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## "THEY ARE WORSE THAN SARACENS WITH THEIR STRONG HAND AND THEIR ARM STRETCHED IN FIGHT": MULTIFACETED CONTEXT OF THE ALBIGENSIAN CRUSADE

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### Abstract

The Albigensian Crusade was an internal campaign against the Albigensian/Cathar heretics in the south of France through the alliance of the Papacy and French Monarchy between 1209 and 1229. The Albigensians posed a great threat to the institutional Church with their unorthodox beliefs such as the rejection of baptism and church hierarchy. The reasons for the Albigensian Crusade are still a source of debate among the historians though there are many studies on the subject. This paper will try to contextualise the Albigensian Crusade by examining multifaceted factors that resulted in the mass persecution of the heretics. It will be argued that it is crucial to discuss the interaction of various factors such as the rising power of the Papacy, Crusading ideology, medieval heresy and socio-economic and political conditions in the region to understand fully the Albigensian Crusade.

**Keywords:** Medieval Europe, France, Heresy, The Crusades, Albigensians, Catharism.

### Introduction

The Albigensian Movement was the most pervasive heresy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in many regions of Europe. It posed a great danger to the political and religious authorities particularly in the Rhine-Valley, the Champagne region, Lombardy and Languedoc (Barber, 2014: 2). The term Albigensians was genuinely referring to the Cathar heretics as a misattribution due to a public convocation arranged at Lombers, about ten miles away from Albi in southern France, with the intention of persuading local nobility not to support the heretics but to convince them (Costen, 1997: 59; Pegg, 2008: 42).<sup>1</sup> The term "Cathar", which derived from the Greek word *katharos* meant the pure ones. It was the popular name used especially by the enemies of the Movement to designate the adherents of this heresy. According to an eye-witness report of Ekebert, the Abbot of Benedictine Abbey of Schönau, in the mid twelfth century (d.1184), the heretics associated with the Movement were present in every corner of Europe. In his opinion, the medieval heresy had an international character. Ekebert thought that the word "Cathar" was coming from the word "cat" because the Cathar heretics were worshipping Lucifer making appearance in the form of cat (Lambert, 2015: 85; Frassetto, 2007: 77).<sup>2</sup> The demonization of the Cathars acquired an immediate religio-political dimension when Pope Innocent III (1160-1216) wrathfully called for war against the widespread Albigensian heresy in 1208. The murder of Pierre de Castelnau, the papal legate in the region of Languedoc, marked practically Innocent III's decision. This was "a general appeal to Christian knights in the surrounding provinces" and offered the lands of heretics to anyone who would sincerely strive to suppress the heresy (Housley, 2001: 17-36, 17). For Pope Innocent III, they were more evil than the Saracens. The Crusade against the heresy was more important than the external enemy, Islam (Barber, 2014: 107).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pegg indicates that the Cathars were thinking that the priests were wicked men. So, they did not deserve to be obeyed. Mark Gregory Pegg (2008). *A Most Holy War: The Albigensian Crusade and the Battle for Christendom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.42.

<sup>2</sup> The etymology of "Cathar" is still a debate and source of confusion among the scholars. For this issue see Bernard Hamilton (2016). "Cathar Links with the Balkans and Byzantium", *Cathars in Question*, ed. Antonio Sennis, York: York Medieval Press, pp. 131-150, p.146. Pegg (2008). *A Most Holy War*, p.201. The question is certainly related to the origin of the word. It is very obvious that the name Cathar had already been used by earlier theologians before Ekebert. For example, eighth-century church father John of Damascus in his *On Heresies* had written that the Cathars "absolutely reject those who have married a second time and they do not accept penance." *The Fathers of the Church, A New Translation: Saint John of Damascus Writings*, Vol: 37 (1958), translated by Frederic H. Chase Jr., Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 59: p.125. John of Damascus had based his definition of heresies on the writings of fourth-century church father Epiphanius of Salamis. Epiphanius had indicated that there had been a group of heretics named "Purists" in his own time. *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Books II and III. De Fide* (2013), Second, revised edition, translated by Frank Williams, Leiden: Brill, Book II: p.104. These examples do not mean that the Albigensians/Cathars of the High and Late Medieval Ages were simply the followers of the heretics of the Late Antiquity. The specific characteristics of the Albigensian/Cathar heresy will be presented in the following pages of this article.

<sup>3</sup> The title of the article is part of a sentence from pope Innocent III's 1208 dated letter to French king Philip Augustus (1165-1223) to encourage him for armed action against the Albigensians. In his letter, Innocent fully writes that "You should also strive to destroy the heretical treachery, whose adherents are as more steadfast than the Saracens as they are worse than them with their strong hand and their arm stretched in fight." "...Haereticam tamen studeas perfidiam abolere, sectatores ipsius eo quam Saracenos securius quo peiores

At first glance, Innocent's Call may sound pretty bizarre to those inclined to think of the Crusades mainly as religious campaigns just against the Muslims. But, as the new historiography of the Crusades instigates the pursuit of diverse approaches, to mention both the heretics and the Crusades in the same sentence seems quite sensible. The common perception of the Crusades has been shaped until now by the traditionalist view of the Crusades. In traditional or classical history-writing, the Crusades have been simplistically viewed as just a war against the "infidels". Within this framework, the military activities against other groups such as heretics or Christians have been regarded as a deviation from the true aim of the "Holy War". However, as Norman Housley and Jonathan Riley-Smith have shown us, under the direction of the ecclesiastical authority, secular administrative mechanism canalised its aggression for Crusading to the other regions as well as the East as we can clearly observe in a variety of examples from the Crusade against the pagan Wends in 1147 to Innocent III's offerings of Crusade indulgences to the Sicilians in 1199 to oppose imperial officer Markward of Anweiler, "who tried to maintain a presence in Italy after Henry VI's death" (Riley-Smith, 2005:162-163). In general terms, the Albigensian Crusade can be evaluated in this broad understanding of the Crusading activities.<sup>4</sup> But, it should also be considered one of the turning points in the history of the Crusading campaigns because this was the first example of the Crusades against the heretics. We can see here the extension of the Crusading policy against the internal enemy. Then we may regard the war against heresy in the south of France as an extension of a practice rather than seeing it fundamentally a distortion of Crusading ideals (Housley, 2006: 61).<sup>5</sup>

Here it is pointless to give a simple chronological narrative of the events. The primary achievements, the stages of campaigns and the mass persecution of the heretics are certainly functional to construct narrative history. However, if we wish to understand how this Crusading campaign occurred and resulted in mass persecution, it is more compelling to show the interaction of different factors from socio-economic and political to religious one in shaping the Albigensian Crusade. In this respect, the argument of this paper is that Albigensian Crusade should be considered in the context of the interrelated connections of the Crusading ideology, papal religious policy, heresy and Languedoc socio-political history. Notifying the linkages and relations among these factors in the development of the suppression of the heresy will assuredly display that the issues of religious dissent and the Crusading ideology cannot be thought separately from internal socio-political developments and motivations. Regarding this point, the article is going to reveal how the idea of war against heresy was used very consciously and systematically to transform both the socio-political and religious landscape of southern France under the control of royal government and Catholic Church to firmly establish religious and political authority.

### 1. Albigensian Crusade in the Context of Medieval Heresy

The Albigensian Crusade was an unmerciful war waged against the supporters of the Albigensian/Cathar heresy that increased numbers in the south of France in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The Crusading campaign began in 1209 and continued up to the treaty of Meaux/ Paris that was made between King Louis IX (1214-1270) of France and the most influential southern aristocrat Raymond VII (1197-1249) from the House of Toulouse in 1229. The apparent purpose of the Crusade was to demolish widespread heresy in the south and restore an orderly Christian society loyal to both secular and religious authorities. On the whole, the immediate targets of the Crusaders were the leaders of the local aristocracy, particularly Raymond VI (1156-1222), the count of Toulouse, who for Pope Innocent had failed to support the Church in suppressing heresy and had enforced the disruption of the peace. This means that there was a great danger for the Papacy that undermined the orderly government and Christian society. Thus, the Crusade had two basic objectives. The first one was to exterminate the threat of heresy and establish religious order and the second one was to bring political authority and control over the Languedoc society.

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sunt illis in manu forti et extento brachio impugnando." For the title, instead of pronoun "them", I used the word Saracens, which points to the heretics in the original statement. As this part of the letter shows, the Albigensians were much more dangerous than the Saracens according to pope Innocent III. *Innocenti III Romani Pontificis Regestorum Sive Epistolarum*, Liber XI, Letter, XXVIII: 1358-1359. [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z\\_11981216\\_\\_SS\\_Innocentius\\_III\\_\\_Regestorum\\_Sive\\_Epistolarum\\_\[AD\\_1203-1208\]\\_\\_MLT.pdf.html](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z_11981216__SS_Innocentius_III__Regestorum_Sive_Epistolarum_[AD_1203-1208]__MLT.pdf.html)

<sup>4</sup> Like Anglo-Saxon scholarship, the German and French historiographies have closely dealt with the problem of Cathar heresy in the Middle Ages. But, the purpose of this article is not to compare various trends in the historiography. My aim here is just to show modestly the complexity of the Albigensian Crusade. As can be seen from the examples given here, most of the primary sources about Albigensian Crusade have been translated into English. So, the Anglo-Saxon scholarship gives sufficient empirical evidence for this. For a striking example of the interest in Cathar heresy by the French scholars, see Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's book, *Montaillou, village occitan de 1294 à 1324*, which deals with the later reflections of Cathar heresy in rural regions of France. This work was published in 1975 and was translated into English by Barbara Bray in 1978 with the title of *Montaillou: the Promised Land of Error*, New York: George Brazillier.

<sup>5</sup> To see the discussion and criticism of the traditionalist view of the crusades, especially look at the first chapter of Norman Housley (2006). *Contesting the Crusades*, Oxford: Blackwell.

In this regard, it is vital to begin the examination with the discussion of the problem of heresy in general terms and to explain exclusive place of the Albigensian Heresy in it. It can be rightly argued that heresy and the menace it caused was part of the history of Church itself. Starting from the early centuries of Christianity, the problem of heresy urged the church “to define its doctrines and to anathematize the deviant theological opinions” (Lambert, 2015: 11). Heresy and the schisms generated by it were anathematized in the works of the early church fathers like Tertullian, Origen and most importantly in the epistles and treatises against heresy and schism by St. Augustine (Marshall, 2006: 200). For instance, St. Augustine, in his *De Haeresibus* (About the Heresies), tried to list the heresies or deviant theological views though he knew that it was really difficult to make a lucid definition of it. St. Augustine, therefore, would write that “what it is then, that makes one heretic, in my opinion, cannot at all, or can only with difficulty, be grasped in a definition in accord with rules” (Berzon, 2016: 219). However, he attempted to construct a heresiology seeing the need for a guide to struggle against unorthodox stances. This need had forced St. Augustine to assess his own work as functional in explaining “the heresies which arose against the teaching of Christ after his coming and ascension” (Berzon, 2016: 219).

The medieval heresiological literature strictly depended on the legacy of the early Church Fathers.<sup>6</sup> According the definition made by thirteenth-century English theologian Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253), heresy was “an opinion chosen by human sense, contrary to Holy Scripture, taught openly, defended pertinaciously” (Ames, 2015: 25). However, the medieval men realized in time that the popular heresy of their age also had its own attributes. In medieval heresiology, the question of true belief heavily focused on a debate about the basic principles commanded by the institutional Church. The expanding Catholic Church in Europe, which encountered challenges to its principles and institutional structure from hostile sects, was forced to take measures against the rising popular heresy. The popular heresy had social and economic aspects. As R.I. Moore indicated, in parallel with the complexification of socio-economic and political structure by the late tenth century, the struggles between the elites for property and political power led to the “accusations and counter-accusations of heresy” as well as its propaganda (Moore, 2000: 8-25). In this sense, the war against heresy was not a technical issue. It was a socio-political necessity deriving from “developing self consciousness of the new administrative elite produced by the demographic and cultural transformation of Europe in the eleventh century.” (Moore, 2008: 189-210). Although the heresy had various forms throughout the Middle Ages, it is possible to draw general characteristics of it. Notably, the Church as an expanding spiritual institution was the main target of the heretics. In connection with this, the rejection of some fundamental doctrines of the Church like baptism, the cross, the criticism of the worldly lives of the clerics and monks, enthusiasm for asceticism and poverty, intellectual and doctrinal speculations about the nature of God were the general aspects of medieval heresy (Lambert, 2015: 46-80).

Heresy came to be regarded as a serious threat by the Catholic Church particularly by the second of the twelfth century. In the Third (1179) and Fourth (1215) Lateran Councils, heresy was classified as a kind of treason and blasphemy against God. It has been further argued that the punishment of heretics itself would serve to legitimize and display the divine powers of the monarchs (Marshall, 2006: 214). The Fourth Lateran Council’s statement in the Canon 3 on Heresy that “if a temporal ruler, after having been requested and admonished by the Church, should neglect to cleanse his territory of this heretical foulness, let him be excommunicated by the metropolitan and the other bishops of the province” (Schroeder, 1937: 242-43) shows us that the Papacy was very decisive to step into action against the popular heresy adopted even among the secular rulers. Therefore, the threat of Excommunication forced the civil authorities who were not willing to act against heresy, to participate in the mass persecution of the heretics since “the stigma of heresy was extended those who sheltered or defended its adherents and to magistrates who failed to act against them” (Moore, 1987: 22). We can see the zenith of this notion in the justifications and acts in the Albigensian Crusade, in which the French kings used massive force in their largely successful attempts to crush and exterminate the Albigensians.

The Albigensian/Cathar heresy contained many of the above-mentioned characteristics of the medieval heresy. In principle, Catharism was a dualist heresy. Its adherents believed in the two wholly opposite and antagonistic principles of good and evil, personified as God and Devil. The earth and all material things were the creation of the Devil. God had created all spiritual things, including men’s soul but his realm was a heavenly and spiritual one quite distinct from this world. This aspect of their belief was quite explicit in one of the rare surviving texts, the *Liber de Duobus principiis* (the Book of the Two Principles) written by an anonymous Cathar heretic in the early thirteenth century: “For if God does not desire all evil

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<sup>6</sup> St. Augustine’s *De Haeresibus* was the major source for defining heresy in Europe throughout the Middle Ages. St. Augustine, defined the Cathar heresy like Epiphanius of Salamis and John of Damascus. See footnote 2. For Augustine’s definition and its influence on Ekebert look Bernard Hamilton (2016). “Cathar Links with the Balkans and Byzantium”, *Cathars in Question*, ed. Antonio Sennis, York: York Medieval Press, p. 131-150, p.135.

things, nor to lie, nor to destroy Himself, there is no doubt that He cannot do so, because that which God most certainly does not desire He cannot do, and what He absolutely cannot do He does not desire. From this it is clear that in the true Lord God there exists no potency for sinning or for doing all evil things" (Wakefield& Evans, 1991: 511ff.). The potency for evil was the key notion in Cathar dualism. It was the source of power and primary principle "from whom the power of Satan and of darkness and all other powers which are inimical to the true Lord God are exclusively and essentially derived" (Wakefield& Evans, 1991: 511ff.). This dualist position necessitated the belief that Jesus Christ could not have a material body because God's creation was confined to the spiritual world.<sup>7</sup> In ritualistic terms, the Cathars thought that Christ had granted the Christians a single sacrament, called *consolamentum*. As a concept, *consolamentum* means consolation in English. What *consolamentum* referred to in content was the consolation by sacrament after the regret of living in this material world. In the life of the mortals, this peculiar ritual could take place twice. This ritual could be first performed when the Cathar believers were converting into Cathar religion. The second one was happening when the believer was very near to death. Practically, it was a baptism in the spirit by the "laying-on of hands." They believed that the soul of the believer was reunited by his spirit through only by *consolamentum* (Lambert, 2015, 145; Costen, 1997: 67.). Moreover, the church membership was limited to those called *perfecti* or in the case of the women, *perfectea*, who completed a long and rigorous period of training and instruction (Lambert, 2015: 145; Costen, 1997: 67-68). There was a clear distinction between *perfecti* and the believers. The threat of the Cathar faith lay particularly in the denial of priesthood, and of the sacraments and of Christ as the son of God. The real power of Catharism was coming from its rigid criticism and emphasis on the failings of the church and its wealthy clergy, who had many contrasts with the poverty of Christ and his disciples as well as its attack to the fundamental tenets of Catholic Orthodoxy (Lambert, 2015: 145-160).

## 2. Social and Political Context of the Albigensian Crusade

The growing strength of Catharism at that time is revealed in the *Chronicle of William of Puylaurens*, one of the major sources narrating the Albigensian Crusade. William points that the preachers against the heresy in the region of Languedoc "persisted in their arduous task of preaching for two years and more, but were unable by this means to extinguish the fire. They saw that the affair needed advice from a higher quarter and so were driven to appeal to the Holy See" (Puylaurens, 2003: 27). As can be understood from this evidence, heresy was doctrinally regarded as a great threat to the Church. However, it is necessary to consider the multi-faceted factors while discussing the growing popularity and strength of heresy in the south of France and investigating the elements which paved way to the Crusading campaign. This means that the success of Albigensian/Cathar heresy cannot be assessed in isolation from social and political context in which it developed because exceptional socio-political conditions in the region created a very convenient environment for the growth of heresy. In time, it turned into a tool of legitimisation for the military operation of the Crusaders. The social and political peculiarity of southern France was the essential reason behind the apparent difference between the north and the south. When compared to the northern France, the south, especially the region of Languedoc was prosperous, urbanised and cosmopolitan. Therefore, the great lords of the region could not create a powerful central government similar to that of the Capetians in the north (Costen, 1997: 196). The dispersion of regional power among the territorial lords always worked against the establishment of overriding political authority. For this reason, the most important preliminary condition for the success of the heresy in the region was this political fragmentation that prevented the imposition of unified centralised jurisdiction. Moreover, the inheritance customs and practices like the partible inheritance also enforced the political fragmentation and anarchy because a lord could divide his estate among many heirs by this way. This custom was widespread particularly among the middle and lesser nobility (Hamilton, 1999: 164-181, 165).

Neither of the territorial lords had a whole authority over the region. The kings of Aragon, had claims on the lands in the region. Many of the richest lands and wealthiest towns of the country belonged to the counts of Toulouse. It is true that the House of Toulouse was the most effective power in the region. But, in practice, the power of the Count of Toulouse was limited. For instance, the city of Narbonne was divided between the archbishop and the viscount, one of the largest cities of the region, Montpellier was held by one

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<sup>7</sup> Their dualist doctrinal views had close links and similarities with the Bogomil heresy of Eastern Europe and if it needs to go back, there were some reflections of Manichaeism in Cathar beliefs that had caused a great trouble for the Church until the late sixth century. The relationships among Manichaeism, Bogomilism and Catharism are still a subject of discussion among the modern historians. Although many have accepted the essential continuity of dualism from Gnosticism and Manichaeism to the Paulicians, Bogomils and Cathars, one of the most important historians of Cathar heresy, Mark Gregory Pegg sharply criticizes the construction of these relations between different heresies and writes "the similarity would, at best, be superficial, while the meaning, in any case, could not be the same" look Mark Gregory Pegg "On Cathars, Albigenses and the Good Men of Languedoc", *Journal of Medieval History* 27 (2001), 181-195.

of the oldest families of the region, the Tranceval family. This family had many holdings and desired to expand its authority throughout the region. In this regard, every noble family tried to expand its own power in all those lands (Costen, 1997: 29-31). Especially, the eleventh and twelfth centuries were “a period of disruption and instability in Languedoc, resulting apparently from almost a constant warfare between the counts Toulouse on the one side, the counts of Barcelona and the dukes of Aquitaine on the other (Graham-Leigh, 2005: 92). War among different factions went on due to the lands held by the House of Toulouse. The conflict among greater lords gave the lesser and middle nobility the opportunity to benefit from the factional divisions. Thus they could act independently for themselves to a great extent. In this sense, the political fragmentation in the region prevented the establishment and consolidation of central power willing to eradicate the Albigensian heresy. There was actually no reason and need for such an attempt. The Languedoc region always took advantage of being a cosmopolitan society. In a cosmopolitan society composed of people from various segments of society from nobles to merchants, the new ideas could easily spread and could not be controlled by the precautions that were being taken by the Church.

Another significant factor that hindered the direct control of the Church as an institution and the French Monarchy in the region was the violence. The natural consequence of the political anarchy and fragmentation was an inclination towards the militarization of the society. The warfare was prevalent. In the local conflicts among the local rulers, the mercenaries (*routiers*), well-organised group of soldiers recruited especially from the foreign countries like Spain or Netherlands were used by the most of the lords of Languedoc such as Raymond VI of Toulouse. The employment of the mercenaries was a widespread practice particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They were the most important devices of the struggles and rivalries between sovereign kings and barons. However, the mercenaries could not be easily controlled. Their activities always made the region an unsafe place (Barber, 2014: 68). As Costen indicated, when the feudal institutional structure was not very strong, the mercenaries were transforming into violent instruments of groups connected with the heretics and the nobles acting independently of the central authority (Costen, 1997: 118). The employment of the mercenaries by the Languedoc nobility led to the identification of heresy, aristocracy and mercenaries. In the actual state of political anarchy and instability, most of the noble families, particularly those coming from the middle and lesser aristocracy were protecting or tolerating the heretical movements. Some members of these families had close relations with the heresy. For instance, the lords like Raymond Roger Tranceval had sympathies with the Cathars. According to the report given by a chronicler of the Albigensian Crusade, Peter of Les Vaux-de Cernay, Raymond Roger was a man supporting the heretics (Cited from Barber, 2014: 124). The fortified lands of the nobles associated with the heretics were providing them a suitable environment to sustain their activities. These places enabled the Cathars “to preach over a large area and to establish houses for their communities in many different places” (Barber, 2014: 68). In this respect, it is very obvious that social and political situation provided protection for the heretics. The Albigensian heresy could not be successful without the support and protection of the nobility. Papacy always sought for the support of secular authorities in southern France to suppress the heretics. But, it failed in this case. The leading lords did not have absolute control over their vassals supporting the heretics. Despite the fact that many of the great lords were Orthodox Catholics, they did not show any sign of interest in suppressing heresy. Rather, these lords were willing to tolerate the adherents of the heresy because of their lord-vassal relations. On this basis, the members of the Council of Lavaur, which convened in February 1213, accused the great lords such as counts of Toulouse, Foix and Comminges of being the allies of the heretics (Graham-Leigh, 2005: 71).

### **3. Religious Context of the Albigensian Crusade**

The failure of the Papacy in suppressing the heretics did not only come from the association of the nobility with them. The problems of the institutional Church in Languedoc were very profound and structural. The weakness and difficulty of the Church was mainly caused by its inadequacy to stand against the prevalence of the heresy as we have pointed out before through the account of Puylaurens about the lamentation of the preachers. The structural problems of the Languedoc Church were directly related to its weak organisation. Like political fragmentation in the region, the Church suffered from ecclesiastical decomposition. This means that there was a lack of coherent leadership. The religious authority in the region was divided among the archbishoprics of Narbonne, Bourges and Auch. Chronic warfare and political instability in the region continuously caused the disruption of the Church (Costen, 1997: 198). Moreover, this situation always prevented the bishops who might be eager for an active observation and control of the rural parishes where the heresy first established itself (Lambert, 2015: 116). In addition to this, the vacuum of religious authority and the weakness of the church led to the condition of the lack of law. Many of the bishoprics were dependent on secular rulers. Much of the church property was plundered by secular lords. The frictions between the bishops contributed to the growth of anti-clerical sentiments and heretical views firmly refusing the church authority. Another problem for the institutional Church in the south of France

was the lack of economic resources for the clergymen. This led to the failure for effective administrative organisation in the region. Particularly, rural clergy was poor and heavily dependent on local nobles. Furthermore, many of the southern bishops were not committed to the idea of the reformed and powerful church defended by the popes. They did not have the willingness, the capability and the resources to hinder the influence of the heretical preachers. The lower clergy was poorly educated and demoralised and they did not have the ability to cope with the heretics (Lambert, 2015: 116-117). In this sense, many of the churchmen in Languedoc were not be able to tackle the problem of heresy however much individual bishops were beware of heresy and they tried to struggle against the spread of it. In these circumstances, the Albigensian heresy appeared to be a great threat for the church both religiously and politically. The conflicts between the Papacy and local rulers over jurisdiction and property issues, the employment of the mercenaries, the growing popularity of the heresy in the region, the support and protection of the nobility for the heretics and the inability and failure of the southern clergymen against the heretics as a whole seem to be sufficient reasons to legitimize for a Crusading campaign.

Initially, the response of the Papacy to these developments was a bit ambiguous. The Crusade against the Cathar heretics was not a sudden decision. It was a slow process of development in the papal policy running parallel with the events in Languedoc. In general terms, some steps were taken against the heresy under the pontificates of Alexander III and Lucius II in the twelfth century. Resting on traditional hostility against the heretics in Christian mind, both popes admitted that the heretics must be repressed in a way. But, the Papacy had not a consistent and coherent policy against the heretics (Lambert, 2015: 125) since the prevalent popular heresy was a very new case. As an early policy, the Papacy tried to convince the heretics by calling them to repentance and conversion. This early policy was a piece of a general attitude and approach of the Papacy against the heretical movements since its institutionalisation. In such a condition, the institutional Church was always setting the main principles to condemn heresy and trying to convince first especially the leaders of heresy. When their ideas were certainly seen as the source of evil and complete error, the heretics and their protectors were condemned (Costen, 1997: 99-100). In this process, another policy of the church to hinder the spread of the heresy was to reform the Church in Languedoc to make it more responsive to the needs of the Papacy to suppress the heresy. The Third Lateran Council in 1179 particularly gave the popery the opportunity to fulfil many reforms in the region. Since the tenth century, the influence of Papacy was increasing, now the Pope was not only the representative of St. Peter. He was unquestionable shadow of Jesus Christ (Costen, 1997: 102). By this way, the Pope could have a great authority over the bishops. In this regard, the increasing charisma of the Papacy as an institution was of a great importance in Languedoc in terms of the re-organisation of the church hierarchy in order to struggle the popular heresy effectively.

The legal justifications had been developed since the twelfth century for the employment of the church and its secular allies against the heretics. The education of the lower clergy, fervent preaching and writing against popular heresy were part of new direction in the fight. (Lambert, 2015: 125). But, the great turning point in Papacy's response to the suppression of heresy was the extension of the Peace and Truce of God movements against both the mercenary bands and the heretics. It is known that the Peace of God movement placed "certain categories of persons, such as monks, the clergy and the poor" and certain categories of material things like church property and poor people's means of livelihood" under ecclesiastical protection and the Truce of God was an "attempt to stop violence at certain times" (Cowdrey, 1970: 42-67) These movements had been very powerful and influential throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries. By means of these movements, the Church could have imposed a great authority through its control of the endemic violence because the people who would not join or break the Peace were identified as the enemies of God. The Peace of God and Truce of God movements as the ideas that the church might be able to apply spiritual sanctions to stop or regulate warfare started to be gradually extended both against the mercenary bands' (*routier*) violence and the heretics throughout the twelfth century. The internal peace was necessary for the repression of heresy. But, as stated above, uncontrollable bands of the mercenary soldiers posed great threat to the peace in the southern France. The edicts of the Papacy before the mid-twelfth century apparently declared the attempts "to fight off and expel those marauding outsiders" (Housley, 2001: 17-36). The decision of fight against the mercenary violence and heresy had special importance in the south because they were very influential in a decentralised region unlike the northern France where the Capetian authority was day by day growing.

The construction of the linkage between Albigensian heresy and the *routiers* reached its critical point in the 1170s and 1180s (Housley, 2001: 17-36). In the canons of the Third Lateran Council of 1179, the heretics were anathematized and some penalties were prescribed against the mercenary bands. The Truces were decided to be strictly observed. According to Canon 21 of the Council, it has been emphasized that "truces are to be inviolably observed by all from after sunset on Wednesday until sunrise on Monday, and from

Advent until the octave of the Epiphany, and from Septuagesima until the octave of Easter. If anyone tries to break the truce, and he does not comply after the third warning, let his bishop pronounce sentence of excommunication and communicate his decision in writing to the neighboring bishops” (<http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/LATERAN3.HTM>). Additionally, Canon 27 of the same Council attracted attention to the spread of the heresy and resolution of the Papacy to combat heretics. The Papacy was taking a decisive action against the Albigensian Heresy. The Papacy was granting the secular governors the right of enslaving the heretics and the confiscation of their properties if they did not repent (<http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/LATERAN3.HTM>). In 1184, pope Lucius III issued the decretal *Ad Abolendam*. As its title indicates, this papal bull aimed at abolishing the prevalent heresies in Christendom. Like the Third Lateran Council, the bull anathematized the heretics and their defenders. Later, it would become Canon 3 of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 that consolidated the power of institutional Church. As indicated before in the first pages of this article, the Papacy saw the secular rulers cooperating with the heretics as enemy. Those neglecting the war against the heretics deserved to be excommunicated. By means of this decree, The Church expected the alliance of secular powers in destroying heresy. All these measures and decrees against Albigensian Heresy can be justified through the perspective of the Papacy. First of all, heresy was an attack on peace and civil order. Therefore, by punishing those identified by ecclesiastical authority as heretics, it was possible to legitimize the war against them to maintain stability in south of France. Confiscation of the goods of the heretics would facilitate the weakening of the social and economic power of heretics and their supporters in the society. Secondly, as we mentioned before, the mercenary soldiers found shelter and employment in Languedoc and were regarded as a threat, too. Thus, in the minds of the churchmen, the uprooting of heresy and the eradication of the *routiers* became interrelated for the establishment of orderly and peaceful Christian society. The target was the suppression of the heresy and the submission of the lords who hired the mercenary bands.

It can be argued that particularly by Pope Innocent III’s pontificate, the Papacy started to deal with heresy very efficiently and seriously. Innocent III emphasized that the pope had the right of supremacy over the secular and mundane affairs as well as its control over the organisation of the Church (Sayers, 1994: 91). Through his active policy, as an idea, the notion of the orderly governance of Christian society under the ultimate authority of the pope became more tangible. The claim of Innocent III for an absolute power of the Church had some objectives. The first objective was the reinvigoration of orthodox religion and the removal of insufficient prelates and priests. The second and related issue to the first one was the suppression of heresy posing threat to the public authority of the Church. Thirdly, the establishment of the peaceful government, the respect for ecclesiastical authority and the secular support for the Church were central to his ideal Christian society under the ultimate leadership of the pope. Innocent III thought that the Papacy had to obtain the full power in all matters (Ginther, 2002: 233-235, 233). Practical political and religious motivations of Papacy to establish its authority all over Europe were forcing it to define its position and take strict measures against heresy. The Christian faith could not be retained in a society in which heresy flourished. Lords would act arbitrarily; disorder and petty warfare would reign. In such a society, the Church and its property would be unsafe. Languedoc society had all components, regarded as a threat to the church by Innocent III. Although, it is explicit that Innocent III had a great passion for the Crusading idea, his deal with the problem of heresy in Languedoc was initially cautious. At the first level, he tried to enforce the religious revival in its Orthodox Catholic form through the means of preaching by some of the ascetic religious Orders especially the Cistercians. However, the peaceful methods against the heretics were not very successful. At the second level, Innocent III attempted to provide the cooperation of the secular authorities to end the heresy. He tried to get the support of the King of France to put pressure on the nobility in Languedoc led by Raymond VI of Toulouse. He tried to convince Raymond to quit from protecting and tolerating the heretics (Lambert, 2015: 132-133). But, he failed initially in both of his enterprises. The heresy was still prevalent in the region. It was supported or tolerated by many of the counts and the *routiers* were still prominent in those areas where the heresy was strong. Thus, in all these circumstances, Albigensian Crusade could be justified by Pope Innocent III. Twenty-year military campaign was initiated by Papacy as a result of the murder of Papal legate in 1208 as stated in the Introduction. The reaction of the Pope to this event was the papal bull in October 1208 calling all prelates and nobility for the Crusading campaign. Innocent used whole Crusading mechanism against the heretics. They were to take “sign of the cross” and would thus take on the protection of the Church. Their possessions would also be protected by the church and other privileges would be given to them (Housley, 2001: 28). The military campaign to suppress the heresy started in 1209 by the gathering of many nobles and knights from northern France and Burgundy. With its initial success, reverses, rebellions, and final successes, the Albigensian Crusade ended by the establishment of the control of French Kingdom, and by the introduction of Inquisition, as the engine of repression to eradicate the heresy.

## Conclusion

The political and social setting was very suitable in Languedoc for the growth and development of heresy. Albigensian (Cathar) heresy was getting more and more dangerous to the authority of the Church. The calling of the Crusade was the zenith of long years' efforts of Papacy since the mid-twelfth century to combat the heresy. In essence, the Crusade against heretics does not seem to be a radical departure from the crusading idea. It was just the extension of settled convention. The promise of the Papacy in the Fourth Lateran Council for those participating in the campaigns obviously presents this: "Catholics, who have girded themselves with the cross for the extermination of the heretics, shall enjoy the indulgences and privileges granted to those who go in defense of the Holy Land" (Schroeder, 1937: 236-296).

As Lambert pointed out, when the Crusade started, Innocent III lost the control of the secular princes that he motivated (Lambert, 2015: 133). The lust of power and desire for the total control of the south France led to the extremeness of the northern secular princes. But, the Papacy had to tolerate the heedlessness of them. The repression of heresy was a moral and political obligation for the Papacy. Since it defined and declared itself as the sole religious authority, the Papacy had to defend the basic tenets of Christianity and reassert its universal leadership. For this reason, to fulfil the suppression of heresy, it needed the aid of the secular princes seduced by land and pillage. The Crusade against the Albigensians had many consequences. For the Capetians, the Albigensian Crusade brought the possibility of the growth of the Monarchy. Despite the fact that Catharism survived marginally as an underground heresy after the Crusade, the movement lost totally its power as a great threat to institutional Church. The Church thus could consolidate its power as the sole religious authority and reinforced its control on the daily lives of the people. Crusading discourse was mainly used as a weapon against the loss of both secular and religious authorities. By the final achievement of the destruction of the heresy, the Church and the Capetian Monarchy as allies could shape the conditions for both territorial and ideological integrity.

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