daughter, were hereticated in death.<sup>8</sup>

During Fournier's inquisition, several villagers reported rumors related to the heretical activity of Guilhem Benet. Guilhem was rumored to have been a believer in heretics and, a guide

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<sup>6</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dixit eciam ei illo tempore quod Guillelmus Auterii de Ax quondam hereticus frequentabat domum dicti Bernardi Beneti et fratrum suorum, Guillelmi Beneti et Bernardi Riba de Monte Alionis.  
Fournier, Vol. I. f. 94c, p. 458.

<sup>7</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dixerunt etiam quod domus Iohannis Guilaberti erat etiam credens, in qua tunc errant dictus Iohannes, de quo dicebant quod erat bonus credens, et Alamanda, uxor eius; et domus etiam Guillelmi Beneti, qui Guillelmus erat bonus credens, et eodem modo etiam Guillelma, uxor eius, Ramundus, filius eorum.  
Fournier, Vol. III, f. 257c, p. 161.

<sup>8</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod fama fuit in Monte Alionis quod Guillelmus Beneti et Ramundus filius eius et Alazaicis eius filia hereticate fuerunt in morte.  
Fournier, Vol. I. f. 95d, p. 463.

to them, to have housed them, and to have been hereticated at his death. As we will see, these rumors were entirely true.

### Spreader of Heretical Teachings and Maker of Threats

Various villagers confirmed that Guilhem Benet had indeed been very involved with heresy and heretics, that he had been involved in the spread of heretical teachings, and had made death threats against one woman who was herself threatening to expose the heretics to the inquisitorial authorities. According to Guilhem Fort, a farmer from Montaillou and Cathar sympathizer who was later burnt at the stake, in his deposition given April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1321 concerning events of 1305:

He [Guilhem Fort] also said that around three years before the [heretication of Guilhem Guilhabert], as it seemed to him, the late Guilhem Benet of Montaillou, in whose house heretics were hosted, as the said Guilhem told him the deponent (and he also heard this from others, he said) Guilhem his [Guilhem Fort's] neighbor, told him that those who were called good Christians, i.e. heretics, are good men and holy, and undergo many persecutions for the sake of God, do not touch women, nor eat meat, and are men of great penitence, and are alone in keeping the way of God and saving souls, and those who are received by them enter heaven immediately after death, and they absolve men from all of their sins, and in their faith men are saved, and that it is great alms to do them good. And he [Guilhem Benet] brought him to believing these things and also seeing the said heretics, and giving them certain things, saying that if he wished to give something to the said heretics, he would take it to them.<sup>9</sup>

In her deposition of January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1321, Alazaïs Azema, a heretical sympathizer, cheesemaker, and pig farmer from Montaillou, described how Guilhem Benet threatened her with death for conspiring against the heretics “at the time when she visited the heretics.” The date of this is

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<sup>9</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod antequam predicta facta fuissent per tres annos vel circa, ut ei videtur, Guillelmus Beneti quondam de Monte Alionis, in cuius domo heretici hospitabantur, ut dictus Guillelmus dixit ipsi loquenti, et eciam ipse hoc idem quidivit ab aliis, ut dixit, qui Guillelmus erat vicinus ipsius loquentis, dixit ei quod illi qui vocantur boni christiani, id est heretici, sunt boni homines et sancti, et sustinent multas persecutiones propter Deum, nec tangent mulieres, nec comedunt carnes, et sunt homines magne penitencie, et tenant soli viam Dei et salvant animas, et illi qui recipiuntur per eos statim intrant paradysum post moretem, et absolvunt homines ab omnibus peccatis, et in fide eorum homines salvantur, et quod magna elemosina est facere eis bonum. Et inducebat eum ad credendum predicta et eciam ad videndum dictos hereticos, et ad dandum eis aliquid, dicens quod si aliquid vellet dare dictis hereticis, ipse portaret eis.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 91c, p. 444.

unclear, but probably 1305-1306, since she reported visiting the Belot household regularly around that time, and Guilhem Benet died in the early months of 1305.

And when she was in Montaignou, the said Raimond Belot said to her [Alazaïs] that she could not enter their [Belot] house again, because she put the good Christians in a scandal, and had made them [the heretics] flee from their house, and he threatened her that if she revealed them again, one day she would find her head separated from her body. Afterwards the same Raimond went to Guilhem Benet and complained about her concerning the above-mentioned things, [and] Guilhem Benet violently threatened the same [Alazaïs] with death, if she would again reveal the good Christians.<sup>10</sup>

Clearly, Guilhem was a loyal protector and supporter of the heretics and their frequent hosts the Belots, having hosted heretics and spread their teachings, and he threatened Alazaïs with death if she should reveal the heretics (or get the Belot family in trouble with the inquisitorial authorities).

#### Host of Heretics

Guilhem was not only rumored to have hosted heretics; this was confirmed by several villagers. According to the depositions of Alazaïs Azema, Guillelma Clergue, and Gaia Clergue, Guilhem hosted heretics very often.

The deposition of Alzsaïs Azema reports that she confessed to Fournier that she was invited by Raimond Clergue to visit Guilhem's home where heretics were staying. She said on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1320, concerning events of 1302:

She said that, as it seemed to her, around 18 years ago early in the morning she had let out the pigs from her house and found on the castle plateau of Montaignou the late Raimond Clergue of Montaignou who was supporting himself on a staff he was carrying, who said to her that she ought to enter his house, and she [Alazaïs] responded that she could not because she had left her house open, to which the said Raimond said that on the

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<sup>10</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et quando fuit in Monte Alionis, Ramundus Beloti predictus dixit ei quod de cetero non ingrederetur domum ipsorum, quia ipsa ponebat in scandalum bonos christianos, et fecerat eos fugere de domo eorum, et comminatus fuit ei quod si de cetero eos manifestaret, aliqua dierum inveniretur capud eius separatum a corpore. Postea idem Ramundus ivit ad Guillelmum Beneti et conquestus fuit de ipsa super predictis, qui Guillelmus Beneti graviter comminatus fuit eidem de morte, si de cetero dictos bonos christianos discelaret.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 60d, p. 318.

contrary she ought to enter because she would see in his home something which would never be seen again, and then she [Alazaïs] with the said Raimond entered the house of Guilhem Benet, and when she was in [the part of the] house called the foganha, she found standing next to the door of a certain chamber Guilhem Authié and Pons Sicre the heretics, and seeing them she said: “Who is that?” and then the said two heretics entered the chamber and exited by a certain secret door the house of the said Raimond and entered the house of Bernart den Riba, and the said Raimond followed them, while she remained in the aforesaid foganha.<sup>11</sup>

As can be seen from this section of Alazaïs’ deposition, Raimond Clergue convinced Alazaïs to visit “his own” house, telling her that if she would come, she would see something she would never see again. Then, he took her to the house of Guilhem Benet where she saw the heretics Guilhem Authié and Pons Sicre, just before they left his house through a rear exit.

Guilhem also visited the heretics while they were hosted in the houses of other believers.

According to the deposition of Guillelma Clergue on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1320:

She frequently saw both before and after, that the said Guilhem [Authié] entered her father’s house, when the heretics were there. The following men also entered the said house, with or without him, when the heretics were there, and she knew them to be: Bernard, Raimond, and Guilhem Belot, Guilhem Benet, and Raimond Benet his son, the latter two (Guilhem and Raimond Benet) were not mentioned in Carcassonne, as she knows, because they were already dead. She does not know if their bones were burned afterwards, but she knew well that the said two were believers of heretics, and that this is the public opinion in Montailou, and it was commonly said that in the house of Guilhem Benet heretics were hosted. And one day when she was going for water, she met the said Guilhem who was coming by road from Ax, and she asked him from where he was coming, and he responded that [he was coming] from Ax, and had stayed at the house of

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<sup>11</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dixit quod ut videtur ei XVIII anni sunt vel circa ipsa quodam mane emiserat porcos de domo sua et invenit in plano castris de Monte Alionis Ramundum Beloti quondam de Monte Alionis qui sustinebat se super baculum quem portabat, qui dixit ei quod intraret domum eius, et ipsa respondit quod non poterat quia dimiserat domum suam apertam, cui dictus Ramundus dixit quod immo intraret, quia videret in domo eius aliqua que postea nunquam visura esset, et tunc ipsa cum dicto Ramundo intravit domum Guillelmi Beneti, et cum fuit in domo vocata la foganha, invenit stantes iuxta hostium cuiusdam camera Guillelmum Auterii et Poncium Cicedri hereticos, et ipsa videns eos dixit: “Qui est sa”, et tunc dicti duo heretici intraverunt cameram et per quemdam posticium exiverunt de domo dicti Ramundi et intraverunt domum Bernardi de Riba, et dictus Ramundus sequutus fuit eos, ipsa remanente in domo foganha predicta.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 60a, p. 315.

Sebèlia den Balle. It was a house of heretics; she believed that the said Guilhem was a believer of heretics.<sup>12</sup>

According to the deposition of Guillelma Clergue, her own father kept the heretics safe in his own house, hosting them so that other believers could come and make the *melhorament* to them, including members of the Benet and Belot families. It is clear from this deposition, that Guilhem often visited the heretics along with his son Raimond while they were in the Clergue house, and that Guillelma Clergue also claimed Guilhem himself hosted heretics in his own home and had visited a heretical household in Ax.

### An Organizer and Summoner of Heretics

In addition to simply seeing the heretics, Guilhem worked with members of other families of *credentes* to arrange the heretications of various individuals. In one instance, he worked to summon a heretic for his daughter when she was dying so that she could be hereticated.

According to the deposition of Faurèsa den Riba, a Cathar sympathizer who managed a tavern in Montailou, given on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1320, concerning events of 1301:

She said that around 19 years ago, she does not fully remember the time, between the feasts of All Saints [1 November] and Christmas [25 December], Alazaïs daughter of Guilhem Benet from Montailou was sick with the sickness from which she died, in her sickness the deponent [Faurèsa] served her, and one night, early in the night, Guilhem Benet the father of the said Alazaïs, [and] Raimond and Guilhem Belot spoke into the ear of the said Alazaïs while she began to decline towards death, she [Faurèsa] seeing [this], did not then hear what they had said among them, and after they had secretly spoken with the said Alazaïs, the aforesaid Raimond Belot left the house, while [the following]

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<sup>12</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Vidit tamen frequenter et ante et post quod dictus Guillelmus intrabat domum patris sui quando heretici in dicta domo erant. Intrabant eciam et cum eo et sine eo dictam domum quando heretici erant ibi et ipsa sciebat eos esse: Bernardus, Ramundus, et Guillelmus Beloti, et Guillelma Belota, Guillelmus Beneti et Ramundus Beneti filius eius, qui tamen Guillelmus et Ramundus Beneti non fuerunt citati apud Carcassonem quod ipsa sciat, quia iam mortui erant. Nescit tamen si postea ossa eorum fuerunt combusta, sed bene scit quod dicti duo erant credentes hereticorum, et de hoc est communis fama in Monte Alionis, et dicebatur communiter quod in domo Guillelmi Beneti heretici hospitabantur. Et quadam die, dum ipsa iret pro aqua, obviavit dicto Guillelmo qui veniebat per viam de Ax, et ipsa interrogavit eum unde venierbat, et ipse respondit quod de Ax, et steterat ibi in domo Sibilie den Balle, erat domus hereticorum, credidit quod dictus Guillelmus esset credens hereticorum.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 67c, pp. 343-344.



remained in the said house: Guilhem Benet, Guilhem Belot, Sebèlia den Fort, who was imprisoned, Guillelma Benet I, mother of the said Alazaïs, and the deponent [Faurèsa], all of whom watched the said Alazaïs. And around dawn the said Raimond Belot, who had left early in the night from the said house, returned to those who had kept vigil with the said Alazaïs, and he spoke separately, herself [Faurèsa] seeing, with Guilhem Benet, and when they had spoken, the said Guilhem Benet said to her [Faurèsa] that she ought to leave the house, and she then said “Let’s go!”

And then the said Guilhem Benet and Raimond Belot exited the house with her (the witness), and when they were outside, the said Raimond Belot entered the cellar of the said house, the said Guilhem Benet remaining outside, and then the said Raimond Belot brought from the said cellar two men whom she did not recognize, because at the time it was dark, and the said Guilhem Benet and Raimond Belot led the said men into the aforesaid house, in which Alazaïs was lying; she (the witness) remaining outside. When they had entered the said house, the door of the said house was closed, and the deponent [Faurèsa] went to her own house, and she did not know what the said men did in the said house, and herself believed then that the said two men who had been brought inside by the said Raimond Belot were heretics, because they had been put in the cellar and led into the house, and had been brought to hereticate the said Alazaïs. And she also believes it, because when it was daylight, she returned to the house where the said Alazaïs was lying and was now dying, and Guilhem Benet and Raimond Belot held her, and they did not permit any woman to touch the said Alazaïs nor her bed, and when she (the deponent), as she was in the habit of doing, was wishing to approach the bed of the said Alazaïs, the said Guilhem and Raimond said to her that she should beware not to approach the said Alazaïs nor her bed, nor touch [the bed or Alazaïs]. And in the hands of the said Guilhem and Raimond the said Alazaïs passed away, and they also did not want her (the deponent) to touch the body of the said Alazaïs after death, but the said body was prepared by the aforesaid Guilhem, Raimond, and Sebèlia, and because of them, she (the witness) believed that the said Alazaïs had been hereticated by the said two men, who were brought by the said Raimond Belot.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dixit enim quod XIX anni sunt vel circa, non recordatur tamen plene de tempore, inter festa Omnium Sanctorum et Nativitatis Domini, Alazaicis filia Guillelmi Beneti de Monte Alionis fuit infirma de infirmitate de qua obit, in qua infirmitate ipsa que loquitur servivit ei, et quadam nocte circa principium noctis, Guillelmus Beneti pater dicte Alazaicis, Ramundus et Guillelmus Beloti loqui fuerunt ad aurem dicte Alazaici que iam incipiebat declinare ad mortem, ipsa teste vidente, non tamen audivit quid inter se loqui fuerunt, et postquam sic secrete loqui fuerant cum dicta Alazaici, Ramundus Beloti predictus exivit de dicta domo, remanentibus in dicta domo dicto Guillelmo Benet, Guillelmo Beloti, Sibilia den Fort qui fuit inmurata, Guillelma Beneta matre dicte Alazaicis, et ipsa teste, qui vigilaverunt dictam Alazaicim. Et circa auroram dictus Ramundus Beloti qui exiverat in principio noctis de dicta domo reversus fuit ad eos, qui vigilaverant dictam Alazaicim et fuit loquutus, vidente ipsa, ad partem cum dicto Guillelmo Beneti, et cum loqui fuissent, dictus Guillelmus Beneti dixit ipsi que loquitur quod egrederetur de domo, et ipsa eciam dixit: “Egrediamur!”

Et tunc dictus Guillelmus Beneti et Ramundus Beloti exiverunt de domo cum ipsa teste, et cum fuerunt extra, dictus Ramundus Beloti intravit cellarium dicte domus, remanente extra dicto Guillelmo Beneti, et tunc dictus Ramundus Beloti eduxit de dicto cellario duos homines quos ipsa non cognovit, quia tempus erat obscurum, et dictos homines dictus Guillelmus Beneti et Ramundus Beloti introduxerunt in domum predictam, in qua iacebat ipsa

According to Faurèsà's deposition, Guilhem was an active participant in the heretication of his daughter Alazaïs, conspiring with Raimond Belot to bring a heretic to console her in the presence of other believers (Sebèlia Fort, Guilhem Belot, and Faurèsà herself). After her heretication, Guilhem and Raimond together ensured she would not be touched, in accordance with heretical custom, so her soul could avoid contracting new sins after the *consolamentum*, but before her death.

In another instance, Guilhem convinced Gaia Clergue to hereticate her daughter, and Guilhem's goddaughter, Esclarmonda. From the deposition of Gauia Clergue made on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1325, concerning events of 1303:

She also said that the following year, the Friday before the [first] Sunday in Lent, when she [Gauia] went for water at the place called "la Canal", in the road she found the said Guilhem Benet, who asked her [Gauia] how her daughter Esclarmonda, wife of Comutz Adelh of Comus, goddaughter of the said Guilhem Benet, then sick, was; and she [Gauia] responded to the said Guilhem that her said daughter Esclarmonda was very weak, and that God would do her great grace if he would raise up her said daughter before her the deponent [Gauia], because she was very weary of her sickness and had spent a great amount for her.

To whom the said Guilhem responded that on the said day around midday he would go to her [Gauia's] house, to see what state the said Esclarmonda, his goddaughter, was in, and if she [Gauia] wanted (and, she said, that he entirely wished that she would thus want it), he would bring a physician to the said Esclarmonda, who would cure her. When she the deponent [Gauia] responded to him that she did not care that some physician would come to the said Esclarmonda, her daughter, whom many physicians had seen after she had become sick, and none had cured [her] from her illness, the said Guilhem responded to her that he was not speaking of those kinds of physicians, but of those which would save the soul of the said Esclarmonda and would make her soul clear before

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Alazaicis, ipsa teste remanente extra. Quibus ingressis dictam domum, fuit clausum hostium dicte domus, et ipsa loquens ivit ad domum suam, et nescivit quod dicti homines fecerunt in dicta domo, et credidit ipsa tunc quod dicti duo homines quos adduxerat dictus Ramundus Beloti essent heretici, pro eo quod sic fuerant positi in cellario et introducti in domum predictam, et quod adducti fuissent ut hereticarent dictam Alazaicim. Et ex eo eciam hoc credit, quia cum dies sequens factus fuisset, ipsa reversa fuit ad dictam domum ubi iacebat dicta Alazaicis que iam moriebatur, et tenebant eam Guillelmus Beneti et Ramundus Beloti et non permittebant quod aliqua mulier tangeret dictam Alazaicim nec lectum eius, et cum ipsa loquens, ut solebat, vellet appropinquare lecto dicte Alazaicis, dicti Guillelmus et Ramundus dixerunt ei quod caveret ne appropinquaret dicte Alazaicis nec lecto eius, et eciam quod non tangeret. Et in manibus dictorum Guillelmi et Ramundi mortua fuit dicta Alazaicis, nec voluerunt eciam quod post mortem ipsa que loquitur tangeret corpus dicte Alazaicis, sed dictum corpus paraverunt dictus Guillelmus et Ramundus et Sibilia predicta, et ex illis ipsa que loquitur credidit quod dicta Alazaicis hereticata fuisset per dictos duos homines, quos adduxerat dictus Ramundus Beloti.

Fournier, Vol. I, ff. 62a-62b, pp. 323-324.

God; from which words she [Gauia] understood that the said Guilhem called the said heretics ‘physicians’. And because of this she said to him that she did not wish him to bring such physicians to her house for the said Esclarmonda, because she feared that if he did this, it would [cause her] misfortune and tribulation. To whom the said Guilhem responded that she ought not to fear for herself about this, because if she would not reveal this to anyone it would never be known by anyone that the said heretic had come to her house for the said Esclarmonda, because, he said, he himself would not reveal this, nor Guillelma I, his wife, nor others of the said Guilhem’s household; because, as he said, they had less reason to disclose such things than she did. And because of this, she said, he asked her that she permit the said physician, whom he would bring, to come to her house the next night for the said Esclarmonda.

And he also, she said, wanted what she [Gauia] wanted, because as he said the said Esclarmonda was very important to him, as she was his goddaughter, and otherwise if she had not been, he would not have had such concern for her, nor for the salvation of her soul. And because of this he, she said, wished that she [Gauia] would make her husband go to bed in the room in which he lay which was situated next to the foganha, because, he said, he himself would send when it was night Guillelma I, his wife, the godmother of the deponent, to her house, who would bring a physician who would save the soul of the said Esclarmonda. And he wanted and asked the deponent, she said, to do and let happen whatever the said Guillelma I, his wife, would want and order. To which she responded that, because he so wanted these things, she would do them, although she would fear much that bad things would happen to her on account of this. To which he responded that she ought not to have fear about this, and that the devil had made her so fearful: “And you believe,” he said, “that we wish to reveal ourselves?” And then there were no more words between her [Gauia] and the said Guilhem.

And on the same day around noon the said Guilhem Benet came to the house of the deponent [Gauia], and came upon [Gauia] alone in the foganha of the said house, and in the said foganha in which the said Esclarmonda was laying sick. And the said Guilhem and the deponent came to the bed of the sick woman, and then the said Guilhem said to the said patient: “Goddaughter, how are you?” to which she responded that [she was] weaker; and the said Guilhem said that displeased him, because she had married well [and] had begun to do things well, and the said Guilhem added: “Goddaughter, do you wish that I bring you a physician who will save your soul?” And she hearing this raised her hands and raised her arms towards the said Guilhem; [seeing this] the said Guilhem said that it would have been a sin to let her down in this or refuse her.

And then the said Guilhem, turning his discussion to the deponent [Gauia], said to her that she should do everything that the said Guillelma I, wife of the said Guilhem, whom he would send to her the next night, would say to her; to whom she responded that because it was such a good thing, and because the said man whom the said Guillelma I would bring to Esclarmonda had to do such a good thing, namely that he would save and restore her soul, she would do what Guillelma I would want, and so the said Guilhem left the house.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod anno sequenti, die veneris ante dominicam in XL, cum ipsa loquens iret pro aqua in loco vocato la Canal, in via invenit dictum Guillelmum Beneti, qui interrogavit ipsam loquentem qualiter erat Sclarmonde, filie

As understood from these instances, Guilhem encouraged the heretications of the ones he loved: both his daughter Alazaïs, and his goddaughter Esclarmonda. He persuaded Gauia Clergue to let the heretic visit Esclarmonda, and also worked closely with his *credente* wife Guillelma I to ensure that the heretic would be brought to her.

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ipsius loquentis tunc infirme, uxorique den Comutz Adelh de Comutz, filiule dicti Guillelmi Beneti; et ipsa loquens respondit dicto Guillelmo quod multum debilis erat dicta Sclarmonda filia sua, et quod magnam gratiam Deus faceret ei, si dictam filiam eius leveret ante ipsam loquentem, quia multum erat atediata de infirmitata eius, et multum expenderat pro ipsa.

Cui dictus Guillelmus respondit quod ipse dicta die circa meridiem iret ad domum ipsius loquentis, ad videndum in quo statu erat dicta Sclarmonda, filiola eius, et quod si ipsa loquens volebat, (et, ut dixit, quod ipse omnino volebat quod ipsa loquens hoc sic vellet), ipse adduceret unum medicum ad dictam Sclarmondam, qui eam curare; cui cum ipsa loquens responderet quod ipsa non curabat quod aliquis medicus veniret ad dictam Sclarmondam, filiam suam, quia multi medici eam viderant postquam fuerat infirma, et per nullum fuerat sanata de dicta infirmitate, dictus Guillelmus respondit ei quod ipse non loquebatur de talibus medicis, set de illis qui animam dicte Sclarmonde salvarent et facerent ire animam eius claram ante Deum; ex quibus verbis ipsa loquens intellexit quod dictus Guillelmus appellaret medicos dictos hereticos. Et propter hoc dixit ei quod nolebat quod tales medicos adduceret ad domum eius pro dicta Sclarmonda, quia timebat sibi, si hoc fieret, de malo et tribulation. Cui dictus Guillelmus respondit quod non timeret sibi de hoc, quia, solum modo quod ipsa hoc non revelaret, nunquam per aliquem sciretur quod dicti heretici venissent ad domum ipsius loquentis pro dicta Sclarmonda, quia, ut dixit, ipse hoc nullo modo revelaret, nec Guillelma, uxor eius, nec alii de domo dicti Guillelmi; quia, ut dixit, minus habebant opus quod talia discelarentur per eos quam quod ipsa non discelaret; et propter hoc ipse, ut dixit, rogabat eam quod permetteret quod dictus medicus, quem ipse adduceret, venire ad domum ipsius loquentis nocte sequenti pro dicta Sclarmonda.

Et ipse etiam, ut dixit, volebat quod ipsa loquens ita vellet, quia, ut dixit, multum atinebat sibi dicta Sclarmonda, cum esset eius filiola, et aliter si non fuisset, non se intromisisset tantum de ea, nec de salute anime eius, et propter hoc ipse, ut dixit, volebat quod ipsa loquens faceret intrare lectum hora maritum suum in camera in qua iacebat iuxta la foganha, quia, ut dixit, ipse mitteret quando esset nox Guillelmam Benetam, uxori suam, commatrem ipsius loquentis, ad domum eius, que adduceret unum medicum qui sanaret animam dicte Sclarmonde. Et volebat et rogabat ipsam loquentem, ut dixit, quod faceret omnia et fieri permetteret quod vellet et ordinaret dicta Guillelma, uxor sua. Cui ipsa respondit quod, ex quo ipse tantum hec volebat, ipsa predicta faceret, licet sibi multum timeret ne malum propter hoc ei evineret. Cui ipse respondit quod non timeret de hoc, et quod dyabolus ita eam fecerat pavidam: “Et creditis, ut dixit, quod nos velimus nos ipsos discooperire?” Et tunc non fuerunt alia verba inter ipsam loquentem et dictum Guillelmum.

Et eadem die circa meridiem dictus Guillelmus Beneti venit ad domum ipsius loquentis, et invenit ipsam loquentem in foganha dicte domus, que sola erat, et in dicta foganha in qua iacebat infirma dicta Sclarmonda. Et venerunt ad lectum dicte inferme dictus Guillelmus et ipsa loquens, et tunc dictus Guillelmus dixit dicte infirme: “Filiola, qualiter est vobis?” cui ipsa respondit quod debiliter; et dictus Guillelmus dixit quod displicebat ei, quia bene erat maritata et bene inceperat facere facta sua, et addidit dictus Guillelmus: “Filiola, vultis quod ego adducam ad vos unum medicum qui salvet vobis animam?” Et ipsa hoc audiens elevavit manus et brachia sursum versus dictum Guillelmum; quod videns dictus Guillelmus dixit quod peccatum esset cui ei in hoc deficeret vel eam refutaret.

Et tunc dictus Guillelmus, vertens sermonem suum ad ipsam loquentem, dixit ei quod faceret illa omnia que dicta Guillelma, uxor dicti Guillelmi, quam ipse mitteret ei non nocte sequenti, diceret ei; cui ipsa respondit quod ex quo tantum bonum erat, et magnum bonum facere debebat dictus homo quem adduceret dicta Guillelma ipsi Sclarmonde, scilicet quod salvaret et restauraret eius animam, ipsa faceret illa que vellet dicta Guillelma, et sic dictus Guillelmus recessit de dicta domo.

Fournier, Vol. III, ff. 294c-294d, pp. 361-362.

In a final instance of bringing heretics around the village, Guilhem helped to organize the heretication of “na Roqua” (a colloquial form of *domina* or “lady’ Roqua). According to the deposition of Alazaïs Azema given February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1321, concerning events that had occurred in 1305:

She also said that around the same time as it seemed to her, she does not otherwise remember the time, when ‘na Roqua’ had been brought to the house of Bruna wife of Guilhem Porcelli formerly of Montailou, who was sick with the illness from which she died, the deponent was in the house of Guilhem Benet, formerly of Montailou, and in the said house with her was the said Guilhem Benet, Raimond Benet his son, and Guilhem Belot, and then they began to speak of the said Roqua. And then the said Guilhem Belot and Raimond Benet said that in a certain blanket they had carried the said Roqua to the house of the said Bruna. Nevertheless, they said, she had first been received in their presence at night by Guilhem Authié the heretic about the faith and sect of the heretics, and, they said, she had been received in the “palharitz” [barn] of Raimond Roqua her son, and afterwards she did not speak nor eat nor drink until she had died. And she the deponent, as she said, did not see the said Roqua in the said sickness, but when she had died, she went to the house of the said Bruna, and with the said Bruna she prepared the body of the said Roqua, whom she knew, as has been said, to have been hereticated.<sup>15</sup>

Bruna Pourcel, the illegitimate daughter of the heretic Prades Tavernier, corroborated this story, as recounted in her deposition, given January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1320:

And after a few days she [Bruna] went by a certain house that had been [owned by] the said Roqua, and she found in it the previously-mentioned Guilhem Belot, and she asked him why he said to her when he had carried the said Roqua to her house, as said above, that she not give her anything to eat or drink, because this should not be done, he responded to her that he had said this to her, because the said Roqua had been received, long before, in her own house, by the good Christians, into their sect and faith, and he [Guilhem Belot], Guilhem and Raimond Benet had been present at her reception. And he did not tell her which heretic had received the said Roqua to their sect. But she knew

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<sup>15</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod circa idem tempus ut ei videtur, tamen aliter de tempore non recordatur, quando fuerat portata na Roqua ad domum Brune uxoris Guillelmi Porcelli quondam de Monte Alionis infirma de infirmitate de qua decessit, ipsa loquens erat in domo Guillelmi Beneti quondam de Monte Alionis, et erant in dicta domo cum ipsa dicti Guillelmus Beneti, Ramundus Beneti filius eius, et Guillelmus Beloti, et tunc inceperunt loqui de dicta Roqua. Et tunc dicti Guillelmus Beloti et Ramundus Beneti dixerunt quod ipsi in quadam lodice portaverant dictam Roquam ad domum dicte Brune, tamen, ut dixerunt, primo fuerat recepta presentibus ipsis de nocte per Guillelmum Auterii hereticum ad fidem et sectam hereticorum, et, ut dixerunt, recepta fuit in palharitz Ramundi Roquati filii eius, et postea non fuit loquuta nec comedit nec bibit quosque mortua fuit; et ipsa loquens, ut dixit, non vidit dictam Roquam in dicta infirmitate, sed quando mortua fuit, ipsa venit ad domum dicte Brune, et cum dicta Bruna paravit corpus dicte Roque, quam sciebat, ut dictum est, hereticatam fuisse.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 61a, p. 320.

well, she said, that her said father the heretic was then in the house of the said Alazaïs den Riba when the said Roqua was hereticated.<sup>16</sup>

Guilhem worked closely with his son Raimond as well as Guilhem Belot to hereticate “na Roqua”, carrying her to her son’s barn to be hereticated by the heretic Guilhem Authié.

#### Guilhem Benet Hereticated and Posthumously Burned by the Inquisition

According to the depositions of Bernart Benet, Guilhem’s son, and Guillelma Benet I, Guilhem’s wife, Guilhem was hereticated before his death by Guilhem Authié, himself led to the Benet house by Guilhem Belot, Bernart Benet, and perhaps Raimond Belot. According to the deposition of Bernart Benet given on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1321, about events that had occurred in the early months of 1305:

Around 15 or 16 years ago, or around then, it seems to him, Guilhem Benet, the deponent’s father, was sick with the disease from which he died, and when he had begun to weaken, he [Guilhem] told Guilhem Belot who had come to visit him, that he ought to bring good Christians, i.e. heretics, to receive him into their faith and sect, and Guilhem Belot brought Guilhem Authié the heretic to his [Bernart’s] father [Guilhem] who was lying sick in a certain part of his house, in which the animals lay. And then his said father [Guilhem], seeing the heretic, asked him to make him a good Christian, and to receive him into their faith and sect, and his father could barely speak when the aforesaid was said to the said heretic.

And then the said heretic placed a certain book on the head of his said father [Guilhem] and hereticated him, and after he had been hereticated, ordered him that he no longer eat nor drink, which was done. In the said heretication, he said, he himself had been present, together with Guillelma I his mother, Bernart Clergue, and Guilhem Belot of Montailou, who all made the *melhorament* to the heretic, after his said father [Guilhem] was hereticated, genuflecting before him, bowing their head, and hands pointing towards the east in the heretic way, saying thrice: “Bless you, good Christian, pray to God for us”, and the said heretic responded: “May God bless you and lead you all to a good end.” And these things being done, the said Guilhem Belot left with the said

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<sup>16</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et post aliquos dies ipsa transibat per quoddam casale quod fuerat dicte Roque, et invenit in dicto casali Guillelmum Beloti predictum, et interrogavit, eum quare dixerat sibi quando portaverat dictam Roquam ad domum eius, ut predictum est, quod non daret ei aliquid comedere nec bibere, quia hoc fieri non debebat, qui respondit ei quod hoc pro tanto dixerat ei, quia dicta Roqua fuerat recepta, iam diu erat, in domo propria per bonos christianos ad sectam eorum et fidem, et ipse Guillelmus et Ramundus Beneti fuerant presente in eius recepcione. Et non dixit ei quis hereticus receperat dictam Roquam ad sectam eorum. Bene tamen scit, ut dixit, quod dictus pater eius hereticus tunc erat in domo dicte Alazaicis den Riba quando dicta Roqua fuit hereticata.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 78b, pp. 388-389.

heretic and he himself [Bernart] does not know where they went, and he the deponent [Bernart] remained with his said father [Guilhem] and the said Bernart Clergue and his [Bernart's] mother [Guillelma I] also remained there with him.

Asked if his said father agreed that he would be hereticated, he [Bernart] responded yes.<sup>17</sup>

Guillelma I, (Guilhem's wife and Bernart's mother), also discussed the heretication of Guilhem in her deposition on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

After, she said that her aforesaid husband Guilhem Benet was sick from the disease from which he died, and was lying sick in the said house in which the two aforesaid persons [Alazaïs and Raimond Benet] were hereticated, around the festival of Saint Michael in September, and at the hour at which people go to bed, came Guilhem Belot, Raimond Belot, and Guilhem Authié the heretic, and entered the said house in which her said sick husband was lying, and before the said sick man was hereticated by the said heretic, Bernart Clergue from Montailou arrived and in the presence of the deponent, Guilhem and Raimond Belot, Bernard Clergue, and Bernart Benet the son of the deponent, the said patient willing and consenting was hereticated in the aforesaid heretical manner, and he died that night... And before the said heretic would hereticate her husband, he [the heretic] said to her that she should absolve him from the bond of matrimony, which (she said) she did...<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The text printed in Fournier's register reads:

XV vel XVI anni sunt vel circa, ut sibi videtur, Guillelmus Beneti pater ipsius loquentis fuit infirmus de infirmitate de qua decessit, et cum incepisset debilitari, dixit Guillelmo Beloti qui venerat ad eum visitandum, quod adduceret bonos christianos, id est hereticos, ut reciperent eum ad fidem et sectam eorum, qui Guillelmus Beloti adduxit Guillelmum Auterii hereticum ad patrem ipsius qui iacebat infirmus in quadam parte domus sue, in qua bestiarium iacebat. Et tunc dictus pater eius videns dictum hereticum rogavit eum quod faceret ipsum bonum christianum, et eum reciperet ad fidem et sectam eorum, et vix bene poterat loqui dictus pater eius quando predicta dixit dicto heretico.

Et tunc dictus hereticus posuit quemdam librum super caput dicti patris sui et eum hereticavit, et postquam hereticaverat, precepit quod de cetero non comederet vel biberet, quod et factum fuit. In dicta hereticacione, ut dixit, fuerunt presentes ipse loquens, Guillelma mater eius, Bernardus Clerici et Guillelmus Beloti de Monte Alionis, qui omnes dictum hereticum adoraverunt, postquam dictum patrem eius hereticaverat, flectendo genua coram ipso inclinato capite et manibus positus versus terram modo hereticali, dicendo ter: "Benedicite, bone christiane, orate pro nobis", et dictus hereticus respondebat: "Deus vos benedicat et ducat vos ad bonum finem". Et hiis factis dictus Guillelmi Belot recessit cum dicto heretico et nescit ipse quo iverunt, et ipse loquens remansit cum dicto patre suo, et remanserunt eciam ibi cum eo dictus Bernardus Clerici et mater ipsius loquentis.

Interrogatus si dictus pater eius ante conventus fuerat quod esset hereticatus, respondit quod sic...

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 81b, pp. 401-402.

<sup>18</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod postea Guillelmus Beneti maritus eius predictus fuit infirmus de infirmitate de qua decessit, et iacebat infirmus in dicta domo in qua predictae due persone fuerant hereticate, circa festum Sancti Michaelis septembris, et hora qua solent homines lectum intrare venit Guillelmus Beloti et Ramundus Beloti cum Guillelmo Auterii heretici et intraverunt dictam domum in qua iacebat dictus infirmus maritus eius, et antequam dictus infirmus hereticaretur per dictum hereticum, supervenit Bernardus Clerici de Monte Alionis, et presentibus ipsa loquente, Guillelmo et Ramundo Beloti, Bernardo Clerici et Bernardo Beneti filio ipsius loquentis volentem et petentem dictum infirmum dictus hereticus modo supradicto hereticavit, et eadem nocte decessit... Et antequam dictum

According to the deposition of Faurèsa den Riba, Guilhem Benet was burned after he died. In referring to him, she reported that Guilhem “*fuit combustus post mortem*” (was burned after death).<sup>19</sup>

This section showed various ways in which Guilhem Benet participated in heretical activities from about 1300 until his death in about 1305. During Fournier’s inquisition, many villagers reported rumors related to Guilhem Benet’s heretical activities. He was rumored to have been a believer in heretics and a guide to them, to have housed them, and to have been hereticated at his death. These rumors were all confirmed by various villagers from Montailou. The depositions of Guilhem Fort and Alazaïs Azéma confirm that he had been involved in the spread of heretical teachings and had made death threats against at least one woman who was herself threatening to expose the heretical ministers and the Belot household to the inquisitorial authorities.<sup>20</sup> He was confirmed by the depositions of Alazaïs Azéma and of Guillelma Clergue to have hosted heretics.<sup>21</sup> And he was confirmed by the depositions of Alazaïs Azéma, Bruna Pourcel, Gauia Clergue, and Faurèsa den Riba to have worked with many other *credentes* to organize the heretications of his daughter Alazaïs, his goddaughter Esclarmonda Clergue, and another woman from Montailou, ‘na Roqua’.<sup>22</sup> And he not only organized the heretications of others, but was himself hereticated by Guilhem Authié in 1305, who was brought to his house by Guilhem Belot, Bernart Benet, and perhaps also Raimond Benet just before his death, according to the

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maritum eius dictus hereticus vellet hereticare, dixit ipsi loquenti quod absolveret eum a vinculo matrimonii, quod et ipsa fecit, ut dixit...

Fournier, Vol I, ff. 98c-98d, p. 474.

<sup>19</sup> Fournier, Vol. I, f. 62d, p. 326.

<sup>20</sup> For these accounts, see Fournier, Vol. I, f. 91c, p. 444; also Fournier, Vol. I, f. 60d, p. 318.

<sup>21</sup> For instances of heretics being at Guilhem’s home, see Fournier, Vol. I, f. 60a, p. 315; also Fournier, Vol. I, f. 67c, pp. 343-344.

<sup>22</sup> For the heretications organized by Guilhem Benet, see Fournier, Vol. I, f. 61a, p. 320, Fournier, Vol. I, ff. 62a-62b, pp. 323-324; Fournier, Vol. I, f. 78b, pp. 388-389, Fournier, Vol. III, ff. 294c-294d, p. 361-362.



depositions of his own son Bernart and his wife Guillelma I.<sup>23</sup> If the depositions can be believed (and all of the depositions that discuss him, both those of Catholics and those of Cathar sympathizers, his close neighbors, friends, and even family members point to the same conclusion): Guilhem Benet actively perpetuated and participated in the Montaillou heresy and worked with many individuals from different families of *credentes* to support the heretical ministers, encouraging heretical teachings, organizing heretications, bringing heretics around the village and ensuring their safe-keeping, allowing them to stay in his home, and he himself was hereticated at his death.

#### Guillelma Benet I

On seven occasions from Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> of May to Sunday the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, 1321, Guillelma Benet I, a village matriarch from Montaillou, was brought before the inquisitor-Bishop Jacques Fournier in his episcopal chamber at Pamiers. She was interrogated by the lord Bishop, who was assisted by an archdeacon, a Dominican friar, a monk from a local monastery, and a notary. She had been arrested under suspicion of seeing and hearing heretics, believing in their sermons, receiving them in her home, making the *melhorament* to them, concealing others who had committed heretical crimes, and making the agreement of wanting to be received by them in their faith and sect at her death.

Guillelma Benet I's participation in heresy can be better understood if divided up into degrees of involvement. Relying on and comparing the records of Bishop Fournier, including her own deposition, and others by Alazaïs Azéma, Raimonda Belot, her own son Bernart Benet, Bernart and Gaia Clergue, Alazaïs Faure, Guilhem Fort, Alamanda Guilhabert, Joan and Pèire Maury, Faurèsa den Riba, and Raimonda Testaniere, we learn that when heretics were first introduced to

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<sup>23</sup> For the heretication of Guilhem Benet, see Fournier, Vol. I, f. 81b, pp. 401-402; also Fournier, Vol. I. ff. 98c-98d, p. 474.

Montaillou (by her husband), she remained a relatively passive participant in heresy, chatting with her husband about the heretics, suggesting to him that she would perhaps like to meet them, and later spoke with the heretic Guilhem Authié while he stayed in her home. Becoming more active in the heresy, she visited the heretics, and had heretics visit her home, made the *melhorament* to the heretics, and talked about the heretics and heretical teachings with other villagers. The deepest level of her participation consisted of perpetuating heresy as she assumed a leading and guiding role. She asked people to support the heretics, brought others to make the *melhorament* to them, taught others about them (and about how to properly make the *melhorament* to them), conspired to withhold information from the inquisition, and even lied about having a terrible fall to avoid her summons to the inquisitorial court at Carcassonne.

#### Making Introductions

When the heretics first arrived to Montaillou from Lombardy ca. 1300, Guillelma I was a passive participant in heresy. She chatted with her husband about the heretics, suggesting to him that she would perhaps like to meet them, and later spoke with the heretic Guilhem Authié while he stayed in her home. In her deposition in Fournier's inquisitorial register, she informed the inquisitor about how heretics were introduced to her and her house. According to her deposition given on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

She said that the first year that the heretics Pèire and Guilhem Authié came from Lombardy, Guilhem Benet, her aforesaid husband, told her in the courtyard of her house where she and her said husband were sitting, that the Authiés were good men and good Christians, and that they saved souls, and that men could not be saved without passing through their hands, and that it was good for her to see them, and that they should receive them in their home.

And she told him that if these men were good, that him bringing them to their house would be pleasing to her, and that she would see them willingly.

And after about a month, her said husband, one night, while she was already in bed, brought into their house the said heretic Guilhem Authié, and that night she did not see the said heretic. But the next morning, she entered her house which was facing "Le Bac" and adjoined the house of Ramunda Lizier in the middle of the street, and discovered in

the said house the aforesaid Guilhem Authié whom she had known previously and knew he was a heretic. Guilhem Authié told her that her husband had brought him that other night and asked her if she wanted to see and hear him, and she responded yes. And the said Guilhem started talking, but she the deponent [Guillelma I] does not remember what he was talking about, and, she said, she did not make the *melhorament* to the said heretic at that time, nor gave him anything, because, she said, the said heretic carried his provisions with him. And, she said, no one, that she knows, came to the said heretic. And for the whole day the said heretic stayed in the said house, and when it became night, Guilhem Belot came to the said house and he brought the said heretic with him and she does not know where he took him.<sup>24</sup>

Based on the initial passages from her deposition, the role she played during the introduction of heresy to the village becomes clear. The initial relationship between the Authié brothers and Montailou had been forged by her husband, and Guillelma I's role was much more reserved than his. While her husband was introducing heretics to the village, Guillelma remained in bed. And later, although she did have a short conversation with Guilhem Authié, her failure to remember what he had spoken about may reveal the fact that initially she had paid little attention to him, or perhaps she was not willing to tell the inquisitor what he had said to her, protecting other *credentes*.

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<sup>24</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dixit enim quod primo anno quo venerunt de Lombardia Petrus et Guillelmus Auterii heretici, Guillelmus Beneti maritus eius predictus dixit ei in curti domus sue ubi sedebant ipsa et dictus maritus suus, quod illi Auterii erant boni homines et boni christiani, et quod animas salvabant, et quod non poterant homines salvari nisi transsirent per manus eorum, et quod bonum erat quod ipsa eos videret, et quod ipsos reciperent in domo sua.

Et ipsa respondit ei quod si illi homines erant bone res, bene placebat ei quod adduceret eos ad domum eorum, et quod ipsa libenter eos videret.

Et post quasi circa mensem, dictus maritus eius quadam nocte, cum ipsa iam esset in lecto, introduxit in domum ipsius loquentis Guillelmum Auterii hereticum, et de dicta nocte ipsa non vidit dictum hereticum. Sed in crastinum mane ipsa intravit domum suam que erat versus "Le Bac" et confrontat cum domo Ramunde Lezera via media, et invenit in dicta domo Guillelmum Auterii predictum quem ante ipsa cognoverat, et sciebat ipsum hereticum esse. Qui Guillelmus Auterii dixit ipsi loquenti quod maritus ipsius loquentis nocte predicta adduxerat eum ad dictum locum et interrogavit ipsam si ipsum volebat videre et audire, que respondit quod sic. Et dictus Guillelmus incepit loqui, non recordatur tamen de quibus loquutus fuit tunc, et, ut dixit, non adoravit tunc dictum hereticum, nec dedit ei aliquid, quia ut dixit, dictus hereticus portabat secum cibaria sua. Et, ut dixit, nulla persona, quod ipsa sciat, venit ad dictum hereticum. Et per totam diem in dicta domo dictus hereticus stetit, et quando fuit facta nox, Guillelmus Beloti venit ad domum ipsius loquentis predictam et dictum hereticum secum adduxit et nescit quo ipsum duxit.

Fournier Vol. II. f. 98, pp. 471-472.

## Becoming Active

Soon after the introduction of heretics to the village, Guillelma I became more actively involved with them. In actions characterizing the increased depth of her devotion and participation, she made the *melhorament* to the heretics, visited them, attended the heretications of her family members, and talked about the heretics and their teachings with her neighbors, taking special care not to talk about heresy in the presence of non-sympathizers. Heretics also visited her house. According to her deposition before Fournier:

And then the said heretic and Prades Tavernier frequented the house of her the deponent [Guillelma I], and it seems to her that they spent the night in her said house as many as twelve times...

And at that time, she said, she made the *melhorament* to the heretics as many as four times, genuflecting before them and bowing her head towards the ground, saying thrice 'Bless us, good Christians, pray to God for us', and the heretics responded, 'May God bless you and lead you to a good end.' And sometimes her said husband was present when she did these things, who also made the *melhorament* to the heretics with her.<sup>25</sup>

Later in her deposition, it becomes clear that she also made the *melhorament* to the heretics while they were hosted at the Belot house, and she made the *melhorament* with Guillelma Belot and Mengarda Clergue. According to Guillelma's deposition:

And when she was in the said Belot house she came upon in the solar<sup>26</sup> of the said house Guilhem Authié the heretic sitting near the bed which was in the said solar, and, genuflecting before the heretic stood Guillelma Belot and Mengarda, wife of the late Pons Clergue, of Montailou. And the said heretic preached, and she the deponent [Guillelma] also bending knees before the said heretic listened to him preach and so stayed until the preaching finished; and the said preaching was about the errors of the said heretics. She does not still remember, about which errors, except that she heard him at that time saying that he and those who err of their sect saved souls. And after the said

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<sup>25</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et deinde dictus hereticus et Pradas Tavernier domum ipsius loquentis frequentaverunt, et ut videtur ei usque ad XII noctes in dicta domo sua pernoctaverunt...

Et illo tempore, ut dixit, usque ad quater dictos hereticos adoravit, flectendo genua coram ipsis et inclinando capud versus terram, dicendo ter 'Benedicte, bon christiani, orate Deum pro nobis', et dicti heretici respondebant: 'Deus vos benedicat et ducat ad bonum finem'. Et aliquando presens erat dictus maritus eius cum predicta faciebat, qui eciam dictos hereticos cum ipsa adorabat.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 98, pp. 472.

<sup>26</sup> A 'solar' according to Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, was "the first floor above the kitchen, communicating with the ground floor by means of a ladder." See Montailou, 39.

preaching she and the said Guillelma and Mengarda also made the *melhorament* to the said heretic in the aforesaid heretical way, saying three times: ‘Bless us, good Christian, pray to God for us’, and the said heretic responded: ‘May God bless you and lead you to a good end’.<sup>27</sup>

After making the *melhoramentum* to the heretic, according to Guillelma Benet, Mengarda then agreed with Guilhem Authié that if she happened to be sick and dying, she would like to be received in his faith and sect at her death.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to simply making the *melhorament* to the heretics, Guillelma I attended the heretications of her daughter Alazaïs, her son Raimond, and her husband Guilhem, breaking (in accordance with heretical custom) their marital bond before he passed away. She discusses the heretication of all her family members in her deposition, including her husband:

After, she said that her aforesaid husband Guilhem Benet was sick from the disease from which he died, and was lying sick in the said house in which the two aforesaid persons [Alazaïs and Raimond Benet] were hereticated, around the festival of Saint Michael in September, and at the hour at which people go to bed, came Guilhem Belot, Raimond Belot, and Guilhem Authié the heretic, and entered the said house in which her said sick husband was lying, and before the said sick man was hereticated by the said heretic, Bernart Clergue from Montailou arrived and in the presence of the deponent, Guilhem and Raimond Belot, Bernard Clergue, and Bernart Benet the son of the deponent, the said patient willing and consenting was hereticated in the aforesaid heretical manner, and he died that night... And before the said heretic would hereticate her husband, he [the heretic] said to her that she should absolve him from the bond of matrimony, which (she said) she did...<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et cum fuit in dicta domo dels Belostz invenit in solario dicte domus Guillelmum Auterii hereticum sedentem iuxta lectum quod erat in dicto solario, et flectis genibus coram dicto heretico stabant Guillelma Belota et Mengardis uxor Poncii Clerici quondam de Monte Alionis. Et dictus hereticus predicabat et ipsa loquens flectens eciam genua coram dicto heretico audivit eum predicantem et sic stetit quousque predicacionem finivit; et dicta predicatio erat de erroribus dictorum hereticorum. Non recordatur tamen, de quibus erroribus, nisi quod audivit eum tunc dicentem quod ipse et illi qui errant de secta sua salvabant animas. Et post finem dicte predicacionis ipsa loquens et dicta Guillelma et Mengardis dictum hereticum adoraverunt modo hereticali supradicto, dicendo ter: “Benedicite, bone Christiane, orate Deum pro nobis”, et dictus hereticus respondebat: “Deus vos benedicat et ducat ad bonum finem”.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 98, pp. 477.

<sup>28</sup> Fournier Vol. II, f. 98, pp. 477-478.

<sup>29</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod postea Guillelmus Beneti maritus eius predictus fuit infirmus de infirmitate de qua decessit, et iacebat infirmus in dicta domo in qua predictae due persone fuerant hereticate, circa festum Sancti Michaelis septembris, et hora qua solent homines lectum intrare venit Guillelmus Beloti et Ramundus Beloti cum Guillelmo Auterii heretico et intraverunt dictam domum in qua iacebat dictus infirmus maritus eius, et antequam dictus infirmus

By attending the heretications of her daughter Alazaïs, her son Raimond, and her husband Guilhem, she demonstrated the growing depth of her commitment to heresy. She was even willing to break the bonds of marriage so that her husband could be received by the heretics at his death.

Continuing to demonstrate growing devotion to the heretics, she took care not to speak too freely about heresy and heretics with people who she was not sure were sympathizers. According to the deposition of Joan Maury, one of the shepherds of Montailou:

He also said that one day he went to the house of Guillelma Benet I, formerly of Montailou, and when he at that time was sitting next to the fire with the said Guillelma I and the said Guilhem Belot, the said Guillelma I and the said Belot were talking amongst themselves about heretics. And when they had begun to talk about those matters, the said Guillelma I said for Joan to go away, and the said Guilhem answered that they need not worry about him, and by that time the said Guilhem Belot had already seen the deponent [Joan] speaking with the heretic in his [Joan's] father's house, as he said above.<sup>30</sup>

Beyond simply chatting with the heretics, Guillelma later demonstrated the depth of her devotion by making the *melhorament* to them, listening to their preaching, attending the heretications of her daughter Alazaïs, her son Raimond, and her husband Guilhem, having broken the bond of marriage between them to save his soul (in accordance with heretical custom).

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hereticaretur per dictum hereticum, supervenit Bernardus Clerici de Monte Alionis, et presentibus ipsa loquente, Guillelmo et Ramundo Beloti, Bernardo Clerici et Bernardo Beneti filio ipsius loquentis volentem et petentem dictum infirmum dictus hereticus modo supradicto hereticavit, et eadem nocte decessit... Et antequam dictum maritum eius dictus hereticus vellet hereticare, dixit ipsi loquenti quod absolveret eum a vinculo matrimonii, quod et ipsa fecit, ut dixit...

Fournier, Vol I, ff. 98c-98d, p. 474.

<sup>30</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dixit etiam quod illo tempore quadam die ivit ad domum Guillelme Benete quondam de Monte Alionis, et cum ibi sederet ad ignem cum dicta Guillelma et dicto Guillelmo Belhoti, dicta Guillelma et dictus Belhoti loquebantur inter se de facto hereticorum. Et cum sic incepissent loqui de dicta materia, dicta Guillelma dixit ipsi loquenti quod recederet, et dictus Guillelmus respondit quod non oportebat quod caverent sibi de dicto loquente, et iam illo tempore dictus Guillelmus Belhoti viderat ipsum loquentem cum dicto heretico in domo patris ipsius loquentis, ut supra dixit.

Fournier, Vol. II. f. 214c, pp. 471-472.

## Perpetuating Heresy and Assuming a Guiding Role

Finally, Guillelma I herself assumed a guiding role in perpetuating heresy. She asked others to support the heretics, brought others to make the *melhorament* to them, taught others about them (and especially about how to properly make the *melhorament* to them), and conspired with other heretical sympathizers to avoid the inquisition.

According to the depositions of Raimonda Marty, Alamanda Guilhabert, and Raimonda Belot, Guillelma I came to each of them individually and asked them to support the heretics. First, according to the deposition of Alamanda Guilhabert (whose son Guilhem had been hereticated at his death by Guilhem Authié):

A few days after Alamanda Guilhabert's said son had died, Guillelma Benet I from Montailou came to her house and found her [Alamanda] in her doorway and Guillelma I said it would be a great almsgiving if Alamanda sent something to those good men, i.e. heretics, who do not dare to work, for fear of being caught, and endure many tribulations for the sake of God, and save the souls of men and women, and do no bad things, and who are good Christians and friends of God. And hearing this and believing it to be true, Alamanda gave the said Guillelma I two fleeces of wool to give to the said heretics, so they might ask God for the soul of Alamanda's said son. And Guillelma I took the said fleeces, and put them in the bosom of a fleece-lined jacket [pelisse] that she was wearing, and left. And afterwards Alamanda did not know what the said Guillelma I did with the said fleeces, because immediately the said Guillelma I was captured.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to asking for material support for the heretics from the vulnerable Alamanda Guilhabert, Guillelma I also asked for donations from Raimonda Belot. One day, Raimonda had taken some salted pork to the house of Guilhem and Guillelma Benet I to be smoked. Leaving

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<sup>31</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Quod post paucos dies postquam decesserat dictus filius eius, Guillelma Beneta de Monte Alionis venit ad domum eius et invenit ipsam loquentem in hostio domus sue, et dixit ei quod magnam elemosinam faceret si mitteret aliquid illis bonis hominibus, id est hereticis, qui non audent laborare, timentes ne caperentur, et sustinent multas tribulationes propter Deum, et salvant animas hominum et mulierum, et nulli rei malum faciunt, et quod sunt boni christiani et amici Dei. Que ipsa audiens et credens vera esse dedit dicte Guillelme duo vellera lane ut daret ipsa dictis hereticis, ut rogarent Deum pro anima dicti filii sui. Que Guillelma accepit dicta vellera, et posuit in gremio cuiusdam pellicie quam portabat, et recessit. Et postea ipsa nescivit quid dicta Guillelma de dictis velleribus fecit, quia statim dicta Guillelma fuit capta.

Fournier, Vol I, f. 87, p. 425.

the house, she met Guilhem Authié and another heretic wearing hoods over their heads which almost covered their faces.<sup>32</sup> Raimonda deposed:

And on the next day, around the ninth hour, while she the deponent [Raimonda] was in her house and kneading bread, the said Guillelma Benet I entered her the deponent's [Raimonda's] house and came to her kneading, and they were alone together in the said house. And there the said Guillelma I said to her the deponent [Raimonda] "And yesterday did you recognize the 'senher' Guilhem Authié?" And she the deponent [Raimonda] responded to her that yes, because it was him, [who] a few years ago, had helped her to bring in the harvest, and recently, she understood him to have been made a heretic. And the said Guillelma I responded to her to not call the said Guilhem a heretic, but rather he was a good man, although he was being called a heretic, and that it was a great almsgiving to do him good, because he did not dare to go openly and publicly, because he was suffering persecution; and that she would do a great almsgiving if she gave the said heretic of her flour that was there. And she the deponent [Raimonda] responded to her that if she was still willing to accept the said flour she was wanting, she might accept it for the said heretic, because, she said, she would not be able to say that her the deponent [Raimonda] had given the said flour to the said heretic [...]

Also, she said that on the same day, as it seemed to her, the said Guillelma I, with she the deponent went for water to the spring of the 'Canal', in the road she said to her the deponent [Raimonda] to bring her tender cabbages from her garden, she herself responded willingly; and she went, she said, she the deponent [Raimonda] to her garden and gathered cabbages, and took [them to] the said Guillelma I who was in her barn. And she did not know then, as she said, that the said Guillelma I had asked for the said cabbages for the said heretic.<sup>33</sup>

Guillelma I also asked the staunch Catholic, Raimonda Marty of Montailou, to provide goods for the heretics, although, Guillelma I was not able to as easily persuade her as she had

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<sup>32</sup> Fournier, Vol. III, f. 237b, p. 67.

<sup>33</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et in crastinum, circa horam nonam, cum ipsa loquens esset in domo sua et pistaret, dicta Guillelma Benet intravit domum ipsius loquentis et venit ad eam pistantem, et errant ambe sole in dicta domo. Et ibi dicta Guillelma dixit ipsi loquenti: "Et cognovisti heri le senher Guillelmum Auterii?" Et ipsa loquens respondit ei quod sic, quia ille erat qui, annis aliquibus transactis, iuverat ad defferendum herbam, et modo, ut adiverat, erat factus hereticus. Et dicta Guillelma respondit ei quod non vocaret dictum Guillelmum hereticum, immo erat bonus homo, licet vocaretur hereticus, et quod magna helemosina erat, qui ei bonum faciebat, quia non audebat ire palam et publice, quia persecutionem paciebatur; et quod magnam helemosinam faceret si mitteret dicto heretico de sua farina que erat ibi. Et ipsa loquens respondit ei quod si de dicta farina accipere volebat, acciperet pro dicto heretico, quia, ut dixit, non posset dicere quod ipsa loquens dedisset de dicta farina dicto heretico...

Item dixit quod eadem die, ut ei videtur, dicta Guillelma, cum ipsa loquens iret pro aqua ad fontem de Canal, in carreria dixit ipsi loquenti quod portaret ei de orto suo teneres caules, cui ipsa respondit quod libenter; et ivit, ut dixit, ipsa loquens ad ortum suum et collegit caules, et portavit dicte Guillelme que erat in palherio suo. Et nescivit tunc, ut dixit, quod dictos caules dicta Guillelma petivisset et habuisset pro dicto heretico.

Fournier, Vol. III, f. 237c-237d, pp. 67-68.



persuaded the grieving Alamanda Guilhabert and Cathar sympathizer Raimonda Belot.

According to Raimonda Marty's deposition before Fournier:

She also said that a short time before the men and women of Montailou were captured on the order of the Inquisitor of Carcassonne, perhaps around fourteen years ago, on a certain day which she said she does not remember, when she the deponent [Raimonda] was going to the house of Bernart Maurs, her brother in law from Montailou, she found in the doorway of the house Guillelma Benet I and Alazaïs, wife of the said Bernart Riba formerly of the same place, sitting, who said to her the deponent [Raimonda]: "Niece, sit here with us a little!" and she, she said, remained standing there on her feet, and then the said Guillelma asked her the deponent [Raimonda] if there were any of those good men in her father's house, and she the deponent [Raimonda] responded to her that she did not know, because it was already eight days that she had not been in her father's house, she was busy concerning her own affairs. And then the said women said to her the deponent [Raimonda] that it would be a great almsgiving to do good to the said good men, i.e. heretics, and that she the deponent [Raimonda] was doing evil, because while she was holding goods between [her] hands, that is wool and other of her husband's goods, she did not give to the said good men, because the said good men, heretics, that is, kept a good faith and a good way. And she responded to them, she said, that the heretics would not enjoy of their goods, and the said women responded to her that they believed her well, because she was wicked and cold; and thus, she left the said women.<sup>34</sup>

Besides simply asking Raimonda Belot to support the heretics with material goods, Guillelma I, the day after she asked for cabbages from her garden, invited Raimonda to come to her house to make the *melhorament* to the heretics with her. According to the deposition of Raimonda Belot:

And on the next day around midday, when she the deponent [Raimonda] was in her house, came the said Guillelma Benet I to her, [who] was alone then, and said for her to come to her house, because she needed her; and she replied to her: "willingly", and when they went on the road, she the deponent [Raimonda] asked the said Guillelma I why she wanted her to go to her house, and she answered her that the said Guilhem Authié the

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<sup>34</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod ante, per modicum tempus, quam homines et mulieres de Monte Alionis caperentur de mandato inquisitoris Carcassonne, et possunt esse XIII anni vel circa, quadam die de qua dixit se non recordari, cum ipsa loquens iret ad domum Bernardi Martini sororii sui de Monte Alionis, invenit in hostio dicte domus Guillelmam Benetam et Aladaycim, uxorem dicti Bernardi Riba quondam dicti loci, sedentes, que dixerunt ipsi loquenti: "Neptis, sedeatis hic nobiscum aliquantulum!" et ipsa, ut dixit, remansit ibi stans pedes, et tunc dicta Guillelma dixit ipsi loquenti si erant aliqui de illis bonis hominibus in domo patris ipsius loquentis, et ipsa loquens respondit ei quod nesciebat, quia iam erant octo dies quod non fuerat in domo patris sui, circa propria negocia occupata. Et tunc dicte mulieres dixerunt ipsi loquenti quod magna helemosina esset facere bonum dictis bonis hominibus, id est hereticis, et quod ipsa loquens male faciebat, quia dum tenebat bonum inter manus, id est lanam et alia bona mariti sui, non dabat dictis bonis hominibus, quia bonam fidem tenebant et bonam viam dicti boni homines, id est heretici. Et ipsa respondit eis, ut dixit, quod de bonis suis heretici non gustabunt, et dicte mulieres responderunt ei quod bene credebant ei, quia mala erat et frigida; et sic ipsa recessit a dictis mulieribus.

Fournier, Vol. III, f. 246b-246c, p. 107.

heretic was in her house, and he was wanting to see her; and she [Raimonda] responded to her that this was pleasing to her. And when they had entered the house of the said Guillelma I, the said Guillelma I closed the door of the house behind her, and when they were in the *foganha*, they found there beside the fire Sebèlia, formerly wife of Guilhem Fort mentioned above and Guillelma Maurs, wife of Bernart Maurs, who is now a fugitive for heresy, and in a certain room which was itself attached to the said *foganha* was the late Guilhem Authié the heretic, whose room's door was opened by the said Guillelma Benet I.

And then the said heretic emerged to them in the said *foganha*, and stood on [his] feet, and they also did before him, and then the said Guillelma Benet I said to her the deponent [Raimonda] and the other said two women, in the said heretic's hearing, that the said heretic was a good man and holy and a good Christian, and that he held to a good faith and that none could be saved except in the faith that the said heretic kept, and that he would help to save souls, praying to God for people, and that those who were received by him at their end would be saved, and that those who were received by him were absolved from all of their sins, and that the said heretic did not lie or touched women, nor did he eat meat nor blood, and fasted much, and that none could be saved without passing through his hands, and that he followed the way of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and underwent persecution for the sake of God, and that it would be a great almsgiving to do him good.

And the said heretic said what the said Guillelma I had said about him was quite true; and then the said Guillelma I said to her the deponent [Raimonda] and the other said two women: "And don't you think it is true what I said to you about the *senher* (i.e. the said heretic)?" And she responded that they believed this well, and then the said heretic said to them that they should genuflect thrice before him, putting [their] hands on a certain bench, saying each time: "Bless you, *senher*, the blessing of God and yours", and which they did. And the said heretic responded each time: "Receive it from God and from us". And afterwards they said: "Bless us, good Christian, pray to God for us", and the said heretic responded: "May God be asked, make you good Christians, and lead you to a good end."

And before they made this said *melhorament* to the heretic, the said heretic thanked her the deponent [Raimonda] for the said flour and cabbages, this done, the other women stayed with the said heretic, herself leaving from the said house. And at her leaving, the said Guillelma said to her the deponent [Raimonda] to beware much of herself that the said heretic not be discovered, nor tell any person that she had seen the said heretic with the said women, nor that they had done or said what they had done or said there, because, she said, it was a great sin to reveal the aforesaid things, and [it was] such that it could not be remitted or forgiven in this world or in the future, and if she did this her soul would not have rest or repose. And she, she said, promised the said Guillelma that she would not reveal nor disclose these things. And so, leaving from the house, she went home.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et in crastinum circa meridiem, cum ipsa loquens esset in domo sua, venit dicta Guillelma Benet ad eam, que tunc sola erat, et dixit ei quod venire ad domum eius, quia indigebat ipsa; et ipsa respondit ei quod libenter, et cum fuerunt in via, ipsa loquens interrogavit dictam Guillelmam ad quid volebat quod ipsa iret ad domum eius, que

According to this testimony, Guillelma had profound influence over Raimonda. She convinced her to donate her goods to the heretics, led her to make the *melhorament* to Guilhem Authié, convinced her to make the *melhorament* to him, threatening and warning her not to reveal what happened between the supplicants and the heretic. For supporting and making the *melhorament* to the heretics, Raimonda was sentenced to life imprisonment.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to simply bringing villagers to the heretics, she also brought the heretics around to perform the *consolamentum*, continuing to instruct others how to make the *melhorament* to the heretics. According to the deposition of Gaia Clergue, Guillelma Benet and her husband

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respondit ei quod dictus Guillelmus Auterii hereticus erat in domo eius, et ipsam volebat videre; et ipsa respondit ei quod bene hoc sibi placebat. Et cum intrassent domum dicte Guillelme, dicta Guillelma clausit hostium domus post se, et cum fuerunt en la foganha, invenerunt ibi iuxta ignem Sybiliam uxorem quondam Guillelmi Fortis supradictam et Guillelmam Maurinam, uxorem Bernardi Martini, nunc pro heresi fugitivam, et in quadam camera que se tenebat cum dicta foganha erat Guillelmus Auterii quondam hereticus, cuius camera hostium aperuit dicta Guillelma Beneta.

Et tunc dictus hereticus exivit ad eas in dicta foganha, et stetit pedes, et ipse etiam coram eo, et tunc dicta Guillelma Beneta dixit ipsi loquenti et aliis dictis duabus mulieribus, audiente dicto heretic, quod dictus hereticus erat bonus homo et sanctus et bonus christianus, et quod tenebat bonam fidem et quod nullus poterat salvari nisi in fide quam dictus hereticus tenebat, et quod iuvabat ad salvandum animas, rogando Deum pro hominibus, et quod recepti per eum in suo fine salvabantur, et quod recepti per eum erant absolute ab omnibus peccatis suis, et quod dictus hereticus non mentiebatur nec tangebatur mulieres, nec comedebat carnem nec sanguinem, et multum ieiunabat, et quod nullus poterat salvari nisi transiret per manus eius, et tenebat viam Apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et sustinebat persecutionem propter Deum, et quod magna elemosina erat facere ei bonum.

Et dictus hereticus dixit quod bene vera erant illa que dicta Guillelma dixerat de eo; et tunc dicta Guillelma dixit ipsi loquenti et aliis dictis duabus mulieribus: “Et nonne vos alie creditis quod bene sint vera illa que ego dixit vobis del senher (id est de dicto heretico)?” Et ipsa respondit quod bene predicta credebant, et tunc dictus hereticus dixit eis quod flecterent ienua ter coram eo, ponendo manus super quondam bancam, dicendo qualibet vice: “Benedicite, senher, benedictionem Dei et vestram”, quod et ipse fecerunt. Et dictus hereticus respondebat qualibet vice: “A Deo habeatis et a nobis”. Et postea dixerunt: “Benedicite, bone Christiane, orate Deum pro nobis”, et dictus hereticus respondit: “Deus sit rogatus, Deus faciat vos bonas christianas et perducat vos ad bonam finem.”

Et antequam dictum melioramentum facerent dicto heretic, dictus hereticus fuit regraciatu ipsi loquenti de dictis farina et caulibus, quibus factis, remanentibus aliis mulieribus cum dicto heretic, ipsa recessit de dicto domo. Et in recessu dicta Guillelma dixit ipsa loquenti quod caveret sibi multum quod dictum hereticum non disceleret, nec diceret alicui persone quod dictum hereticum cum dictis mulieribus vidisset, nec quod fecissent vel dixissent illa que ibi fecerunt vel dixerunt, quia, ut dixit, magnum peccatum esset predicta revelare, et tale quod non posset remitti vel indulgeri in hoc seculo vel in futuro, et eius anima si hoc faceret non haberet requiem vel pausam. Et ipsa, ut dixit, promisit dicte Guillelme quod nunquam supradicta revelaret vel detegeret. Et sic, recedens de dicta domo, ivit ad domum suam.

Fournier, Vol. III, f. 237c-237d, pp. 68-69.

<sup>36</sup> For Raimonda’s sentence, see Doat 28, ff. 71r-76v.

Guilhem worked together to assure the heretication of Esclarmonda, Gaia's daughter and Guilhem's goddaughter, who was mortally ill:

She also said that the following year, the day which came before Easter Sunday, when she the deponent went for water at the place called "la Canal", in the road she found the said Guilhem Benet, who asked her the deponent [Gauzia Clergue] how her daughter Esclarmonda, wife of Comutz Adelh of Comus, goddaughter of the said Guilhem Benet, then sick, was; and she the deponent responded to the said Guilhem that her said daughter Esclarmonda was very weak, and that God would do her great grace if he would release her said daughter from her the deponent [Gauzia Clergue], because she was very weary of her sickness and had spent a great amount [on her behalf].<sup>37</sup>

Guilhem then said that he would go to her house to see what state his goddaughter Esclarmonda was in. Guilhem visited the house the next day and Esclarmonda consented to being visited by the heretics. Immediately after Esclarmonda consented, according to the deposition of Gauzia Clergue:

And then the said Guilhem, turning his discussion to the deponent [Gauia], said to her that she should do everything that the said Guillelma I, wife of the said Guilhem, whom he would send to her the next night, would say to her; to whom she responded that because it was such a good thing, and because the said man whom the said Guillelma I would bring to Esclarmonda had to do such a good thing, namely that he would save and restore her soul, she would do what Guillelma I would want, and so the said Guilhem left the house.<sup>38</sup>

... when Guillelma I entered the said foganha and said to her the deponent there that the said Guilhem Benet, fellow godparent of her the deponent, sent her to do those things, which she the deponent knew, because, she said, one of these good men, i.e. a heretic, was supposed to come immediately, to receive in their faith and sect the said Esclarmonda, daughter of her the deponent; and she added: "May you be pleased,

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<sup>37</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod anno sequenti, die veneris ante dominicam in XL, cum ipsa loquens iret pro aqua in loco vocato la Canal, in via invenit dictum Guillelmum Beneti, qui interrogavit ipsam loquentem qualiter erat Sclarmonde, filie ipsius loquentis tunc infirme, uxorique den Comutz Adelh de Comutz, filiole dicti Guillelmi Beneti; et ipsa loquens respondit dicto Guillelmo quod multum debilis erat dicta Sclarmonda filia sua, et quod magnam gratiam Deus faceret ei, si dictam filiam eius leveret ante ipsam loquentem, quia multum erat atediata de infirmitata eius, et multum spenderat pro ipsa.

Fournier, Vol. III, f. 294c, p. 361.

<sup>38</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et tunc dictus Guillelmus, vertens sermonem suum ad ipsam loquentem, dixit ei quod faceret illa omnia que dicta Guillelma, uxor dicti Guillelmi, quam ipse mitteret ei non nocte sequenti, diceret ei; cui ipsa respondit quod ex quo tantum bonum erat, et magnum bonum facere debebat dictus homo quem adduceret dicta Guillelma ipsi Sclarmonde, scilicet quod salvaret et restauraret eius animam, ipsa faceret illa que vellet dicta Guillelma, et sic dictus Guillelmus recessit de dicta domo.

Fournier, Vol. III, f. 294d, p. 362.

Godmother, that your said daughter may be received by this said good man, i.e. a heretic, because thus the soul of your daughter can be better saved than in any other way, and if after the said reception your said daughter should die, do not take it to heart, because her soul will go to a good place, and better than in the present world.”<sup>39</sup>

[...] and she added: “When this good man (i.e. heretic) comes, you will genuflect thrice before him just as you will see me doing, or you will bow towards him as I will do.”<sup>40</sup>

Apparent from the testimony of Gauzia Clergue, Guillelma I also brought heretics to other villagers, serving as an intermediary between the two parties. She worked with her husband and the heretic, and instructed Gauzia how to properly make the *melhorament* to the heretic.

According to Gauzia Clergue’s deposition, we also learn about how Guillelma I spread heretical teachings:

Guillelma I also said to her the deponent, (the latter said), that blessed were those who received these good men (i.e. heretics) in their homes because, she said, wherever two of these good men, (i.e. heretics) were, God was in their midst.<sup>41</sup>

She also said that Guillelma I said to her that everything chaplains did or said in mass was completely “nulhis” (null, that is), except the Our Father and Gospel.

The said Guillelma I also said, she said, that each believer ought to attempt, as much as possible, to instruct others who are not believers of the said good men, to be believers and to come to the said heretics; which, she said, had great merit, because, she said, the whole court of God rejoices when someone is made a believer.<sup>42</sup>

She said also that to these said good men, i.e. heretics, God had given power because they are able to beseech God on behalf of others.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

...que intravit dictam foganham et dixit ipsi loquenti ibi quod dictus Guillelmus Beneti, compater ipsius loquentis, miserat eam, pro faciendo illa que ipsa loquens sciebat, quia, ut dixit, statim debebat venire unus de illis bonis hominibus, id est hereticis, ad recipiendum ad fidem et sectam suam dictam Sclarmondam, filiam ipsius loquentis; et addidit: “Placeat vobis, commater, quod dicta filia vestra recipiatur per dictum bonum hominem, id est hereticum, quia sic melius salvaretur anima dicte filie eius quam aliquo alio modo, et si post dictam receptionem dicta filia vestra moreretur, non sit vobis cordi, quia ad bonum locum anima eius ibit, et in meliori quam sit presens seculum.”

Fournier, Vol. III, f. 294d, p. 363.

<sup>40</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et addidit: “Quando veniet dictus bonus homo (id est hereticus) vos flectetis ter ienua coram eo sicut videbitis me facere, vel inclinabitis vos versus eum sicut ego faciam.”

Fournier, Vol. III, f. 295a, p. 363.

<sup>41</sup> See Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

<sup>42</sup> See Luke 15:7, “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

<sup>43</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dicebat etiam dicta Guillelma ipsi loquenti, ut dixit, quod beati errant illi qui dictos bonos homines, id est hereticos, in domos suas recipiebant, quia, ut dicebat, ubicumque duo de dictis bonis hominibus, id est hereticis, errant, in medio eorum erat Deus.

But Guillelma I did not stop there in her interactions with Gauzia. After Esclarmonda's heretication, she also asked Gauzia for material support for the heretics. According to Gauzia's deposition:

And after some days the said Guillelma Benet I said to her the deponent, not still remembering the place or day, she said, that when the said good man (i.e. heretic) had labored so much that he had come from near Tarascon to receive and save the soul of her daughter, that she was not doing good because she did not give anything to the said good man (i.e. heretic), and that many others, both from Montailou, and even from Limoux, did much good to these said good men, (i.e. heretics), because those who gave them alms had great merit. To whom when she the deponent had answered that she had not prepared, the said Guillelma I responded to her that the said good men (i.e. heretics), accepted by men that which they were wishing to give, and were able, if a lot, or if a little, and that she ought to give to the heretic that which she is able to give. She the deponent, instigated, she said, by the said Guillelma I, gave the said Guillelma I two Toulouasin sous, so the said Guillelma I would give them to the heretic on her behalf.<sup>44</sup>

In a final act of loyalty to the heretics, Guillelma I conspired to avoid the inquisition. According to her own deposition:

She said that twelve years ago or around then, she does not remember the time otherwise, as she said, a letter of citation had come to Montailou from the lord Inquisitor in which she was cited to hear her sentence concerning those things that she had confessed there and had committed in the crime of heresy on the evening before she was to be told about the said citation, Arnaut Clergue, natural son of the late Guilhem

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Dixit etiam ipsi loquenti dicta Guillelma quod quicquid capellani faciebant vel dicebant in missa totum erat "nulhis" id est nullum, exceptis Pater noster et Evangelium.

Dicebat etiam, ut dixit, dicta Guillelma, quod quilibet de credentibus debebat conari, quantum poterat, quod instrueret alios qui non errant credentes dictorum bonorum hominum, ut essent credentes et ad dictos hereticos venirent; qui, ut dicebat, magnam mercedem habebat, quia, ut dicebat, tota curia Dei multum Gaudet quando aliquis efficitur credens.

Dicebat etiam quod dictis bonis hominibus, id est hereticis, Deus dederat potestatem quod possent Deum rogare pro aliis...

Fournier, Vol. III, ff. 294b-294c, pp. 359-360.

<sup>44</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et post aliquos dies dicta Guillelma Beneta dixit ipsi loquenti, non recordatur tamen expresse de loco vel die, ut dixit, quod cum dictus bonus homo (id est hereticus), tandum laborasset quod venisset de iuxta Taraschonem ad recipiendum et salvandum animam filie eius, quod non faciebat bene quia non dabat aliquid dicto hono homine (id est heretico), et quod multi alii, tam de Monte Alionis, quam etiam de Limoso, multa bona faciebant dictis bonis hominibus, (id est hereticis), quia magnam mercedem habebant illi qui eis helemosinam faciebant. Cui cum ipsa loquens respondisset quod non habebat paratum, dicta Guillelma respondit ei quod dicti boni homines (id est heretici), accipiebant ab homine illud quod illis dare volebat, et poterat, sive multum esset, sive parum, et quod daret illo heretico illud quod dare posset. Ipsa loquens, instigata, ut dixit, per dicta Guillelmam, dedit dicte Guillelme duos solidos tolosanos, ut dicta Guillelma daret eos dicto heretico ex parte eius.

Fournier, Vol. III, ff. 295b, pp. 364-365.

Clergue, the brother of the said rector, came to her in her house, as he said to her, on behalf of the rector, and he said to her that on the next day the said rector had to cite her on behalf of the lord inquisitor to go to Carcassonne to hear her sentence, and so that she might be excused from going to Carcassonne, on the next day she ought to lie in bed and pretend to be ill and say that she had fallen off the ladder of her house and as a result she was completely broken, thus the said rector would excuse her. For, he said, if she were to appear before the lord inquisitor, she would be imprisoned; and she, agreeing with the advice of the said rector, had placed herself in bed and claimed to be all broken, and on the next day when the said rector came with the letter of citation and witness, she lay in bed and pretended she was very sick, and said that she had fallen from a ladder, and was completely broken. And thus she was excused.<sup>45</sup>

Guillelma I assumed a guiding role, perpetuating heresy. She asked others to support the heretics, brought others to make the *melhorament* to them, taught them about the heretics, their teachings (and especially about how to make the *melhorament* to them), and she also conspired with other heretical sympathizers to avoid the inquisition.

### Conclusions

The ways in which Guillelma and her husband Guilhem engaged in heresy reveal some of the ways in which women participated in Catharism during the “Authié revival” after the decline of the *perfectae* (female perfect), and enable a comparison of the roles of female *credentes* in heresy with those of male *credentes*.

As was mentioned earlier, during Fournier’s inquisition, many villagers reported rumors related to the heretical activities of Guilhem Benet. He was rumored to have been a believer in

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<sup>45</sup> The text printed in Fournier’s register reads:

Item dixit quod cum XII anni vel circa, aliter de tempore non recordatur, ut dixit, littera citacionis domini inquisitoris venisset apud Montem Alionem in qua ipsa citabatur ad audiendum sentenciam super illis que confessata fuerat ibi de hiis que comiserat in crimine heresis, de sero quando sequenti mane debebat intimari ei dicta citatio, Arnaldus Clerici filius naturalis Guillelmi Clerici quondam, fratris dicti rectoris venit ad ipsam in domo eius, ut dixit ei, ex parte dicti rectoris, et dixit ei quod in crastinum dictus rector eam citare debebat ex parte domini inquisitoris ut iret apud Carcassonam ad audiendum sentenciam, et ut ipsa posset excusari ne iret apud Carcassonam, in crastinum iaceret in lecto et fingeret se infirmari et diceret quod de scala domus sue ceciderat et ex casu illo tota fracta erat, et sic dictus rector eam excusaret. Nam, ut dixit, si ipsa compareret coram domino inquisitore, inmureretur; et ipsa acquiescens consiliis dicti rectoris posuit se in lecto et finxit se totam esse fractam et in crastinum quando dictus rector venit cum littera citacionis et testibus, ipsa iacuit in lecto et finxit se multum infirmari, et dixit quod ceciderat de scalari, et tota fracta erat. Et sic fuit excusata.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 99b, pp. 476-466.

heretics, a guide to them, to have housed them, and to have been hereticated at his death. All of these rumors were confirmed by various villagers from Montailou. The depositions of Guilhem Fort and Alazaïs Azéma attested that he had been involved in the spread of heretical teachings and had made death threats against at least one woman who was herself threatening to expose the heretical ministers, and a family who housed them, to the inquisitorial authorities.<sup>46</sup> He was alleged by the depositions of Alazaïs Azéma, Bruna Pourcel, Gauia Clergue, and Faurèsa den Riba to have organized the heretications of his daughter Alazaïs, his goddaughter Esclarmonda Clergue, and another woman from Montailou, ‘na Roqua’.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, his wife Guillelma, initially a passive participant in heresy, later became much more active. She made the *melhorament* to the heretics, invited others to make it to them and to give them their goods, brought the heretics around to perform the *consolamentum*, and lied about having a terrible fall to avoid being sentenced by the inquisition.

At least in the case of the heretical *credentes* Guilhem and Guillelma Benet I, men and women supported the heretics to similar degrees, although they participated in different ways. While her husband was generally involved as a guide (*ductor*) and procurer of heretics, working with other *credentes* to bring the heretics around, Guillelma served as a *ductor* only in one alleged instance. However, she worked to encourage her neighbors to give material goods to the heretics, brought her neighbors to the heretics, and taught them how to make the *melhorament* to the heretics properly, encouraging and perpetuating the heretical faith, working closely with individuals from other families of believers. Guillelma played an active role in heresy and also worked to perpetuate it. Guillelma was found to have committed “considerable

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<sup>46</sup> For these accounts, see Fournier, Vol. I. f. 91c, p. 444; also Fournier f. 60d, p. 318.

<sup>47</sup> For the heretications organized by Guilhem Benet, see Fournier, Vol. I, ff. 62a-62b, pp. 323-324; Fournier, Vol. III, ff. 294c-294d, p. 361-362; Fournier, Vol. I, f. 61a, p. 320; Fournier, Vol. I, f. 78b, pp. 388-389.



heretical deeds” when she was sentenced by the Inquisitor Bernard Gui on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1321, and was committed to the *Chateau des Allemans* in perpetuity with chains and irons on her feet, given only water and bread to sustain her.<sup>48</sup> Whether she died in prison, or was eventually released, is not known.

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<sup>48</sup> For the sentence of Guillelma Benet, see Limborch, p. 287. This is a transcription of British Library Add MS 4697, in which Guillelma’s sentence can be found at f. 145b.

### **Chapter Three: The Benet Sons, Raimond, Bernart, and Pèire**

Like their parents, Raimond, Bernart, and Pèire Benet participated in heretical activities. This chapter explores the heretical activities of Guilhem and Guillelma I's sons, and examines how the "family heritage" of Catharism helped to prolong its survival into the fourteenth century, and how the faith was shared between parents and their children. Building upon the scholarship of Michel Dmitrevsky and Anne Brenon, this chapter will explore how Raimond Benet kept heretical company, assisted Guilhem Belot and Guilhem Benet his father in the heretication of "na Roqua", and was hereticated at his death. It will discuss how Bernart Benet, like his father, helped to organize the heretication of Guilhem Guilhabert, and how he was arrested for matters related to heresy, escaped, and was subsequently turned in by his sister-in-law. Although not often mentioned in the inquisition registers, Pèire Benet, too, kept heretical company just as his parents had done.

Anne Brenon had found that by 1180 if not earlier, "Catharism was virtually a family heritage, bestowed upon infants in their cradles. One was born a Cathar just as one's neighbor might be born a Catholic—the family's religious options were thus conditioning, even if this did not rule out the possibility of a later divergence."<sup>1</sup> According to Dmitrevsky, "sectarian parents always agreed that their children should embrace Catharism."<sup>2</sup> This chapter will carry Michel Dmitrevsky and Anne Brenon's claims about the nature of the "family heritage" of Catharism into the fourteenth century and will show that if parents, in this case Guilhem and Guillelma Benet I, were sympathetic to the heretical cause, and maintained an environment where heretics

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<sup>1</sup> Brenon, "Catharism and the Family," 295-296.

<sup>2</sup> Michel Dmitrevsky, "I. Notes sur le Catharisme et l'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France." *Annales du Midi*, vol. 36, no. 141, (Privat, 1924): 294-311, here 306.

were coming, staying in the family home, and performing rites in their *foganha*, or those of close neighbors, their children would be likely to be sympathetic to them.

### Raimond Benet

Raimond Benet, who has been little discussed in previous studies, was one of the sons of Guilhem and Guillelma Benet I. In *Montaillou*, Raimond's entry in Le Roy Ladurie's appendix of brief biographies, reads simply: "hereticated by [Guilhem] Authié... died."<sup>3</sup> As this chapter will discuss, Raimond Benet did much more than simply be hereticated and die. Raimond was rumored to have believed in heresy, was often present around heretics, brought heretics around his village, assisted in a heretication, and was himself hereticated at death. Like his parents (especially his father), Raimond also participated actively in heresy, perpetuating it, and supporting its ministers.

Guillelma Benet I's deposition from May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1321, concerning events from ca. 1302, describes her son Raimond:

She said that eighteen years ago or around that, she does not otherwise remember the time, her husband and herself were keeping sheep in common with those of the Belot household, and one evening at sunset she the deponent [Guillelma I] brought bread to the house of the Belots so they of the said household would send the said bread to Guilhem Belot and Raimond Benet her son, shepherds, who were watching over the said common sheep.<sup>4</sup>

Raimond Benet, it seems, was a shepherd who looked after the sheep with Guilhem Belot, also from the village of Montaillou, whose family kept their sheep in common with the Benets.

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<sup>3</sup> Montaillou, p. 364.

<sup>4</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dixit quod XVIII anni sunt vel circa, aliter non recordatur de tempore, maritus eius et ipsa tenebant oves in parsaria cum illis de domo dels Belostz, et quodam sero in solis occasu tempore estivo ipsa loquens portavit panem ad doum dels Belostz ut illi de dicta domo mitterent dictum panem Guillelmo Beloti et Ramundo Beneti filio ipsius loquentis pastoribus, qui custodiebant dicta oves parserias.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 99c, p 477.

In a deposition from April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1321 in which she referred to events of 1304-1305, Alamanda Guilhabert, the mother of Guilhem Guilhabert, who was also a shepherd with Raimond, deposed before Fournier:

She said that about sixteen or seventeen years ago, she had a son of sixteen years or around that, called Guilhem Guilhabert, who was a shepherd and kept sheep, and had a close friendship with Guilhem Belot and Raimond Benet, who were great believers in heretics, and this was commonly reputed.<sup>5</sup>

The shepherd Pèire Maury also reported that he had heard from Guilhem Belot and his brother Guilhem Maury that Raimond was heretical. From the deposition of Pèire Maury given June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1324 concerning events of 1301:

They [Guilhem Belot and Guilhem Maury] also said [to Pèire] that the house of Joan Guilhabert was also a believing one, in which there were at that time Joan who they said was a good believer, and Alamanda, his wife; and also the household of Guilhem Benet, [in which Guilhem] was a good believer, and also in the same way was Guillelma I, his wife, [and] Raimond, their son.<sup>6</sup>

From these depositions, it becomes clear that Raimond Benet was a shepherd who was commonly considered to have been a believer in heretics and was perhaps known to have been involved with them and their activities.

#### Raimond's Keeping of Heretical Company

According to the depositions of Guillelma Clergue and Bruna Pourcel (both Cathar sympathizers), Raimond Benet often consorted with heretics. According to the deposition of Guillelma Clergue from December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1320, about events which had occurred in 1308:

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<sup>5</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dixit quod XVI vel XVII anni sunt elapsi, ipsa habebat unum filium XVI annorum vel circa, vocatum Guillelmum Guilaberti, qui fuerat pastor et custodiebat oves, et habuerat familiaritatem cum Guillelmo Beloti et Ramundo Beneti, qui erant magni credentes hereticorum, et tales communiter reputabantur.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 86b, p. 422.

<sup>6</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dixerunt etiam quod domus Iohannis Guilaberti erat etiam credens, in qua tunc errant dictus Iohannes, de quo dicebant quod erat bonus credens, et Alamanda, uxor eius; et domus etiam Guillelmi Beneti, qui Guillelmus erat bonus credens, et eodem modo etiam Guillelma, uxor eius, Ramundus, filius eorum.

Fournier, Vol. III, f. 257c, p. 161.

She frequently saw then, before, and after, that the said Guilhem [Authié] entered her father's house, when the heretics were there. These also entered the said house, with or without him, when the heretics were there: Bernard, Raimond, and Guilhem Belot, and Guilhem Benet, and Raimond Benet his son, although Guilhem and Raimond Benet were not cited in Carcassonne, as she knows, because they were already dead. She does not know if their bones were burned afterwards, but she knew well that the said two were believers of heretics, and that this is the public opinion in Montaillou, and it was commonly said that heretics were hosted in the house of Guilhem Benet. And one day when she was going for water, she came upon the said Guilhem who was coming by road from Ax, and she asked him from where he was coming, and he responded that [he was coming] from Ax, and had stayed at the house of Sebèlia den Balle; it was a house of heretics, she believed that the said Guilhem was a believer of heretics.<sup>7</sup>

The deposition of Bruna Pourcel given January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1320, concerning events of 1302, also shows that Raimond kept heretical company:

She [Bruna] also said that after about a month, she does not otherwise remember the time, the said Alazaïs [Riba] came to her house and said to her to come with her to her house, and she responded that [she would gladly come], and went with her, and when she was in the house of the said Alazaïs, she found her said father standing in the doorway of the said room, and standing next to the fire were Bernart Riba and Pons Riba his son, the brothers Raimond and Bernard Belot, and Raimond Benet, and the said heretic was standing on his feet at the doorway of the said room speaking with the aforesaid men, who were also standing. And when she saw them, immediately, she said, she left the house. And the said Alazaïs said to her: "And you leave so quickly?", and she responded yes.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Vidit tamen frequenter et ante et post quod dictus Guillelmus intrabat domum patris sui quando heretici in dicta domo erant. Intrabant eciam et cum eo et sine eo dictam domum quando heretici erant ibi et ipsa sciebat eos esse: Bernardus, Ramundus, et Guillelmus Beloti, et Guillelma Belota, Guillelmus Beneti et Ramundus Beneti filius eius, qui tamen Guillelmus et Ramundus Beneti non fuerunt citati apud Carcassonem quod ipsa sciat, quia iam mortui erant. Nescit tamen si postea ossa eorum fuerunt combusta, sed bene scit quod dicti duo erant credentes hereticorum, et de hoc est communis fama in Monte Alionis, et dicebatur communiter quod in domo Guillelmi Beneti heretici hospitabantur. Et quadam die, dum ipsa iret pro aqua, obviavit dicto Guillelmo qui veniebat per viam de Ax, et ipsa interrogavit eum unde veniebat, et ipse respondit quod de Ax, et steterat ibi in domo Sibilie den Balle, erat domus hereticorum, credidit quod dictus Guillelmus esset credens hereticorum.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 67c, pp. 343-344.

<sup>8</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod quasi post mensem, non recordatur tamen aliter de tempore, dicta Alazaicis venit ad domum eius et dixit ei quod venire cum ipsa ad domum eius, et ipsa respondit quod libenter, et ivit cum ipsa, et quando fuit in domo dicte Alazaicis, invenit dictum patrem suum stantem in hostio dicte camera, et stabant ad ignem Bernardu Riba et Poncius Riba filius eius, Raymundus et Bernardus Beloti fratres, et Ramundus Beneti et dictus hereticus stando pedes ad hostium dicte camera loquebatur cum predictis, qui eciam pedes stabant. Et quando vidit predictos, incontinenti, ut dixit, ipsa recessit de domo. Et dicta Alazaicis dixit ei: "Et ita cito recedes?", que respondit quod sic.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 77c, p. 384.

The depositions of Guillelma Clergue and Bruna Pourcel reveal to us how Raimond Benet was frequently in his parents house when heretics were there, and also chatted with them in the Riba house.

#### Assistant in Heretications

Raimond was especially known for bringing heretics around the village to console villagers. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, 1321, Alazaïs Faure (née Guilhabert) deposed before Fournier about the heretication of her brother Guilhem in 1308:

[...] and [Alazaïs] went, she said, to the house of her father, and spoke with her aforesaid brother, and said to him: “Brother, Guilhem Belot and Raimond Benet your companions will procure and bring to you one of the good Christians who will make you a good Christian, and this you should do, because Guilhem Benet and Raimond Maurs have similarly made themselves good Christians”, as Arnald Vital as she said to her brother, had said to her, “and therefore, brother, you may make your soul saved, and it will be absolved from all sins, and your soul will go to paradise after death.”<sup>9</sup>

Raimond also participated very actively in the heretication of “na Roqua,” another woman from Montailou. According to the deposition of Bruna Pourcel about an event from ca. 1305:

She [Bruna] also said that fifteen or seventeen years ago, she no longer remembers the time clearly, she said, around the time of Easter, on a certain day Guilhem Belot, Raimond Benet son of the late Guilhem Benet and the late Rixenda Juliana of Montailou at dusk in a certain blanket they carried the late ‘na Roqua’ to her house, and they said to her [Bruna] that she should not give to her food or drink, because these things ought not to be done. And the said night she the deponent [Bruna Pourcel] watched the said Roqua with the said Rixende, and the late Alazaïs Peliceria, and they frequently asked the said Roqua to speak with them, but she did not want to. She was also wishing then to give her some broth of salted pork, [but] they were not able to open her mouth. On the contrary, when they were wishing to open her mouth, to give her a drink, she squeezed her mouth even tighter, and in this state she stayed for two days and nights, and on the third night she died around dawn.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

... et ivit, ut dixit, ad domum patris sue, et fuit loquta cum fratre suo predicto, et dixit ei: “Frater, Guillelmus Beloti et Ramundus Beneti socii vestri procurabunt et adducent ad te aliquem de bonis christianis qui te faciet bonum christianum, et hoc facere debes, quia Guillelmus Beneti et Ramundus Maurs fecerunt se fieri bonos christianos similiter”, ut Arnaldus Vitalis predictus, sicut dixit fratri suo, dixerat, ei, “et ideo, frater, faciatis quia sic vestra anima salvabitur, et eritis absolutus ab omnibus peccatis, et anima vestra statim ibit ad paradisum post mortem”

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 84a, p. 413.

<sup>10</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

According to the deposition of Alazaïs Azema given February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1321 Guilhem Belot and Raimond Benet talked about this heretication in her presence:

She also said that around the same time as it seemed to her, she does not otherwise remember the time, when ‘na Roqua’ had been carried to the house of Bruna wife of the late Guilhem Pourcel of Montailou, sick with the illness from which she died, the deponent was in the house of the late Guilhem Benet of Montailou, and in the said house with her was the said Guilhem Benet, Raimond Benet his son, and Guilhem Belot, and then they began to speak of the said Roqua. And then the said Guilhem Belot and Raimond Benet said that in a certain blanket they had carried the said Roqua to the house of the said Bruna, nevertheless, they said, she had been received first in their presence at night by Guilhem Authié the heretic into the faith and sect of the heretics, and, they said, she had been received in the barn of Raimond Roqua her son, and afterwards she did not speak nor eat nor drink until she had died; and she the deponent, she said, did not see the said Roqua in the said sickness, but when she had died, she went to the house of the said Bruna, and with the said Bruna she prepared the body of the said Roqua, whom she knew, as has been said, to have been hereticated.<sup>11</sup>

In her deposition, Bruna Pourcel reveals that she had asked Guilhem Belot why he had brought “na Roqua” and instructed her (Bruna) not to feed her nor touch her, confirming that she had indeed been hereticated with the assistance of Raimond Benet. From Bruna’s deposition given January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1320:

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Item dixit quod XV vel XVII anni sunt, non recordatur tamen, ut dixit, plene de tempore, tempore Paschali, quadam die Guillelmus Beloti, Ramundus Beneti filius Guillelmi Beneti quondam et Rixendis Iuliana quondam de Monte Alionis in crepusculo noctis in quadam borracio portaverunt ad domum ipsius Na Roqua quondam, et dixerunt ei quod de cetero non daret ei comedere vel bibere aliquid, quia non debebat hoc fieri. Et dicta nocte ipsa loquens vigilavit dictam Roquam cum dicta Rixendi, et Alazaici Peliceria quondam, et frequenter sollicitabant dictam Roquam quod loqueretur cum ipsis, quod tamen ipsa facere volebat. Volebat etiam ei dare de brodio carniū salsarum de porco, et non poterant aperire os eius. Immo, quando volebant ei os aperire, ut darent ei bibere, ipsa magis stringebat os suum, et in isto statu ipsa stetit per duas dies et noctes, et in tertia nocte circa auroram decessit.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 78a-78b, p. 388.

<sup>11</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod circa idem tempus ut ei videtur, tamen aliter de tempore non recordatur, quando fuerat portata na Roqua ad domum Brune uxoris Guillelmi Porcelli quondam de Monte Alionis infirma de infirmitate de qua decessit, ipsa loquens erat in domo Guillelmi Beneti quondam de Monte Alionis, et erant in dicta domo cum ipsa dicti Guillelmus Beneti, Ramundus Beneti filius eius, et Guillelmus Beloti, et tunc inceperunt loqui de dicta Roqua. Et tunc dicti Guillelmus Beloti et Ramundus Beneti dixerunt quod ipsi in quadam lodice portaverant dictam Roquam ad domum dicte Brune, tamen, ut dixerunt, primo fuerat recepta presentibus ipsis de nocte per Guillelmum Auterii hereticum ad fidem et sectam hereticorum, et, ut dixerunt, recepta fuit in palharitz Ramundi Roquati filii eius, et postea non fuit loquta nec comedit nec bibit quosque mortua fuit; et ipsa loquens, ut dixit, non vidit dictam Roquam in dicta infirmitate, sed quando mortua fuit, ipsa venit ad domum dicte Brune, et cum dicta Bruna paravit corpus dicte Roque, quam sciebat, ut dictum est, hereticatam fuisse.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 61a, p. 320.

And after a few days she [Bruna] went by a certain house that had been [owned by] the said Roqua, and she found in it the previously-mentioned Guilhem Belot, and she asked him why he said to her when he had carried the said Roqua to her house, as said above, that she not give her anything to eat or drink, because this should not be done, he responded to her that he had said this to her, because the said Roqua had been received, long before, in her own house, by the good Christians, into their sect and faith, and he [Guilhem Belot], Guilhem and Raimond Benet had been present at her reception. And he did not tell her which heretic had received the said Roqua to their sect. But she knew well, she said, that her said father the heretic was then in the house of the said Alazaïs den Riba when the said Roqua was hereticated.<sup>12</sup>

Just as his father had arranged for the heretications of Esclarmonda Clergue, Alazaïs Benet, and “na Roqua”, so too did Raimond work to organize the heretication of Guilhem Guilhabert, having assisted Guilhem Belot to hereticate “na Roqua” by carrying her to her son’s house to be hereticated.

#### Sickness, Heretication, and Death

In a final act of devotion to heresy and the heretical ministers, Raimond Benet was hereticated at his death. According to his mother Guillelma I’s deposition from May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

She also said, a certain year around the festival of Pentecost, when Raimond Benet, her late son, was sick from the disease from which he died, a certain evening at dusk Guilhem Belot, Arnaut Vital, [and] Arnaut Belot had brought Guilhem Authié the heretic, and when he had entered the said house the said heretic hereticated the said Raimond, son of her [the deponent], who was willing and beseeching, in the above-mentioned heretical way, in the presence of herself [the deponent], Guilhem Benet her aforesaid husband, and the aforesaid Guilhem and Arnald Belot and Arnald Vital. And the aforesaid heretication made, everyone except her made the *melhorament* to the heretic.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et post aliquos dies ipsa transibat per quoddam casale quod fuerat dicte Roque, et invenit in dicto casali Guillelmum Beloti predictum, et interrogavit, eum quare dixerat sibi quando portaverat dictam Roquam ad domum eius, ut predictum est, quod non daret ei aliquid comedere nec bibere, quia hoc fieri non debebat, qui respondit ei quod hoc pro tanto dixerat ei, quia dicta Roqua fuerat recepta, iam diu erat, in domo propria per bonos christianos ad sectam eorum et fidem, et ipse Guillelmus et Ramundus Beneti fuerant presente in eius receptione. Et non dixit ei quis hereticus receperat dictam Roquam ad sectam eorum. Bene tamen scit, ut dixit, quod dictus pater eius hereticus tunc erat in domo dicte Alazaicis den Riba quando dicta Roqua fuit hereticata.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 78b, pp. 388-389.

<sup>13</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit, cum eodem anno circa festum Penthecostes Ramundus Beneti filius eius quondam esset infirmus de infirmitate de qua decessit, quodam vespere in crepusculo noctis Guillelmus Beloti, Arnaldus Vitalis, Arnaldus Beloti adduxerunt Guillelmum Autierii hereticum, et cum intrasset dictam domum dictus hereticus dictum



After Raimond's heretication, Bruna Pourcel visited his grave with Guilhem Belot, who also suggested that Raimond had been hereticated at his death. From the deposition of Bruna Pourcel:

She also said that after Raimond Benet, son of the said Guilhem Benet, had died, she went to the church to the tomb of the said Raimond, and with her went the said Guilhem Belot, and then she said to the said Guilhem Belot that it had been very sad that Raimond had died, because he had been a handsome youth, and apt, and the said Guilhem responded that it had been good that the said Raimond had died, to which she responded, "And how can you say this?", and the said Guilhem responded it was only so because the said Raimond had been received by the good Christians, and she said to him: "And how do you know this?" and he responded to her that he had been present when the said Raimond had been received. He did not then tell her which heretic had been present, nor who else had been present. She said that at that time her said father the heretic had been in the house of the said Alazaïs den Riba, as was commonly said among believers.<sup>14</sup>

Clearly, Raimond was rumored by many to have been involved in heresy, was present around heretics, brought them around the village, assisted in the heretication of "na Roqua", and was himself hereticated at death. Thus, Raimond's participation in heresy resembles that of his father.

### Bernart Benet

According to Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie "[Bernart] Benet was another victim of downward mobility." When his family's goods were taken, he "was ejected into the proletariat of the shepherds. His material and moral situation was not strong... he was caught between two fires:

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Ramundum filium ipsius loquentis volentem et petentem modo supradicto hereticavit, presentibus ipsa loquens, Guillelmo Beneti marito eius predicto, et predictis Guillelmo et Arnaldo Beloti et Arnaldo Vitalis. Et facta dicta hereticacione predicti omnes ipsa excepta dictum hereticum adoraverunt.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 98c-98d, p. 474.

<sup>14</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod postquam mortuus fuit Ramundus Beneti, filius dicti Guillelmi Beneti, ipsa ivit ad ecclesiam ad sepulturam dicti Ramundi, et cum ipsa ibat dictus Guillelmus Beloti, et tunc ipsa dixit dicto Guillelmo Beloti quod magnum dampnum erat de morte dicti Ramundi, quia pulcher iuvenis erat et aptus, et dictus Guillelmus respondit quod bene contigerat dicto Ramundo quod mortuus erat, cui ipsa respondit: "Et quomodo hoc dicitis?", et dictus Guillelmus respondit quod pro tanto quod dictus Ramundus receptus fuerat per bonos christianos, cui Guillelmo ipsa dixit: "Et quomodo hoc vos scitis?," et ipse respondit ei quod ipse fuerat presens, quando dictus Ramundus fuit receptus. Non tamen dixit ei per quem hereticum fuerat receptus, nec quibus aliis presentibus. Dixit tamen quod illo tempore dictus pater eius hereticus erat in domo dicte Alazaicis den Riba, ut communiter dicebatur inter credentes.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 78b-78c, p. 389.

the Clergue clan which wanted to make him bear false witness to the Carcassonne Inquisition, and the Azema clan, enemy to the Clergues, who wanted to make him retract his deposition. Bernard Clergue, following the instructions of his brother the priest, promised [Bernart] to give him back one of his confiscated meadows in return for his cooperation.”<sup>15</sup> According to Le Roy Ladurie, he was a “would-be informer... [Pèire] Azema had him thrown into the chateau dungeons and his livestock seized and given to the Compte... [he] was relegated on release to the status of a shepherd.”<sup>16</sup> He and his brother Pèire were formerly farmers working their own land, but they were subsequently forced to become migrant shepherds.”<sup>17</sup> An individual with a dramatic story, this section will discuss how Bernart engaged in Catharism as a *ductor*, just as his father had, attempted to extort a woman for her sheep, and gave the Inquisition a false testimony.

#### Bernart and the Heretication of Guilhem Guilhabert

Bernart Benet participated very actively in the heretication of Guilhem Guilhabert, having brought the heretic Prades Tavernier to him. According to the deposition of Alazaïs Fabri, made April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1321:

And on the same day, around vespers, the said Guilhem Belot returned to the house of her the deponent [Alazaïs], and finding the deponent in her said house, and the said Alamanda mother of the said patient, she said to her asking her since her aforesaid son wanted to be received by the good Christians, that this would be pleasing to her, because, he said, if he is received by them, and if he is made a good Christian, his soul is saved, because only in the faith and belief of the said good Christians are men saved, and those who are received by them at their end are absolved from all sins committed by them, and their souls enter paradise after death immediately; and that they were the only good Christians and holy men and by their hands only are men saved.

The aforesaid errors, she said, she believed, and in the said faith, she said, she remained for a year, and had confessed, she said, in the penitential court to the Brothers of *Podio Ciritano*.

And then she and her said mother told Guilhem Belot that since this said reception was a good thing, it was pleasing to her that the said Guilhem bring one of the said good Christians to make the said patient a good Christian, and then the said Guilhem Belot left

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<sup>15</sup> Montaillou, 71.

<sup>16</sup> Montaillou, 364.

<sup>17</sup> Montaillou, 157.

them, and the next night, after midnight, and just around dawn, the said Guilhem Belot and Bernart Benet came to the said house bringing with them Prades Tavernier the heretic whom she the deponent [Alamanda] knew to be a heretic, and had known before that he was a heretic.<sup>18</sup>

The fact that Bernart brought the heretic to Guilhem Guilhabert is also confirmed by Arnaut Faure, Alamanda's husband, and brother-in-law to Guilhem Guilhabert. According to his deposition, given April 4<sup>th</sup> 1321:

And after they had stayed there for a rest, the said Alamanda and Alazaïs, seeing that the said patient Guilhem was losing [his] voice, and wondering a lot about [what] was delaying the said Guilhem Belot and the said heretic, they said to her the deponent and Guilhem Authié to go from house to the *palherium* [a storage building for straw] to see if the said Guilhem Belot and the heretic were coming, and while they were there in the *palherio*, immediately came three men by the side called '*del Bac*', and it was around midnight, [and] the three men came to her and the said Guilhem, [and] she did not then recognize the men except Guilhem Belot and Bernart Benet. And she the deponent when the said Guilhem went to the said three men saying to them: "And who is there?", and the said Guilhem Belot responded that they were friends; and then she and Guilhem Authié said to them: "Welcome!", and the said Guilhem Belot greeted them, and then she the deponent proceeded them and entering the house, said to the aforesaid people who were waiting for the said Guilhem Belot and heretic that they had arrived, and immediately the aforesaid Guilhem Belot and Bernard Benet and Guilhem Belot entered the said house and Bernart Benet entered to the second door of the said house, and did not enter the [part of the house] called the *foganha*, in which the said patient was lying.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et eadem die, circa vespere, dictus Guillelmus Beloti reversus fuit ad domum ipsius loquentis, et inveniens in dicta domo ipsam loquentem, et dictam Alamandam matrem dicti infirmi, dixit ei eam rogando quod cum filius eius predictus vellet recipi per bonos christianos, quod placeret hoc sibi, quia, ut dixit, si reciperetur per eos, et efficeretur bonus christianus, eius anima salvaretur, quia in sola fide et credencia dictorum bonorum christianorum homines salvantur, et illi qui recipiuntur per eos in suo fine absolvuntur ab omnibus peccatis per eos commissis, et statim eorum anime post mortem intrant paradisum; et quod illi soli erant boni christiani et homines sancti et per manus eorum solum homines salvantur.

Predictos autem errores, ipsa, ut dixit, credidit, et in dicta credencia, ut dixit, stetit per annum, et confessa fuit, ut dixit, in foro penitencie Fratribus de Podio Ciritano.

Et tunc ipsa et dicta mater eius dixerunt dicto Guillelmo Beloti quod ex quo ita bonum erat dicta receptio, placebat ei quod dictus Guillelmus adduceret aliquem de dictis bonis christianis ut faceret dictum infirmum bonum christianum, et tunc dictus Guillelmus Beloti recessit ab ipsis, et nocte sequenti, post mediam noctem, et quasi circa auroram, dictus Guillelmus Beloti et Bernardus Beneti venerunt ad dictam domum adducentes secum Pradas Tavernier hereticum quem ipsa loquens sciebat esse hereticum, et ante cognoverat ipsum antequam hereticus esset.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 83b-83c, pp. 410-411.

<sup>19</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et postquam ibi stetissent per aliquam pausam, dicta Alamanda et Alazaicis videntes quod dictus Guillelmus infirmus amittebat loquelam et multum mirarentur quia tantum tardabat dictus Guillelmus Beloti et dictus hereticus venire, dixerunt ipsi loquenti et Guillelmo Auterii quod exirent extra domum ad palherium ad videndum si dictus Guillelmus Beloti et hereticus veniebant, et cum stetissent in palherio, statim venerunt tres homines per costam

Bernart Benet also offered an account of the event. From his deposition, made March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

He said that about 16 to 20 years ago, he does not remember the time otherwise, as he says, a certain night the late Guilhem Belot of Montailou came to him the deponent [Bernart] who was then in the courtyard of his father's house which itself was [next to] his father's house, or in the road next to the courtyard, and then the said Guilhem said to him that he had been asked to go near Prades to seek either Guilhem Authié or Prades Tavernier the heretics, so that one of them might come to receive in their faith and sect Guilhem Guilhabert who was then sick with the disease from which he died, and when he the deponent said to the said Guilhem that he was a young boy and could not follow him, nor go with him, the said Guilhem said that on the contrary this was fine, because he could go as best he could with him; and then he the deponent went with the said Guilhem Belot and crossed in front of the house of the said Guilhem Guilhabert, and they went in the direction of Prades by the road called "le Serrat de Pradis", and when they were near the said vill of Prades, he the deponent stayed in the meadows of the said vill, and the said Guilhem entered the said vill to seek the heretics. And after a short while he had returned to himself the speaker, saying to him that he had not found Guilhem Authié or Prades Tavernier, the heretics, in the said vill, because, as he said, they had gone towards Savartes, and it was necessary that they follow them, and when they had been in the place called upper 'del Angle', the said Guilhem made a great shout and no one responded to them. They both proceeded together, and when they were beside the spring of 'Colobre', for the second time the said Guilhem made the said call, and no one responded, then they proceeded a bit further, and again made a third call, and then they heard an answer and [having] anticipated the said answer, after a short wait came either Prades Tavernier or Guilhem Authe the heretic, he no longer remembers which of them it was, he said, [and] with him came Guilhem Dejean, son of Pèire Dejean of Prades.

And then he the deponent and the said Guilhem Belot on the order of the said heretic made the *melhorament* to the said heretic in the heretical way, saying: "Bless us, good [Christian]..." and then the said Guilhem Belot told the said heretic that he had come for him so he might come to Montailou to receive Guilhem Guilhabert who was seriously ill, and the said heretic responded that he [would] gladly, and they went together as far as the village of Prades; and the said Guilhem Dejean left them and entered the said village. And him the deponent, the said heretic, and Guilhem Belot went towards Montailou, crossing by the place calleed 'Mata Maior', and went by the right road to the house of the said Guilhem Guilhabert, and through the [barn] entered the said house, and from the said [barn] came to meet them Guilhem Authié of Montailou [not Guilhem Authié the heretic, his namesake] and Arnald Fabri, and received the said heretic and them. And

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vocatam del Bac, et erat circa mediam noctem, qui tres homines venerunt ad ipsum et dictum Guillelmum de quibus hominibus ipse tunc non cognovit nisi Guillelmum Beloti et Bernardum Beneti. Et ipsa loquens cum dicto Guillelmo occurrentes dictis tribus hominibus dixerunt eis: "Et quis est ibi"?, et dictus Guillelmus Beloti respondit quod amici erant; et tunc ipse et Guillelmus Auterii dixerunt eis: "Bene veneritis!", et dictus Guillelmus Beloti resalutavit eos, et tunc ipse loquens antecessit eos et intrans domum, dixit predictis personis exspectantibus dictos Guillelmum Beloti et hereticum qui iam venerant, et incontinenti predicti Guillelmus Beloti et Bernardus Beneti et Guillelmus Auterii intraverunt dictam domum, et Bernardus Beneti intravit usque ad secundam portam dicte domus, et non intravit domum vocatam la foganha, in qua dictus infirmus iacebat.

Fournier, Vol. I. ff. 88a-88b, p. 430.

they entered the house together, and in the said house at the same time present and seeing the [heretication] were: him the deponent, Guilhem Belot, the said heretic, Arnaut Fabri, Guilhem Authié, Alazaïs wife of Arnaut Fabri, Alamanda wife of Joan Guilhabert, and Guillelma sister of the said Guilhem Guilhabert who has a husband at Gebestz, and the said patient.

And the said heretic asked the said Guilhem Guilhabert who was hardly able to speak if he would be received into their faith and sect, and he responded yes. And afterwards the heretic genuflected many times and put a certain book on the head of the said patient, and hereticated him with himself present and seeing and also the aforesaid persons. And after he had hereticated him, he ordered him that he should not eat nor drink anything any more, and this done, he left with the said Guilhem Belot and went to his house, the heretic remaining in the house of the said Guilhem Guilhabert, and he does not know where the said heretic went afterwards. Of the said sickness the said Guilhem died.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dixit enim quod a XVI anni usque ad XXti possunt esse, aliter tamen, ut dixit, de tempore non recordatur, quadam nocte Guillelmus Beloti quondam de Monte Alionis venit ad ipsum loquentem qui tunc erat in curti domus patris sui que se tenebat cum domo dicti patris sui, vel in carreria iuxta curtim, et tunc dictus Guillelmus dixit ei quod ipse rogatus erat quod iret apud Pradas ad querendum vel Guillelmum Auterii vel Pradas Tavernii hereticos, ut venire alter eorum ad recipiendum ad suam fidem et sectam Guillelmum Guilaberti qui tunc erat infirmus de infirmitate de qua decessit, et cum ipse loquens diceret dicto guillelmo quod ipse erat puer et non poterat sequi eum, nec ire cum eo, dictus Guillelmus dixit quod immo bene, quia taliter iret quod se posset bene tenere cum ipso; et tunc ipse loquens ivit cum dicto Guillelmo Beloti et fecit transitum per ante domum dicti Guillelmi Guilaberti, et iverunt versus Pradas per viam vocatam le Serrat de Pradis, et quando fuerunt iuxta dictam villam de Pradis, ipse loquens remansit in pratis dicte ville, et dictus Guillelmus intravit dictam villam ad querendum hereticos. Et post pausam reversus fuit ad ipsum loquentem, dicens ei quod non invenerat in dicta villa Guillelmum Auterii vel Pradas Tavernii hereticos, quia, ut dixit, iam transiverant versus Savartesium, et oportebat quod sequerentur eos, et quando fuerunt in loco vocato apud superius del Angle, dictus Guillelmus fecit unum magnum uquetum, et nulus sibi respondit, deinde processerunt ambo simul, et quando fuerunt iuxta fontem del Colobre, iterum dictus Guillelmus fecit dictum uquetum, et nullus sibi respondit, deinde processerunt aliquantulum ultra, et iterum fecit tertium uquetum, et tunc audiverunt respondentem et exspectaverunt dictum respondentem, et post pausam venerunt vel Pradas Tavernii vel Guillelmus Auterii hereticus, non recordatur tamen quis istorum fuit, ut dixit, cum quo venit Guillelmus Iohannis, filius Petri Iohannis de Pradis.

Et tunc ipse loquens et dictus Guilhem Belot ad preceptum dicti heretici adoraverunt dictum hereticum modo hereticali, dicendo: “Benedicite, bone...” et tunc dictus Guillelmus Beloti dixit dicto heretic quod ipse venerat pro ipso ut venire apud Montem Alionem ad recipiendum Guillelmum Guilaberti qui erat infirmus graviter, et dictus hereticus respondit quod libenter, et iverunt simul usque ad dictam villam de Pradis; et dictus Guillelmus Iohannis recessit ab eis et intravit dictam villam. Et ipse loquens, dictus hereticus et Guillelmus Beloti iverunt versus Montem Alionis, transeundo per locum vocatum Mata Maior, et iverunt recta via ad domum dicti Guillelmi Guilaberti, et per palearium intraverunt dictam domum, et de dicto paleario occurrerunt eis Guillelmus Auterii de Monte Alionis et Arnaldus Fabri, et receperunt dictum hereticum et Ipsos. Et intraverint simul domum, et fuerunt in dicta domo simul presents et videntes illa que facta fuerunt: ipse loquens, Guillelmus Beloti, dictus hereticus, Arnaldus Fabri, Guillelmus Auterii, Alazaicis uxor Arnaldi Fabri, ALamanda uxor Iohannis Guilaberti, et Guillelma soror dicti Guillelmi Guilaberti que habet virum a Gebestz, et dictus infirmus.

Et dictus hereticus petiit a dicto Guillelmo Guilaberti qui vix poterat loqui si volebat recipe ad fidem et sectam eorum, qui respondit quod sic. Et postea hereticus fecit multas genuflections et posuit quemdam librum super caput dicti infirmi, et hereticavit eum ipso presente et vidente cum predictis personis. Et postquam eum hereticaverat, precepit ei quod de cetero non comederet nec biberet, et his factis, ipse cum dicto Guillelmo Beloti recesserunt et iverunt quilibet ad domum suam, remanente dicto heretic in domo dicti Guillelmi Guilaberti, et nescit postea quo dictus hereticus ivit. De dicta autem infirmitate dictus Guillelmus obiit.

Fournier, Vol. I. ff. 81c-81d, pp. 402-403.

In another instance, Bernart attempted to extort Alazaïs Faure (née Guilhabert) for some sheep, in exchange for his silence about the heretication of her late brother. According to her deposition dating from April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1321, discussing events of 1308:

And then on the Thursday after the first Sunday in Lent, she was returning from a field and found the said Bernart Benet on the plateau near the castle of Montailou, and Bernart told her that he had to go to Carcassonne with Bernart Clergue and his wife to confess to the Lord Inquisitor, about the heretication of her the deponent's aforesaid brother, because he had come to an agreement with the said Bernart [Clergue]. But if she would give some sheep to him, he would go to Puigcerda or to Narbonne, and not go to confess about the aforesaid heretication before the said Lord Inquisitor of Carcassonne. To whom she responded that she would not give some sheep to him, because after she had given them to him, he would ask for more, and as she said, it would have been better for her the deponent that the said heretication would have been revealed ten years ago. But since he was wanting to confess, it would be better if he would go to the Lord Inquisitor of Pamiers, and she would go with him to confess, [to which] the said Bernart said that Bernart Clergue and Raimonda his wife had instructed him to go reveal the aforesaid heretication before the aforesaid Lord Inquisitor of Carcassonne, and because she had not otherwise disclosed that she had been present at the said heretication, and then she herself knew to be revealed by the said Bernart, for that reason she came to confess the aforesaid; because she also thought she had not committed such a great sin that she had [in fact] committed, therefore she had not confessed the aforesaid until now.<sup>21</sup>

### Bernart's Capture

Among the final sections of Bernart's deposition, we learn what happened to Bernard near the end of his life. According to the notary's commentary:

Afterward, when because of the Easter holiday he had been freed from Allemans Castle, and he had been brought to Mas-Saint-Antonin so he might freely stay there, and

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<sup>21</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et deinde die iovis sequenti post dominicam in Quadragesima, ipsa veniebat de campo et invenit dictum Bernardum Beneti in plano iuxta castrum de Monte Alionis, qui Bernardus dixit ei quod ipse debebat ire versus Carcassonam cum Bernardo Clerici et eius uxore ad confitendum domino inquisitori, de hereticatione fratris predicti ipsius loquenti, quia ita convenerat cum dicto Bernardo. Ac tamen si ipsa daret ei aliquas oves, ipse recederet apud Podium Ciritanum vel apud Narbonensium, et non iret ad confitendum de predicta hereticacione coram dicto domino inquisitori Carcassone, cui ipsa respondit quod non daret ei aliquas oves, quia postquam expendisset eas, iterum petere alias, et melius, ut dixit, fuisset ipsi loquenti quod iam decem anni sunt dicta hereticacio detecta fuisset. Sed ex quo volebat confiteri, Melius faceret si iret ad dominum episcopum Appamiarum, et ipsa iret simul cum eo ad confitendum, qui dictus Bernardus dixit quod Bernardus Clerici et Ramunda uxor eius instruxerant et induxerant eum quod iret ad detegendum predictam hereticacionem coram predicto domino inquisitore Carcassone, et quia ipsa alias detecta non erat quod fuisset presens in dicta hereticacione, et tunc sciebat se esse detectam per dictum Bernardum, ideo venit ad confitendum predicta; quia eciam credebat quod non commisisset tam grande peccatum sicut comiserat, ideo non confessa fuerat de predictis usque modo.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 83d, p. 412.

had been ordered by the said Lord Bishop that he should not leave this vill and the house of the Bishop, this Bernard, without having asked permission fled from the village secretly, and went to Puigcerda. Then, when he had returned to Ax, around the following feast of Pentecost, Pèire Roussel and Alissenda his wife caused him to be arrested in the said place, and had him taken prisoner to Brother Gaillard de Pomiers, prior of the convent of Pamiers, vicar of the Bishop in spirituality and particularly in the matters of faith, who had him put in the prison of the Castle of Allemans.<sup>22</sup>

Like his parents and brother, Raimond had participated actively in the heresy, as did Bernart, bringing a heretic along with Guilehm Belot to console his friend Guilhem Guilhabert, and attempting to extort Alazaïs Faure in exchange for his silence about her brother's heretication. Whether he was freed after being turned in by his sister-in-law is unknown.

### Pèire Benet

According to Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Pèire Benet “married [Galharda III] (family name unknown); [Galharda] Benet [III] and her sister Alissen Roussel had both been mistresses of the priest.”<sup>23</sup> Le Roy Ladurie theorizes that the Pèire Clergue may have taken advantage of Pèire Benet's having been a transhumant shepherd to seduce his wife.<sup>24</sup> As will be shown below, Pèire Benet was involved in heresy although his appearances in the manuscript sources are few.

There exist many reports of the infidelity of Piere's wife Galharda Benet III in Fournier's inquisition register. Faurèsa den Riba deposed to Fournier on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September, 1320 that

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<sup>22</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Postque cum propter festivitatem Pasche fuisset eductus de carcere castri de Alamannis, et fuisset ductus ad Mansum Sancti Antonini ut libere ibi posset stare, et fuisset ei preceptum per dictum dominum episcopum quod de dicta villa et domo episcopali non recederet, ipse Bernardus non petita licencia clam de villa aufugit, et ivit versus Podium Ciritanum. Deinde cum fuisset reversus apud Ax, circa festum sequens Penthecostis, Petrus Rosselli et Alissendis uxor eius fecerunt eum capi in dicto loco, et fecerunt eum duci captum ad Fratrem Galhardum de Pomeriis, priorem conventus Appamiarum, vicarium in spiritualibus et maxime in causa fidei dicti domini episcopi, qui eum fecit poni in carcere castri de Alamannis.

Jacques Fournier, “confessio bernadi beneti de monte alionis,” *Inquisition À Pamiers, Interrogatoires De Jacques Fournier, 1318-1325*. ed. Jean Duvernoy. (Toulouse: É. Privat, 1966), Vol. I. ff. 79d-83a, pp. 395-409; here ff. 83a, p. 408.

<sup>23</sup> Montaillou, 364.

<sup>24</sup> Montaillou, 157.

she had confronted Pèire Clergue, the rector of Montailou, for sleeping with the married

Gahlarda Benet III:

[She told the rector] it was said that he was having [sex with] the said Gahlarda III, and if it had been true, this was bad, and a great sin, because he was committing adultery with a married woman. The rector responded to her that one woman was as good as another, and that he believed he was sinning with one as much as with the other, because he did not believe he was sinning with either. Hearing that she left him quickly, because her pot was boiling over. – Asked who was present, she said Grazida, her daughter, and the said rector, and she said no more, although carefully questioned.<sup>25</sup>

Raimond Valseria also deposed about Gahlarda III's infidelity. According to his deposition made October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1320:

He also said that it was rumored in the town of Ax that the said rector [Pèire Clergue], had carnally known Alissenda wife of Pèire Roussel, and also in the same way had known Gahlarda, wife of Pèire Benet, sister of the said Alissenda.<sup>26</sup>

#### Perhaps a Believer

Meanwhile, it seems Pèire Benet may also have held heretical views. According to the deposition of the shepherd Joan Maury, made February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1323:

He also said that it seems to him that the said Guillelma Benet I told him around the same time that Gahlarda III her daughter [in-law], who afterward had a husband called Pèire, who was from Camurac,<sup>27</sup> was a believer of heretics. he the deponent [Joan] does not remember if the said Gahlarda III talked to him about these matters.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Ipsa dixit dicto rectori quod dicebatur quod ipse tenebat dictam Galhardam, et si verum erat, male faciebat, et multum peccabat, quia cum muliere coniugata adulterium commitebat, qui rector respondit ei quod tantum valebat una mulier sicut et alia, et tantum credebat peccare cum una sicut et cum alia, quia cum nulla credebat peccare. Quod audiens ipsa recessit ab eo cito, quia olla sua superbulliebat. -- Interrogata de presentibus, dixit quod Grazida filia eius, et dictus rector, et nichil plus dixit, licet diligenter interrogata.

Fournier, Vol. I, 63c, p. 329.

<sup>26</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod fama est in villa de Ax quod dictus rector carnaliter cognovit Alissendam uxorem Petri Rosselli, et eciam quod eodem modo cognoverat Galhardam uxorem Petri Beneti sororem dicti Alissendis.

Fournier, Vol I, 51c, p. 279.

<sup>27</sup> A small village about 2km to the northeast of Montailou.

<sup>28</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dixit etiam quod videtur ei quod dicta Guillelma Beneta ei dixit circa idem tempus quod Gahlarda filia sua, que postea habuit virum quondam vocatum Petrum, qui erat de Camuracho, erat hereticorum credens. Non recordatur ipse loquens si dicta Gahlarda loquat fuit sibi de dicta materia.

Fournier, Vol. II, 214c, p. 472.



From this, it seems that Pèire and Galharda Benet III had been believers of heretics, and that perhaps Pèire encouraged his wife Galharda to believe in heresy. Because Joan speaks about Pèire Benet as ‘formerly called Pèire’ it is likely Pèire passed away before 1323 when Joan’s deposition was given.

### Conclusions

The three Benet sons, Raimond, Bernart, and Pèire, were all involved in the heresy that had been introduced to their village around 1300. Raimond was rumored by many to have been involved in heresy, was present around heretics, brought them around the village, assisted in the heretication of “na Roqua”, and was himself hereticated at death. Bernart worked to bring a heretic to Guilhem Guilhabert to hereticate him. Pèire Benet, seems from the depositions, to have been a believer in heretics.

This chapter extends Michel Dmitrevsky’s and Anne Brenon’s claims about the “family heritage” of Catharism into the fourteenth century. In this case Guilhem and Guillelma Benet I, were sympathetic to the heretical cause, and maintained an environment where heretics were coming, staying in the family home, and performing rites in their *foganha*, or those of close neighbors, and their three sons all apparently followed them in this.

## **Chapter Four: The Benet Daughters, Alazaïs, Guillelma II, Esclarmonda, and Montanha**

Just as their brothers were involved in heretical activity because of their parents, so too were Alazaïs and Guillelma Benet II. Two additional sisters, Montania and Esclarmonda Benet are each mentioned only once in the registers of the inquisition, so their role in Catharism is unknown.

### Alazaïs Benet

Alazaïs Benet was one of the four recorded daughters of Guilhem and Guillelma Benet I. According to Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Alazaïs was: “hereticated before her death in her parental home by [Guilhem] Authié; deloused her mother; [and] married [Bertomieu] d’Ax.”<sup>1</sup> “Within eight days of consoling [na Roqua],” as René Weis explains, “[Guilhem] Authié was needed again, because his wife’s cousin Alazaïs Benet from Montaillou was dying. She had been ill since late November or early December 1304, and was nursed by, among others, Fabrissa Rives. There could be no question but that this daughter of a leader Cathar house, and one so intimately allied to the Authiés, would be consoled by them.”<sup>2</sup>

The depositions of Alazaïs Azema, Faurèsa den Riba, her brother Bernart Benet, Raimonda Testaniere, her mother Guillelma Benet I, and Pèire Maury, reveal that Alaszais was actively involved in heresy even before her heretication shortly before her death. She was rumored to have consorted with heretics and also to have been a believer.

### Rumored to Have Been a Heretic

One of the shepherds of Montaillou, Pèire Maury, told Fournier that he had been told by Guilhem Belot and Guilhem Maurs about the various heretics in the surrounding area. According to his deposition on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1324:

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<sup>1</sup> Montaillou, 364.

<sup>2</sup> Weis, 157.

[They also said to Pèire] that at Ax there were believers of heretics, namely Galhardaa, wife of the late heretic Guilhem Authié, Sebèlia den Balle and Bernart, her son, Raimond Authié and Esclarmonda his wife, Berengaria, wife of Arnaut Borrelli, and a certain daughter of Guilhem Benet, wife of Joan Bartomieu of Ax, called Alazaïs.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Alazaïs was rumored to have been a believer in heretics according to Guilhem Belot and Guilhem Maurs, two other heretical believers.

### Consorting with Heretics

According to Raimonda Testaniere, Alazaïs often visited the heretics. Raimonda had seen some of her neighbors visiting the heretic Guilhem Authié in the Belot solar.<sup>4</sup> According to her deposition given April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

She also said that at the time she saw Guilhem Clergue on two separate occasions enter the said solar, carrying wine and honey, and she believed that at the time the said Guilhem entered the said solar, heretics were in the said solar. And Raimonda, now the wife of Bernard Clergue, had a husband then and went up with him to the said solar, having seen her the deponent [Raimonda]...

She also said that in the said solar she did not see others climb up except Bernart and Guilhem Clergue and Raimond, Bernart and Guilhem Belot, and Guillelma and Raimonda Belot, Raimond Benet, and Alazaïs his sister, who had a husband at Ax. Concerning the last two it was rumored in Montailou that they had been hereticated at death.<sup>5</sup>

As her mother had done, Alazaïs Benet visited the heretics in the Belot household.

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<sup>3</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dicti etiam Guillelmi dixerunt sibi quod apud Ax erant isti hereticorum credentes, scilicet Galharda, uxor Guillelmi Auterii quondam heretici, Sybilia den Balle et Bernardus, filius eius, Ramundus Auterii et Sclarmonda, uxor eius, Berengaria, uxor Arnaldi Borrelli, et quedam filia Guillelmi Beneti, uxor Bartholomei den Iohannis de Ax, vocata Alazaycis.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 257d, p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> Fournier, Vol. I, f. 94d-95a, pp. 459-460.

<sup>5</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod dicto tempore ipsa vidit quod Guillelmus Clerici quondam bis diversis temporibus intravit dictum solarium, et portabat vinum et mel, et ipsa credit quod illo tempore quo dictus Guillelmus intrabat dictum solarium heretici erant in dicto solario. Et Ramunda uxor Bernardi Clerici nunc, que tunc habebat virum ascendebat cum eo dictum solarium, vidente ipsa loquente...

Dixit eciam quod in dicto solario non vidit alios ascendentes nisi Bernardum et Guillelmum Clerici et Ramundum, Bernardum et Guillelmum Beloti, et Guillelmam et Ramundam Beloti, Ramundum Beneti et Alazaicim sororem eius, que habebat virum apud Ax, de quibus duobus ultimis fuit fama in Monte Alionis quod hereticati fuerunt in morte.

Fournier, Vol. I, ff. 95a-95b, p. 460.

## Hereticated

According to various depositions, Alazaïs herself was hereticated at her death sometime during the winter of 1304-5 probably at the insistence of her parents. According to the deposition of Faurèsa den Riba from September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1320, concerning events of 1304-1305:

She said that around 19 years ago, she does not fully remember the time, between the feasts of All Saints [1 November] and Christmas [25 December], Alazaïs daughter of Guilhem Benet from Montailou was sick with the sickness from which she died, in her sickness the deponent [Faurèsa] served her, and one night, early in the night, Guilhem Benet the father of the said Alazaïs, [and] Raimond and Guilhem Belot spoke into the ear of the said Alazaïs while she began to decline towards death, she [Faurèsa] seeing [this], did not then hear what they had said among them, and after they had secretly spoken with the said Alazaïs, the aforesaid Raimond Belot left the house, while [the following] remained in the said house: Guilhem Benet, Guilhem Belot, Sebèlia den Fort, who was imprisoned, Guillelma Benet I, mother of the said Alazaïs, and the deponent [Faurèsa], who all of whom watched the said Alazaïs. And around dawn the said Raimond Belot, who had left early in the night from the said house, returned to them, and those who had kept vigil with the said Alazaïs, and he spoke separately, herself [Faurèsa] seeing, with Guilhem Benet, and when they had spoken, the said Guilhem Benet said to her [Faurèsa] that she ought to leave the house, and she then said “Let’s go!”

And then the said Guilhem Benet and Raimond Belot exited the house with her (the witness), and when they were outside, the said Raimond Belot entered the cellar of the said house, the said Guilhem Benet remaining outside, and then the said Raimond Belot brought from the said cellar two men whom she did not recognize, because at the time it was dark, and the said Guilhem Benet and Raimond Belot led the said men into the aforesaid house, in which Alazaïs was lying; she (the witness) remaining outside. When they had entered the said house, the door of the said house was closed, and the deponent [Faurèsa] went to her own house, and she did not know what the said men did in the said house, and herself believed then that the said two men who had been brought inside by the said Raimond Belot were heretics, because they had been put in the cellar and led into the house, and had been brought to hereticate the said Alazaïs. And she also believes it, because when it was daylight, she returned to the house where the said Alazaïs was lying and was now dying, and Guilhem Benet and Raimond Belot held her, and they did not permit any woman to touch the said Alazaïs nor her bed, and when she (the deponent), as she was in the habit of doing, was wishing to approach the bed of the said Alazaïs, the said Guilhem and Raimond said to her that she should beware not to approach the said Alazaïs nor her bed, nor touch [the bed or Alazaïs]. And in the hands of the said Guilhem and Raimond the said Alazaïs passed away, and they also did not want her (the deponent) to touch the body of the said Alazaïs after death, but the said body was prepared by the aforesaid Guilhem, Raimond, and Sebèlia, and because of them, she (the witness)

believed that the said Alazaïs had been hereticated by the said two men, who were brought by the said Raimond Belot.<sup>6</sup>

Alazaïs Azema visited the Benet household about eight days after Alazaïs passed away. From her deposition given on the February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

She also said that eight days after Alazaïs daughter of the aforesaid Guilhem Benet had died, she the deponent went to the house of the said Guilhem Benet, and came upon Guillelma Benet mother of the deceased crying over the death of her aforesaid daughter, and she the deponent said to her that she ought not to cry, because she still had other daughters, and she was not able to restore the deceased [to health], to which the said Guillelma responded that she would have been even more grieved at her said daughter's death than she was, but, thank God, she had been received by Guilhem Authié the heretic, that Guilhem and Raimond Belot had gone to get him so he might receive her. He came at night, when there was a great snowstorm.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dixit enim quod XIX anni sunt vel circa, non recordatur tamen plene de tempore, inter festa Omnium Sanctorum et Nativitatis Domini, Alazaicis filia Guillelmi Beneti de Monte Alionis fuit infirma de infirmitate de qua obit, in qua infirmitate ipsa que loquitur servivit ei, et quadam nocte circa principium noctis, Guillelmus Beneti pater dicte Alazaicis, Ramundus et Guillelmus Beloti loqui fuerunt ad aurem dicte Alazaici que iam incipiebat declinare ad mortem, ipsa teste vidente, non tamen audivit quid inter se loqui fuerunt, et postquam sic secrete loqui fuerant cum dicta Alazaici, Ramundus Beloti predictus exivit de dicta domo, remanentibus in dicta domo dicto Guillelmo Benet, Guillelmo Beloti, Sibilia den Fort qui fuit immurata, Guillelma Beneta matre dicte Alazaicis, et ipsa teste, qui vigilaverunt dictam Alazaicim. Et circa auroram dictus Ramundus Beloti qui exiverat in principio noctis de dicta domo reversus fuit ad eos, qui vigilaverant dictam Alazaicim et fuit loquutus, vidente ipsa, ad partem cum dicto Guillelmo Beneti, et cum loqui fuissent, dictus Guillelmus Beneti dixit ipsi que loquitur quod egrederetur de domo, et ipsa eciam dixit: "Egrediamur!"

Et tunc dictus Guillelmus Beneti et Ramundus Beloti exiverunt de domo cum ipsa teste, et cum fuerunt extra, dictus Ramundus Beloti intravit cellarium dicte domus, remanente extra dicto Guillelmo Beneti, et tunc dictus Ramundus Beloti eduxit de dicto cellario duos homines quos ipsa non cognovit, quia tempus erat obscurum, et dictos homines dictus Guillelmus Beneti et Ramundus Beloti introduxerunt in domum predictam, in qua iacebat ipsa Alazaicis, ipsa teste remanente extra. Quibus ingressis dictam domum, fuit clausum hostium dicte domus, et ipsa loquens ivit ad domum suam, et nescivit quod dicti homines fecerunt in dicta domo, et credidit ipsa tunc quod dicti duo homines quos adduxerat dictus Ramundus Beloti essent heretici, pro eo quod sic fuerant positi in cellarium et introducti in domum predictam, et quod adducti fuissent ut hereticarent dictam Alazaicim. Et ex eo eciam hoc credit, quia cum dies sequens factus fuisset, ipsa reversa fuit ad dictam domum ubi iacebat dicta Alazaicis que iam moriebatur, et tenebant eam Guillelmus Beneti et Ramundus Beloti et non permittebant quod aliqua mulier tangeret dictam Alazaicim nec lectum eius, et cum ipsa loquens, ut solebat, vellet appropinquare lecto dicte Alazaicis, dicti Guillelmus et Ramundus dixerunt ei quod caveret ne appropinquaret dicte Alazaici nec lecto eius, et eciam quod non tangeret. Et in manibus dicatorum Guillelmi et Ramundi mortua fuit dicta Alazaicis, nec voluerunt eciam quod post mortem ipsa que loquitur tangeret corpus dicte Alazaicis, sed dictum corpus paraverunt dictus Guillelmus et Ramundus et Sibilia predicta, et ex illis ipsa que loquitur credidit quod dicta Alazaicis hereticata fuisset per dictos duos homines, quos adduxerat dictus Ramundus Beloti.

Fournier, Vol. I, ff. 62a-62b, pp. 323-324.

<sup>7</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod post octo dies cum Alazaicis filia Guillelmi Beneti predicti mortua fuisset, ipsa loquens venit ad domum dicti Guillelmi Benet, et invenit Guillelma Benetam matrem dicte mortue plorantem super morte filie sue predicte, et ipsa loquens dixit ei quod non ploraret, quia satis habebat adhuc filias, et illam mortuam recuperare non posset, cui dicta Guillelma respondit quod bene plus doleret de morte dicte filie sue quam faceret, sed, Deo gratias,

Having been present at Alazaïs' heretication, Guillelma Benet I, her mother, told Fournier about it. According to her deposition of May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

She also said that 16 years ago or around then, in winter, Alazaïs wife of Bartomieu son of Joan Bertholomieu of Ax, the daughter of her the deponent [Guillelma] was sick with the disease from which she died, and she was lying ill in the house of her the deponent in Montailou. At the beginning of the night on which she was to die at dawn, came Guilhem and Raimond Belot with Guilhem Authié the heretic, and in her sight and presence (at that time she was suffering in her hearing) the said Guilhem Authié the heretic made many genuflections and then put a book on the head of the said Alazaïs and hereticated her.<sup>8</sup>

Her brother Bernart also told Fournier about his sister's heretication. According to his deposition from March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

Also asked about the heretication of Alazaïs wife of Joan Bartomieu of Ax, sister of the witness, who had died in the house of Guilhem Benet father of him the deponent, he said that a fortnight after the said Alazaïs had died, the said Guilhem Benet the father of him the deponent said to him in a certain field of his called 'de l'Argiliera' when his said father was plowing and he was harvesting turnips, that his said daughter had been received by the good Christians in their faith and sect, and that Guilhem Authié had received her, and had made her a good Christian, [and that Guilhem] had been brought by the late Guilhem Belot or Raimond Belot, he the deponent does not remember which one, he said.<sup>9</sup>

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recepta fuit per Guillelmum Auterii hereticum, pro quo iverunt ut ipsam reciperet dicti Guillelmus et Ramundus Beloti, qui hereticus venit de nocte, cum vigeret magnus turbo nivis.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 61b, p. 320.

<sup>8</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod cum XVI anni sunt vel circa, tempore yemali Alazaicis uxor Bartholomei filii Iohannis Bartholomei de Ax filia ipsius loquentis infirmaretur de infirmitate de qua decessit, et iaceret infirma in domo ipsius loquentis apud Montem Alionem, in principio noctis quasi in primo sompno nocte illa qua decessit circa auroram, venerunt Guillelmus et Ramundus Beloti cum Guillelmo Auterii heretic, et vidente et presente ipsa que tunc paciebatur in aure, dictus Guillelmus Auterii hereticus fecit multas genuflections et deinde posuit librum super capud dicte Alazaicis et hereticavit ipsam.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 98c, p. 473.

<sup>9</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item interrogatus super hereticatione Alazaicis uxoris Iohannis Bartholomei de Ax, sororis ipsius testis, que mortua fuit in domo Guillelmi Beneti patris ipsius loquentis, dixit quod post quindenam quando iam mortua erat dicta Alazaicis, dictus Guillelmus Beneti pater ipsius loquentis dixit ei in quodam campo suo vocato de l'Argiliera quando dictus pater eius arabat et ipse colligebat rapas, quod dicta filia eius recepta fuerat per bonos homines ad fidem et sectam eorum, et quod Guillelmus Auterii receperat eam, et fecerat bonam christianum, quem adduxerat Guillelmus Beloti quondam vel Ramundus Beloti, non recordatur tamen ipse loquens de quo istorum dixit.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 81a, p. 400.

Alazaïs Benet evidently like her parents and brothers was also involved in heresy, although her participation more closely resembles that of her mother: not as a *ductor* but making the *melhorament* to them while they stayed in the Belot household and eventually being hereticated at her death by Guilhem Authié.

### Guillelma Benet II

Guillelma Benet II also engaged actively in the Cathar heresy. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie describes Guillelma II as “married [to] Bernard Belot; sentenced to life imprisonment, fetters, and bread and water in 1321, although she had been saved from the Inquisition twelve years before by [Pèire] Clergue (priest), because of the strength of the inter-marriage connections.”<sup>10</sup> Here, Le Roy Ladurie reveals that he mixed up Guillelma Benet I and Guillelma Benet II. While Guillelma II had indeed been married to Bernart Belot, the rest of this description is mistaken. The individual who received the sentence to fetters and bread and water, and was ‘saved’ by Pèire Clergue had in fact been Guillelma Benet I.<sup>11</sup>

First, Le Roy Ladurie had misattributed Guillelma Benet I’s fall to her daughter. How Le Roy Ladurie confused the two is unclear, as Guillelma I’s deposition is titled, ‘*Guillelme, uxoris Guillelmi Beneti quondam de Monte Alione*’ (Guillelma, wife of the late Guilhem Benet of Montailou), and she consistently refers to her husband Guilhem Benet, and her daughter Guillelma II, and then plainly confesses to Fournier about how she lied about a fall to avoid her summons to the inquisition court ca. 1308-1309.<sup>12</sup>

Le Roy Ladurie also misappropriated her sentence. The sentence to ‘life imprisonment, fetters, and bread and water’ had been given to “*Guillelma uxor Guillelmi beneti quondam de*

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<sup>10</sup> Montailou, 364.

<sup>11</sup> Montailou, 364.

<sup>12</sup> Fournier, Vol. I. f. 99b, pp. 476-466.

*monte alione appamensis dyocesis*” (Guillelma wife of the late Guilhem Benet of Montailou of the Diocese of Pamiers) according to Philip van Limborch’s edition (1692) of British Library, London, Add. MS 4697, (Bernard Gui’s *Liber sententiarum* [book of sentences]), not to Guillelma Benet II (who was clearly married to Bernart Belot).<sup>13</sup>

Examining the depositions of Raimonda Vaissiere, Raimonda Testaniere, and Guillelma Benet I, this section seeks to shed light on the ways in which Guillelma Benet II participated in heresy. According to their depositions, it is clear that she frequently listened to heretics preach and held heretical beliefs. Her marriage to Bernart Belot is also interesting, because both partners were Cathar sympathizers. This marriage shows how families of believers worked together to ensure that the sect would not be compromised, and that both heretics and their believers were kept safe.

#### Listening to Heretics Preach

In 1320, Galharda Benet II, the heretic Guilhem Authié’s wife, was brought before Jacques Fournier. She was the daughter of Guilhem’s brother Arnaut from Ax, niece of Guilhem and Guillelma Benet, and first cousin to their children. In her deposition from December 30<sup>th</sup>, 1320, she discusses her cousin Guillelma Benet II:

Galharda II, wife of the late heretic Guilhem Authié from Ax, judicial witness and interrogated [concerning] certain individuals accused of heresy, she said and deposited as follows: first, about eighteen years ago or around then, as it seems to her, she does not otherwise remember the time, in the month of January, when Bernard Belot had taken in marriage Guillelma II, daughter of Guilhem Benet, her the witness’s first cousin, she was the bride at their wedding, and the first or second night, she does not remember if it was the first or second, when she was in the house of Raimond Belot and his late brothers, and they had eaten, and after supper were resting by the fire, and there was with her the witness Alissen wife of Pèire Rosselli from Ax, and Arnalda den Terras de Maianes de Donazano, and Alazaïs sister of Raimond Belot, wife of Raimond den Torbas de Maianes, Guillelma Belot, Raimond, Bernart, and Guilhem Belot, and Guillelma II wife

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<sup>13</sup> Philippus van Limborch. *Historia inquisitionis: cui subjungitur liber sententiarum inquisitionis tholosanae ab anno Christi MCCCVII ad annum MCCCXXIII*. Ed. Philippus van Limborch. Amsterdam: Henricum Wetstenium, 1692, here f. 145, p. 287.



of the said Bernard Belot, and the aforesaid Raimond Torba, as it seems to her, and Bernart Clergue, and Raimond his wife of Montailou, and there came Guilhem Authié, husband of she the witness and Prades Tavernier from a certain solar where they had been, for the aforesaid Guilhem Belot had gone to get them, and had opened this solar to them, and when the said Guilhem and Prades the heretics had come in they sat with them at the fire, and, sitting with them they preached, she does not remember about what matters they preached; and when they had stayed there for a long time, they left in turn. They did not make the *melhorament* to the heretics then, and Arnalda den Terras gave money to the said heretics as Guilhem Belot afterwards said to her the witness, as she said, the said Bernart Clergue previously [had] left the said house with her.<sup>14</sup>

Guillelma Benet II evidently had married Bernart Belot in the month of January c. 1302, and around that time she had been in the Belot household and had made the *melhorament* to the heretics Guilhem Authié and Prades Tavernier who had been invited to stay by Guilhem Belot.

Raimonda den Arsen discussed this same occasion in her deposition before Fournier on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1320:

And when she [Raimonda] was staying in the said [Belot] house, in the month of January, Bernart Belot brother of the said Raimond Belot, took to wife Guillelma the daughter of Guilhem Benet of Montailou, and at the wedding had been [witnesses]: Alissen, sister [in-law] of the said Guillelma II, wife of Petri Rosselli de Ax, Galharda II wife of Guilhem Authié the heretic of Ax, Arnalda den Terras de Maianes de Donazano, Alazaïs sister of Raimond Belot, who had a husband in the said place of ‘de Maianes’, all of whom were in the household of the said Raimond Belot, and Guillelma the wife of the said bernart to whom she was then married, and Guillelma Belot, mother of the said Raimond Belot, and his brothers: Raimond, Bernart, [and] Guilhem Belot. She the

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<sup>14</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Galharda, uxor quondam Guillelmi Auterii heretici de Ax, testis iurata et interrogate contra aliquas personas delatas de heresi, dixit et deposuit ut sequitur: Primo quod XVIII anni sunt vel circa, ut sibi videtur, non recordatur tamen plene de tempore, in mense ianuarii, cum Bernardus Beloti accepisset in uxorem Guillelmam, filiam Guillelmi Beneti, cognatam germanam ipsius testis, ipsa fuit in nuptiis dictorum coniugum, et prima vel secunda nocte, non recordatur tamen si fuit prima vel secunda, cum ipsa esset in domo Ramundi Beloti et fratrum suorum quondam, et cenassent, et post cenam starent ad ignem, et essent ibi cum ipsa teste Alissendis uxor Petri Rosselli de Ax, et Arnalda den Terras de Meianes de Donazano, et Alazaicis soror Ramundi Beloti, uxor Ramundi den Torbas de Maianes, Guillelma Beloti, Ramundus, Bernardus, et Guillelmus Beloti, et Guillelma uxor dicti Bernardi Beloti, et Ramundus Torba predictus, ut sibi videntur, et Bernardus Clerici, et Ramunda uxor eius de Monte Alionis, venerunt Guillelmus Auterii, maritus ipsius testis et Pradas Taverneir de quodam solario in quo erant, pro quibus iverat Guillelmus Beloti predictus, et aperuerat eis dictum solarium, et venientes dictus Guillelmus et Pradas heretici sederunt cum ipsis ad ignem, et sedentes cum eis predicaverunt, non recordatur tamen de qua materia predicaverunt eis; et cum ibi stetissent per magnam pausam, recesserunt ad invicem, non tamen adoraverunt dictos hereticos tunc, et Arnalda den Terras dedit peccuniam dictis hereticis ut ipsi testi postea dixit Guillelmus Beloti, et ut dixit, dictus Bernardus Clerici ante recessit de dicta domo cum ipsa.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 54c, p. 293.

deponent [Raimonda] was standing behind the fire, holding a certain daughter of the said Alazaïs, sister of the said Raimond.

And when they were all standing near the fire in the [room] called the *foganha*, from a solar that [was attached to] the *foganha*, she the deponent [Raimonda] saw climbing down on a ladder a certain man who had been clothed either in dark blue or in dark green, and an outer tunic and inner tunic of that cloth, for whom Guilhem had called, climbed up to the door of the said solar which had been closed.

When the said man had climbed down all of the previously-mentioned had stood up, except she the deponent who was holding the aforesaid girl in her arms. And then the said man sat on the bench with the said Raimond, Bernart, and Guilhem Belot, and on the said bench no women sat, although they had sat on this bench before. And then the said man spoke quietly, so that she the deponent did not understand his words, while Galharda II, who was sitting on another low bench next to the said man, and the aforesaid Arnalda, genuflected before the said man who was standing together with the aforesaid men. And after standing near the fire for a while, the said three brothers led the said man up to the said solar, and after they had closed the door of the said solar, her the deponent seeing them, and when they had come down from the said solar, everyone went to bed, except she the deponent and the aforesaid Guilhem Belot, who remained near the fire.<sup>15</sup>

According to Raimonda Testaniere, Guillelma Belot and ‘na Roqua’ had a conversation about Guillelma Benet II. According to her deposition from April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

She also said that at the time Bernart Belot had taken to wife Guillelma daughter of Guilhem Benet, herself on a certain day had been in the house of Bernard Benet and his brothers, and Guillelma Belot and ‘na Roqua’ had been there and then the said Guillelma said to the said Roqua that she had said to her aforesaid son Bernart after he had married the said Guillelma Benet, that he had done badly, because he had taken the said

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<sup>15</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et dum ipsa in dicta domo morabatur, in mense sequenti ianuarii, Bernardus Beloti frater dicti Ramundi Beloti accepit in uxorem Guillelmam filiam Guillelmi Beneti de Monte Alionis, et in nupciis fuerunt pro expaderiis: Alissendis, soror dicte Guillelme, uxori Petri Rosselli de Ax, Galharda uxor Guillelmi Auterii heretici de Ax, Arnalda den Terras de Maianes de Donazano, Alazaicis soror Ramundi Beloti, qui habebat virum in dicto loco de Meianes, que omnes erant in domo dicti Ramundi Beloti de Monte Alionis, et Guillelma uxor dicti Bernardi, qui erat tunc nupta, et Guillelma Belota, mater dicti Ramundi Beloti et fratrum suorum, Ramundus, Bernardus, Guillelmus Beloti fratres, et ipsa que loquitur stabat retro ignem, tenens quamdam filiam dicte Alazaicis, sororis dicti Ramundi.

Et cum sic omnes starent ad ignem in domo vocata la foganha, de quodam solarario quod se tenebat cum dicta la foganha, ipsa que loquitur vidit descendentem per scalam quemdam hominem qui erat indutus vel de blavo obscuro vel de viridi obscuro, et habebat de dicto panno supertunicale, et tunicam, pro quo vocando ascendit ad hostium dicti solararia quod erat clausum Guillelmus Beloti predictus.

Cumque dictis homo descendisset omnes predicti assurrexerunt ei, excepta ipsa que loquitur que tenebat puellam predictam inter brachia sua. Et tunc dictus homo sedit in banca cum predictis Ramundo, Bernardo, et Guillelmo Beloti, et in dicta banca nulla mulier sedit, licet ante in dicta banca sedissent. Et tunc dictus homo loquutus fuit submisse, ita quod ipsa que loquitur non intellexit verba eius, cum Galharda, que sedebat in quadam banca alia bassa iuxta dictum hominem, et cum Arnalda predicta, que flexis genibus ante dictum hominem stabat, et cum predictis viris. Et cum per pausam stetissent ad ignem, dicti tres frates conduxerunt dictum hominem usque ad dictum solarium, et postea clauserunt hostium dicti solararia, videnti ipsa que loquitur, et cum descendissent de dicto solarario, iverunt cubitum omnes, exceptis ipsa que loquitur et Guillelmo Beloti predicto, qui remanserunt iuxta ignem.

Fournier, Vol. I. ff. 74b-74c, p. 371.

Guillelma in marriage, and that he had trusted Guilhem Benet more than her. And when the said Bernart asked his said mother why it was displeasing to her that he had married the said Guillelma Benet, Guillelma [Belot] responded that [the witnesses] who had come with the said Guillelma Benet would destroy her household, and some others of the said village, because, as she said, Gaillarde, wife of Guilhem Authié the heretic had been present at the wedding, and Guilhem Authié himself had come to the house of the said Guilhmette Belot's house for the wedding on account of the wife of the said Bernart. And then the said Roqua answered the said Guillelma Belot that having the said daughter-in-law seemed good to her, because she had the same belief as her, and she was able to confide in her, and that she would love and cherish her, because she would not be able to have a better daughter-in-law.<sup>16</sup>

“Na Roqua” apparently valued Guillelma II because she shared the Belot's and Roqua's heretical faith, even though Guillelma Belot was still worried that the witnesses at Guillelma and Bernard's wedding might confess to having seen heretics at the event.

Finally, according to her mother's deposition, Guillelma II frequently listened to the heretics speaking in her house. According to Guillelma I's deposition from May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

And then the said heretic and Prades Tavernier frequented the house of her the deponent [Guillelma I], and it seems to her that they spent the night in her said house as many as twelve times. And those who frequently brought the said heretics to the aforesaid house [were] Guilhem Belot, Raimond Belot, Guilhem Benet her husband, and Raimond the son of her the deponent, and coming to see the said heretics and staying and hearing them in the said house [were] the men mentioned above and Bernart Clergue, and Sebèlia wife of Guilhem Fort, sister of her the deponent, and Raimonda wife of Prades d'Arsen, Pons Riba, Alazaïs Azema, and Guillelma II her daughter, wife of Bernart Belot and others, as she said, [but] she does not remember.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod illo tempore quo Bernardus Beloti acceperat in uxorem Guillelmam filiam Guillelmi Beneti, ipsa quadam die erat in domo Bernardi Beneti et fratrum suorum, et erant ibi Guillelma Belota et 'na Roqua', et tunc dicta Guillelma dixit dicte Roque quod ipsa dixerat Bernardo filio suo predicto postquam contraxerat matrimonium cum dicta Guillelma Beneta, quod male fecerat, quia dictam Guillelmam acceperat in uxorem, et quod plus crediderat Guillelmo Beneti quam sibi. Et cum dictus Bernardus diceret dicte matri sue quare displicebat ei quia dictam Guillelmam duxerat in uxorem, respondit dicta Guillelma quod espaderii qui venerant cum dicta Guillelma Beneta destruerent domum suam, et aliquas alias de dicta villa, quia, ut dixit, in nupciis fuerat expaderia Guialharda, uxor Guillelmi Auterii heretici, et ipse Guillelmus Auterii venerat ad domum dicte Guillelme Belote in nupciis propter uxorem dicti Bernardi. Et tunc dicta Roqua respondit dicte Guillelme Belote quod bene sibi contingerat quia dictam nurum habebat, quia erat eiusdam credencie cum ipsa, et posset in illa confidere, et quod eam amaret et diligeret, quia nullo modo melius sibi poterat contigere de nuru habenda quam sibi contigisset.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 94a, p. 455.

<sup>17</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Guillelma, like her sister Alazaïs, made the *melhorament* to the heretics in a similar way as her mother, but did not actively bring them around like her father or brothers. She was considered by Guillelma Belot and ‘na Roqua’ to have held heretical beliefs and made the *melhorament* to the heretics on several occasions. Her marriage to Bernart Belot also reflects the belief among heretics that marriages between believers were better than a marriage between a believer and a nonbeliever. This reflects Anne Brenon’s findings which suggested “marriages were carefully arranged between families of believers so as not to let the wolf (that is, a potential informer) into the fold,”<sup>18</sup> showing how the sect became dependent on secrecy and the reliability of its members to ensure the *perfecti* were protected, fed, and housed. The desire for a likeminded spouse is explained well in Arnaud Sicre’s deposition before Fournier

Meanwhile, Montania is only mentioned in one instance as ‘breastfeeding’ and was too young to participate in heresy,<sup>19</sup> and Esclarmonda is only referred to briefly in the deposition of her brother Bernart.<sup>20</sup>

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Et deinde dictus hereticus et Pradas Taverneir domum ipsius loquentis frequentaverunt, et ut videtur ei usque ad XII noctes in dicta domo suo pernoctaverunt. Et frequenter dictos hereticos ducebant ad domum predictam Guillelmus Beloti, Ramundus Beloti, Guillelmus Beneti maritus et Ramundus filius ipsius loquentis, et vidit venientes ad dictos hereticos et cum ipsis stantes et audientes eos in dicta domo supradictos homines et Bernardum Clerici, et Sibiliam uxorem Guillelmi Fortis, sororem ipsius loquentis, et Ramundam uxorem den Prades d’Arsen, Poncium Riba, Alazaicim Ademariam, et Guillelmam filiam suam uxorem Bernardi Beloti, et de aliis, ut dixit, non recordatur.

Fournier, Vol. I. ff. 98a-98b, p. 472.

<sup>18</sup> Anne Brenon. “Catharism and the Family,” 309-310.

<sup>19</sup> The only reference to Montania Benet in Fournier is found in the deposition of Alazaïs Azema:

Interrogata de presentibus, dixit quod erant ibi due parve puelle filie Guillelmi Beneti predicti, scilicet Galharda quondam uxor Petri Beneti, et Montania que adhuc lactabatur.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 59a, p. 311.

<sup>20</sup> The only reference to Esclarmonda Benet in Fournier can be found in her brother, Bernart’s, deposition:

Et deinde ipse reversus fuit cum dicto Bernardo usque ad Limosum, et de dicto loco vit apud Belestar, in quo loco habet unam sororem vocatam Sclarmundam, uxorem Guillelmi Sanci Iohannis, et deinde reversus fuit apud Montem Alionem.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 81a, pp. 399-400.

## Chapter Five: The Ax Benets, Arnaut, Galharda I, and Galharda II

While the majority of the Benets lived in Montailhou, Guilhem's brother Arnaut lived in Ax (the home-village of the Authiés) along with his wife, Galharda I, and their daughter, Galharda II, who was married to Guilhem Authié himself. Like his brother, Arnaut was also involved in heresy although he is discussed less often in the inquisition registers. While Galharda Benet I is only mentioned a handful of times, their daughter, Galharda Benet II, was very deeply involved in the support of the heretics, made the *melhorament* to the heretics, was present at various heretications, visited the heretics, was cited by the inquisitor of Carcassonne and threatened by her husband not to denounce them, asked others if they wished to be hereticated, and also begged her grandfather to be hereticated at his death.

### Arnaut and Galharda Benet I

Arnaut Benet is nearly absent from extant literature. In *Montailhou*, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie refers to him only twice in the main body of the work, pointing to the fact that his daughter was married to the *perfectus* Guilhem Authié. Le Roy Ladurie wrote: "Heresy was introduced to Montailhou by the Authiés in 1300, in the house of [Guilhem] Benet [...] The fact that [Guilhem] Benet was the Brother of Arnaut Benet from Ax, himself the father-in-law of [Guilhem] Authié clearly made contacts easier between town and village."<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile in René Weis' *The Yellow Cross*, he is not even mentioned once. The inquisition registers of both Jacques Fournier and Geoffroy d'Ablis, show that Arnaut kept heretical company and made the *melhorament* to the heretics. I could not find any references to Galharda Benet I in any extant literature. This is likely because she is only mentioned in passing once in the register of Geoffroy d'Ablis.

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<sup>1</sup> Montailhou, 27.

## Keeping Heretical Company

According to the depositions of Géraud de Rodes, Guillelma Garsen, and Blanca de Rodes, Arnaut Benet was seen various times in the presence of the heretical preachers. According to the deposition of Géraud de Rodes given May 10th, 1308 at Carcassonne:

He also said that he saw Arnaut Benet from Ax with the said heretics in the house of Raimond Authié, and that Arnaut Authié son of Pèire Authié was there at the same time, who [together] made the *melhorament* to the said heretics, [i.e.] Pèire and Jacme Authié in the aforesaid way, [he the deponent seeing this].<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Guillelma Garsen saw the heretics Guilhem Authié and Prades Tavernier at Arnaut's own house in the presence of Arnaut Benet and Galharda Benet I. According to her deposition given at Carcassonne on June 15th, 1308:

Similarly, she once saw, as she said, at that time the two said heretics in the house of Arnaut Benet of Ax. – Asked about the individuals whom she saw there with the said heretics she said Galharda I, wife of the said Arnaut and Arnaut, and no others. – Asked if she made the *melhorament* to the said heretics or saw either of the aforesaid couple make the *melhorament*, she said no.<sup>3</sup>

Correcting herself later in her deposition, she suggested:

She also said that where she said in her confession that she saw the said heretics in the house of Arnaut Benet of Ax and with them [were] Arnaut and Galharda Benet I his wife, she must say she saw with them Galharda Benet II daughter of Arnaut, wife of Guilhem Authié the heretic.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The text printed in Ablis reads:

Item dixit quod vidit Arnaldum Benet de Ax cum dictis hereticis in domo Raimundi Auterii, et erat ibi similiter tunc Arnaldus Auterii filius dicti Petri Auterii, qui adoraverunt dictos hereticos, videlicet Petrum et Iacobum Auterii secundum modum predictum, ipso teste vidente.

Ablis, f. 3r, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> The text printed in Ablis reads:

Item vidit semel, ut dixit, tempore predicto dictos duos hereticos in domo Arnaldi Beneti de Ax. Interrogata de personis que vidit ibi cum dictis hereticis dixit quod Gualardam uxorem dicti Arnaldi et ipsum Arnaldum et nullum alium. - Interrogata si adoravit dictos hereticos vel vidit a predictis coniugibus adorari, dixit quod non.

Ablis, f. 22v, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup> The text printed in Ablis reads:

Item dixit quod ubi dicit in confessione sua quod vidit dictos hereticos in domo Arnaldi Beneti de Ax et cum eis dictum Arnaldum et Galhardam uxorem suam, debuit dicere quod vidit cum eis Galhardam filiam dicti Arnaldi uxorem Guillelmi Auterii heretici.

Ablis, f. 24r, p. 196.

In another instance, Arnaut and Guilhem Benet came to see the heretics when they were at the house of Blanca de Rodes. According to Blanca's deposition given July 26th, 1308 at Carcassonne:

She also said, in the same year [c. 1300] around the festival of Saint Michael [29 September], the aforesaid heretics, a certain night, returned to her and her husband's house in Tarascon. – Asked who brought them, she said she does not remember. Asked if they stayed there long, she said eight days or around that, as it seemed to her. – Asked about the people who came to her house to see the said heretics, she said Guilhem Pèire Cavaer from Limoux, Felip from Larnat, Pèire and Guilhem his brother from Luzenac, Ramoneta daughter of Raimond Bernart, Arnaut Issaurat from Larnat, Arnaut and Guilhem Benet, brothers from Ax, [and] Raimonda from Rodes. Asked what they said or did with them, she said they entered a certain room where the said heretics were and she does not know, as she said, what they did, because she was not always with them in the said room but was engaged in her own affairs in the house.<sup>5</sup>

Based on these depositions, it seems Arnaut Benet was somewhat active in supporting the Cathar ministers like his brother Guilhem. He hosted them in his home, and went around to visit them. Although perhaps not quite as involved in the heresy as his brother Guilhem or his sister-in-law Guillelma, Arnaut was nevertheless a believer in heretics. Because Galharda Benet I is only referred to in passing in the Ablis register one cannot determine whether she actively participated in heresy or if she was simply in her house while heretics were present.

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<sup>5</sup> The text printed in Ablis reads:

Item dixit quod, anno predicto circa festum sancti Michaelis, predicti heretici, quadam nocte, redierunt ad domum suam et dicti viri sui apud Tarasconem. Interrogata quis adduxit eos, dixit se non recordari. Interrogata si fuerunt ibi diu, dixit VIII diebus vel circa, ut sibi videtur. Interrogata de personis que venerunt ad domum suam ad videndum dictos hereticos, dixit quod Guillelmus Petrie Cavaerii de Limoso, Philippus de Lernato domicellus, Petrus de Lusenacho et Guillelmus frater eius de Lusenacho, Ramoneta de Ramundo Bernardi, Arnaldus Issaura de Lernato, Arnaldus Boneti et G. Boneti fratres de Ax, Ramunda de Rodesio. Interrogata quid dixerunt vel fecerunt cum ipsis, dixit quod intraverunt quandam cameram ubi erant dicti heretici et nescit, ut dixit, quid fecerunt, quia ipsa non erat continue cum eis in dicta camera sed faciebat negocia sua per domum.

Ablis, f. 28r, p. 216.

## Galharda Benet II

Galharda Benet II is referenced throughout the registers of Geoffroy d'Ablis and Jacques Fournier, and is referenced very often in the extant literature. A short deposition she gave to Fournier still exists.

### Rumor

In his deposition given at Carcassonne on June 13th, 1308, Guilhem Rodes from Tarascon was asked about who he saw supporting the heretics:

Also, asked, he said that he had heard from the aforesaid heretics, Pèire and Guilhem Authié, that Pèire Marti de Junac received the said heretics and hid them in his house and gave them food and drink from his supplies. He also heard from these same heretics, he says, that the brothers Guilhem and Pèire from Luzenac also received them in their house and watched over them. In the same way, he heard from them that Bernart Servel from Tarascon was their friend, secretary, and familiar, and he received and kept them secretly in his house, gave them food and drink to eat from his supplies. He also said that he heard from the said heretics that Raimond Vayssiere, Bernart Arquier, the Gomberts, their nephews whose names he does not know, Pèire Tignac, the late Raimond Garsen, his daughter Guillelma, Guilhem Mathei and his mother Gaillarde, wife of Guilhem Authié and Arnaut Authié, son of Pèire Authié from Ax, were friends, familiars, accomplices, believers, and defenders of these heretics, receiving them in their own homes and giving them food and drink from their provisions.<sup>6</sup>

Likewise, the shepherd Pèire Maury from Montailou reported that Galharda II was a believer.

According to his deposition before Fournier on June 25th, 1324:

[They also said to Pèire] that at Ax there were believers of heretics, namely Galharda, wife of the late heretic Guilhem Authié, Sebèlia den Balle and Bernart, her son, Raimond

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<sup>6</sup> The text printed in Ablis reads:

Item, interrogatus, dixit se audivisse dici a Petro et Guillelmo Auterii, hereticis predictis, quod Petrus Martini de Uginhaco receptabat dictos hereticos et celabat in domo sua et dabat eis comedere et bibere de bonis suis. Item audivit, ut dixit, ab eisdem hereticis quod Guillelmus et Petrus et Lusenaco fratres similiter receptabant eos in domo sua et eis providebant. Item dixit se audivisse ab eisdem quod Bernardus de Servello de Tarascone erat amicus secretarius et familiaris eorum et receptabat et tenebat eos secrete in domo sua, dando eis ad comedendum et bibendum de bonis suis. Item dixit se quod audivit a dictis hereticis quod Ramundus Valsieyra, Bernardus Arquiatoris, els Gomberx eius nepotes quorum nomina ignorat et Petrus Tinhac, Ramundus Garsen mortuus, Guillelma eius filia, G. Mathei et eius mater et Gualarda uxor Guillelmi Auterii et Arnaldus Auterii, filius Petri Auterii de Ax, erant amici, familiares, receptatores, credentes et fautores ipsorum hereticorum, recipientes eos in domibus propriis et dantes eis ad comedendum et bibendum de bonis suis.

Ablis, f. 15v, p. 150.



Authié and Esclarmonda, his wife, Berengaria, wife of Arnaut Borrelli, and a certain daughter of Guilhem Benet, wife of Joan Bartomieu of Ax, called Alazaïs.<sup>7</sup>

### Defender of the Heretics

In 1308 Galharda Benet II was cited by the inquisitor of Carcassonne. While she expressed concerns about being sure to tell the inquisitorial authorities the truth, she ended up working to protect the heretical ministers. According to the deposition of Raimonda den Arsen given before Fournier on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1320:

She also said that around the end of Lent, when the aforesaid Galharda Benet II wife of Guilhem Authié the heretic had been cited by the lord inquisitor of Carcassonne, the said Galharda Benet II came to Montailou with Arnaut Authié son of Piere Authié the heretic, and stayed either in the house of Raimond Maurs or Guilhem Benet, she does not remember in whose house she stayed, and when it was late at night, after supper the said Galharda came to the house of the said Raimond Belot and his brothers, in which house Guilhem Authié the aforesaid heretic stayed for two days. And when the said Galharda was standing in the house of the said Raimond Belot with the said Arnaut Authié next to the fire, the said Guilhem Authié came down from the solar and, standing, spoke with the said Galharda his wife and the said Arnaut Authié for a long time, she the deponent [Raimonda] seeing [them]. And in the said house present and seeing [this] were the brothers Raimond, Bernart, and Guilhem Belot, Guillelma Belot, their mother, and Guillelma Benet II wife of the said Bernart.

And after the said heretic talked with his said wife and Arnaut Authié for a long time, the said Galharda and Arnaut Authié left the house and the said heretic led them to the door of the house.

Asked if she knew what had been talked about between the said Guilhem the heretic and Galharda and Arnaut, she said that the said heretic was saying to his wife she ought not to confess the truth nor reveal them, because she would commit a sin if she would expose them, and the said Galharda responded to the said heretic that it was necessary that she tell the whole truth, and the said Guilhem said to her that if she believed him, not to tell the truth, or at least not say then that she had seen them. And when the said heretic had left the said house with the said Galharda, for a second time he spoke with her for a long time, but she the deponent [Raimonda] does not know what he said to Galharda his

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<sup>7</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Dicti etiam Guillelmi dixerunt sibi quod apud Ax erant isti hereticorum credentes, scilicet Galharda, uxor Guillelmi Auterii quondam heretici, Sybilia den Balle et Bernardus, filius eius, Ramundus Auterii et Sclarmonda, uxor eius, Berengaria, uxor Arnaldi Borrelli, et quedam filia Guillelmi Beneti, uxor Bartholomei den Iohannis de Ax, vocata Alazaycis.

Fournier, Vol. I, f. 257d, p. 162.

wife. And Raimond Belot led the said Galharda to the house in which she was staying, and the said heretic returned to the solar in which he was staying, and Guilhem Belot went up with him to the said solar, and since then she did not see Guilhem Authié because that night he left with the said Guilhem Belot.<sup>8</sup>

Although Galharda had initially expressed concerns about telling the lies to the inquisitorial authorities, it seems that her husband's words encouraged her to help the heretical ministers. As suggested by Duvernoy: if Galharda Benet II had told the inquisition all she knew around Lent, it would be difficult to explain why the arrest of all of the inhabitants of Montailou would have been postponed until September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1308.<sup>9</sup>

### Making the *melhorament* to and Visiting Heretics

According to the depositions of Géraud Rodes, Guillelma Garsen, Jacme Garsen, Raimonda den Arsen, and Raimonda Testaniere, Galharda Benet II consistently made the *melhorament* to and visited the heretics. According to the deposition of Géraud Rodes, Galharda Benet II visited

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<sup>8</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod circa carniprivium, cum fuisset citata per dominum inquisitorem Carcassone Galharda predicta, uxor Guillelmi Auterii heretici, dicta Galharda venit apud Montem Alionem, cum Arnaldo Auterii filio Petri Auterii heretici, et hospitati fuerunt vel in domo Ramundi Maur, vel Guillelmi Beneti, non recordatur tamen ipsa in cuius domo istorum fuit hospitata, et cum fuit nox profunda, post cenam dicta Galharda venit ad domum dicti Ramundi Beloti et fratrum suorum, in qua domo steterat Guillelmus Auterii hereticus predictus per duas dies. Et cum dicta Galharda staret in domo dicti Ramundi Beloti cum dicto Arnaldo Auterii iuxta ignem, dictus Guillelmus Auterii descendit de solarario et stando pedes loquutus fuit dictus Guillelmus Auterii cum dicta Galharda uxore sua et dicto Arnaldo Auterii per longum tempus, vidente ipsa que loquitur. Et erant in dicto domo presentes et videntes Ramundus, Bernardus et Guillelmus Beloti fratres, Guillelma Belota mater eorum, et Guillelma uxor dicti Bernardi.

Et postquam sic fuit loquutus per magnam pausam dictus hereticus cum dicta uxore sua et Arnaldo Auterii, dicta Galharda et dictus Arnaldus Auterii recesserunt de domo et conduxit eos usque ad portam domus dictus hereticus.

Interrogata si scit quod inter se loqui fuerunt dicti Guillelmus hereticus et Galharda et Arnaldus, dixit quod dictus hereticus dicebat dicte uxori sue quod non confiteretur veritatem nec discelaret eos, quia peccatum committeret si eos discooperiret, et dicta Galharda respondit dicto heretico quod omnino oportebat quod ipsa diceret veritatem, et dictus Guillelmus dixit ei quod si crederet ei, non diceret totaliter veritatem, vel ad minus non diceret quod tunc vidisset eos. Et cum dictus hereticus exivisset de dicta domo cum dicta Galharda, iterum fuit loquutus cum ipsa per longam pausam, nescit tamen ipsa que loquitur quid loquutus fuit cum uxore sua, ut dixit. Et Ramundus Beloti conduxit dictam Galhardam usque ad domum in qua hospitabatur, et dictus hereticus reversus fuit ad solarium in quo morabatur, et Guillelmus Beloti ascendit cum eo dictum solarium, et ex tunc ipsa non vidit dictum Guillelmum Auterii, quia eadem nocte cum dicto Guillelmo Beloti recessit.

Fournier, Vol. I, ff. 74d-75a, pp. 373-374.

<sup>9</sup> See Fournier, Vol. I, p. 373, note 158.

the house of Guilhem Gombert and made the *melhorament* to the heretics there. According to his deposition given May 10th, 1308 at Carcassonne:

He also said that he saw in the house of Guilhem Gombert from Ax P[èire] and Guilhem Authié and P[èire] Raimond of Saint-Papoul and he saw with them Pèire Carot, Galharda, wife of the aforesaid Guilhem Authié and Blanc, wife of Guilhem Rodes, brother of the witness, and the said Guilhem Gombert and his wife, whose name he does not know, who all made the *melhorament* to the said heretics according to the aforesaid way, [he the witness seeing this].<sup>10</sup>

In another instance, Guillelma Garsen deposed that Galharda Benet II had visited the heretics at her house. According to her deposition given at Carcassonne on June 15th, 1308:

Asked about the people who had seen and visited the said heretics in her house, she said Narbonna mother of Guilhem Gombert, Guilhem Gombert [himself], and Raimond and Bernart sons of the said Narbonna, Ermesenda wife of the said Guilhem, Raimonda Jaufre, Bernart Arquier, Berenguieira wife of Arnaut Borrel, Galharda, wife of Arnaut d'Orlu, Raimond Vayssiere, Vesiade widow of Pèire Mathei, Jacme Garsen, brother of the witness, Raimonda, widow of Raimond Garsen, sister of the witness, Sebèlia d'en Bayle, Guilhem Mathei, Galharda, wife of the heretic Guilhem Authié, 'na Montane', wife of Joan Laurens, Raimond Authié, Esclarmonda, his wife, Arnaut Authié, son of Pèire Authié, Bossa, wife of Bernart Amiel, Galharda, widow of Arnaut Gaubert, Guillelma, wife of Arnaut Caravessas, Pericel, brother of Guilhem Mathei, Arnaut Mathei, all from Ax, and Raimonda, wife of Raimond Dejean from Merens, deceased, who died in Ax.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The text printed in Ablis reads:

Item dixit quod vidit in domo Guillelmi Gombert de Ax P. et Guillelmum Auterii et P. Ramundi de Sancto Papulo et vidit ibi cum eis Petrum Carot et Galhardam uxorem Guillelmi Auterii predicti et Blancam uxorem Guillelmi de Rodesio, fratris ipsius testis, et dictum Guillelmum Gomberti et uxorem suam, cuius nomen ignorat, qui omnes predicti adoraverunt predictos hereticos secundum modum predictum, ipso teste vidente.

Ablis, f. 3r, p. 94.

<sup>11</sup> The text printed in Abils reads:

Interrogata de personis que viderunt et visitaverunt dictos hereticos in dicta domo sua, dixit quod Narbona mater Guillelmi Gomberti, G. Comberti et Ramundus ac Bernardus filii dicte Narbone, Ermessendis uxor dicti Guillelmi, Ramunda d'en Jaufre, bernardus Arquiatoris, Berengaria uxor Arnaldi Borrelli, Gualarda filia Arnaldi d'Orlu, Ramundus de Valseyra, Vesiata uxor condam Petri Mathei, Jachobus Garsendi frater ipius testis, Ramunda uxor condam Ramundi Garsendi soror ipsius testis, Sebilia d'en Batle, G. Mathei, Gualarda uxor Guillelmi Auterii heretici, Na Montaha uxor Johannis Laurencii, Ramundus Auterii heretici, Esclarmonda uxor eius, Arnaldus Auterii filius Petri Auterii, Bossa uxor Bernardi Amelii, Gualarda uxor condam Arnaldi Gauberti, Guillelma uxor Arnaldi Caravessas, Pericela frater G. Mathei, Arnaldus Mathei, omnes de Ax et Ramunda uxor Ramundi Johannis de Merenx mortua que morabatur apud Ax.

Ablis, f. 22r, p. 184.

According to the deposition of Jacme Garsen, Galharda Benet II was also present when heretics were speaking out against the Roman Church. According to his deposition given in Carcassonne on January 26th, 1309:

He also said and confessed that he often heard the said heretics speaking against the Roman Church and clerics and saying everything bad that they could about it and that it was the church of evil people and that nothing the Roman Church did was useful for the saving of souls and that carnal marriage was worthless and that it was a great sin to go lie with one's wife as with a prostitute and that the host consecrated by the priest is not the body of Christ but only bread. He also said and confessed that the said heretics, at the aforesaid time and place, had seen and visited [with]: Bernart and Guilhem Gombert, brothers, Arnaut Authié, son of Pèire Authié, B[ernart] Bayle, son of Sebèlia d'en Bayle, the aforesaid Sebèlia d'en Bayle, Aladaycis wife of Pèire Authié, Galharda den Benet II wife of Guilhem Authié, Guillelma sister of him the deponent [Jacme], Esclarmonda wife of Raimond Authié, Ramunda Garsende mother of him the deponent, Ermesenda [his] sister, Raimond Garsende his father, Vesiada, the wife of the late Pèire Mathei, Arnaut Mathei, Pèire Mathei and Guilhem Mathei, brothers, sons of the said Pèire Mathei, mother of the aforesaid Guilhem and Bernart Gombert, all from Ax, and Guilhem Pierre, Martin Frances, Pèire Mounier, Arnaut brother of Guilhem Piere, from Limoux, and a woman by the name of Pagesia, he does not know, however, where she was from, as he said. He also said and confessed that all those named saw, [and] visited the said heretics, not all at once, but at different times, at the above-mentioned place.<sup>12</sup>

According to the deposition of Blanca de Rodes, Galharda also made the *melhorament* to the heretics while they were in the house of Sebèlia d'en Balle. From her deposition given at Carcassonne on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1308:

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<sup>12</sup> The text printed in Ablis reads:

Item dixit et confessus est quod audivit dictos hereticos pluries loquentes contra ecclesiam Romanum et clericum et dicentes omnem malum quod poterant de ea et quod erat ecclesia malarum gencium et quod nichil quod facit ecclesia Romana valet ad salvationem animarum et quod matrimonium carnale nichil valet et quod est ita magnum peccatum jacere cum uxore sua sicut cum meretrice et quod hostia consecrata per sacerdotem non est corpus Christi sed panis tantum. Dixit etiam et confessus est quod predictos hereticos, tempore de loco predictis, viderunt et visitaverunt Bernardus et Guillelmus Gobmertii fratres, Arnaldus Auterii filius Petri Auterii, B. Baiuli filius Sebelie d'en Balle, Sebèlia d'en Balle predicta, Aladaycis uxor Petri Auterii, Galharda d'en Benet uxor Guillelmi Auterii, Guillamona soror ipsius qui loquitur, Esclarmonda uxor Ramundi Auterii, Ramunda Garsendis mater ipsius qui loquitur, Ermensendis soror, Ramundus Garsendis pater ipsius qui loquitur, Vesiada uxor condam Petri Mathei, Arnaldus Mathei, Petrus Mathei et Guillelmus Mathei fratres, filii predicti Petri Mathei, mater Guillelmi et Bernardi Gomberti predictorum, omnes predicti de Ax et Guillelmus Petri, Martinus Francisci, Petrus Monerii, Arnaldus frater Guillelmi Petri de Limoso et quedam mulier nomine Pagesia, nescit tamen unde erat, ut dixit ipse qui loquitur. Dixit etiam et confessus est quod omnes prenominati viderunt, visitaverunt predictos hereticos non tamen simul sed diersis vicibus, loco et tempore supradictis.

Ablis, f. 60r-60v, p. 364.

She also said that five or six years ago, as it seems to her, she saw in the house of Sebèlia d'en Balle from Ax either Pèire or Guilhem Authié the heretic and with him was Prades Tavernier the heretic. Asked why she went there, she said to see the said heretics. Asked who told her that they were in the said house, she said Esclarmonda wife of Raimond Authié of the same place. Asked what she did and said with the said heretics, she said she greeted them with great reverence and asked them how they were. Asked if she made the *melhorament* to them, she said yes, [that she] genuflected her knees three times saying as above: “Good Christians God’s blessings and yours,” to which the said heretics responded as above. Asked who was present, she said the aforesaid Esclarmonda and Galharda Benet II wife of Guilhem Authié and the said Sebèlia and the said witness and the said heretics. Asked if the said women made the *melhorament* to the said heretics, she said yes, except Sebèlia, genuflected before them and said: “Good Christians the blessings of God and yours” and the said heretics responded: “May God bless you and make you good Christians and lead you to a good end.”<sup>13</sup>

In another instance, Galharda Benet II was at the wedding of her cousin Guillelma II, where heretics were present. According to the deposition of Raimonda den Arsen made before Fournier on November 23rd, 1320:

And when she [Raimonda] was staying in the said [Belot] house, in the month of January, Bernart Belot brother of the said Raimond Belot, took to wife Guillelma the daughter of Guilhem Benet of Montailou, and at the wedding had been [witnesses]: Alissen, sister [in-law] of the said Guillelma II, wife of Petri Rosselli de Ax, Galharda II wife of Guilhem Authié the heretic of Ax, Arnalda den Terras de Maianes de Donazano, Alazaïs sister of Raimond Belot, who had a husband in the said place of ‘de Maianes’, all of whom were in the household of the said Raimond Belot, and Guillelma the wife of the said bernart to whom she was then married, and Guillelma Belot, mother of the said Raimond Belot, and his brothers: Raimond, Bernart, [and] Guilhem Belot. She the deponent [Raimonda] was standing behind the fire, holding a certain daughter of the said Alazaïs, sister of the said Raimond.

And when they were all standing near the fire in the [room] called the *foganha*, from a solar that [was attached to] the *foganha*, she the deponent [Raimonda] saw climbing

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<sup>13</sup> The text printed in Ablis reads:

Item dixit quod V vel VI anni sunt elapsi, ut sibi videtur, quod vidit in domo Sebilie d'en Balle de Ax Petrum vel Guillelmum Auterii hereticos alterum de duobus et cum illo erat Pradas Tavernerii hereticus. Interrogata quare ivit ibi, dixit quod ad videndum dictos hereticos. Interrogata quis dixit sibi quod essent in dicta domo, dixit quod Esclarmonda uxor Ramundi Auterii dicti loci. Interrogata quod fecit vel dixit cum dictis hereticis, dixit quod salutavit eos cum magna reverencia et peccit qualiter erat eis. Interrogata si adoravit eos, dixit quod sic ter flectendo et dicendo ut supra: “Boni christiani la benediccio de Dieu et de vos autres”, dictis hereticis respondentibus ut supra. Interrogata de astantibus, dixit quod Esclarmonda predicta et Gualarda uxor Guillelmi Auterii et dicta Sebilie et dicta testis et dicti heretici. Interrogata si dicte mulieres adoraverunt dictos hereticos, dixit quod sic, sxccepta dicta Sebilie, flectendo genua coram eis et dicendo: “Boni christiani benedictionem Dei et vestram” et dicti heretici respondebant: “Deus vos benedicat et faciat vos bonam christianam et perducat vos ad bonum finem.”

Ablis, f. 29v, p. 224.

down on a ladder a certain man who had been clothed either in dark blue or in dark green, and an outer tunic and inner tunic of that cloth, for whom Guilhem had called, climbed up to the door of the said solar which had been closed.

When the said man had climbed down all of the previously-mentioned had stood up, except she the deponent who was holding the aforesaid girl in her arms. And then the said man sat on the bench with the said Raimond, Bernart, and Guilhem Belot, and on the said bench no women sat, although they had sat on this bench before. And then the said man spoke quietly, so that she the deponent did not understand his words, while Galharda II, who was sitting on another low bench next to the said man, and the aforesaid Arnalda, genuflected before the said man who was standing together with the aforesaid men. And after standing near the fire for a while, the said three brothers led the said man up to the said solar, and after they had closed the door of the said solar, her the deponent seeing them, and when they had come down from the said solar, everyone went to bed, except she the deponent and the aforesaid Guilhem Belot, who remained near the fire.<sup>14</sup>

As mentioned previously, Guillelma Belot expressed her concerns that Galharda and her husband had been present at her son's wedding. According to the deposition of Raimonda Testaniere from April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

She also said that at the time Bernart Belot had taken to wife Guillelma daughter of Guilhem Benet, herself on a certain day had been in the house of Bernard Benet and his brothers, and Guillelma Belot and 'na Roqua' had been there and then the said Guillelma said to the said Roqua that she had said to her aforesaid son Bernart after he had married the said Guillelma Benet, that he had done badly, because he had taken the said Guillelma in marriage, and that he had trusted Guilhem Benet more than her. And when the said Bernart asked his said mother why it was displeasing to her that he had married

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<sup>14</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Et dum ipsa in dicta domo morabatur, in mense sequenti ianuarii, Bernardus Beloti frater dicti Ramundi Beloti accepit in uxorem Guillelmam filiam Guillelmi Beneti de Monte Alionis, et in nupciis fuerunt pro expaderiis: Alissendis, soror dicte Guillelme, uxori Petri Rosselli de Ax, Galharda uxor Guillelmi Auterii heretici de Ax, Arnalda den Terras de Maianes de Donazano, Alazaicis soror Ramundi Beloti, qui habebat virum in dicto loco de Meianes, que omnes erant in domo dicti Ramundi Beloti de Monte Alionis, et Guillelma uxor dicti Bernardi, qui erat tunc nupta, et Guillelma Belota, mater dicti Ramundi Beloti et fratrum suorum, Ramundus, Bernardus, Guillelmus Beloti fratres, et ipsa que loquitur stabat retro ignem, tenens quamdam filiam dicte Alazaicis, sororis dicti Ramundi.

Et cum sic omnes starent ad ignem in domo vocata la foganha, de quodam solario quod se tenebat cum dicta la foganha, ipsa que loquitur vidit descendentem per scalam quemdam hominem qui erat indutus vel de blavo obscuro vel de viridi obscuro, et habebat de dicto panno supertunicale, et tunicam, pro quo vocando ascendit ad hostium dicti solararia quod erat clausum Guillelmus Beloti predictus.

Cumque dictis homo descendisset omnes predicti assurrexerunt ei, excepta ipsa que loquitur que tenebat puellam predictam inter brachia sua. Et tunc dictus homo sedit in banca cum predictis Ramundo, Bernardo, et Guillelmo Beloti, et in dicta banca nulla mulier sedit, licet ante in dicta banca sedissent. Et tunc dictus homo loquutus fuit submisse, ita quod ipsa que loquitur non intellexit verba eius, cum Galharda, que sedebat in quadam banca alia bassa iuxta dictum hominem, et cum Arnalda predicta, que flexis genibus ante dictum hominem stabat, et cum predictis viris. Et cum per pausam stetissent ad ignem, dicti tres frates conduxerunt dictum hominem usque ad dictum solarium, et postea clauserunt hostium dicti solararia, videnti ipsa que loquitur, et cum descendissent de dicto solarario, iverunt cubitum omnes, exceptis ipsa que loquitur et Guillelmo Beloti predicto, qui remanserunt iuxta ignem.

Fournier, Vol. I. ff. 74b-74c, p. 371.

the said Guillelma Benet, Guillelma [Belot] responded that [the witnesses] who had come with the said Guillelma Benet would destroy her household, and some others of the said village, because, as she said, Gaillarde, wife of Guilhem Authié the heretic had been present at the wedding, and Guilhem Authié himself had come to the house of the said Guilhmette Belot's house for the wedding on account of the wife of the said Bernart. And then the said Roqua answered the said Guillelma Belot that having the said daughter-in-law seemed good to her, because she had the same belief as her, and she was able to confide in her, and that she would love and cherish her, because she would not be able to have a better daughter-in-law.<sup>15</sup>

According to the depositions of Géraud Rodes, Guillelma Garsen, Jacme Garsen, Blanca de Rodes, Raimonda den Arsen, and Raimonda Testaniere, Galharda Benet II consistently made the *melhorament* to and visited the heretics. She made the *melhorament* to the heretics at the house of Guilhem Gombert of Ax, saw and visited the heretics at the house of Guillelma Garsen, was seen and visited by the heretics according to Jacme Garsen, made the *melhorament* to the heretics in the house of Sebèlia d'en Balle and also attended her cousin Guillelma Benet II's wedding along with her husband Guilhem Authié.

#### Assistant in Heretications

In addition to making the *melhorament* to the heretics, Galharda Benet II also participated in various heretications. According to the deposition of Raimond Authié, she was present at the heretication of Raimonda Rodes from Tarascon, kept watch while Guilhem Roussel was hereticated, and petitioned Sibille Authié and her maternal grandfather, Arnaut Savinhan, to be

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<sup>15</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod illo tempore quo Bernardus Beloti acceperat in uxorem Guillelmam filiam Guillelmi Beneti, ipsa quadam die erat in domo Bernardi Beneti et fratrum suorum, et erant ibi Guillelma Belota et 'na Roqua', et tunc dicta Guillelma dixit dicte Roque quod ipsa dixerat Bernardo filio suo predicto postquam contraxerat matrimonium cum dicta Guillelma Beneta, quod male fecerat, quia dictam Guillelmam acceperat in uxorem, et quod plus crediderat Guillelmo Beneti quam sibi. Et cum dictus Bernardus diceret dicte matri sue quare displicebat ei quia dictam Guillelmam duxerat in uxorem, respondit dicta Guillelma quod espaderii qui venerant cum dicta Guillelma Beneta destruerent domum suam, et aliquas alias de dicta villa, quia, ut dixit, in nupciis fuerat expaderia Guialharda, uxor Guillelmi Auterii heretici, et ipse Guillelmus Auterii venerat ad domum dicte Guillelme Belote in nupciis propter uxorem dicti Bernardi. Et tunc dicta Roqua respondit dicte Guillelme Belote quod bene sibi contingerat quia dictam nurum habebat, quia erat eiusdam credencie cum ipsa, et posset in illa confidere, et quod eam amaret et diligeret, quia nullo modo melius sibi poterat contigere de nuru habenda quam sibi contigisset.

Fournier, Vol. I. f. 94a, p. 455.

hereticated by the heretical preachers. First, according to the deposition of Raimond Authié, Galharda Benet II was present at the heretication of Raimonda Rodes from Tarascon. According to the deposition of Raimond Authié given at Carcassonne on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1308:

He also said that three years ago or around then, he does not otherwise remember the time, that his sister Raimonda, late wife of Guilhem Rodes from Tarascon, was ill in Ax in the house of him the witness [Raimond], with the disease from which she died, and he saw and heard that Guilhem Authié the aforesaid heretic, brother of him the witness [Raimond] and the said Raimonda, one night during the sickness around midnight, received her in the faith and sect of the heretics and hereticated her.

Asked about the type of reception or this type of heretication, he said that he was not [there] in the beginning but afterwards he came, saw, and heard that the patient was holding her joined hands between the hands of the heretic. [Then] the heretic was saying to the said patient if she wished to be received in the faith which he held, and die in it, and she responded yes. And then the said heretic said to the said patient: “You ought to refrain from every man and I spare you and forgive all your sins, on behalf of God, over which I have full power.” Asked who were present, he said Galharda Benet II, wife of the said heretic and a certain female servant of him the deponent [Raimond] who is called Migassola, Esclarmonda wife of the witness and the said heretic and the sick woman and he saw no others there that he remembers, as he said. Asked if he or the others made the *melhorament* to the said heretic, he said no.<sup>16</sup>

In another instance, according to the deposition of Guillelma Garsen, Galharda Benet II kept watch during the heretication of Guilhem Roussel. From her deposition given at Carcassonne on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1308:

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<sup>16</sup> The text printed in Ablis reads:

Item dixit quod III anni vel circa sunt elapsi, aliter non bene recordatur de tempore, quod Ramunda soror sua, uxor condam Guillelmi de Rodesio de Tarascone, infirmabatur apud Ax in domo ipsius testis, ea infirmitate de qua obiit, et vidit et audivit quod Guillelmus Auterii hereticus predictus, frater ipsius testis et dicte Ramunde, quadam nocte durante dicta infirmitate circa mediam noctem, recepit eam in fidem et sectam hereticorum et ipsam hereticavit.

Interrogatus de modo receptionis seu hereticationis huiusmodi, dixit quod non fuit in principio sed postea venit et vidit et audivit quod dicta infirma tenebat manus junctas inter manus dicti heretici. Qui hereticus dicebat dicte infirme si volebat recipi in fide quam ipse tenebat et mori in ea, et ipsa respondit quod sic. Et tunc, dictus hereticus dixit dicte informi: “Tu debes parcere omni homini et ego parco tibi et remitto omnia peccata tuo, ex parte Dei, a quo habeo plenarium potestatem.” Interrogatus qui erant presentes, dixit quod Gualarda uxor dicti heretici et quedam ancilla ipsius testis que vocatur Migassola, Esclarmunda uxor ipsius et ipse testis et dictus hereticus et dicta infirma et nullos alios vidit ibi quod recordatur, ut dixit. Interrogatus si ipse vel alii predicti adoraverunt dictum hereticum, dixit quod non.

Ablis, ff. 11r-11v, p. 126.



She also said and confessed that Guilhem Roussel from Ax was received in the sect of the heretics by Guilhem Authié and Andre de Prades [Prades Tavernier] the heretics in the final sickness from which she died in her own house in Ax and that Pèire Roussel son of the aforesaid Guilhem Roussel procured and brought heretics to his father for his heretication. Asked how it was done, she said and confessed that before the aforesaid reception she the deponent [Guillelma] had seen the aforesaid heretics in the house of the aforesaid sick man behind a woolen blanket in a certain chamber towards the water, where the two said heretics had stayed for two days and because the said Pèire, son of the received, and other believers had said to her the deponent [Guillelma] that he had been received. Then she the deponent [Guillelma], Galharda Benet II, wife of Guilhem Authié and others who had come to visit the said sick man were standing by the fire in the house of the said sick man and because she the deponent and the aforesaid Galharda Benet II had been asked by those of the house to watch over and make sure that no other stranger who did not have the intention or understanding enter the room where the above reception happened.<sup>17</sup>

In another instance, Galharda (according to her own deposition) asked Sebèlia Authié if she wanted to be hereticated by the heretics, brought her heretical husband Guilhem to her, but she did not end up being hereticated, because she was delirious and could not consent. According to the deposition of Galharda Benet II herself given before Fournier:

She also said that 18 years ago or around then, when Sebèlia, wife of Pèire Pauc<sup>18</sup> from Ax was sick in bed and as if frantic, she the deponent [Galharda] came to her and asked her if she wished to be received in the faith and sect of Guilhem Authié her husband, leading her in the ways by which she could so that she would wish to be received in the said sect, who responded that she would freely wish this, but was afraid that if her husband knew this, misfortune would happen to her; and then she the deponent said to her to not have fear of this, because she would bring this about, that she would not let her husband find out. And then the next night she the deponent led her husband from the house of Sebèlia den Balle when the said husband of the said sick Sebèlia was

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<sup>17</sup> The text printed in Ablis reads:

Item dixit et confessa est quod Guillelmus Rosselli de Ax fuit receptus in sectam hereticorum per Guillelmum Auterii et Andream de Pradis hereticos in ultima infirmitate de qua obiit in domo sua propria apud Ax et quod Petrus Rosselli filius predicti Guillelmi Rosselli procuravit et adduxit hereticos ad patrem suum predictum hereticandum. Interrogata quomodo sit factum predictum, dixit et confessa est quod ante receptionem predictam viderat ipsa que loquitur predictos hereticos in domo predicti infirmi retro quendam flassiatam in quadam camera versus aquam, ubi jam dicti duo heretici steterant per duos dies et quia dictus Petrus, filius dicti recepti, et alii credentes dixerant ipsi que loquitur quod receptus fuerat. Dum ipsa que loquitur, Galharda d'en Benet, uxor Guillelmi Auterii et alii qui venerant ad visitandum dictum infirmum stabant ad ignem in domo dicti infirmi et quia ipsa que loquitur et Galharda predicta erant rogate per illos de hospitio quod custodirent et adverterent ne aliquis extraneus qui non esset de intentione et intellectu facti intraret cameram dum fieri receptio supradicta.

Ablis, f. 24v, p. 200.

<sup>18</sup> 'Pèire Pauc' is an alias for Pèire Authie, 'pauc' meaning 'little' in Occitan.

sleeping in his bed, and she the deponent brought her said husband into the house to the sick woman because she was able to enter and exit the said house, since she was caring for the said patient, whom the said heretic saw. [But] because he saw that she was speaking frantically, he did not wish to receive her in his sect, but said to her the deponent that if the said Sebèlia recovered her senses, that he would come to her and he would receive her in their sect, [and] afterwards she was not received in the sect of the said heretics, because she did not recover her senses, and died like this.<sup>19</sup>

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1321, Esclarmonda Authié described to Fournier her recollection of Sebèlia Authié's heretication:

Also asked about the heretication of Sebèlia wife of the late Pèire Authié (also called Pauc), she said that eighteen years ago or around then, she does not remember the time completely, the said Sebalie was sick with the sickness from which she died and was lying sick next to the fire, and the night she died, she the witness went to visit the said sick woman and came upon there Galharda wife of Guilhem Authié the heretic and the mother of the said patient whose name she does not remember, and Guilhem Authié who was the brother-in-law of the patient. And when they had stood for a while, the said woman began to grow very weak, and then the said Galharda Benet said to her the witness [Esclarmonda] to quickly leave from the house with the said Guilhem Authié, and do this hastily, because the aforesaid woman [was nearing] her end. And she [Esclarmonda] understood that Galharda was saying the aforesaid because Esclarmonda was to be received in the sect of the heretics and she did not want the said Guilhem Authié to be present, [and] Esclarmonda said to the said Guilhem: "Quickly take a handful of straw, and come with me to my house, because I wish to leave quickly," and the said Guilhem did this and left with her the witness to her house, Galharda Benet II staying behind with the said patient and the mother of the said patient, and she did not know what was done afterwards, but it was for this purpose that she left with the said Guilhem, that the said woman might be received. And the next day when the body of the said woman was buried, while she and the said Galharda were in the cemetery, she asked the said Galharda Benet II if the said Sebèlia had been received and hereticated, who

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<sup>19</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod XVIII anni sunt vel circa, cum Sibilia, uxor Petri Pauc alias dicti Petri Auterii de Ax esset in lecto infirma et quasi frenetica, ipsa loquens venit ad ipsam et dixit ei si volebat recipi ad fidem et sectam Guillelmi Auterii mariti sui, inducens eam modis quibus potuit quod vellet se recipi ad dictam sectam, que respondit quod libenter hoc volebat, sed timebat quod si hoc sciret maritus eius, male contingeret ei; et tunc ipsa loquens dixit ei quod non timeret de hoc, quia ipsa bene faceret taliter, quod non perperderet maritus dicte Sibilie. Et tunc nocte sequenti ipsa loquens duxit maritum suum de domo Sibilie den Balle quando dictus maritus dicte Sibilie infirme erat dormiens in lecto suo, et ipsa loquens introduxit dictum virum suum infra dictam domum ad dictam infirmam, quia ipsa poterat intrare et exire dictam domum, cum dicte infirme serviret, quam infirmam cum dictus hereticus vidisset, quia vidit quod loquebatur ut frenetica, noluit eam recipere ad sectam suam, sed dixit ipsi que loquitur quod si dicta Sibilia suum sensum recuperaret, quod venire ad ipsam ut ipsam reciperet ad sectam eorum, que tamen postea non fuit recepta ad sectam dictorum hereticorum, quia non recuperavit sensum suum, sed sic fuit mortua.

Fournier, Vol I. f. 54d, p. 294.

responded to her that no, because Guilhem Authié [the heretic] had stayed with her, so long that she had lost her memory when he left, and because she had not made the *convenenza* that she wished to be received in the faith and sect of the heretics even if she lost her voice and memories, therefore she was not received. She said then that the said Sebèlia had asked the said heretics and wished to be received, although she had not made the *convenenza* with the heretics.<sup>20</sup>

And finally, in perhaps one of the clearest demonstrations of the ‘family heritage’ of Catharism during this period, we read how when Galharda Benet II’s maternal grandfather, Arnaut Savinhan, became sick, she begged him to be hereticated at his death. According to the deposition of Mengarda Savinhan given on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1321:

She also said that two or three years before she had been cited by Brother Nicholas (then the inquisitor of Carcassonne), the late Arnaut Savinhan of Prades d’Alion was sick with the disease from which he died, and was lying sick in the said sickness in the [part of] the house called the foganha, and she the deponent [Mengarda] was staying in the same house with the said Arnaut, because he was her father-in-law. And while the said Arnaut was sick, Galharda II wife of Guilhem Authié the heretic from Ax came to him because she was his granddaughter (his daughter’s daughter), and she stayed there for one day and night, before the following things took place:

Then on the following night, when the said patient began to weaken, the said Galharda II said to her the deponent [Galharda] and Alazaïs wife of Raimond Romieu from Camurac to go to bed, which they did, putting themselves in a bed of a certain room that was attached to the said foganha; and before they got into bed, she the deponent closed the door of the room a little, but did not shut it with a bar or other sort of closure. And around [the first sleep] she and the said Alazaïs heard men murmuring or speaking

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<sup>20</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item interrogata super hereticacionem Sibilie uxoris quondam Petri Auterii cognominati Pauc dixit quod XVIII anni sunt vel circa, non recordatur tamen plene de tempore, dicta Sebilia erat infirma de infirmitate de qua obiit et iacebat infirma iuxta ignem, et nocte qua obiit, ipsa testis ivit ad visitandum dictam infirmam et invenit ibi cum dicta infirma Galhardam uxorem Guillelmi Auterii heretici, et matrem dicte infirme de cuius nomine non recordatur, et Guillelmum Auterii qui erat sororius dicte infirme. Et cum ibi stetissent per pausam, dicta mulier incepit multum debilitari, et tunc dicta Galharda dixit ipsi testi quod cito egrederetur de domo cum dicto Guillelmo Auterii, et hoc cito faceret et properanter, quia mulier predicta trahhebat ad finem. Et ipsa intelligens quod propter hoc dicta Galharda predicta dicebat, quia recipi ad sectam hereticorum debebat et nolebat dicta Galharda quod dictus Guillelmus Auterii esset presens, dixit dicto Guillelmo: “Attendatis cito unum manipulum de paletis, et veniatis mecum ad domum meam, quia volo cito recedere”, quod et dictus Guillelmus fecit et recessit cum ipsa testi ad domum suam, remanentibus cum dicta infirma dicta Galharda et matre dicte infirme, et nescit quid postea factum fuit, licet ad illum finem ipsa recessit cum dicto Guillelmo, ut dicta mulier reciperetur. Et in crastinum quando corpus dicte mulieris sepeliebatur, dum essent in cimiterio ipsa et dicta Galharda, interrogavit dictam Galhardam si dicta Sibilia fuerat recepta et hereticata, que respondit sibi quod non, quia tantum steterat dictus Guillelmus Auterii cum ipsa, quod iam amiserat memoriam quando recessit, et quia non fecerat convenienciam quod recipi vellet ad fidem et sectam hereticorum, eciam si loquelam et memoriam perdidisset, idcirco recepta non fuit. Dixit tamen quod dicta Sibilia bene pecierat dictos hereticos et recipi voluerat, licet convenienciam dictis hereticis non fecisset.

Fournier, Vol I. f. 55c, p. 297

quietly with the said patient, and immediately she, as she said, believed that the said men who spoke with the said man were heretics, who were brought by the said Galharda, who was the wife of the said heretic.

And, as she said, there was a disagreement between the said patient and the said men, because it seemed that the said patient refused to consent to the said men, and she and the said Alazaïs heard the said sick man tell the said men twice or thrice: “Devils, do not harass me!”, and then one of the said men said with her hearing : “Let us leave him, because a compelled thing is no good. May God help him if it is pleasing to him”.

She, as she said, because the fire was mostly covered, could not see clearly enough to be able to recognize the people who were speaking with the said patient, but she saw that the two men were standing by the bed on one side, and the said Galharda was standing on the other side of the bed. And when the said men had disputed with the said patient, one of them said: “Let us leave, because we are doing nothing here!”, and opened the door of the said house [and] exited the said house. And she the deponent, saw this, rose, and went to the door of the house by which the said men had made an exit, and saw the said two men from behind, and one of them had a plated belt, she did not know them, she said. And while she was at the door of the said house, the said Galharda who had remained with the said patient said: “Lord Grandfather believe me, Lord Grandfather believe me”, and then the said patient responded to the said Galharda: “Do what you would like”, and immediately the said Galharda went after the said men and brought them back to the said patient, she the deponent standing at the door to the house. And the fire had been lit, and she saw that the said two men genuflected frequently before the said bed, and then placed [their hands] on the head of the said patient, she did not see that they put a book on the head of the sick man, but she firmly believed then that the said two men had hereticated the said patient.

[...] The heretication done, the said two men left, while Galharda remained in the house with the said patient. She, as she said, did not make the *melhorament* to the said heretics nor believe, as she said, that because of the said heretication that the soul of the said patient would be saved, although she believed then that the said Galharda had had that man hereticated for that purpose, so that his soul would be saved. She did not reveal the aforesaid, as she said, before now.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The text printed in Fournier reads:

Item dixit quod ante per duos vel tres annos antequam fuisset citata per fratrem Nicholaum tunc inquisitorem Carcassonne, Arnaldus Savinhani quondam de Pradis de Alione fuit infirmus de infirmitate de qua decessit, et iacebat infirmus de dicta infirmitate in domo sua vocata la foganha, et ipsa loquens tunc morabatur in eadem domo cum dicto Arnaldo, quia socer suus erat. Et dum sic erat infirmus dictus Arnaldus, venit ad ipsum Galharda uxor Guillelmi Auterii heretici de Ax, que erat neptis dicti infirmi, filia filie eius, et mansit ibi per unam diem et noctem, antequam fierent infrascripta.

Deinde sequenti nocte, cum iam inciperet debilitare dictus infirmus, dicta Galharda dixit ipsi loquenti et Alazaicis uxori Ramundi Romieu de Camuraco quod irent cubitum, quod et ipse fecerunt, ponentes se in lecto in quadam camera que se tenebat cum dicta foganha ; et antequam intraverant lectum, ipsa loquens aliquantulum strinxit hostium dicte camere, non tamen clausit cum vecte vel alio genere closure. Et circa primum sompnium ipsa et dicta Alazaicis audierunt homines murmurantes vel submisse loquentes cum dicto infirmo, et statim ipsa, ut dixit, credidit quod dicti homines qui loquebantur cum dicto homine essent heretici, quos introduxisset dicta Galharda, que erat uxor heretici predicti.

Thus, it was Galharda Benet I who convinced her dying grandfather to be received in the heretical faith, not the heretics themselves.

### Conclusions

Although perhaps not as involved in heresy as Guilhem or his sister-in-law Guillelma I, Arnaut Benet was nevertheless a believer in heretics. Galharda Benet II, on the other hand, was very deeply involved in heresy. She was married to a *perfectus*. She made the *melhorament* in the houses of various believers, was consistently present around heretics, and persuaded her own maternal Grandfather to be hereticated at his death and arranged for it to be done.

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Et, ut dixit, inter dictum infirmum et dictos homines erat discentio, quia videbatur quod dictus infirmus nollet consentire dictis hominibus, et audivit ipsa loquens et dicta Alazaycis quod dictus infirmus dixit dictis hominibus bis vel ter : « Diaboli, non vexetis me ! », et tunc unus de dictis hominibus dixit audiente ipsa : « Dimittamus eum, quia res coacta nichil valet. Deus iuvet eum si placet ei ».

Ipsa, ut dixit, quia ignis erat pro magna parte coopertus, non poterat distincte videre quod posset cognoscere personas que loquebantur cum dicto infirmo, set tamen bene vidit quod duo homines stabant in sponda lecti ex parte una, et dicta Galharda stabat in alia sponda lecti. Et cum sic contendissent dicti homines cum dicto infirmo, unus eorum dixit : « Recedamus, ex quo hic nichil faciemus ! », et aperto hostio dicte domus exiverunt de dicta domo. Et ipsa loquens, hoc videns, surrexit, et ivit usque ad hostium domus per quod dicti homines egressi fuerant, et vidit dictos duos homines a parte posteriori, et unus eorum habebat singulum platonatum, non tamen cognovit eos, ut dixit. Et dum ipsa erat in hostio dicte domus, dicta Galharda que remanserat cum dicto infirmo dixit : « Domine avie credatis michi, domine avie credatis michi », et tunc dictus infirmus respondit dicte Galharde : « Fac quod volueris », et incontinenti dicta Galharda sequuta fuit dictos homines et reduxit eos ad dictum infirmum, ipsa loquente stante ad dictum hostium. Et fuit accensus ignis, et vidit ipsa quod dicti duo homines flectebant frequenter genua ante dictum lectum, et deinde ponebant se super capud dicti infirmi, et eum hereticaverunt. Non vidit tamen ipsa que loquitur quod librum ponerent super capud dicti infirmi, set bene tunc credidit quod dicti duo homines dictum infirmum hereticarent.

[...] Et facta dicta hereticatione, dicti duo homines recesserunt, remanente dicta Galharda in domo cum dicto infirmo. Ipsa, ut dixit, non adoravit dictos hereticos nec credidit, ut dixit, quod propter dictam hereticationem anima dicti infirmi salvaretur, licet tunc crederet quod dicta Galharda ad illum finem dictum hominem hereticare fecerit ut eius anima salvaretur. Non revelavit predicta, ut dixit, usque nunc.

Fournier, Vol. II, ff. 148b-148c, pp. 149-150.

## Conclusion

In contrast to earlier scholarly work, this study primarily used the inquisition records of Jacques Fournier to offer an investigation into the lived religion of men, women, and families of Cathar *credentes* during the “Authié revival” from ca. 1300 to 1308. The study examined how men and women who were friends, relatives, accomplices, believers, and defenders of the Cathar *perfecti* were involved in their support. It sought to investigate the role of women in this regard and compare that to the role of men. It also sought to examine the family nature of Catharism.

The second chapter of this thesis, “Guilhem and Guillelma Benet I” compared the ways in which this married couple participated in heresy and contributed to our understanding of the ways women participated in heresy in the early fourteenth century. The chapter began with a discussion of how Guilhem Benet participated in heresy, and then compared the way he participated in heresy to the ways his wife participated in heresy. The chapter ultimately concluded that although the ways that men and women participated in heresy differed, they nevertheless participated to similar degrees. While in the fourteenth century it may have only been men who occupied positions as heretical ministers, both men and women *credentes* provided the *perfecti* with food, shelter, and community, working to perpetuate the heretical faith.

The third chapter of this thesis, ‘The Benet Sons: Raimond, Bernart, and Pèire Benet’ explored the heretical activities of Guilhem and Guillelma I’s sons and began to more fully explore how the ‘family heritage’ of Catharism helped to prolong its survival into the fourteenth century, and how the faith was shared between parents and their children. Building on this, the chapter discussed how Raimond Benet kept heretical company, assisted Guilhem Belot and his father in the heretication of “na Roqua”, and was hereticated at his death. The chapter

discussed how Bernart Benet helped to organize the heretication of Guilhem Guilhabert, was arrested for matters related to heresy, escaped, and was subsequently turned in by his sister-in-law. Although not often mentioned in the inquisition registers, Pèire Benet also kept heretical company just as his parents and siblings had done.

The fourth chapter, ‘The Benet Daughters: Alazaïs, Esclarmonda, Guillelma II, and Montania’, explored the heretical activities of Guilhem and Guillelma I’s daughters, continuing to explore Catharism’s ‘family heritage’ in the fourteenth century. The chapter discussed how Alazaïs Benet was actively involved in heresy even before her death. She was rumored to have consorted with heretics, rumored to have been a believer, made the *melhorament* to the heretics while they were in the Belot house and was hereticated at her death by Guilhem Authié. According to depositions which discuss Guillelma II, it is clear that she frequently listened to heretics preach and held heretical beliefs. Her marriage to Bernart Belot highlights the ‘family heritage’ of later Catharism because both partners were Cathar sympathizers. Meanwhile, Montania, of the remaining sisters, who was breastfeeding at this time is only mentioned in one instance was too young to participate in heresy. Esclarmonda is only referred to briefly in the deposition of her brother Bernart. This chapter, and the chapter before it, establish that Michel Dmitrevsky and Anne Brenon’s claims about the nature of the “family heritage” of Catharism in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries held true in the fourteenth century as well: Guilhem and Guillelma Benet I were sympathetic to the heretical cause, and maintained an environment where heretics were coming, staying in the family home, and performing rites in their home, or those of close neighbors, and their children followed them in this.

The fifth chapter of this thesis, ‘The Ax Benets: Arnaut Benet, Galharda Benet I, and Galharda Benet II’, examined the heretical activities of Guilhem Benet’s brother Arnaut’s

family. Arnaut Benet was somewhat active in supporting the Cathar ministers. He hosted them in his home, and went around to visit them. Although perhaps not as involved in the heresy as his brother Guilhem or his sister-in-law Guillelma, Arnaut was nevertheless a believer in heretics. Meanwhile, because Galharda Benet I is only referred to in passing in the Ablis register, one cannot determine whether she actively participated in heresy or if she was simply in her house while heretics were present. However, the depositions concerning Galharda Benet II demonstrated perhaps the deepest degree to which women could participate in the Cathar heresy during the Authié revival. Galharda II made the *melhorament* to the heretics, was present at various heretications (as a witness and as an assistant to the heretical ministers), visited the heretics, was cited by the inquisitor of Carcasonne and was threatened by her husband not to denounce them, asked others if they wished to be hereticated, and also persuaded her grandfather to be hereticated at his death.

The ways in which Guilhem, Guillelma, their sons, and their relatives participated in heresy reveal how after 1300, the *perfecti* became dependent on networks of households of believers. The Belot, Benet, Gombert, Guilhabert, Maurs, Maury, and Rives families worked together to ensure the *perfecti* who were the lifeblood of the sect were provided with food, protection, and a community of faithful.

Historians such as Charles Schmidt, Charles Molinier, Celestin Douais, Michel Dmitrevsky, Richard Abels, Ellen Harrison, and Anne Brenon all noted that women participated actively in Catharism in Languedoc. Although they had initially participated as *perfectae*, following persecution in the thirteenth century, women stopped participating as *perfectae* and instead supported the sect and its ministers as *credentes*.



By contrast, however, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and John Arnold have dismissed the roles women played in the sect. Le Roy Ladurie wrote that women were “passive rather than active elements in Cathar propaganda,” that women “accepted Catharism rather vaguely,” and “rallied to the heretic cause only temporarily and superficially.”<sup>1</sup> Arnold seems to agree with this assessment, and, like Le Roy Ladurie, downplays the role of women: “women were never predominant in heresy, and in regard to issues of activity and visibility, were usually strongly in the minority—as one might similarly find with orthodox religion.”<sup>2</sup> It seems Le Roy Ladurie and Arnold’s conclusions are based on the fact that there were very few female *perfectae* by the turn of the fourteenth century. But as this thesis has shown, women *credentes* who were not in positions of power within the hierarchy of the church (such as Guillelma Benet I and Galharda Benet II) participated very actively in support of the *perfecti* and their faith.

I therefore find the conclusions about the agency of Cathar women that were presented in 1979 by Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison much more convincing than those of Le Roy Ladurie and Arnold. The ways in which women involved themselves in heresy must not be reduced to the oversimplified generalities that Arnold and Le Roy Ladurie present. Regardless of the means by which they were introduced to the sect, or to what degree they believed the heretics or adopted their teachings, if, in the end, we are asking: “to what degree did women participate in Catharism of the fourteenth century?”, then we must answer that during the period of the Authié revival, even though they did not assume roles as *perfectae*, women *credentes* were active and influential in their support of the heretical ministers.

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<sup>1</sup> Montaillou, 258.

<sup>2</sup> John Arnold, “Heresy and Gender in the Middle Ages,” 501.

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