Bodies of Spirit and Bodies of Flesh: The Significance of the Sexual Practices Attributed to Heretics from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth Century

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Modern historiography has stressed that medieval accounts of the sexual activities of deviant groups and individuals should rarely be taken at face value. In his transformative book *Europe's Inner Demons*, Norman Cohn illustrated that the sex-filled nocturnal meetings ascribed to witches, heretics, and similar groups constituted a long-running trope in Western civilization. Cohn tracks accounts of the supposed nighttime meetings of various conspiratorial sects from the ancient world up to the witches' Sabbaths of the early modern period. These meetings often feature sexual promiscuity, incest, demon worship, infanticide, cannibalism, and black magic. Cohn terms this trope "the nocturnal ritual fantasy." In contrast to earlier scholars, who had sought some kernel of truth in these recurrent descriptions, Cohn argued that these activities never actually occurred but rather existed in the minds of learned men as part of a literary tradition.[1]

The literary tradition of "the nocturnal ritual fantasy" helped to shape the portrayals of heresy created by the learned men in whose minds it existed, and these presentations offer a more immediately accessible object of study for the modern historian than the actual activities of those labeled as heretics in the medieval period. In particular, one can track how authorities created, disseminated, and implemented ideas of heresy and heretics in order to further their own sociopolitical and economic agendas.[2] This

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[1] Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonization of Christians in Medieval Christendom*, rev. ed. (London: Pimlico, 1993), 72–73.

[2] Much work in this vein owes a debt to the approach of R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

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approach has some frustrating limitations. It focuses its attention upon a small elite and continues the marginalization of subaltern voices that originate from outside that elite.[3] Limiting as it may be, close attention to these authorities' descriptions can illuminate the meanings attached to certain types of sexual activity, meanings that can still influence or possibly "constrain our own thought" as part of the history of our ideas.[4] While the sexual behaviors ascribed to medieval heretics are almost certainly fantastic, the formulaic accounts of heretics' ritualistic sex are important because they set up a powerful logic regarding the place of certain kinds of sexually active individuals in both the human and the divine orders.

However much descriptions of heretical sex follow set formulas, these formulaic descriptions do change over time, particularly regarding the portrayal of sexual acts between members of the same sex. In these descriptions, the appearance of sex between men and men or women and women in the early twelfth century serves a rhetorical function, as well as reflecting a growing concern with these behaviors in medieval society as a whole.[5] The appearance of homosexual sex as part of the "nocturnal ritual fantasy" in the early twelfth century, as well as the developing descriptions of heterosexual sex within this same fantasy, illustrate the beliefs of learned elites that the deviancy of heretical sects was shared between many different groups. In particular, Jews, heretics, lepers, and those who supposedly engaged in same-sex sexual acts all became targets of a newly persecutory society in this same period. In the accounts left by medieval intellectuals, these enemies become almost expressions of the same common enemy, exhibiting similar traits and threatening Christian society in thematically linked ways.[6] In other words, homosexual sex between heretics emphasized

[3] Given the nature of the sources, distortions that privilege the story of the elites are almost inevitable; nevertheless, a number of scholars have attempted to access the actual beliefs held by supposed heretics. See the essays in, for example, Michael Frassetto, ed., *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages: Essays on the Work of R. I. Moore* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), esp. Frassetto, "Pagans, Heretics, Saracens, and Jews in the Sermons of Ademar of Chabannes," 73–91; and Susan Taylor Snyder, "Cathars, Confraternities, and Civic Religion: The Blurry Border between Heresy and Orthodoxy," 241–51.

[4] I have borrowed this phrasing from David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The History of a Way of Thinking* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2014), 10, 27. While our subjects may appear radically divergent, there is significant overlap in the sources and ideas I have utilized here.

[5] A relationship between persecutions for heresy, sexuality, witchcraft, and so on has long been established; see Vern L. Bullough, "Postscript: Heresy, Witchcraft, and Sexuality," in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1982), 206–17.

[6] The linkage between the persecution of Jews, heretics, lepers, and "homosexuals" was first proposed by R. I. Moore. Although I do not use the noun "homosexual" as a medieval category, in what follows, I develop his essential insight regarding the appearance of same-sex sexual acts in accounts of medieval heresies. Moore argues that "in the essential characteristic which was ascribed to them, a degree of lasciviousness that menaced good Christians, their

themes of gross carnality and barrenness already present in descriptions of ritualized heretical heterosexual sex. These shared themes illustrate the existence in the minds of authorities of a specifically heretical, or non-Christian, kind of sexual morphology in which the non- or quasi-Christian social body expressed its identity through the kind of sex it repeatedly was driven to have.

What follows below is a partial attempt to delineate some of the central aspects of the medieval heretic, as viewed by hostile authorities, as a type with clear mental and physical characteristics expressed through sexual activities. Particular types of sexual behavior, as a heretical sexual morphology, established and expressed traits common to the larger community of human beings who had supposedly turned away from God.[7] At the heart of the argument will be the familiar use in the Middle Ages of the image of the human body as a way to imagine larger corporate identities, such as human polities and the Christian Church. In descriptions of heretics and their sexual deviancy, these corporate identities constituted bodies of knowledge that could be, and indeed were, applied to individuals. Through synecdoche, the actions of individual bodies revealed the unity and interior nature of larger social and spiritual bodies.[8] In this context, the specific types of sexual activity ascribed to certain heretics produced more than simple shock value. These descriptions contained complex messages that marked deviant groups as inversions of the values and identity of the rest of society. Through the lens of human communities as bodies, social bodies are also sexual bodies.

The focus on the sexual activities ascribed to supposed heretics will help to illuminate some of the fundamental assumptions that unite a number of the condemned practices frequently, and often infuriatingly, connected to the category of sodomy and same-sex sexual acts in the Middle Ages. Sodomy, described by Gregory Bredbeck as "a way to encompass a multitude of sins with a minimum of signs," has an unstable meaning as it appears in medieval texts, and it is not the only term used to describe same-sex sexual acts.[9] It can refer to same-sex sexual activities, any nongenerative sex, bestiality, and heresy. If fact, the short phrase "to commit heresy" can refer

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children and even their wives, male homosexuals were obviously and easily assimilated to the stereotype of the common enemy along with the Jews, heretics, and lepers with whom . . . they rapidly became identified in rhetoric and invective" (*The Formation*, 94).

[7] In my use of "morphology," I have drawn from the suggestions offered by David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 41.

[8] This literary function of heretical sex underlines the wide-ranging power of synecdoche in medieval thought and theology. See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 208–16.

[9] Gregory W. Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 13.

to illicit sexual intercourse between members of the same sex or between a person and an animal.[10]

What appears to modern commentators like Foucault as "an utterly confused category" was for many medieval intellectuals a set of associations based upon thematic similarities, foremost of which was a contempt for God and a resulting emersion in carnality.[11] The interpretive filters that combine these seemingly disparate elements are easily missed by modern eyes.[12] The modern categories of heterosexual and homosexual are ahistorical to the Middle Ages, and the logic of human morality and sex from the period follows lines different from common assumptions today. In particular, the division between reproductive and nonreproductive sex acts loomed far larger.[13] The different acts sometimes labeled as sodomy foreground eroticism unmoored from a reproductive teleology.[14] As I will argue below, nongenerative intercourse could serve as an expression of an equally barren spiritual orientation. In my own descriptions of the sex acts imagined for heretical groups, I will use "homosexual" and "heterosexual" as adjectives (never as nouns) to describe the sexes of the participants in sexual acts.[15] I will likewise use words like "deviant" only in relation to the points of view inhabited by the medieval authorities whose works I analyze. Opposition to God, as the essence of deviance in a theological model, frequently united heresy and sexual activity.[16]

The sexual activities educated clerics attributed to heretics function as a way to illustrate that different heretical sects shared a common identity as part of a group opposed to legitimate society. This legitimate society distinguished itself by its promise of spiritual unity within a Christian community, while its enemy articulated itself as an enemy through recurrent and empty acts of physical unity. Descriptions of heretical sex offered by hostile authorities provided an opportunity to illustrate the nature of heretics' errors, and this error most often took the shape of an inability to understand the proper relationship between matter and spirit. This terrible mistake

[10] On the many ways to describe same-sex sexual activities, especially the frequent linguistic connections between these activities and heresy, see Helmut Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400–1600* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 12–13.

[11] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, vol. 1 of *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978), 101.

[12] William E. Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law in Medieval Literature: France and England, 1050–1230* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 13.

[13] Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing unto Others*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2012), 8.

[14] Mark Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 175.

[15] My use of these terms follows the suggestions of Joan Cadden, *Nothing Natural Is Shameful: Sodomy and Science in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 3.

[16] Kim M. Phillips and Barry Reay, *Sex before Sexuality: A Premodern History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 62.

leads these heretical groups into a gross carnality in which they essentially become one unredeemed, material body as expressed through literal acts of sexual union.

In orthodox polemics against supposed heretics, the insistence upon the function of heretical sex as a way to emphasize these heretics' materiality and spiritual emptiness may at first appear contradictory to these heretics' purported theologies, and this contradiction serves the needs of the authorities who described them. These descriptions of what heretics supposedly believed derive almost entirely from the work of orthodox authors, and these are often the very same works that include descriptions of heretics, cannibalism, meetings with demons, and shocking sexual behaviors. While the modern critical impulse might be to parse the possibly true from the obviously false, the authors who wrote these descriptions designed them to be taken as a whole; all the pieces fit.[17] At the core of many descriptions of medieval heresies is what can be called a "dualist" theology.[18] In this heretical schema, the world of matter is irredeemably evil, existing as a kind of prison for the believer, whose goal is to escape the material world in order to enter the realm of pure spirit. The materializing function found in descriptions of heretics' sex emphasizes how heretics are not the spiritual exiles they claim to be; rather, they are hypocrites or deluded fools, choosing

[17] In the current historiography regarding medieval heresy, the very reality of the phenomenon under investigation is a topic of intense debate. Heresy as it reaches us through medieval sources is constructed. For an influential exploration of what that might mean, see Monique Zerner, ed., *Inventer l'hérésie? Discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l'Inquisition* (Nice: Centre d'Études Médiévales, 1998). On one side of the current debate is an approach that questions whether any description of heresy can be taken at all as factual. This approach leads to an emphasis on how much persecution can reveal about the persecutors rather than the persecuted. To quote James Given, "In many cases those whom the rulers of society persecuted were phantoms of their own imagining" ("Chasing Phantoms: Philip IV and the Fantastic," in Frassetto, *Heresy*, 272. On the other side, scholars like Peter Biller ("Through a Glass Darkly: Seeing Medieval Heresy," in *The Medieval World*, ed. Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson [New York: Routledge, 2001], 308–26) insist that real elements of actual religious dissent can be seen through the distortions of the sources, particularly if care is taken to understand how these sources shaped the very reality glimpsed through them.

[18] R. I. Moore has suggested that this "dualist" theology is itself largely a construct of the orthodox learned authors who described it. See *War on Heresy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 207–8. Uwe Brunn, in a very detailed study of the earliest sources for the Cathar heresy (*Des contestataires aux "Cathares" Discours de réforme et propagande antihérétique dans les pays du Rhin et de la Meuse avant l'Inquisition* [Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2006]), argues that the dualist theology of medieval Catharism arose largely as a construct projected onto diverse dissident groups. For doubt regarding the existence of what historians call Cathars, also see Mark Pegg, *The Corruption of Angels: The Great Inquisition of 1245–1246* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 15–19. This argument has not gone unchallenged. For example, Peter Biller, in a review of *The War on Heresy: Faith and Power in Medieval Europe*, Reviews in History (review no. 1546), accessed 24 June 2014, http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1546, calls attention to Moore's reliance on other scholars' conclusions, some of which can be questioned, for his coverage of the thirteenth century onward.

to separate themselves from the body of the church. As it is deployed in the descriptions offered by learned authorities of heretical rituals, the gross physicality of the medieval heretic underscores how these heretics do not understand the proper mystical relationship between spirit and materiality.[19] As a result, they condemn themselves to eternal immersion in fallen matter that will carry them into hell. They can claim to be spiritual, but they are actually fallen bodies joined together as tares for the fire.[20]

I will divide my argument into several sections. First, I will discuss medieval ways of describing collective social identities as shared bodies. The sexual activities attributed to individual heretical bodies illustrate their removal from the licit Christian social body and their subsequent incorporation into the body of the damned. I will next highlight the ways that accounts of the heresy at Orléans in 1022 use this bodily logic, establishing the paradigm for similar accusations in later centuries. From the heresy at Orléans, I will argue that the emergence of accounts of sex between members of the same gender represents a further development of the theme of a shared bodily identity. To make this argument, I will show how Peter Damian's conception of the spiritual and social effects of sodomy offers a remarkable parallel to the spiritual and social functions of ritualized heretical orgies, like those attributed to the heretics at Orléans. This parallel is made explicit in my consideration of later descriptions of nocturnal orgies from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as Guibert of Nogent's account of the heretics he encountered near Soissons, Walter Map's description of the Paterenes, and the Rhineland heretics denounced by Gregory IX in the influential bull *Vox in Rama*. I will conclude my argument by interrogating how the social meanings behind ritual deviant sex function in the accusations against the Templars in the early fourteenth century.

ONE BODY OUT OF MANY

The idea of human unity and its expression through the imagery of a body shaped both the presentation and the reception of the activities of deviant

[19] A condemnation of the material world and all relationships based upon it is sometimes presented as a justification for "libertinism." In short, if all sexual activity is equally sinful, why not try every type? See Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NJ: Cornell University Press, 1972), 127–28. Although Russell takes the sexual license of certain heretics to be an actual outgrowth of their theologies, I find its literary function so conveniently suited to the condemnations of the elite that its existence as described is very unlikely.

[20] This image, found in Matthew 13:24–30, was applied to the fate of human beings at the end of time. Like the wheat at harvest, the good would be saved, while the wicked would burn in hell, just as the tares (weeds) of Jesus's parable would be burned up. See the letter of Wazo of Liege, *Herigeri et Anselmi gesta episcoporum Leodiensium*, II, 62–4, Monumenta Germaniae Historica (hereafter MGH) SS 7:226–28; Walter Wakefield and Austin P. Evans, trans., *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 89–93.

groups. Descriptions of the activities of heretics and sodomites in medieval sources from the eleventh to early fourteenth century deliberately play upon contemporary understandings of the ways in which many different individuals come to share one common identity, or, to put it another way, how many different bodies become one body. These understandings had deep roots in Christian theology. The words of the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:12–18 lay out a principle of bodily unity between deity and believers that exerted a profound influence on ideas of community in the Middle Ages:

> For as the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body, so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and in one Spirit we have all been made to drink. For the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were the eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him.[21]

In this theological model, the corporate identity of the Christian community, imagined through the image of a united body, came about through the action of the Holy Spirit and the rest of the Trinity.[22] Like a fire melting individual fragments of metal that could be cast into one object, God's charity, often translated in a more modern idiom as love, brought individual Christians together into one organism.[23]

As established by the church fathers and maintained throughout the medieval period, charity, the Latin *caritas*, is the virtue by which human beings love God and become united to Him.[24] It is a special, spiritualized

[21] For the translations of biblical verses, I have used the Douay-Rheims 1899 American edition unless otherwise stated.

[22] The prominence to be given to any individual member of the Trinity and whether charity could be identified as the Holy Spirit itself were debated in the Middle Ages. Geertjan Zuijdwegt, "'Utrum caritas sit aliquid creatum in anima': Aquinas on Peter Lombard's Identification of Charity with the Holy Spirit" *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 79 (2012): 39–74.

[23] On the difficulty of translating *caritas*, see Martha G. Newman, *The Boundaries of Charity: Cistercian Culture and Ecclesiastical Reform, 1098–1180* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 261–62n4. *Caritas* may be more familiar to some readers through the Greek term *agape*.

[24] For the biblical foundation, see 1 Corinthians 13. The formulation often cited by medieval authorities was the one offered by Augustine in his *De doctrina christiana* 3.10: "I call charity a movement of the soul towards loving God on account of Himself and towards loving oneself and one's neighbor on account of God" (3.10, ed. Joseph Martin, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 32 [Turnholt: Brepols, 1962], 87). The Latin original

kind of love, distinct from carnal affection, that unites believers and their God. This union with God through caritas entails a unity of believers with each other. As each Christian becomes united to God, they also become one with all other Christians, who are also part of that God. In this fashion, the command to "love your neighbor" (Mark 12:31) can only truly come about through the power of caritas rather than worldly love and its physical expressions. While theologians could, and in fact did, debate exactly how the virtue of caritas arose, there was broad agreement that it was a special virtue, enabled by the action of God in the human soul.[25] Through caritas human beings could love God first and foremost, channeling their affections for the things of this world as tools by which to better comprehend Him rather than goods in and of themselves. Christian community, as it is described in the High Middle Ages, is fundamentally based upon this coidentity of individuals with their God and through their God with each other, brought about through the proper ordering of affections. This spiritual unification through charity into a shared mystical body both complements and repairs a fundamental, primordial, and corporeal unity between all human beings by virtue of their common descent through Adam. The substance of all human bodies descends from the first body, crafted by God. Imagined in this way, humanity is not just one family but also the continuous multiplication of one person. Just as all humans share one common descent and origin for the substance of their bodies through Adam, they also share the burden of the original sin Adam committed.[26] At the moment of birth, all human beings are one in Adam's body and in Adam's sin.[27]

In the idea of human unity through the body of Adam current in the Middle Ages, the Incarnation of God as Christ responds to the fallen unity of humanity in its first parent. The potential for the believer to become

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is "Caritatem uoco motum animi ad fruendum deo propter ipsum et se atque proximo propter deum." See also Thomas Aquinas's paraphrase of Augustine's description of charity from *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum* 1.11: "Charity is a virtue which, when our affections are perfectly ordered, unites us to God, for by it we love Him" (*Summa theologica* 2-2.23.3, s.c., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3023.htm#article3).

[25] For an example of one such debate, see Aquinas's response to Peter Lombard's identification of charity with the Holy Spirit in note 22.

[26] Romans 5:12: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." See also Psalm 50:7 and its common interpretation.

[27] As explained by Augustine in his *Literal Interpretation of Genesis*: "Not in vain, however, does scripture say that even an infant is not free from sin if he has spent one day of life on earth. The Psalmist says, 'In iniquity I was conceived, and in sin my mother nourished me in her womb.' St. Paul says all die in Adam, 'in whom all have sinned'" (*De genesi ad litteram libri duodecim* 6.9, ed. Joseph Zycha, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum [hereafter CSEL] [Prague: F. Tempsky, 1894], 181; John Hammond Taylor, trans., *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* [New York: Newman Press, 1982], 188).

one with Christ, to be incorporated into his body, offers the possibility of salvation to the individual burdened with sin through his or her preexisting coidentity with the first man. In this fashion, Anselm of Canterbury argued that the first man is redeemed through the perfect man, and since all men are one, they can be saved as one.[28] In the dominant theological consensus of the Middle Ages, this unity with Christ is enacted through his literal ingestion by the believer in the form of the Eucharist, which does not add to the body's substance as food but rather promotes a spiritual union.[29] While this first unity of humanity in Adam is fundamentally corporeal, traveling as it does through the body's substance, the salvific unity in Christ is primarily spiritual.[30] As Paul states in 1 Corinthians 12:12, it is the Spirit that unites believers with God as God, rendering the community of human beings into an organism with a body and a soul.

Medieval writers imagined this corporate identity in other ways, for example, as the Ark of Noah or the City of God, and none of these images excludes the other; rather, they are complementary. The images of the Ark and the City make clearer the potential coidentity between the institutional church and the body of Christ on earth. In the influential words of Augustine, quoted by almost every medieval theologian after him, the community of Christians in this world could be taken as the City of God. This city existed as a pilgrim surrounded by another, earthly city. Like the Ark of Noah, those who took their refuge within the church would be saved, while those who remained without in the earthly city would perish.[31] Medieval discussions of group identity routinely described the community joined together by God's caritas through the linked images of City, Ark, institutional church on earth, and common body.

[28] Anselm of Canterbury in *Cur deus homo* 2.21; Francis Schmitt, ed., *S. Anselmi opera omnia* (Rome, 1940), 2:132. See also 1 Corinthians 15:21–22.

[29] While transubstantiation was made official doctrine only at the IV Lateran Council (1215), it was developed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. See Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 24. Furthermore, the idea that Christ is present in substance in the sacrament was an assumption shared before the thirteenth century by clerics and laymen alike for centuries. See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 50–51.

[30] In fact, original sin, especially by the later Middle Ages, was held to be transmitted through the matter of the parent that ultimately originated in Adam. See Hugh of Saint Victor, *De sacramentis Christiane fidei* 1.7.29–31, ed. Rainer Berndt (Aschendorff: Monasterii Westfalorum, 2008), 184–88; Roy J. Deferrari, trans., *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1951), 134–37; Thomas Aquinas, Quodlibet 12. q 21. art. 32, in *Opera omnia* (Parma: Petrus Fiaccadorus, 1859), 9:630. See also Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 138.

[31] Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.26, ed. Bernard Dombart and Alphons Kalb, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 48 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1955), 493. For an overview of conceptions of the church as Ark, see Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale: Les quatre sens de l'écriture* (Paris: Aubier, 1964), 4:41–42.

That these different images equate to the same thing is essential, and this equivalence shapes the responses to those individuals or groups who do not fit within any one of them. Those excluded from the Ark must logically perish.

The world or individuals excluded by these images constitute an important counterpoint to the community of Christian believers. If the Christian community is fundamentally one, then logically those human beings who are, for various reasons, not members of that community are themselves one. In this worldview, non-Christians remain within Adam's unredeemed and fallen body. In other words, if the community of faithful Christians is joined together as one body, the damned are one body as well. Indeed, to Augustine, just as believers are one in Christ's body, the damned are one in the body of the devil: "St. Paul says, 'For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, although they are many, are one body, so it is with Christ.' In a similar manner, the body of the Devil is called the Devil, for he is the head of the body, that is, of the multitude of the wicked, especially of those who fall from heaven, inasmuch as they fall away from Christ and the Church."[32] The body of Christ, here synonymous with the institutional church on earth, has a fallen mirror-image. Where the body of Christ comes into being through the spiritual power of charity, the body of the devil exists as a fundamentally corporeal, or material, unity. In the thought of Augustine, this fallen unity, according to Peter Brown, joined unredeemed humanity together into a "single city of the doomed," expressed through and further propagated by "discordant sexuality."[33] The community of the doomed stood in opposition to the redemptive unity of charity and the clerical ideal of chastity.[34]

Descriptions of the sect supposedly uncovered at Orléans in 1022 reveal how the deviant sexuality attributed to heretics could both facilitate and express this change between corporate identities.[35] After a long period of an apparent lack of interest in heresy, the uncovering of the heresy at Orléans represents a watershed.[36] It set the pattern for what Cohn termed the nocturnal ritual delusion for centuries to come in the Christian West and represents the first recorded medieval instance of burning alive as a pun-

[32] Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* 11.24, ed. Zycha, 356–57; Taylor, *Literal Meaning*, 156.

[33] Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 427.

[34] Glenn Burger makes a similar point regarding medieval identity politics in his analysis of the *Pardoner's Tale*. See *Chaucer's Queer Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 121.

[35] An overview in the English language of the major sources for this event can be found in Michael Frassetto, "The Heresy at Orleans in 1022 in the Writings of Contemporary Churchmen," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 49 (2005): 1–17.

[36] Moore, *The Formation*, 13–16.

ishment for heresy.[37] One of the accusations against the supposed heretics at Orléans in 1022 was indiscriminate and often incestuous heterosexual intercourse. As Paul of Saint-Père de Chartres records:

> They gathered together on certain nights in an assigned house. Each, holding lights in their hands at the beginning of their litany intoned the names of demons until suddenly they saw a demon in the guise of some small animal descend among them. Immediately, as they saw that sight, they would extinguish all the lights and every man who could seized whatever woman came into hand for sex, with no thought given to sin, whether they were their mother or their sister, or a nun. They considered their coitus sacred and an act of worship.[38]

Paul elaborates that if any children result from these unions, they are thrown into a fire "in the manner of the pagans" and burned to ashes. The heretics venerate these ashes just as "Christian religiosity ought to guard the body of Christ, to be given to the sick about to leave this world as the viaticum." Indeed, Paul informs the reader that they call this meal "celestial." These ashes have "such a great power of diabolic deception" in them that whoever eats of them "can scarcely ever after direct the pace of his mind away from that heresy to the way of truth."[39]

Paul's presentation of the sexual activities of the sect at Orléans suggests that, blinded to charity and bereft of the spiritual powers made available to Christians, the heretics are defined by their unity in the shared, fallen body of mankind. They enact this fallen unity by literally joining together into one incestuous body. Where Christians become one through spiritual participation with the divinity, the heretics become one body through "sacred" intercourse. The fruit of this body, in the form of illegitimate offspring, is literally reduced to ashes. The heretics eat these ashes as a kind of communion, underscoring their united body once again.[40] In the place of the sacred meal that spiritually unites a Christian to God, the heretics construct a spiritless feedback loop in which they eat their own increase.[41] This

[37] Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 39; Michael D. Barbezat, "The Fires of Hell and the Burning of Heretics in the Accounts of the Executions at Orleans in 1022," *Journal of Medieval History* 40, no. 4 (2014): 399–420.

[38] Paul of Saint-Père de Chartres, *Gesta synodi Aurelianensis an. MXXII, adversos novos Manichaeos,* in *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. Martin Bouquet (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1874), 10:538. The translation is mine.

[39] Paul, *Gesta synodi Aurelianensis*, 538.

[40] This kind of portrayal of Eucharistic practices among heretics formed one way of responding to criticisms leveled at the weak spots of Eucharistic doctrine. See Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 319–24.

[41] I have borrowed this phrasing from Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, 5.2.191. This play employs the act of cannibalism in much the same way I see it functioning in the accusations made against the Orléans heretics. As David Goldstein argues, "Eating destroys, but

incestuous cannibalism traps them in a depraved sense marked by reduced cognitive powers. The unredeemed bodily unity of the heretics is ultimately inert, infertile, and dead. The heretics become entirely fallen bodies.

What these ideas of community, shared spirituality, and common bodies mean for notions of heresy, especially sodomy as an activity associated with heresy, will become clearer through a consideration of the ways these notions function in the work of the eleventh-century monk, theologian, and reformer Peter Damian. Peter Damian holds a special place in the history of human sexuality in the Middle Ages. Author of the only sustained treatise on sodomy written during the medieval period, his work has been used by modern historians to chart the changing responses to same-sex intercourse, as well as the evolution or invention of the theological category of sodomy, particularly as applied to men's sexual sins.[42] In this argument, Damian's views regarding charity and sexuality establish a logic that carries over into other medieval descriptions of heretical intercourse.

CHARITY, BODILY UNITY, SEX, AND SODOMY IN PETER DAMIAN

Peter Damian outlines a sexual and spiritual typology for the sodomite that parallels exactly the typology attributed to the heretic in descriptions of the nocturnal ritual fantasy. This typology depends upon a spiritual unity between Christian believers that the deviant shatters through his sexual and spiritual actions. The act of sodomy for Damian is like an initiation into the sect of the devil, a kind of anticommunion that performs the same functions as the nocturnal orgies, incest, and cannibalism found in descriptions of heresies like that encountered at Orléans in 1022. Intercourse between men joins them together in Adam's unredeemed body, where they become one with the devil.

Damian viewed the Christian community as a body whose limbs are united by the Holy Spirit. In the course of an argument on why a re-

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produces neither sustenance nor regeneration for eater or eaten" ("The Cook and the Cannibal: *Titus Andronicus* and the New World," *Shakespeare Studies* 37 [2009]: 99).

[42] The treatise is the *Liber Gammorialis,* or the *Book of Gomorrah.* It is also known as his "Letter 31." The Latin text is printed in Peter Damian, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani,* ep. 31, ed. Kurt Reindel (Munich: MGH, 1983), 1:284–330. I have used the English translation in Owen J. Blum, trans., *The Letters of Peter Damian* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 2:3–53. For a foundational account of the work's significance in the history of sexuality, see John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 210–13. Mark D. Jordan claims that Peter was the first to use the abstract noun *sodomia*, inventing it as a theological category (*The Invention of Sodomy,* 29–30). Glenn W. Olsen takes issue with this claim of invention. See his *Of Sodomites, Effeminates, Hermaphrodites, and Androgynes: Sodomy in the Age of Peter Damian* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2011), 33–46. Damian includes the following male sexual sins in his definition of *sodomia*: mutual and solitary masturbation, interfemoral intercourse, and anal intercourse.

cluse can licitly use plural formulae in the divine office even though he is alone, Peter maintains that "the Church of Christ is so joined together by the bond of charity that in many it is one, and in each it is mystically complete."[43] This bond of charity can be imagined as the "fire of the Holy Spirit" by which a vast number of individual persons are fused into one in the church.[44] As long as the spiritual connection with God remains, each individual remains part of the whole, and the whole remains present in each individual, or, as Peter believed: "If therefore we are all the one body of Christ, and even though we seem to be physically distinct we cannot be separated from one another in spirit if we remain in Him."[45] The potential for separation from the body of Christ defines Damian's approach to charity and sexuality.

Just as charity causes the mystical union of the church as the body of Christ, Damian also believed that it constitutes the good that can come from the physical union brought about through licit sexuality. In the course of explaining the rationale behind incest prohibitions, he explains that marriage really exists to extend the bonds of charity from the point where they falter due to humanity's sinful nature in the fallen world.[46] God made all human beings in such a way that they all descend from one body. He did this "to commend charity to men and to join them in the bond of fraternal love." As the human race multiplied, "the flame of love" faltered due to human depravity. The more removed they were from each other in their descent, the less charity they felt for one another. The contract of marriage exists to revive the dwindling flame of "mutual charity."[47] When a man and a woman join together as a husband and wife, they renew the essential unity shared by all human beings. Like a "grappling hook," marriage brings a sinful person into feelings of charity for his fellow human beings just as he was falling away due to a lack of a clear blood relation.[48]

In this formulation, love of neighbor most commonly depends upon blood relationships with those neighbors, or the common corporeal unity

[43] Damian, *Die Briefe*, , ep. 28, 1:255; Blum, *Letters*, 1:262. I have altered Blum's translation of "karitatis" from "love" to "charity."

[44] Damian, *Die Briefe*, ep. 28, 1:256; Blum, *Letters*, 1:263.

[45] Damian, *Die Briefe*, ep. 28, 1:260; Blum, *Letters*, 1:267.

[46] Damian's theology of marriage is drawn from Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.16, 476–79. The emphasis in the argument of expanding charity is in some ways distinctive from the more commonly found Augustinian "three goods of marriage," summarized by James A. Brundage as procreation, social stability, and the provision of a "legitimate sexual outlet to safeguard the married couple against temptations to seek sexual satisfaction in a non-marital situation" ("Carnal Delight: Canonistic Theories of Sexuality," in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*, ed. Stephan Kuttner and Kenneth Pennington, *Monumenta iuris canonici, subsidia* 6 [Vatican City, 1980], 364).

[47] Damian, *Die Briefe*, ep. 19, 1:184.

[48] The Latin word I have translated as "grappling hook" is *uncus* and is intended to conjure a graphic image. It more properly refers to the hook that violently dragged away the bodies of executed criminals.

shared by all descendants of Adam that facilitates the more meaningful spiritual intimacy of charity. When, following the words of the Gospel of Mark, a man and a woman join together and the "two become one flesh" (Mark 10:8), this incorporation of two separate individuals into a shared body is mainly a reminder that they already were essentially one body; in fact, all human beings are one body. This logic of a preexisting biological kinship between all people and a complementary and reparative spiritual kinship promised through Christ naturally leads to questions regarding incest that represent another parallel with the occurrence of incest in accounts of heretical orgies like those attributed to the sect at Orléans.

Damian's description of the purpose of marriage suggests that the horror of incest, at least in part, stems from the occurrence of sexual activity within the preexisting bounds of charity.[49] In the broadest sense, all humans already share a certain level of biological kinship. The affront in incestuous sex would be the overlapping of physical intimacy with spiritual intimacy.[50] The concept of spiritual kinship adds weight to this idea. Canonists and confessors regarded spiritual kinship established between children and their godparents, penitents and confessors, or spiritual sons and spiritual fathers as a form of consanguinity.[51] Members of religious communities were spiritual brothers and sisters. Furthermore, for celibate men and women "as sisters and brothers (or adoptive siblings) in Christ," any and all sexual relations with other Christians could be construed as incestuous.[52] Sex within the boundaries of a specific religious community amplifies this inherent incest. In fact, these categories of spiritual kinship, established through relationships in a community rather than blood or the exchange of blood in sexual relations, point toward what was for Damian a more profound method for the cultivation of charity: the monastery.

[49] Of course, the sin implicit in sexual desire remains cupidity, or a sensuous desire for and a spiritually deadening indulgence in the things of creation rather than a delight in their creator. See Augustine, "But cupidity is a movement of the soul towards loving oneself and one's neighbor and whatever corporeal thing not on account of God" (*De doctrina* 3.10, ed. Martin, 87). The original Latin is "Cupiditatem autem motum animi ad fruendum se et proximo et quolibet corpore non propter deum." In the case of incest, the bonds of charity between believers and their God is invaded and infected by this cupidity. For a similar tension in French romances, see Tracy Adams, *Violent Passions: Managing Love in the Old French Verse Romance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 20.

[50] Saint Boniface jokingly refers to a similar logic, drawn entirely from established principles of orthodox theology, in his questioning of spiritual consanguinity, ep. 32: "For in no way can I understand why in one place spiritual relationship in marital intercourse should be so great a sin, when we are all known to be sons and daughters, brothers and sisters of Christ and of the Church in holy baptism" (quoted in Elizabeth Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2001], 34).

[51] For the origins of spiritual kinship in Roman law, see Archibald, *Incest*, 16; for the development of spiritual kinship, see 30–33.

[52] Marc Shell, "The Want of Incest in the Human Family: Or, Kin and Kind in Christian Thought," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62, no. 3 (1994): 631.

One way of describing the purpose of life in a monastic community was the enlargement and cultivation of charity.[53] This pursuit of mutual charity, or love of God, in the homosocial setting of the monastery was sexless; indeed, given Damian's explanation for the purpose of marriage, it was a more direct and universal way to reach the same goal. The chaste cultivation of charity, he believed, is free from all implication of incest. In short, it is real love without the mess. In his treatise against clerical sodomy, often called the *Liber Gammorialis*, or the *Book of Gomorrah*, it is exactly this mess that monopolizes Damian's attention.

Peter Damian wrote the *Book of Gomorrah,* or his Letter 31, as part of an unsuccessful attempt to persuade Pope Leo IX (1049–54) to take a firmer stand against clerics who were guilty of various kinds of homosexual offenses.[54] Damian believed that clerical homosexual sex was the purest distillation of the objectionable elements in human sexuality, expressing the worst crimes against the unified spiritual body of Christ. In the act of sodomy, sexuality intrudes into the sphere most defined by a preexisting unity through charity, and this penetration of the carnal into the spiritual destroys this spiritual union, literally rending the body of Christ. Damian deplored the incest committed between spiritual fathers and spiritual sons when sex occurs between men in religious orders, and he argued that the guilty parties should be removed forever from these religious orders.[55] In addition to his labeling of sexual relations between spiritual siblings as incest in the *Book of Gomorrah*, Peter denounces the vice of sodomy using language that recalls almost all the images of the united Christian community and its demonic counterpart cited above:

> Unquestionably, this vice, since it surpasses the enormity of all others, is impossible to compare with any other vice. Without fail it brings death to the body and destruction to the soul. It pollutes the flesh, extinguishes the light of the mind, expels the Holy Spirit from the temple of the human heart, and gives entrance to the Devil, the stimulator of lust. It leads to error, totally removes truth from the deluded mind, prepares a trap for the traveller and secures the pit and makes it impossible for the victim to escape. It opens up Hell and closes the gates of paradise, changes a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem into an heir of infernal Babylon, and turns a heavenly star into chaff for the

[53] Interest in the place of charity in the monastic life has spawned a massive historiography, particularly regarding whether a monk should seek God through his relationships with others or in solitude with his God. See Brian Patrick McGuire, *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience, 350–1250* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010); and Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Cistercian Conception of Community," in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 59–81.

[54] On the name of the work, see Olsen, *Of Sodomites*, 203. On the work's lack of success in persuading Leo to follow Peter's suggestions, see 206–8.

[55] Damian, *Die Briefe*, ep. 31, 1:289–90; Blum, *Letters*, 2:8–10.

> eternal fire; it cuts off a member of the Church and hurls him into the depths of the devouring flames of Hell.[56]

The vice of sodomy breaks the spiritual connection between a Christian and his God, a separation that is tantamount to the removal of a limb from a body. The removal of a limb from the body of Christ implies its subsequent attachment to the body of the devil.[57] In Damian's interpretation, the sodomite is quite literally reduced to the level of humanity before the Incarnation. In the Incarnation, Christ expelled the devil from men's hearts, while sodomy, in turn, banishes God and invites the devil back in. Sodomy is an act that by its nature pledges the individual to the devil's service.[58]

The separation of the sodomite from God entails a reduction in mental capacity. As Damian argues, those who commit this vice are abandoned by God into a "depraved sense."[59] They become spiritually blind, trapped in an "interior darkness" in which they are unable to discern right from wrong.[60] Indeed, following Augustinian models for human cognition, in which God helps the individual human being think, the reduction or elimination of God's presence in an individual's mind could make that individual literally bestial.[61] Without God, the greatest feats of human thought and interpretation simply will not function.

The sodomite and his practices represent a metaphorical, spiritual, and physical disease. The spread of this disease equates to a satanic assault upon the shared Christian body.[62] Damian argues that sodomites are afflicted with the "Gomorrian Disease," which, like leprosy, underlies how weighted down and defined by his sin the sodomite becomes.[63] In Damian's exposi-

[56] Damian, *Die Briefe,* ep. 31, 1:309; Blum, *Letters*, 2:30.

[57] In offering this reading of Peter's argument, I have followed the use of the concept by Augustine to signify the society of the damned. There are two human communities: the body of Christ, and the damned, who are one with the devil in damnation.

[58] This logic accounts for what Jordan finds to be "one of the fundamental theological paradoxes" that trouble the theological history of sodomy, namely, that it appears to be a "sin that cannot be repented" (*The Invention of Sodomy*, 66). Also compare with "blasphemy of the Spirit" in Matthew 12:31–32. For a similar analysis along the lines of "demonic possession," see Olsen, *Of Sodomites*, 411.

[59] Damian, *Die Briefe*, ep. 31, 1:292–93. "In reprobum ergo sensum traditi sunt." My translation is different from Blum's. Peter cites Romans 1:26–28 as primary support for God's abandonment of sodomites to a "depraved sense."

[60] Damian, *Die Briefe*, ep. 31, 1:293; Blum, *Letters*, 13.

[61] God's role in human thought in Augustine's philosophy is an enormously complicated issue. See Bruce Bubacz, *St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge: A Contemporary Analysis* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), 137–52; Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine* (New York: Random House, 1960), esp. 74–104.

[62] This idea also recurs in Alan of Lille's *De planctu naturae*. Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law*, 57.

[63] Damian, *Die Briefe,* ep. 31, 1:314–15: "Pestis illa Gomorian." The reference Peter makes to the disease is from 2 Samuel 3:28–29, Leviticus 22:4, and Numbers 5:2.

tion, the sodomite assails the larger body as a communicable pathogen, and his conception of the role of the sodomite within and against the body of Christ directly corresponds to how authorities described other groups who assailed the body of the church.

Homosexual Acts and the Heretical Body

Peter Damian's account of the effect of sodomy on the united Christian body is virtually identical to other contemporary and near-contemporary accounts of the assaults launched by heretics upon that same body. In orthodox polemic, heretics also leave the body of Christ, in the form of the institutional church, and attach themselves to the body of the devil. This removal from the body of Christ entails the expulsion of the Holy Spirit. This reduction, or cessation, of God's participation in the human being renders an individual bestial, enervating his moral sense and powers of discernment. Likewise, just like Damian's sodomite, he seeks to corrupt others, spreading like a disease.[64] The heretic, like the sodomite, tears limbs from the body of Christ.

The appearance of sexual acts between members of the same sex in medieval accounts of nocturnal heresy demonstrates the major themes developed above, particularly separation from the spiritual Christian body and incorporation into the material and spiritually inert body of the damned. In their nongenerative nature, homosexual acts serve as an expression of the essence of heresy. Removed from the spiritual unity promised to Christians, the heretics join together in a fallen body. This fallen body is marked by its deficient mental capability. Where the Christian is spiritual, capable of understanding nuance, subtlety, and allegory, the heretic is literal.[65] Literally engaging in sex as part of community formation is one expression of this literal-mindedness. The fact that this sex occurs between members of the same gender stresses its inert nature, its inability to generate anything but eternal death.

According to Jeffrey Burton Russell, the first appearance of homosexual sex in medieval European accounts of the nocturnal rituals of deviant groups is found in 1114 as part of the autobiography of Guibert of Nogent.[66] In this work, Guibert describes a sect of heretics near Soissons and his own role in their unmasking and destruction. They publicly partake of the Eucharist

[64] R. I. Moore, "Heresy and Disease," in *The Concept of Heresy in the Middle Ages (11th–13th c.): Proceedings of the International Conference, Louvain May 13–16, 1973*, ed. W. Lourdaux and D. Verhelst (Leuven: University Press, 1976), 2–3. For Guibert's ideas regarding sex and the morals of his age, see Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 505–10.

[65] This literal-mindedness is one key point of convergence between medieval stereotypes of heretics and Jews, as I will argue below.

[66] Russell, *Witchcraft*, 94–95. See also Bullough, "Postscript," 212.

but regard it as a regular meal. They condemn marriage and the begetting of offspring through sex. Their condemnation of marital sexuality and its purpose leads them into deviant sexual behavior, including homosexual sex: "And surely, wherever they are scattered throughout the Latin world, you may see men living with women but not under the name of husband and wife, and in such fashion that man does not dwell with woman, male with female, but men are known to lie with men, women with women; for among them it is unlawful for men to approach women. They reject all food that comes from sexual intercourse."[67] Guibert believed that for these heretics, the generation of new human beings is sinful, and their sexuality becomes inert to avoid the act of creation. Instead of multiplying the fallen body of humanity, the heretics invert their sexuality, focusing it inward.[68] As Guibert's description develops, this crooked focus leads toward the literal consumption of the produce of heretical bodies, in which the fallen body they share eats itself, just as in the accusations found in Orléans.

Guibert's account of the details of their nocturnal rites is strikingly similar to the earlier description of the heretics at Orléans by Paul of Saint-Père, despite the fact that it would appear to directly contradict the heretics' supposed aversion to generative sex: "They conduct their meetings in underground vaults or deeply hidden places, without distinction of sex. To a certain woman, lying down with exposed buttocks before the gaze of all, they present lit candles from behind. With these candles soon extinguished, they all shout 'Chaos!' from all sides, and each has sex with that person who comes into hand." Guibert goes on to describe how, if a woman becomes pregnant in this way, the heretics toss the infant from hand to hand through a fire until it dies. They use the ashes of these infants to make bread that they use like the Eucharist. Although the heretics do not eat the flesh of animals born as a result of sexual intercourse, they will eat their own children as long as these children came about as a result of their mutual ceremonial sex. These children furnish them with the ashes that constitute their sacrament, and if anyone eats of this ash-filled bread they can hardly ever "recover their senses from that heresy."[69] Guibert explains that when the heretics are confronted, their attempts at defense illustrate their enervated mental powers and literal-mindedness. Clement, one of two

[67] Guibert of Nogent, *Autobiographie* 3.17, ed. Edmond-René Labande (Paris: Société d'édition "les belles lettres," 1981), 430. This story is prefaced by that of the Judaizing count Jean of Soissons (3.16). For an analysis, see Steven F. Kruger, *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 43–47.

[68] This inversion is in many ways quite similar to the past view of homosexuality as "inversion" in the psychological community. See Andreas de Block and Pieter R. Adriaens, "Pathologizing Sexual Deviance: A History," *Journal of Sex Research* 50, no. 3/4 (2013): 282–83; Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds, *Sexual Inversion: A Critical Edition*, ed. Ivan Crozier (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[69] Guibert of Nogent, *Autobiographie* 3.17, 430.

brothers leading the heresy, tells the bishop of Soissons, "Haven't you read in the gospels, master, where it says, 'Beati eritis'?" In his ignorance of Latin, Clement assumed this verse meant "Blessed are the heretics" rather than "you will be blessed."[70] This joke not only pokes fun at illiterate rustics but also illustrates that the heretical mind is one that is incapable of the correct interpretation of texts.[71] Like common medieval conceptions of the Jewish mind, the heretical mind latches onto whatever it sees or hears uncritically.[72] Heretics regard the Eucharist as what it looks like, bread and wine, because they are blind to its spiritual elements. The recurrent and almost ubiquitous emphasis on the literal-mindedness of non-Christians in medieval polemic suggests that proper biblical exegesis is a spiritual exercise that those outside the body of Christ simply cannot perform well. The "depraved sense" of the heretic or sodomite is ill-suited to it.

In contrast to Guibert's accusations of homosexual conduct, many published editions and translations make the description of the nocturnal orgy explicitly heterosexual, and this apparent contradiction may depend on the substitution of the Latin word *persona* (person) for *prima* (presumably, first woman) in more recent editions.[73] The Benton translation, used in so many university courses, has no indication of homosexual activities in the description of the orgy.[74] Whatever editorial debates may surround Guibert's passage, homosexual sex becomes part of the regular accusations leveled against heretical groups after 1114, and this text indicates the functions such accusations would perform.

Medieval polemics such as Guibert's construct heretical sexuality as a mockery of Christian charity. The familiar elements of the heretical body—indiscriminate, deviant sex, the reduction of cognitive powers illustrative

[70] Luke 6:22: "Beati eritis cum vos oderint homines." For the joke to work, it is important to remember that the *h* in "heretic" (*heretici*) would not be strongly pronounced; in fact, it would sound much like *eritis*.

[71] Heretics' disastrous misunderstanding of bits of the biblical text used in the mass accompanies many notable episodes of heresy. For example, Eon of the Star took "per Eum venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos" as "through Eon [per Eon] who will come . . ." and so concluded that he was the Son of God. Multiple sources describe how, thus deluded, he rampaged with demonic help through Brittany. The various sources for Eon of the Star are discussed in Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Dissent and Reform in the Early Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 288–89n23; R. I. Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), 68–71.

[72] Jeremy Cohen has termed the use of Jews as foils to Christian exegetical methods "the hermeneutic Jew." See his *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 2–3.

[73] Compare Georges Bourgin, ed., *Guibert de Nogent: Histoire de sa vie* (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, 1907), 213. Wakefield and Evans, in their translation of this passage (*Heresies*, 674n5), recognize that there is an issue with the meaning of the text. I have been unable to consult the manuscripts on which these editions are based, and I have followed the most recent Labande edition.

[74] John F. Benton, *Self and Society in Medieval France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 213.

of the banishment of the Holy Spirit, and cannibalism—reappear in this account, but the deviant sex has become even more indiscriminate, incorporating homosexual activities. This homosexual sex is of a kind with the heretics' ritual cannibalism; both activities serve the same function. These kinds of portrayals depict heretics as lonely, fallen bodies, removed from the spiritual body of the Christian Church, indulging in empty pleasures, and literally eating themselves up. While the charitable body of Christ is infinitely fertile in the sense of eternal life, the heretical body is defined by and productive of only death.

Walter Map's description of the beliefs and behaviors attributed to a sect called the Publicans or the Paterenes underlines how a medieval author could see or construct the indiscriminate and often bisexual sexual behavior of heretics as a mockery of Christian charity.[75] Writing in the early 1180s, Map describes this group as not believing in the Eucharist and argues that while men and women live together, they have no children. At their meetings, which Map calls "synagogues," a cat descends by a rope, and they kiss it, often on the anus. As if kissing this cat were a license, "each seizes the nearest man or woman and they join together as much as each can endure the mockery. Their masters also say and teach their novices that it is perfect charity to either perform or endure (pati) what a brother or sister desires, as if in turn extinguishing each other's fires, and it is from enduring (paciendo) that they are called Paterini."[76] With his facility for wit and satire, Map quite directly labels all the heretics as bottoms.[77] In the place of the suffering of martyrs or Christ himself, the heretics suffer sexual penetration as an act of mutual charity between them. This sexuality as mockery of charity naturally has no regard for bodily sex. It is mutual and freely shared between the heretics just as spiritual charity, or love, is ideally shared between all members of the church: man or woman, high or low.[78]

[75] Publicans, or *publicani,* served as a general description for heretic in the medieval West (Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1991], 723n3). The Paterines, or Patarenes, were originally a lay reform movement in Milan concerned with clerical corruption who enjoyed the support of Gregory VII. Helped by ready associations with Donatism, the term *paterene* became a technical term applied to Italian heretics by the time of the Third Lateran Council (1179) and the bull *Ad abolendam* (1184) (Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation,* 3rd ed. [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002], 44–45, 89). In practice, Publican, Paterene, and Cathar became synonymous (Moore, *War on Heresy*, 207).

[76] Walter Map, *De nugis curialium* 1.30, ed. M. R. James (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 120.

[77] The verb *patior*, "to suffer" or "to endure," was the technical term for the passive role (the one penetrated) in intercourse. See J. N. Adams, ed., *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 189–90.

[78] Both sexes are the same here, just as in the Pauline epistle describing the oneness of all believers in Christ: "There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free: there is nether male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

In the influential bull *Vox in Rama*, Gregory IX foregrounds the sexual activities of heretics as part of the formation of their community. Gregory issued the bull in June 1233 in response to reports emanating from the circle of the infamous inquisitor Conrad of Marburg regarding a group labeled the Luciferians. Conrad bears the reputation of a "judge without mercy," far too eager to condemn uncounted numbers of the poor and socially vulnerable to the flames.[79] Before his murder at the hands of German nobles, after he had fatefully chosen to expand the circle of his victims into the higher social echelons, the vague shape of the heresy he and many contemporaries believed he faced was communicated to the pope.[80] The resulting bull, *Vox in Rama*, would go on to exert a strong influence on future accusations against supposed heretical groups, including the Knights Templar and witches.[81]

The bull begins with the description of heresy as an external attack by the devil upon the church as the bride of Christ. Once, the devil had dwelt in the "carnal hearts of men," but God had pulled out this "twisting serpent" just as a midwife pulls a child from its mother. Unable to continue his work from within, the devil now raises his assaults from without. The heresy in the Rhineland is just such a "persecution of the Church."[82] This persecution demands a response for the public good. The heretics' ceremonies illustrate their place with the devil as part of a besieging force outside the church and true Christian society. "Novices" join the sect through a series of rituals that render them spiritually deadened and literally poisonous. They begin by kissing toads, thought to be poisonous in the Middle Ages and emblematic of both sexuality and physical decay.[83] After trading

[79] This characterization of Conrad is offered by the *Annales Wormatienses*, MGH, SS 17:39. It is likely a reference to James 2:13, "For judgement without mercy to him that hath not done mercy. And mercy exalteth itself above judgment." The conclusion would be that Conrad's methods merited his downfall.

[80] Many of the attributes found in the chronicle accounts of Conrad's activities resonate with Gregory's letters, in particular the presence of a pallid man, demonic cats, and deviant sex (including same-sex desire). Despite frequent condemnations of Conrad's methods, the accounts almost universally agree that he faced a real heretical sect. For the cat and pallid man, etc., see *Gesta treverorum continuata*, ed. G. Waitz, MGH, SS 24:400–402. For the remarkable appearance of homosexual desire in the story of the heresy's origin, see *Chronica Albrici monachi Trium Fontium a monacho novi monasterii Hoiensis interpolata*, ed. Paul Scheffer-Boichorst, MGH SS 23:931–32.

[81] Malcolm Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 204; Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 48–50.

[82] Gregory IX, *Vox in Rama*, ed. Carolus Rodenberg, MGH ep. saec. XIII, I, 537 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1883), 432. The reference to the "obstetric hand" by which the serpent is removed comes from Job 26:13.

[83] On the toad as a poisonous agent of evil associated with the devil, see Mary E. Robbins, "The Truculent Toad in the Middle Ages," in *Animals in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Nona C. Flores (New York: Garland, 1996), 25–47. On the sexual connotations of medieval toads, see Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "The Strange Case of Ermine de Reims (c. 1347–1396): A Medieval Woman between Demons and Saints," *Speculum* 85,

copious amounts of saliva with the toad, the novice next kisses an emaciated, pallid man whose skin is cold to the touch. After this kiss, "all memory of the Catholic faith" leaves the prospective heretic. Next, the heretics share a meal. After their meal is finished, a black cat appears, and they all take turns kissing its hindquarters. This escalating series of obscene kisses cumulates in an orgy that bears elements of the Christian liturgy, particularly the Litany of the Saints:

> "Forgive us," says the master, and the one next to him repeats this, a third responding and saying, "We know master" and a fourth says, "And we must obey." And when these things have been done, the candles are extinguished and they proceed to the most foul work of luxury, with no distinction between those who are strangers and those who are related. If by chance those of the virile sex surpass the number of women, handed into ignominious passions and burning in turn in their desires, men commit indecency with men. Similarly, women also change their natural use, which is against nature, doing this very thing damnably among themselves.[84]

In this description, it appears that the heretics must be sexual with one another and that this necessity for sexual congress leads to same-sex sexual acts. This communion of sex joins the Luciferians together into one poisonous body, exchanging bodily fluids with each other just as they had exchanged saliva with the poisonous toad.

Gregory argues that the malignant foreign body of the heretics demands a medical response. Their pestilence is like an infection, and once an infection has repelled lighter cures, "recourse should be had to stronger remedies . . . and iron and flame should be applied to the wounds, which do not respond to the medicine of poultices, lest they attract a pure part to putrid, amputated flesh."[85] The logic of heretics' separation from and hostility to the larger social body here becomes an incitement to violence.

The descriptions in this bull are rich in the imagery of shared and blurring bodies, as well as the place and value of sexual activity in relation to these bodies. In the first, we have the union, or promised union, between the church, of which all Christians are members, and its God. This union is spiritual, in which Christ acts as the spiritual bridegroom of this church and, by extension, all its individual believers. The believers' espousal to Christ arose from God's removal of the devil from inside the heart of humanity in an action likened to the activity of a midwife. In the place of a spiritual unity, the heretics literally join together in an incestuous and indiscriminately sexual body. This body centers around an attempt

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no. 2 (2010): 345–47; Christine Ruhrberg, *Der literarische Körper der Heiligen: Leben und Viten der Christina von Stommeln (1242–1312)* (Tübingen: Francke, 1995), 369.

[84] Gregory IX, *Vox in Rama* 433.

[85] Gregory IX, *Vox in Rama* 434.

to invite the devil back in, like the reincorporation of the decayed matter of a stillbirth.

Top-Down Synecdoche in the Prosecution of the Templars

I will conclude this selective survey with an example of how the logic examined above applied on an international scale in the trials of the Templars. This logic provided a guideline for key elements in the accusations made against the order, as well as the confessions extracted from its members. In making this connection, I have deliberately omitted a large amount of material. The time between *Vox in Rama* and the trials of the Templars saw not only the continuation of the kinds of accusations I have followed but also their significant expansion and elaboration. Accusations of "sodomy," or sex that marked its participants as deviant in very specific ways, as well as heresy and sorcery, however defined, became part of the regular arsenal of accusations levied in political disputes and jurisdictional polemics.[86] Likewise, the supposed nocturnal orgies of heretical sects did not disappear; descriptions of this deviant behavior continued to echo and refine the patterns examined above.[87]

The sexual misconduct attributed to the Templars, particularly the prevalence of sodomy within the order, constitutes one of the most well known examples of the intersection between heresy and sexual deviancy in the Middle Ages. The Templars were a military order of celibate knights formed in the early twelfth century to protect the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. In the following decades, the order become one of the pillars of Christian Europe and enormously rich. This wealth made the order a target for Philip IV, "the Fair," of France, who destroyed the Templars and used their confiscated wealth to pay his debts. By the time of the arrest of the Templars in 1307, specific types of sodomy proved to be a very efficient and useful type of accusation for Philip the Fair's propaganda machine. Such accusations were something of a specialty for Philip, who regularly leveled allegations of sodomy, heresy, and diabolism against his enemies, including even a pope.[88] As an organization of all-male celibate warriors, the Templars were particularly vulnerable to accusations of homosexual sex, and their vulnerability to these charges became especially acute after they ceased to demonstrate their prowess on the battlefield following their expulsion from

[86] James A. Brundage, "The Politics of Sodomy: Rex v. Pons Hugh de Ampurias (1311)," in *Sex in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Joyce Salisbury (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991), 239–46.

[87] See, for example, the descriptions provided by Peter Biller in "Bernard Gui, Sex and Luciferanism," in *Praedicatores, Inquisitores, I: The Dominicans and the Medieval Inquisition. Acts of the First International Seminar on the Dominicans and the Inquisition, 23–25 February 2002*, ed. Wolfram Hoyer (Rome: Insituto Storico Domenicano, 2004), 455–70.

[88] Given, "Chasing Phantoms," 281. The pope was Boniface VIII, whom Philip ordered seized at Anagni in 1303.

the Holy Land in 1291.[89] Against an order of warrior monks, the accusation of sodomy was a particularly effective way to sway public opinion, because such sexual activity represented both a corruption of the spiritual brotherhood of the monastery and the abnegation of the hypermasculine persona of the professional warrior.[90]

The accusations against the Templars for alleged sexual misconduct continue many of the themes developed so far. The sexual deviancy attributed to them is but one part of their alleged larger heretical complex and ultimate allegiance to the devil rather than to God. Yet these accusations also deviated from the pattern traced thus far. Although the point of view of most of the sources remains that of a hostile authority, and many of the charges against the Templars focus on their rituals of initiation as enactments of the nocturnal ritual stereotype, a new level of nuance emerged: through the trial documents and depositions, we can track in some detail how authorities could apply accusations of heretical belief and its associated sexual misconduct to an actual group of people and how individuals within this group attempted to resist that label. Through the questioning of the Templars, various authorities attempted to reify their beliefs regarding the behavior of heretics, and there is ample evidence to suggest that torture was often applied until an individual confected a story that was close enough to the stereotype to satisfy the interrogator.[91]

The accusations against the Templars were largely drawn up by clerks in service to Philip the Fair. The charges were broken down into 127 articles, which can be summarized under seven major headings.[92] It was alleged that at their reception into the order new Templars were made to deny Christ, the Virgin, and the saints and then spit on a cross. They were also accused

[89] Such marshal activities constituted a method of asserting their masculinity despite their celibacy. Compared to the Teutonic Knights, who remained martially active, the Templars lost this support. Ruth Mazo Karras, "Knighthood, Compulsory Heterosexuality, and Sodomy," in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, ed. Mathew Kuefler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 282.

[90] The charges against the Templars represent the fruit of deep suspicions of intimate male-male relationships that began in the twelfth century. Mathew Kuefler, "Male Friendship and the Suspicion of Sodomy in Twelfth-Century France," in Kuefler, *The Boswell Thesis*, 179–203. On the importance of avoiding feminization for a knight, see Karras, "Knighthood," 274.

[91] In her survey of the evidence regarding sodomy and the Templars, Anne Gilmour-Bryson finds a strong correlation between the use of torture and confessions of guilt. See her "Sodomy and the Knights Templar," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 7, no. 2 (1996): 153. Malcolm Barber likewise suggests that torture played a central role in obtaining confessions (*The Trial*, 71, 120, 135). Some of the Templars directly referenced the torture they had endured, including Ponsard of Gizy, who stated that his interrogators would be able to force him to say anything they wanted. See M. [Jules] Michelet, *Procès des Templiers* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1841), 36–39. For the common procedures surrounding torture (not all of which were followed in the Templar case), see Edward Peters, *Torture* (Oxford: Basil Blackwood, 1985), 56–58.

[92] I have condensed the fuller description of the charges found in Barber, *The Trial*, 202.

of worshiping idols, denying the sacraments, believing that laymen could grant absolution for sins, and indulging in obscene kisses, encouraging sodomy as a "point" or *punctus* of the order. The sixth and seventh charges alleged that the Templars sought unfair financial gain and that they held their meetings in secret and either imprisoned or murdered those who threatened that secrecy. This list of charges demonstrates that the clerks were drawing upon the long textual history of heretical behavior, including the type of nocturnal ritual described by Gregory IX in *Vox in Rama* and its antecedents.[93] This model of heretical depravity was taken from these textual sources and then inscribed on living men. This inscription often took the form of torture, including some of the same practices called today "enhanced interrogation." The interrogators applied these techniques until the victim acquiesced to the truth that the interrogator was expecting.[94] If we follow Elaine Scarry in understanding torture as involving a transformation of body into voice, then the case of the Templars' torture can be described as an attempt to describe the nature and proclivities of shared bodies as part of the "insignia of power."[95] In this instance, authority took a truth from texts that rendered the nature and activities of both shared and individual heretical bodies an object of knowledge and made this truth manifest; but this reification did not go uncontested.[96]

Where a knowledge of the textual tradition of heretical stereotypes and a knowledge of torture were not joined together, confessions were not forthcoming. In fact, in places like England, Ireland, Spain, and Cyprus, where torture was not usually practiced, virtually no confessions were obtained at all.[97] In France, on the other hand, almost all those questioned confessed to some version of the charges. Contemporaries were well aware that this kind of discrepancy was, at least in part, due to the proficiency of French torturers. In England, when the torture reluctantly conducted by its native sons produced no useful confessions, frustrated officials suggested that the prisoners should be sent to the French experts.[98] The artful torture

[93] Barber in particular sees the charges as the work of William of Nogaret (*The Trial*, 204). See also Barber, "Propaganda in the Middle Ages: The Charges against the Templars," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 17 (1973): 44.

[94] The use of sexualized social bodies in the Templar interrogations provides an excellent example of the use of torture to create "an other in whom truth resides, from whom truth can be extracted" (Page DuBois, *Torture and Truth* [New York: Routledge, 1991], 157).

[95] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and the Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 45.

[96] In this description I have been loosely inspired by the arguments of Brian Stock regarding a "universe of communications governed by texts" (*The Implications of Literacy,* 3) and Michel Foucault's conception of the role of authority in the creation of the individual (*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: Pantheon Books, 1977], 29–30), although I do not believe they would see their arguments in mine.

[97] Gilmour-Bryson, "Sodomy," 153–54.

[98] Helen J. Nicholson, ed., *The Proceedings against the Templars in the British Isles* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), xxiv.

of individual bodies appears to have played an indispensable role in reifying the place of these individual bodies within larger corporate ones.

Even where torture was expertly applied, its victims attempted to resist fully conforming to the type of the heretic, and this resistance is especially prominent regarding heresy's sexual attributes. For example, a Templar would often confess that he was instructed to deny Christ and spit upon a cross but that he merely spoke the words without really meaning them, using the Latin formula *ore non corde* (with the mouth, not in the heart) and then spitting next to the cross but not upon it. Likewise, almost all Templars who confessed to the charges said that they had been instructed that they could commit sodomy with others in the order but that they had never used this privilege. In fact, they often testified that they had resisted their brothers' attempts to perform these acts with them.[99] In short, individual Templars' defense often took the shape of an insistence on the empty actions of bodies out of sync with the mind or soul.

For example, Reginald Bergeron, a former serving brother, described his initiation to the papal commissioners at Paris in February 1310 in the following terms. Although he was married, his initiators insisted that he could still join the order and continue to live with his wife. After repeated reassurances, Reginald agreed to join the order and swore a perfectly innocuous oath, pledging chastity, obedience, and poverty and that he would follow the rules and customs of the order, serve the Holy Land, and refrain from cohabitating with a woman, among other things. Although these vows seem harmless enough, in light of the brothers' promise to allow him to live with his wife, a dangerous hypocrisy was already in the air. Following the vows, he kissed his receptor on the mouth in the Kiss of Peace, and the group retired to a small room next to the chapel. Here, Reginald admitted to his torturers, events took a dark turn. His receptor insisted that he now follow several "points of the order" and deny God and spit upon a cross. Reginald insisted that he denied God "with his mouth, not in his heart" (*ore non corde*), and that he spat next to the cross. Furthermore, the cross had no image of Jesus. His receptor then explained how the brothers can engage in sex with one another as another point of the order. The record of Reginald's interrogation describes his final admission: "Afterward, the said receptor said to them that if they were moved by the heat of nature, they could join carnally in turn one with another. The witness, however, neither did this nor was it asked of him."[100] Reginald then described how the receptor demanded that the novices kiss him on his anus, and he admits that after a brief protest he did kiss his receptor "on or next to his anus."

It is significant that these forced confessions describe an eruption of heretical practices that begins after the Kiss of Peace and that the perversions cumulate in the literal inversion of this kiss. In the Middle Ages, the Kiss

[99] Gilmour-Bryson, "Sodomy," 171.
[100] Michelet, *Procès*, 591.

of Peace was a perfectly legitimate and essential form of socially acceptable intimacy between men. For the apostle Paul, the kiss had served an essential function, delineating the boundaries of the Christian community, acting as a conduit for the Holy Spirit, and serving as a "sign of the mystical reality of the Church as the body of Christ."[101] As a symbol of Christian unity, the kiss functioned as an ideal ritual action that underscored the making of peace between enemies, oaths between lord and vassal, and agreements between friends.[102] Enacting and strengthening the mutual love or caritas shared between different people, this kiss was spiritual.[103] Its inversion in the accusations against the Templars represents an inversion of this spirituality; it is another example of the ways that medieval polemics depicted heretics parodying the spiritual bonds that united Christian society by trying to materialize them.

This sequence of events illustrates the essential themes developed in descriptions of heretics' initiations, as well as Reginald's repeated attempts to emphasize that he imperfectly fits these stereotypes. His denial of God was not a true rejection, Reginald insisted, and in his heart he remained a true Christian. Hidden in the simple formula *ore non corde*, which appears many times in the Templars' depositions, is the attempted insistence that while he was a member of an order opposed to the body of Christ, Reginald himself never left that body nor became malignant against it. When tested, Reginald refused to carry out his initiator's ritual actions with sincerity, insisting, for example, that he spat next to the cross, not on it. When it comes to sex, he was informed of the practice of indiscriminate sexuality within the order, or what has been termed above the strong tendency of the heretical corporate body to join together through literal sex, but he refused to admit that he had ever engaged in this practice. His insistence that he had refused to deny Christ in his heart and that he had not engaged in sex could be part of an attempt to convince his interrogators that he remained only partially incorporated into a corporate body that was opposed to Christianity. He described his initiation as a kind of unconsummated marriage. Reginald's deposition constructs for him a liminal position somewhere between heretic and good Catholic as part of a strategy to facilitate his reincorporation.

Another deposition in which the Templars' deviant sexual practices take on a larger role once again illustrates how forced confessions about the sexual

[101] Nicolas James Perella, *The Kiss Sacred and Profane: An Interpretive History of Kiss Symbolism and Related Religio-Erotic Themes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 13. See Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:11–12, 1 Thessalonians 5:26, 1 Peter 5:14.

[102] Hanna Vollrath, "The Kiss of Peace," in *Peace Treaties and International Law in European History: From the Late Middle Ages to World War One*, ed. Randall Lesaffer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 162–83.

[103] The links between the kiss and caritas were strong in the period of the Templar proceedings. See Kiril Petkov, *The Kiss of Peace: Ritual, Self, and Society in the High and Late Medieval West* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 126–27.

activity of heretics were used to underscore their perversion of the regular bonds between individuals constituting community. In the description of a Templar initiation found in the deposition of Stephen of Troyes taken at Poitiers in 1308, one finds the usual progression of activities; however, Stephen's description of the role of sodomy in the order sounds a great deal like the sexual obligations found in a marriage:

> Regarding sodomy, he said that on a certain day Brother Paul of Valleceli seized him and wanted to corrupt and pollute him with that foul vice, but he himself manfully refused out of horror for that sin. He [Paul] struck him in the jaw and broke three teeth and the deformity and fracture was apparent on his mouth. And the said brother [Paul] said to him, "You do not know the points of the Order. This is one of the points: that a brother ought not to deny himself to a brother." And regarding this injury the witness himself laid out the disagreement to the said Visitor [Hugh of Pairaud], who responded that brother [Paul] had done well, because he ought not to deny himself to brothers in such a work.[104]

The body of an individual Templar here appears as an object to be shared with all his brethren. Stephen of Troyes's description of the Templars' mutual sexual obligations is reminiscent of the marriage debt. The incorporation of an individual into the Templar order literally blends his body with that of his brethren like a licit marriage combines a wife and husband into one body.

The marriage debt describes the mutual sexual obligations between husband and wife.[105] If one partner demanded intercourse, the other was obliged to agree. While fornication outside marriage was a mortal sin, demanding the debt from one's licit partner was venial, and paying the debt out of obligation was blameless.[106] In particular, the marriage debt was a safeguard against one partner succumbing to lust and engaging in sexual activity with other partners.[107] In fact, one partner might have to render the debt even on holy days and in holy places if it was demanded of her or him.[108] The logic of the marriage debt depends upon the fact that each partner no longer held complete control over his or her own body because the two spouses had been joined into one body.

The mutual sexual obligation of the marriage debt adds new significance to the mutual and obligatory sexual activities attributed to the Templars and other heretics. The Templars could supposedly join together if moved

[104] Heinrich Finke, ed., *Papsttum und Untergang des Templerordens*, *Band II: Quellen* (Münster: Druck und Verlag der Aschendorffschen Buchhandlung, 1907), 336.

[105] James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 242.

[106] Elizabeth M. Makowski, "The Conjugal Debt and Medieval Canon Law," *Journal of Medieval History* 3, no. 2 (1977): 100–103.

[107] For the origins of this conception of the marital debt, see 1 Corinthians 7:1–2, 3–6.

[108] Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*, 169.

by "the heat of nature," and one brother ought not to refuse another. The models of heretical sex employed by King Philip's advisors also carry these connotations within them. Long before Philip, Walter Map's insistence that heretics' "perfect charity" amounted to each "in turn extinguishing each other's fires" plays deliberately upon the understanding of sexual activities between husband and wife. When applied to heretics, this play amounts to a parody or horrendous misreading of licit practices and their spiritual significance. Joined together into one carnal body, heretics cannot deny themselves sexually to one another.

Conclusion

Hostile medieval polemics attributed a sexual morphology to heretics that illustrated what learned authorities took to be essential elements of their character. This essential character was spiritually inert and self-consuming. The social body constituted by mainstream Christians was a union of many members brought about through the spiritual power of caritas, which promised both a spiritual and an eventual material redemption. Those who had no place within the body of Christ as institutional church and Christian society were joined together in one body that distinguished itself through the absence of a redeeming spiritual unity. This conception of these outsiders as constituting the body of the devil is reflected in the sexual morphology attributed to them. The sexual acts attributed to heretics emphasize their spiritual infertility through homosexual intercourse and the literal cannibalism of the fruits of heterosexual intercourse. The inversion at the heart of a heretic's identity reflected how they had turned away from the spiritual unity of God and believer for an eternal immersion in a fallen understanding and love of matter.

The messages found within hostile descriptions of heretical sexual acts offer a compelling lens through which to view the origin and function of accusations of same-sex intercourse in accounts of medieval heresies. While same-sex sexual acts constitute only one part of the total sexual activities attributed to these heretical groups, homosexual sex pointedly expresses central attributes of the heretical nature. In these accusations, homosexual sex acts are another example of the synecdoche that determines how medieval authorities shaped the presentation of deviant groups and their activities.[109] This logic still remains in the English language today through the terms "bugger" and "buggery." These words owe their origin to the Latin and old French for Bulgarian, because many of the great twelfth- and thirteenth-century heresies supposedly originated in Bulgaria.[110] This

[109] Such a logic also supports the use of "heresy" as a designation for "sodomy" in addition to religious unorthodoxy in German. See Puff, *Sodomy*, 13–14.

[110] Warren Johansson and William A. Percy, "Homosexuality," in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (New York: Garland, 2000), 158.

apparent linguistic conflation of heresy and homosexual sex illustrates the profound symbolic relationship between the two.

The larger themes in what has been termed the "nocturnal ritual delusion," as well as what Warren Johansson called the "sodomy delusion," reference a linked set of concepts.[111] Both delusions suggest that the enemies of licit society gather together and practice strange rituals as part of a grand conspiracy against the very values that create traditional society. The role of community and its conception as shared bodies can help to explain how medieval individuals could have viewed some of the central antinomies that scholars often find encoded into medieval discussions of homosexual sex. In the theological model of medieval society that influenced the hostile presentation of heretics in polemic, without the spiritual unity of charity, human beings are essentially one body, trapped in death. This body engages in many ultimately fruitless kinds of self-expression, among which homosexual sex plays its part. The sex acts associated with the "nocturnal ritual delusion" are one particularly condensed opportunity for authorities to imagine the self-expression of the unredeemed collective body of the damned.

While the actual groups labeled as heretics who stand behind the individual sources cited above vary widely in place and time, remarkable continuities testify to the long-lasting connections within learned authorities' conceptions of heresy rather than to an actual continuity in the beliefs of these groups. Attention to the messages and meanings developed by these authorities is an essential step toward addressing any questions regarding the truth value behind these accusations. If any true accounts of dissident groups do in fact lie beneath polemical distortions, the agendas and messages conveyed by these distortions must be fully acknowledged and understood. Only then can we address the very open question of what if anything can be separated from them.

In fact, the very places and times that have generated the sources examined above present opportunities to study how the body of Christ could function as a "highly contested area" for the signification of the social order.[112] While I have focused my argument on the logic found within the voice of hostile authorities, more study can and should be done to illuminate how these authorities responded to particular attempts to reinterpret or utilize ideas of society as a sanctified body. Since the body of Christ could function as a "vital cultural resource" for the establishment of legitimacy, it provides an ideal object of study for contesting ideals for human relationships, be they symbolic, ideological, political, or sexual.[113] The ways that particular types of sexual activity within shared bodies become vehicles for

[111] Johansson and Percy, "Homosexuality," 172.

[112] Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture, and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993), 23.

[113] Beckwith, *Christ's Body*, 117.

the conveyance of specific symbolic messages constitute an important part of the cultural heritage of the Middle Ages to the present day.

In fact, the long shadow of these accusations within the history of ideas is significant. While this argument has focused on the logic beneath accounts of heretics' sexual activities, this very logic is directly relevant and recurrently almost identical to the portrayals of other supposedly deviant groups united in the same "social-historical constellation," including Muslims, pagans, and Jews.[114] This likeness is particularly apparent in medieval discourses regarding Jews and Jewishness. In fact, my close attention to how these sources shape their heretical subjects according to the theological ideals of their authors largely replicates an important point made by Steven Kruger regarding the portrayals of medieval Jews. In both cases, the actual bodies of the Jew or the heretic appear "spectral" compared to the ideological messages they convey. These messages, in particular, emphasize the self-realization of traditional Christianity in the face of unredeemed carnality. Both the Jew and the heretic, as portrayed above, are figures "conjured up only to be put to rest."[115]

The logic of licit community and its opposition, interrogated above, still structure modern thinking through the utilization of categories of identity constituted as negative images.[116] Even some conceptions of queer identity embrace a logic of nongenerative corporeality that aligns with remarkable ease to medieval theologians' conceptions of heretical sexual activity.[117] Many parallels between the logic outlined in these sources and modern legislation have arisen during the composition of this argument. In Nigeria, Uganda, Russia, Kansas, and Arizona, legislators have made attempts to differentiate and criminalize homosexual behavior and even discussion of such behavior. [118] These efforts in such disparate places all appeal to a logic that places present homosexuals in a position not terribly dissimilar

[114] Kruger, *The Spectral Jew*, 69.

[115] Steven F. Kruger, "The Spectral Jew," *New Medieval Literatures* 2 (1998): 21. My account of the work heretical sex performed in the workshops of "Western thought" and the suggestions of its current relevance I place here are reminiscent of David Nirenberg's recent work on anti-Judaism, particularly the use of Judaism as "a category, a set of ideas and attributes with which non-Jews can make sense of and criticize their world," especially regarding incorrect relationships with the "fleshy things of this world" (*Anti-Judaism,* 12, 113).

[116] These categories often remain competing and irreconcilable with each other. See Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation,* 126.

[117] Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

[118] See the bills proposed in Kansas and Arizona: HR 2453, 2014 Leg., reg. sess. (Kan. 2014); S. 1062, 51st Leg., 2nd reg. sess. (Ariz. 2014). The Kansas and Arizona bills both claimed to preserve religious freedom by calling for protections for individuals forced into quotidian interactions with members of different social bodies (potentially any other religious communion or group their faith condemns/excludes). Neither of these bills made it into law. Other states have considered similar legislation. For examples from other nations, see notes below.

to that of the Luciferians in the letter of Gregory IX. The proponents of these acts of legislation appear to argue that the presence of sexual deviants constitutes a kind of persecution upon their communities that can seem reminiscent of the Luciferians' supposed "persecution upon the church." In these arguments, sexual deviants present a constant threat to children and the larger social body.[119] The logic behind some of these efforts, just as the logic behind medieval persecutions for heresy, maintains that homosexual conduct can spread like a disease and indeed does spread a disease in the form of HIV/AIDS, which modern religious authorities continue to relate to the biblical model of leprosy and how leprosy has been used historically within Christian theology.[120]

Central to these different pieces of legislation is an attempt to secure the integrity of discrete social bodies based upon the sexual and intellectual activities associated with members' individual bodies. The application of this typology is often tantamount to an incitement to violence. This persistence of an exclusionary synecdoche provides a new impetus for understanding its past manifestations. These efforts continue a long tradition of which the sexual morphology attributed to medieval heretics is but one part. The sexual activities attributed to supposed heretical sects, like that uncovered at Orléans in 1022, the group at Soissons described by Guibert of Nogent, the Paterenes of Walter Map, the Luciferians of Gregory IX, and the Templars all describe the sexual activity of the individual heretic's body as an expression of the spiritual nature of a communal identity. To the authors of these polemics, this identity is a negative image of the corporate identity at the heart of legitimate Christian society. Where the sanctioned sexual activity of licit society propagates the human race and the bonds of redeeming charity, the heretic generates nothing but death and division. In these portrayals, the type of sex heretics have is a profound expression of what they are. For a hostile authority, ascribing such sexual behavior to an enemy is a powerful method of finding and demonstrating truth.

[119] Russia's legislation targets "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations to minors" (Sergei Guneev, "Putin Signs Anti-Gay Bill into Law," *RIA Novosti*, 30 June 2013). Certain American publications have also suggested (following Putin himself) that homosexuality threatens Russia's long-term existence by contributing to population decline. See Neil Munro, "Obama Pressures Uganda to Repeal Anti-Gay Law," *Daily Caller*, 24 March 2014, accessed 25 March 2014, http://dailycaller.com/2014/03/24/obama-pressures-uganda-to-aid-gays/. The legislation proposed in Kansas and Arizona proposed to "protect religious freedom" and "cleanse" society. See Adam Nossiter, "Nigeria Tries to 'Sanitize Itself of Gays," *New York Times*, 8 February 2014, accessed 25 March 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/09/world/africa/nigeria-uses-law-and-whip-to-sanitize-gays.html?_r=1.

[120] A good review of this discourse can be found in Peter Lewis Allen, *The Wages of Sin: Sex, Disease, Past and Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). See also Robin Gill, "AIDS, Leprosy and the Synoptic Jesus," in *Reflecting Theologically on AIDS: A Global Challenge* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 101. Gill argues for a response to the disease grounded in the kind of compassion Jesus showed to the leper in Luke 5:12–13 rather than the exclusion and judgment of the disease prevalent in the Old Testament.

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