

# Heresy in Transition

Transforming Ideas of Heresy in Medieval and Early  
Modern Europe

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# Introduction

Ian Hunter, John Christian Laursen and Cary J. Nederman

Systems of religion that require the faithful to adhere to a strict standard of belief and/or worship generally produce a concomitant idea of heresy, understood as an error in matters directly related to the truths of one's confession.<sup>1</sup> The terminology of heresy originated in the Judeo-Christian tradition, deriving from the Greek word *hairesis*, which means both 'deliberate choice' and 'sect.' The word is employed by Josephus to describe several sects widespread in Judea, and is applied to St. Paul in Acts 24:5 and Acts 28:22 by Roman authorities.

It is possible to conceive of heresy according to either a broad or a narrow understanding. In the broadest understanding, different religions are heretical to each other. In a narrower sense, it is only disagreements among those who profess the same religion that can lead to heresy, while different religions concern infidels. This broadness or narrowness is reproduced inside any single religion, as well. Thus, broadly conceived, heresy can be found in any religion that attempts to define or codify its doctrines as an orthodoxy, excluding certain people who refuse profession of a core set of teachings yet claim to adhere to the faith. The formulation and construction of orthodoxy thus entails the logical possibility of heresy and a concern about its appearance and dissemination. Christianity in its early phases was heresiological in this broad manner. Beginning after c. 150 AD, Christian apologists, taking direction from St. Paul's attacks upon religious diversity among the alleged followers of Jesus, condemned the heretical tendencies of numerous Christian sects. As it developed from St. Justin and Irenaeus in the second century through Tertullian and Hippolytus of Rome in the third century to the crowning achievement of Epiphanius in the fourth century, a large literature of anti-heretical classification and criticism became a hallmark of Christian polemic, accompanied by the construction of unitary Christian doctrine.

The concept of heresy was transformed within the Christian tradition, however, in accordance with a second and narrower understanding, insofar as heretical 'error' came to be seen to require forms of correction and punishment, both temporal and spiritual. To the extent that heresy was singled out by Christians as an especially dangerous sort of spiritual outlook, different in nature and kind from

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<sup>1</sup> For a useful overview, see John B. Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy: Neo-Confucian, Islamic, Jewish, and Early Christian Patterns* (Albany, 1998).

apostasy and similar forms of infidelity, it demanded persecution and extirpation of a greater intensity than other modes of unbelief. What rendered heresy special? Quite simply, the fact that those who were heretics had been admitted, through baptism and sacrament, into the unified soul — the communion — of the Christian church. As a consequence, heterodoxy was particularly horrific because those who adopted it maintained not only that they were Christians, but that their version of Christianity was truer and more pure than the orthodox one. Heresy was therefore a disease of the soul that was extremely contagious if not quickly treated; the prevention of its spread to the remainder of the believing community justified even the use of physical violence against those who persisted in upholding it. And Christianity, with the universalistic pretensions of its 'catholic' church, found temporal resources to enforce its spiritual vision in a way that other religions were unable or unprepared to pursue.

The first several centuries of Christian history, scholars have noted, witnessed heretical movements in far larger numbers than any other religion of that or other times. Such quantitative data, while illustrative, do not fully capture the character of the historical evolution of the place of heresy within Christianity. In the period following the integration of the Christian church into the official apparatus of the Roman Empire, the perseverance of longstanding heterodox views, as well as the appearance and diffusion of new deviant stances, suggests the ineffectiveness with which the specific content of Christianity, as opposed to its general form, had been disseminated to late classical society at large. The Bishop of Hippo (and eventual saint) Augustine expressed evident frustration with the myriad heresies that he combated, a testament to the widespread and deep roots of Christian diversity. It may be, as some scholars have suggested, that the scope of the beliefs that counted as heresy grew along with the confidence of a Christian church supported by the political mandate of the Empire. But it also seems to be the case that the implacable imposition of orthodoxy encouraged the spontaneous emergence of innovative expressions of heretical sentiment.

Ultimately, St. Augustine concluded that patient fraternal correction of heretics — his original prescribed remedy for heresy — required supplement in the form of bodily compulsion and even execution. Persecution became an approved treatment of the contagion, yet the ability of ecclesiastical officials to impose coercive penalties certainly declined with the erosion of a centralized imperial regime.<sup>2</sup> Until the eleventh century, evidence for the presence of heresy among European Christians is so sketchy as to render impossible any sustained conclusions. Even the widely held view that new Christian heresies began to crop up with alarming frequency after about 1100 has been effectively countered. The undisputed fact that the church and secular authorities during the High Middle Ages began to uncover and exterminate heresy has instead been said to reflect an upswing in theological zeal on the part of consolidating political and ecclesiastical institutions,

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<sup>2</sup> See R. I. Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent* (London, 1977).

yielding the 'persecuting society' famously posited by R. I. Moore.<sup>3</sup> The weight of attempts to repress heresies and heretics may be said to stand in direct relation to the rigor of efforts to define orthodoxy and establish uniformity.

The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which proscribed a range of heresies as well as other forms of religious and moral non-conformity, represents in many ways the apogee of the persecutorial impulse during the Latin Middle Ages. The Council propounded a series of decrees that amounted to a comprehensive standard for inclusion in and exclusion from the community of Christian believers. Those who asserted membership, whether by reason of baptism or by partaking of the sacraments, yet who refused to submit to their clerical superiors in matters of creed and conduct, were subject to excommunication and to the temporal penalties (imprisonment, confiscation, and corporal and capital punishment) that followed therefrom. The canon law that had formed the backbone of institutional ecclesiastical development in the twelfth century stipulated a fixed legal procedure, *inquisitio*, to address reputed crimes of notorious or flagrant heresy.<sup>4</sup>

Ironically, the stimulus for the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council was yet another round of demands for clerical renewal, arising from recurring sentiment on the part of the laity (and also some high-minded churchmen) that the clergy had become corrupt and was misleading (if not fleecing) the flock whose souls they were assigned to guard. The persistence of heresy in Christian Europe may thus be intimately linked with reforming sentiment that remained wholly orthodox and reflected an acceptable measure of religious zeal. Both the popular heresies that the church struggled to suppress (such as Catharism) and the more elite heresies (centered in the schools) whose advocates courted censure by ecclesiastical authorities (such as the Spiritual wing of the Franciscan order) tended to direct their outrage toward clerical corruption (doctrinal as well earthly) and to call for the reinvigoration of moral and spiritual purity.

Yet the impression that authorities in medieval Christian society were uniformly persecuting in the treatment of heretics is misleading. Widespread anti-clericalism fostered sympathy toward and protection of heretics by secular officials who did not themselves subscribe to the heresy, as was the case with the Cathars in thirteenth-century Orvieto.<sup>5</sup> Powerful European rulers regularly sheltered accused heretics amongst the intelligentsia and employed them as counselors and polemicists in their causes against popes and the ecclesiastical hierarchy generally. Scholastic authors were also shielded by the institutions of the university from subjection to inquisitorial procedures and the punishments that might follow. In

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<sup>3</sup> R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (Oxford, 1987).

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Vodola, *Excommunication in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1986).

<sup>5</sup> Carol Lansing, *Power and Purity: Cathar Heresy in Medieval Italy* (Oxford, 1998).

sum, resistance to the strict imposition of orthodoxy remained a feature of Latin Christianity throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>6</sup>

In the wake of the Reformation, with the shattering of confessional and institutional unity, heresy increasingly acquired an unfocused quality as an all-purpose term of religious derision. Christians of differing affiliations employed the language of heresy to fling accusations at each other — Catholics against Protestants as well as Protestants against one another and against Catholics — so that eventually the epithet 'heretical' came to denote nearly any form of apostasy or infidelity. In effect, the meaning of heresy in Western society was in the process of changing from the narrowly technical one that referred to obdurate dissent from orthodox authority into an all-purpose charge levied against anyone who expressed a belief or opinion different from one's own.

Yet in the midst of the historical processes that occasioned the transformation from medieval to early modern approaches to heresy, plenty of opportunities remained for transitional moments that defy precise classification into one or the other side of the historical divide. In 1635, the most famous Saxon jurist of the seventeenth century, Benedict Carpzov, offered a confident characterization of heresy: 'I call heresy an obstinate error in the articles of faith'.<sup>7</sup> Of course, Carpzov's confidence was misplaced. In attempting to refashion the weapon of heresy prosecution for use by a Protestant confessional state in the middle of the Thirty Years War, he was already on borrowed time. This was due to expire in 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia, whose enforced toleration of the three main religions signalled the end of heresy as a juridical reality. Yet, Carpzov was drawing on the key canonistic definition of heresy, and Saxon Anabaptists were still being executed for heresy in the seventeenth century, even if Carpzov himself recommended restricting punishments to excommunication and deportation.<sup>8</sup>

Carpzov may thus be regarded as a transitional figure. In carrying forward the central canon law definition of heresy — which conceived heresy as criminal deviation from unimpeachably true doctrine — he was wielding a theological-juridical weapon which had been forged by the Catholic church to combat the great heretical movements of the middle ages. By the end of the century, however, Christian Thomasius could treat heresy as a purely historical phenomenon — albeit a still dangerous one — indicative of the means by which theologians and churches had mercilessly enforced their creeds by claiming a monopoly on true faith.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Cary J. Nederman, *Worlds of Difference: European Discourses of Religious Toleration, c. 1100-c.1550* (University Park, Penn., 2000).

Benedict Carpzov, *Practica nova imperialis saxonica rerum criminalium*, (Frankfurt, 1635), fol. 280, § 4.

Winfried Trusen, 'Rechtliche Grundlagen des Häresiebegriffs and des Ketzerverfahrens', in S. S. Menchi, ed., *Ketzerverfolgung im 16. and frühen 17. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1992), pp. 1220.

<sup>9</sup> Christian Thomasius, 'Ob Ketzerei ein straffbares Verbrechen sei? / An haeresis sit crimen' (1697), in *Auserlesene deutsche Schriften, Erster Teil* (Halle, 1705), pp. 210-307.

Moreover, he could treat Carpzov's confessional jurisprudence as symptomatic of this malign history.<sup>10</sup> The world that Carpzov was losing was one where it was possible for a single church to set the limits of orthodox belief (no matter how contested this process proved to be); and where the church's alliance with state and empire made it possible to persecute the heretics who transgressed these limits (no matter how unstable this alliance proved to be). The world that Thomasius was entering was one in which the advent of an irreducible plurality of sects made all talk of orthodoxy and heresy merely sectarian, and where the alliance between church and state had either been dissolved or was maintained as an open marriage, permitting the state to entertain other churches on the side.

So profound was this change in religious and political culture, and so deeply has it informed our narratives of modernity and our sense of self, that it challenges the scholarly imagination to recover medieval understandings of heresy and then to chart their transformation during the early modern period. Nonetheless, that is what the essays collected in this volume set out to do. In doing so, they imitate their object, straddling the transition between medieval and early modern constructions of heresy. Half of the chapters investigate the manner in which the church and its attendant civil authorities defined and proscribed heresy. The other half focus on the means by which early modern writers sought to supersede such definition and proscription, paying particular attention to the 'histories of heresy' which removed heresy from the domain of truth and falsity and turned it into an explicable historical phenomenon.

One of the striking things to emerge from the investigation of medieval heresy is the intensity of the reaction it evoked from the orthodox, and the routine violence of their response. Under circumstances in which religious belief and practice penetrated deep into society, and in which the civil and religious community were scarcely distinguishable, religious deviance was often perceived as an immediate threat to the community's sacramental relation to God, to be met with violent expulsion. Paul Hayward thus observes that while English and Norman chroniclers paid little attention to heresy prior to the twelfth century, the arrival of Cathar missionaries was treated as an unprecedented threat requiring a harsh response to re-establish the faith community. Unprecedented, perhaps, but certainly not unprepared for. As Hayward notes, these chroniclers had earlier retold exemplary anecdotes regarding the fate of heretics — most notably the story of the heresiarch Arius's self-evisceration while emptying his bowels, indicative of the visceral repulsion and violence accompanying the defence of ecclesial orthodoxy and hierarchy.

Rooting heresy in the body did not mean that its uprooting was always so violent. In her discussion of the thirteenth-century followers of the Parisian master, Amalric, Sabina Flanagan notes that providing heresy with a bodily basis sometimes allowed it to be medicalized as a species of madness, thereby mitigating the crime and avoiding its punishments. Even ascribing madness to diabolical

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<sup>10</sup> Thomasius, 'Ketzerrei', p. 214.



possession could have the same mitigating effect, unless the Devil's presence in the body was itself treated as a sign of heresy, which would dictate an altogether more violent mode of expulsion.

Regardless of the visceral depths to which the medieval fear of heresy penetrated the social and individual body, heresies themselves were delineated and fought over by the church's intellectual elite, the theologians of the universities, cathedral schools, and monasteries. Responding to the view of twelfth-century theology as heralding the emergence of a 'persecuting society', Constant Mews focuses on the diversity and complexity of twelfth-century conceptions of heresy. Mews provides insights into both the extraordinary sophistication and sensitivity of the triggers for heresy allegations — the minefield of deadly subtleties surrounding the duality of Christ's natures and the tri-unity of the Godhead — and into their role as weapons for defending or attacking particular configurations of the believing community.

Something similar emerges from Takashi Shogimen's account of the struggle over juridical and theological constructions of heresy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Clerical authorities sought to endow heresy with an overtly institutional thrust. Shogimen shows that Ockham's sophisticated theological retort to this effort — via his treatment of heresy in terms of the misconstrual of authoritative texts — resulted in a far more individualized application of the definition of heresy as an obstinate error in the articles of faith.

Of course, not all medieval scholars wrote as intellectual shock-troops of the militant church. Cary Nederman's discussion of Marsiglio of Padua and his reception by Nicole Oresme reveals how articulating grounds for the separation of civil and religious authority might attract the charge of heresy in the attempt. The fact that Marsiglio's ideas remained current in the immediate following generations suggests his status as a transitional figure. In turn, Oresme's appropriation of Marsiglio's famously heretical doctrines, when carefully disguised, could render them palatable to an audience that considered itself fully orthodox.

The illusion that matters somehow radically change as we approach the threshold of early modernity is explored by Thomas Fudge's discussion of Aeneas Sylvius's history of the Hussite heretics. Aeneas Sylvius provides a particularly vivid illustration of the way in which sophisticated Christian humanists could harness their intellects to the stigmatizing and demonizing of heretics, treating them as a polluting threat to be eliminated from a society understood as a unified mystical body. Even in the more temperate climate of sixteenth-century Canterbury, those charged with the dual task of rooting out the Lollard heresy and reforming the clergy were erudite clerical humanists, trained in Italy or at Oxbridge. They represented 'the educated elite of the English ecclesiastical machine', as Craig D'Alton puts it in his fine-grained account of these events.

On the other hand, early modern writers whose prime concern was the legitimacy of the territorial state and its sovereign might adopt an opposite tack concerning the threat of heresy. One of these was Thomas Hobbes who, as Conal

Condren points out, drew on Marsiglian ideas in his works on the history of the church and heresy. With Hobbes, some of the central themes of the early modern historicisation of heresy step to center stage: in particular the ambivalence of Constantine as the unifier of church and state, and the role of Greek philosophy in converting faith into enforceable doctrine, thereby giving rise to heresy-mongering as a chief form of priestcraft. Perez Zagorin has recently claimed that Hobbes was 'one of the first thinkers' to attempt to deal with the origins of the idea of heresy, and with that we may understand him as one of the first to historicize heresy.<sup>11</sup> If that is true, it reinforces once again the conventional wisdom that Hobbes was a watershed thinker. But not all historicizations of heresy could afford to relativize heresy and (by implication) religious truth in the Hobbesian manner. Condren thus observes that Archbishop John Sharp's defence of Anglican latitudinarianism meant that he would maintain the concept of heresy, but in a benign form, as a goad to the historical search for truth.

Thomas Ahnert and John Christian Laursen discuss the diversity of the new histories of heresy. Focusing on ecclesial and heresy histories written by Samuel Pufendorf, Christian Thomasius, Gottfried Arnold, and the Pietist theologian Joachim Lange, Ahnert demonstrates a spectrum of positions taken up with regard to the doctrinalizing of faith. These ranged from the orthodox, through 'enthusiast' spiritualism, to the middle-ground of the Pietists. Laursen's focus is elsewhere, on the strategies adopted to obtain the 'impartiality' claimed by many of the new historians of heresy. Gottfried Arnold's famous history thus aspires to impartiality by claiming to occupy no particular confessional position, yet in doing so relies on a doctrinaire spiritualist theology. Johann Lorenz Mosheim, however, adopts a different strategy, seeking impartiality by self-consciously occupying a temperate middle-ground between the confessional extremes.

Arnold receives a more sympathetic reception in Ian Hunter's chapter, where his spiritualist theology is treated as the (anti-metaphysical) condition of adopting a historical and relativistic view of heresy and religious truth. Hunter's main interest, though, is in the manner in which this view was able to feed into the treatment of heresy in Protestant *Staatskirchenrecht* (constitutional church law), specifically in the work of Christian Thomasius whose decriminalization of heresy incorporated Arnold's historicized and relativistic view of the erstwhile crime.

Gisela Schlüter's chapter explores the Italian and German translations of a widely-read French history of heresy first published in 1762-64, and the fortunes of that French work in its later reprintings. She demonstrates that in Italy it served a role in the Catholic Enlightenment, as the translator added polemics against the Jesuits. In Germany, it joined the ranks of 'popular encyclopedias', providing a Catholic answer to Protestant histories of heresy and criticizing compromises with the radical Enlightenment. In France the work was reissued in 1847 with major revisions which added significantly to the catalog of heresies, a clear response to

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<sup>11</sup>Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton, 2003), p. 18.

reform movements within French Catholicism. These translations and later editions demonstrate that the historiography of heresy was always closely integrated into national political controversy.

Finally, in Sandra Pott's discussion of the histories of heresy, we pass through the crucial transition of early modernity and into the modern period where heresy has ceased to be a danger and is being transformed into an object of cultural memory. By focusing on the theme of pre-Reformation 'witnesses of truth' — through which heresy historians had transformed medieval heretics into proto-Protestants — Pott captures the process whereby the historicisation of heresy is transformed into literary topos and cultural common sense.

In addition to discussing the roles of theology, law and politics, the chapters in this book explore the role of nationalism and linguistic identity in constructions of heresy. They draw attention to analogies and alternative concepts such as treason and madness, and to the role of passions and emotions in identifying heresies and sponsoring reactions to them. They contrast the attraction and repulsion, the fascination and disgust, with which heresy was received. They bring out the role of class, status, and professional orientation in different responses to heresy. And, of course, they show when and where historicization emerged as one of the chief factors in the modern understanding of heresy.

The interpretation of changes in the idea of heresy is, in turn, itself profoundly historical. Among Enlightenment thinkers, the heretics and heresies of the past became valorized as part of a heroic struggle to realize religious toleration and humanistic values. John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty* (1859) held up heterodox movements of the Middle Ages as bearers of the truths whose suppression slowed the progress of humanity. Some recent students of heretical ideas barely conceal their admiration for the independence of mind expressed in the dissenting outlooks they study. Such apparent anachronisms retain the earlier sense of horror with which heresy was viewed by the orthodox, but they revalue heretical doctrines as expressions of personal or communal autonomy and refusals to submit to arbitrary power. Such is the scholarly state of the history of heresy today.

## Chapter 1

# Before the Coming of Popular Heresy: The Rhetoric of Heresy in English Historiography, c. 700-1154

Paul Antony Hayward

### Introduction

It is the intention of this chapter to survey the ways in which heresy figures in historical works produced in a country which appears to have remained largely free of doctrinal conflict from the time when its peoples were first converted to Christianity until the fourteenth century. It will shed light on the functions that the rhetoric of heresy has played in medieval historiography prior to the coming of organised popular heresy. The country in question is England, and the texts that will be examined comprise historical works by Bede, Ælfric of Eynsham, John of Worcester, Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury. For the purpose of comparison attention will also be given to the certain works composed on the Continent — that is, to the works of Gregory of Tours, of Orderic Vitalis and to various *vitae* and *miracula* composed at the monastery of Bec.

#### 1. Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*

Three doctrinal heresies figure in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*: Arianism, Pelagianism and Quartodecimanism. The rise of the 'Arian madness' (*vaesania Arrii*) in the fourth century and its corruption of the world to the point where it infected even as remote an island as Britain is briefly covered in book one.<sup>1</sup> Rather

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<sup>1</sup> Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, i.8, ed. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), pp. 34-37, cited hereafter as 'Bede, *HE*'. In this essay, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina, Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis*, Subsidia Hagiographica 6, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1898-9), is cited with H. Fros (ed.), *Novum Supplementum*, Subsidia Hagiographica 70 (Brussels, 1986), as '*BHL*'. The Oxford Medieval Texts is cited as

more attention is given to the rise of Pelagianism and to the efforts of the orthodox to refute this heresy, especially among the Britons: Bede refers to the alleged British origins of Pelagius himself and to the efforts of Augustine to refute the teachings of his apologist, Julianus of Campania;<sup>2</sup> moreover, he devotes some five chapters to the two anti-Pelagian missions of Germanus, bishop of Auxerre (d. 446), to Britain.<sup>3</sup> The latter chapters are taken almost verbatim from the late fifth-century *Life of Germanus* by Constantius of Lyons.<sup>4</sup> The Quartodeciman heresy — that is, the heresy of celebrating Easter from the fourteenth day of the moon in the Hebrew month of Nisan on whatever day of the week on which it fell, even when it did not fall on a Sunday — figures in Bede's treatment of the divergences between the Irish and English Churches over the Easter question. Here he quotes at length Pope John IV's letter accusing the Irish of Pelagianism and of the Quartodeciman heresy.<sup>5</sup> This letter implied that there were some Quartodeciman heretics in Ireland, but Bede's commentary suggests that this deviation was atypical. The practice was, he comments, only a recent aberration and the entire race was not implicated in it. He returns to this point several times, explicitly exculpating Aidan, the monks of Iona and later the bishops who consecrated Chad. However mistaken their methods of calculating the date of Easter, 'they did not always observe it on the fourteenth day of the moon, as some believe, but they celebrated it always on Sunday, just not in the proper week'.<sup>6</sup>

Such scrupulousness in the use of evidence implies a deep concern for historical accuracy, and there is certainly much about Bede's treatment of the theme which suggests a scholarly adherence to his model, Eusebius of Caesarea's *Historia Ecclesiastica*.<sup>7</sup> In his preface Eusebius had listed heresy among his major

'OMT', Studies in Church History as 'SCH', and the Rolls Series as 'RS'.

<sup>2</sup> Bede, *HE*, i.10.

<sup>3</sup> Bede, *HE*, i.17-21.

*Vita S. Germani Autissiodorensis* (BHL 3453), §§ 12-18, 25-27 ed. Wilhelm Levison, *Monumenta Germaniae Historiae: Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, vol. 7 (Hannover, 1920), pp. 247-83, at 259-65, 269-71. Cf. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentary*, OMT (Oxford, 1988), pp. 26-29; Charles Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica* (2 vols, Oxford, 1896), vol. 2, pp. 31-35.

<sup>5</sup> Bede, *HE*, ii.19. On this letter, its context and the Paschal controversy more generally, see Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 'New Heresy for Old': Pelagianism in Ireland and the Papal Letter of 640', *Speculum*, 60 (1985): 505-16; Thomas M. O. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 391-415.

<sup>6</sup> Bede, *HE*, iii.4. Cf. *ibid.*, iii.17, 28.

<sup>7</sup> On Bede's debt to Eusebius, see L. W. Barnard, 'Bede and Eusebius as Church Historians', in Gerald Bonner (ed.), *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede* (London, 1976), pp. 106-24; Robert A. Markus, *Bede and the Tradition of Ecclesiastical Historiography*, Jarrow Lecture 1975 (Jarrow, 1975). On the evolving tradition of ecclesiastical history, see Markus,

themes: second (or third, depending how they are counted) among the chief matters to be covered were 'the names and dates of those who through a passion for innovation have wandered as far as possible from the truth, proclaiming themselves the founts of Knowledge falsely so called while mercilessly, like savage wolves, making havoc of Christ's flock'.<sup>8</sup> For Eusebius heresy was a fundamental topic for the historian of the Church, in part because outbreaks of heresy had been obstacles to the fulfilment of God's plan for the advance of the true faith, but chiefly because heresies — the long-since refuted as well as the recent — were still tearing at the unity of the Church. They had to be identified and condemned in the strongest terms lest the faithful should succumb to them.<sup>9</sup> Given that popular heresy was not a pressing issue in his milieu, Bede's interest in the issue is perhaps to be explained by his adherence to the generic format established by Eusebius, and there are indeed moments where his approach to heresy seems to echo Eusebius with almost mechanical precision. According to Eusebius the trait which has always distinguished heresy from orthodoxy has been novelty: the true Church, 'always remaining the same and unchanged', has been faced with a seemingly endless succession of challenges as 'one after another new heresies [have been] invented, the earlier ones constantly passing away and disappearing, in different ways at different times, into forms of every shape and character'.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Bede regards heresy as an expression of a flippant desire for novelty: every 'foul heresy' poured into fourth-century Britain, he explains, because 'the [British] Isles always delight in hearing something new and hold firmly to no belief'.<sup>11</sup>

There is, however, a polemical edge to Bede's scholarship. As Walter Goffart has argued, the care evident in his account of the alleged Quartodecimanism of the Irish was driven by an urge to correct Stephen the Priest's vision of the recent past — a vision in which Archbishop Wilfrid had singlehandedly renewed the English Church's Roman orthodoxy and saved it from confusion.' In particular, it was Stephen who had 'falsely supposed' that Aidan and the Irish bishops who had

'Church History and the Early Church Historians', in Derek Baker (ed.), *The Materials Sources and Methods of Ecclesiastical History*, SCH 11 (Oxford, 1975), pp. 1-17.

Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, trans. G. A. Williamson (Harmondsworth, 1965), I, alluding to 1 Timothy 6:20 and Acts 20: 29.

<sup>9</sup> See further Robert M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 84-96; Markus, 'Church History', pp. 5-7.

<sup>10</sup> Eusebius, *History of the Church*, p. 110.

<sup>11</sup> Bede, *HE*, i.8, after Acts 17: 21.

<sup>12</sup> Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550-800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 306-20 and esp. 328: 'The program Bede set himself for outdoing his predecessors was not so much to retrace the English conversion for the instruction of posterity as to supersede the rival accounts of the same period.' Cf. Markus, *Bede and Ecclesiastical Historiography*, p. 7.

consecrated Chad were Quartodecimans.<sup>13</sup> Bede knew that here Stephen had gone too far, and this slip provided him with an opportunity to expose the Wilfridians' lack of respect for the many who besides themselves had made worthy contributions to the Christianisation of the English.

This is not the only polemical dimension in Bede's treatment of the issue of heresy. Just as Eusebius was concerned with conflicts over doctrine because these defined the boundaries of the true Church,<sup>14</sup> so Bede deploys the rhetoric of heresy to establish a gratuitous contrast between the English Church and its most immediate competitor, the British Church. The orthodoxy of the English is celebrated above all in Bede's account of the Synod of Hatfield. This synod was part of the efforts of Pope Agatho (678-81) to halt to spread of the Monothelite heresy, which was then endemic in the Byzantine Empire. A survey of the beliefs of the various western Churches was one of his preliminary steps, and it was in obedience to this papal directive that Archbishop Theodore summoned the bishops, abbots and abbesses of England to attend a synod which was held in 679. Each was questioned as to whether they adhered to the faith as defined by the first five ecumenical councils — that is, by the council of Nicaea in 325, of Constantinople in 381, of Ephesus in 431, of Chalcedon in 451, and of Constantinople in 553. The synod duly found that none of them were heretics. Bede quotes at length from the records of the synod and notes with some pride that its findings were well-received when they were reported in Rome: 'The testimony of the English to the Catholic faith was carried to Rome and most gladly received by the pope and by all those who heard it or read it'.<sup>15</sup> 'To Bede's evident gratification', as Henry Chadwick puts it, 'the decisions of the Council of Hatfield proved how meticulously orthodox the English Churches were'.<sup>16</sup>

It is true that Bede concedes that the British 'had no desire at all' to succumb to Pelagianism,<sup>17</sup> but there is no doubting the sharp contrast he draws between the British weakness for doctrinal error and the steadfast orthodoxy of the English from their conversion. In his final sections of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, for example, Bede draws out a threefold comparison between the Irish who have lately

<sup>13</sup> *Vita S. Wilfridi* (BHL 8889), §§ 12, 14-15, ed. B. Colgrave, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus* (Cambridge, 1927), pp. 24-25, 30-33. Cf. Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, p. 310.

<sup>14</sup> Markus, 'Church History', pp. 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> Bede, *HE*, iv.18. See, likewise, the account of Wilfrid's testimony to the faith of the English at the Lateran synod of 680 (*ibid.*, vol. 19).

<sup>16</sup> Henry Chadwick, 'Theodore, the English Church and the Monothelite Controversy', in Michael Lapidge (ed.), *Archbishop Theodore: Commemorative Studies on His Life and Influence*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 11 (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 88-95, at 93. See also Michael Lapidge, 'The Career of Archbishop Theodore', *ibid.*, esp. pp. 22-25.

<sup>17</sup> Bede, *HE*, iv.17. See note 22 below.

been converted, through the agency of the English, to the correct form of Easter observance, the Britons who, 'incorrigible and hobbling along in their ways' (*inueterati et claudicantes a semitis suis*), persist in their errors, and the English who are now — that is, around 731 when he was writing — 'believers instructed in every aspect of the Catholic faith'.<sup>18</sup> The heresies of the British were, for Bede, one of the many faults that caused their displacement by the English;<sup>19</sup> but it is a testimony to his ingenuity that this discourse of ethnic self-justification (which can be seen as the obligatory jingoism of the society in which he operated)<sup>20</sup> is aligned with the cause of ecclesiastical reform.<sup>21</sup> For a crucial point in Bede's account of the anti-Pelagian missions of Germanus is that the British succumbed to this heresy because they lacked the ability 'to refute by argument the subtleties of [this] evil doctrine'. It was a 'beneficent decision' that led them to seek the help of the 'Gallic bishops'.<sup>22</sup> Thanks to the two *bishops*, Germanus and his companion Severus, 'the faith remained untainted in those parts for a very long time'.<sup>23</sup> Bede's lesson for his English readers, in short, is that their continuing freedom from heresy (and with it their possession of their lands in Britain) depends on the full and proper exercise of episcopal authority by competent bishops.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Bede, *HE*, v.22.

<sup>19</sup> Bede, *HE*, i.22: 'As events plainly showed, this [conquest] was ordained by the will of God so that evil might fall upon these [British] miscreants'. As Robert A. Markus argues in 'Pelagianism: Britain and the Continent', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 37 (1986): 1912204, the Pelagianism of the British is most likely to have been a retrospective construction imposed on a Church that was effectively 'pre-Pelagian' by Continental theologians. The heresy's true origins lie in the Origenist controversy and the place of its formulation was Rome. See also Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy* (Princeton, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> It is clear from Bede's criticism of King Ecgfrith's (d. 685) failed invasion of Ireland that Bede thought that conquest could only succeed when it coincided with God's decision to direct divine vengeance against its victims (*HE*, iv.26).

<sup>21</sup> For Bede's concern with pastoral care and the role of bishop in its provision, see his *Epistola Baedae ad Egbertum antistitem*, ed. Plummer, *Baedae opera historica*, vol. 1, pp. 405-23 (esp. §§ 5-10).

<sup>22</sup> Bede, *HE*, i.17: 'Verum Brittanni, cum neque suscipere dogma peruersum gratiam Christi blasphemando ullatenus uellent, neque uersutiam nefariae persuasionis refutare uerbis certo sufficerent, inueniunt salubre consilium, ut a Gallicanis antistibus auxilium belli spiritalis inquirant'. This is Bede's own gloss. Cf. Constantius, *Vita Germani*, § 12.

<sup>23</sup> Bede, *HE*, i.21, following Constantius, *Vita Germani*, § 27 (p. 271). Note, likewise, Bede's account, *HE*, i.20, of a bloodless victory over the Saxons and Picts which the British won through the leadership of the *pontifices* Germanus and of Lupus. Cf. Constantius, *Vita Germani*, § 18 (p. 265).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, p. 26. Bede's own efforts to equip England's teachers with the knowledge required to detect doctrinal error can be seen in his *In epistulas VII catholicas*, ed. David Hurst, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, vol. 121 (Turnhout, 1983), which includes warnings against and explanations of the errors of the



It is instructive at this point to compare Bede's use of the rhetoric of heresy with that found in the works of Gregory of Tours. Like Bede, Gregory invokes the menace of a heresy that had long ceased to be a living issue in his milieu – that is, in the Loire Valley of the 570s and 580s. The spectre of Arianism figures prominently in his *Historiarum libri decem*, even though, as Walter Goffart puts it, it would have been hard for 'normal Catholics of Gregory's generation to look around and regard Arianism as an active menace'.<sup>25</sup> Like Bede, he also invokes the menace of heresy in the service of episcopal authority. Indeed, it is tempting to argue that Bede derived his interest in the topic from reading Gregory as well as Eusebius. But whereas Bede utilises the rhetoric of heresy to demonstrate the need for an effective episcopate, Gregory turns it into a weapon of episcopal authority per se. Thus, in a telling passage he likens the fate of a man who had dared to diminish the power of a bishop of Clermont Ferrand to administer the properties of his church with that of Arius as reported by Rufinus in his Latin translation of Eusebius.<sup>26</sup> Like Arius, this man had also died while sitting on the toilet. There is no question, Gregory concludes, but that he 'was guilty of a crime no less than that of Arius, who likewise emptied his entrails into a latrine through his rear, because it cannot be accepted without heresy that in the Church one may disobey God's bishop, who has been entrusted with the task of pasturing the sheep, and that power may be usurped there by a man who has been entrusted with nothing by either God or man'.<sup>27</sup> Though both historians are concerned with enhancing episcopal authority, they differ over means and ends. Whereas Gregory would strengthen the episcopate by making opposition to episcopal authority itself a heresy, in Bede it is the ever-present danger of doctrinal heresy that requires the establishment of a stronger episcopate of a particular kind. Whereas Gregory is eager to extend the concept of heresy so that it can cover any offence against episcopal authority, Bede keeps it within the doctrinal sphere.

great heretics. See Benedicta Ward, *The Venerable Bede* (London, 1990), esp. p. 57; Scott de Gregorio, 'Nostrorum socordiam temporum: The Reforming Impulse of Bede's Later Exegesis', *Early Medieval Europe*, 11 (2002): 107-22.

<sup>25</sup> Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, p. 213, n. 440.

<sup>26</sup> Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, x.14., ed. Eduard Schwartz and Theodore Mommsen, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* vol. 9, pts. 1-2 (Leipzig, 1903-9), pt. 2, p. 979). The story probably derives from the lost continuation of Eusebius by Gelasius of Caesaria, and was known to Bede. See *Expositio actuum apostolorum*, ed. M. L. W. Laistner, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* vol. 121 (Turnhout, 1983), pp. 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> *Libri historiarum X*, ii.23, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, vol. 1.1 (2nd ed., Hannover, 1937-51), p. 68. See further Martin Heinzlmann, 'Heresy in Books I and II of Gregory of Tours' *Historiae*', in Alexander Callander Murray (ed.), *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History: Essays Presented to Walter Goffart* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 67-82.

## 2. Ælfric of Eynsham

Ælfric was an author chiefly of homilies in the vernacular and cannot, therefore, be described as an ecclesiastical historian in the strict sense,<sup>28</sup> but he nevertheless provides a useful case study for the present essay as his works illustrate the continuing use — in the decades either side of the millennium when historical writing was largely in abeyance in England — of the rhetoric of heresy to consolidate episcopal authority. Ælfric drew upon a vision of the historical role of heresy in the Church similar to that of Eusebius and Bede — one in which the episcopate and the great ecumenical councils had been central to the definition and defence of orthodoxy, but in his concern to hold his audience's attention his approach is far less circuitous. Like Gregory of Tours, he invokes the vivid image of divine vengeance that Rufinus had provided with his story about how Arius was eviscerated through his anus as he was attempting to vindicate his position at the Council of Nicaea.

His earliest use of the story is probably that found in his homily *De fide catholica*, which is part of his first series of Catholic Homilies, that compiled between 990 and 995. Here the variants that Ælfric introduces into the story emphasise God's vindication of his bishop's authority. It is a bishop who invokes God's just vengeance as he keeps vigil on the eve of the synod: 'Thou Almighty God, judge right judgement between me [Bishop Alexander] and Arius'.<sup>29</sup> The story is also deployed in the so-called pastoral letters — the brief manuals for parish priests and secular clergy which Ælfric compiled on behalf of Wulfsig III, bishop of Sherbourne (993-1002) and Wulfstan I, archbishop of York (1002-23). Consider, for example, Ælfric's first pastoral letter for Wulfsig III which was written soon after 992 and before 998:

<sup>29</sup> Then he [the Emperor Constantine] assembled a synod in the city of Nicaea, three hundred and eighteen bishops from all nations, for the strengthening of the faith. There were many such famous bishops at that synod that they *could work miracles*, and did so. They excommunicated there the mass-priest Arius because he would not believe that the

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<sup>28</sup> On Ælfric and his career, see Milton McC. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto, 1977); Peter Clemons, 'Ælfric', in Eric G. Stanley (ed.), *Continuations and Beginnings* (London, 1966), pp. 176-209; Stanley, 'The Chronology of Ælfric's Works', in Stanley (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of their History and Culture presented to Bruce Dickins* (London, 1959), pp. 212-47.

<sup>29</sup> *De fide Catholica*, ed. Peter Clemons, *Catholic Homilies: The First Series, Text*, Early English Text Society, Supplementary Series 17 (Oxford, 1997), pp. 335-244, at 343. M. R. Godden, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, Early English Text Society, Supplementary Series 18 (Oxford, 2000), p. 160, notes that this sermon handles its source materials with great freedom, 'without showing a sustained debt to any particular source'.

Son of the living God was just as mighty as his glorious Father is. Then they all condemned the devil's man; but he would not yield until all his bowels entirely fell out when he went to the privy.<sup>30</sup>

In the same letter there also appears a long account of the role of the first four ecumenical synods in the definition of orthodoxy:

There were four synods for [establishing] the true faith against the heretics who spoke foolishly about the Holy Trinity and the Saviour's humanity. The first was in Nicaea, as we have said before; and the second was afterwards in Constantinople, a hundred and fifty bishops, holy men of God; the third was in Ephesus, consisting of two hundred bishops; and the fourth was in Chalcedon, consisting of many hundred bishops. And they were all unanimous among themselves about the ordinance which had been appointed at Nicaea, and they amended whatever of it was broken. Those four synods are to be observed, just as the four gospels, in Christ's Church. Many synods were held afterwards, but these four are nevertheless the foremost, because they extinguished the heretical doctrines (*dwollican lara*) which the heretics invented heretically (*dwollice*) against God, and they also appointed the ecclesiastical services.<sup>31</sup>

There is in these two passages a strong emphasis on the role of episcopal and synodal authority in the defence of orthodoxy — an emphasis vividly supported by the scatology of Arius's demise. In the later letters, those which he wrote for Wulfstan, the same point is made with greater coherence. In these letters the story of Arius's evisceration appears as the final part of a long digression on the history of the early Church which covers the missionary work of the apostles, the origins of monasticism, the great persecution, and the story of the first four ecumenical councils.<sup>32</sup> It emerges from these pastoral letters that Ælfric was less concerned with the nature of doctrinal error than with the legitimacy of the ecclesiastical structures that had evolved to protect the Church from error. In short, Ælfric uses the rhetoric of heresy to reiterate the centrality of episcopal authority after the manner of Gregory but for Bede-like purposes.

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<sup>30</sup> 'First Pastoral Letter for Wulfsgie III', §§ 6211, ed. and trans. D. Whitelock, M. Brett, and C. N. L. Brooke, *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church*, vol. 1, A.D. 871-1204, 2 pts. (Oxford, 1981), pp. 196-226.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, §§ 93-100, (pp. 215-16).

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, 'First Old English Pastoral Letter for Wulfstan I, Archbishop of York (1002-23)', §§ 54-58, printed in Whitelock, Brett and Brooke, *Councils and Synods*, pp. 260-302.

### 3. The Post-Conquest Period

The rhetoric of heresy is conspicuous by its near complete absence from the historical writing produced between 1066 and the Angevin takeover in 1154. This period saw a dramatic revival in the writing of history in England, with the production of no fewer than three historical works comparable in scale and scope to Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*,<sup>33</sup> but the rhetoric of heresy scarcely figures in them. If we turn, for example, to Henry of Huntingdon what we find on the subject is a few notes about Arianism, Pelagianism and Quartodecimanism, and somewhat lengthier coverage of 679 Synod of Hatfield, all reproduced from Bede. The annal for 679, moreover, is the last in which Henry mentions heresy in his *Historia Anglorum*.<sup>34</sup> John of Worcester, likewise, carries over a few of Bede's comments about the alleged heresies of the British and Irish,<sup>35</sup> and a good deal more material from the early sections of his major source, the World Chronicle of Marianus Scotus.<sup>36</sup> But the last point at which heresy figures in his Chronicle is in his brief note under the year 680 on the Synod of Hatfield. Indeed, so spare is John's treatment of this synod that without knowing John's source (that is, Bede), one would be scarcely be aware that the monothelite heresy was the issue that prompted this synod.<sup>37</sup> William of Malmesbury, likewise, scarcely ever uses the word heresy, even in his saints' lives, though modern translators have sometimes introduced it where matters of doctrinal error are at issue.<sup>38</sup> However, as will

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<sup>33</sup> The three works are: (1) John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. and trs. R. R. Darlington, Patrick McGurk and Jennifer Bray, 3 vols., OMT (Oxford, 1995-), which was begun before 1118 and expanded in a complex series of stages ending between 1141 and 1143; (2) Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum (History of the English People)*, ed. Diana E. Greenway, OMT (Oxford, 1996), which was begun around 1129 and revised several times down before being abandoned in 1154; and (3) William of Malmesbury's paired histories, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. and trs. Roger A. B. Mynors, Rodney M. Thomson and Michael Winterbottom, 2 vols., OMT (Oxford, 1998-9), and *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, ed. N. E. S. A. Hamilton, RS 52 (London, 1870), the first drafts of which were largely complete by the beginning of 1126. On this revival in historical writing, see esp. Martin Brett, 'John of Worcester and his Contemporaries', in R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace Hadrill (eds.), *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages; Essays presented to Richard William Southern* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 101-26.

<sup>34</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, i.48; ii.6; iii.32; iv.1

<sup>35</sup> For example, John of Worcester, *Chronica chronicarum*, s.a. 628.

<sup>36</sup> For example, John of Worcester, *Chronica chronicarum*, s.a. 450 (the Council of Ephesus and the Eutychian heresy), 460 (the Acephalian heresy), 485 (the Vandal persecution of the Catholic Church in Africa), 525 (the end of the Vandal Persecution and the end of the Acephalian heresy), 533 (the mission of Pope Agapitus to Constantinople), 579 (Gregory the Great confutes the Eutychians), 588 (the three chapters controversy), and so on.

<sup>37</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronica chronicarum*, s.a. 680 (recte 679).

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, William of Malmesbury, *Vita S. Dunstani (BHL 2348)*, pref.,

emerge below, he devotes considerable space to the controversy generated by the Eucharistic theology of Berengar of Tours.<sup>39</sup>

This absence is all the more remarkable because these historians were all writing, if not pure ecclesiastical history, hybrid forms that owed much to this genre. Huntingdon openly declares in his prologue that Bede's work provided him with the fundamental starting point for his own researches — indeed, so much of the first four books are derived from Bede that the rest of his work can be seen as a continuation of his *Historia Ecclesiastica*.<sup>40</sup> Malmesbury, likewise, openly declares that one of his aims in writing the *Gesta regum* was to mend the chain of history which was broken when no-one bothered to continue Bede's work.<sup>41</sup> As for John of Worcester, the extent to which his chronicle is an ecclesiastical history has been much disguised by the way in which it has been printed. In the manuscripts it begins with the incarnation of Christ, but because almost all of its material down to the mid-fifth century is derived from the world chronicle of Marianus Scotus the tendency has been to leave it out. Benjamin Thorpe's edition begins in 450, the point at which John begins to intrude English material: he omitted, moreover, almost all of the subsequent material that John derived from Marianus, much of which relates to the history of the Latin Church in general.<sup>42</sup> The new Oxford Medieval Texts edition will only go some way towards repairing this weakness,<sup>43</sup> and at present many readers of John have a misleading impression of the relative balance between the secular and the ecclesiastical in this work. Considered as a whole, the *Chronica chronicarum* is very much an ecclesiastical history. Since all of these historians were following (even if only to a limited extent) in the Eusebian tradition we might reasonably expect them, then, to invoke the rhetoric of heresy rather more often than they do.

It is likely, of course, that this absence is for the want of incidents in which English ecclesiastical authorities had actually named and condemned heretics. For although beliefs contrary to Catholic doctrine may well have made considerably

ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom and Rodney M. Thomson, *Saints' Lives*, OMT (Oxford, 2002), pp. 166-303, at 166-67, where *Egregie et pulchre dictum si esset catholicum!* is rendered as 'That would be a very fine saying, if it were not heretical'; and *ibid.*, i.21 (pp. 212-13), where *male credere*, 'to believe wrongly', is rendered as 'to be heretical'. A rare passage where William does deploy the concept of heresy occurs in his discussion of the British among the fragments of his lost *Vita S. Patricii*, in *ibid.*, pp. 316-43, at 324.

<sup>39</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, iii.284-85.

<sup>40</sup> See further Greenway's Introduction to *Historia Anglorum*, pp. lxxxvi-lxxxix.

<sup>41</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, I, prol. 3.

<sup>42</sup> *Florentii Wigorniensis Monachi Chronicon ex Chronicis*, English Historical Society Publications 13, 2 vols. (London, 1848-9).

<sup>43</sup> Vols. I and 3 report all the Marianus material from 450 onwards; vol. I, which has still to appear, will include extracts from the annals for A.D. 1 to 450.

more progress in England in the period before the 1160s than is now apparent, it is authority that makes such beliefs heresy. Heretics are created when individuals or communities are corrected by the Church yet refuse to accept that correction: 'heresy', as Robert Grosseteste is said to have defined it, 'is a tenet chosen on human impulse, contrary to Holy Scripture, openly declared, and *obstinately defended*'.<sup>44</sup> In England, however, no such confrontations would seem to have taken place until 1166, when the members of a Cathar mission from Germany were tried and condemned at Clarendon.<sup>45</sup> That this trial was unprecedented for England is suggested by the way which Roger, bishop of Worcester (1163-79), wrote to Gilbert Foliot in 1165 seeking advice about what to do with these 'weavers'. So novel was the event that he was at a loss as to how to deal with it,<sup>46</sup> and the missionaries spent some time in prison before they were brought to trial. This episode generated, moreover, numerous reports in the chronicles covering the period, most notably in that by William of Newburgh.<sup>47</sup> It can be argued, therefore, that the historians of the post-Conquest period would have reported more heresy episodes had they taken place; that they did not was because there were no such events to report. But this cannot be the complete explanation. It is important to remember that earlier historians such as Bede and Gregory of Tours had written about heresy even though they had flourished in contexts where actual confrontations between heretics and bishops were all but unknown. There were, moreover, a couple of episodes of intellectual heresy in this period that ought, arguably, to have been given some attention because, even if they did not take place in England, English prelates were involved in them.

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<sup>44</sup> Thus, Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H. R. Luard, RS 57, 7 vols. (London, 1872-283), vol. 5, p. 401: 'Hæresis est sententia humano sensu electa, Scripturæ Sacræ contraria, palam edocta, *pertinaciter defensa*' (emphasis added). On the context in which Grosseteste is supposed to have articulated this definition, see Richard W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste. The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1986), p. 292.

<sup>45</sup> For the judgement of the Assize, see Whitelock, Brett and Brooke, *Councils and Synods*, pp. 925-26.

<sup>46</sup> Zachary N. Brooke, Adrian Morey and Christopher N. L. Brooke (eds), *The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot, abbot of Gloucester (1139-48), bishop of Hereford (1148-63), and London (1163-87)* (Cambridge, 1967), nos. 157-8; Adrian Morey and Christopher N. L. Brooke, *Gilbert Foliot and his Letters*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought 11 (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 241-43.

<sup>47</sup> *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, ii. 13, ed. R. Howlett, *Chronicles of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, RS 82 (4 vols, London, 1884-89), vol. I, pp. 131-4). For a thorough discussion of this incident and the records it generated, see Peter Biller, 'William of Newburgh and the Cathar Mission to England', in Diana Wood (ed.), *Life and Thought in the Northern Church c.1100 – c.1700: Essays in honour of Claire Cross*, SCH: Subsidia 12 (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 11-30.

One of these is the Berengar episode.<sup>48</sup> One of its major protagonists, Lanfranc of Pavia, went on to become archbishop of Canterbury from 1072 to 1089, yet it is only historians based in Normandy, such as Orderic Vitalis, who celebrate his contribution to the defeat of Berengar. A monk of mixed Anglo-Norman descent writing at the Abbey of Saint-Evroult in Normandy, Orderic assigns to Lanfranc the leading role in the events that led eventually to the final condemnation of Berengar at the Lateran Synod of 1079. He describes how the Italian prelate worsted Berengar with his 'spiritual eloquence' in debates held at Rome, Vercelli and Tours, 'forcing him to pronounce anathema on all heresy and to profess the true faith in writing'. When Berengar later revived his false ideas about the Eucharist, Lanfranc responded again, this time with 'a treatise in a lucid and elegant style, heavy with quotations from Scripture and the Fathers, strictly logical in its deductions from the premisses, abounding in proofs of the true meaning of the Eucharist, distinguished in eloquence, but containing nothing superfluous'.<sup>49</sup> Orderic's treatment of this episode is echoed in several hagiographical texts from the Norman abbey of Bec, over which Lanfranc had presided as a prior and school master from around 1045 to 1060: that is, in the *Vita Lanfranci* thought to have been written by Milo Crispin around 1135,<sup>50</sup> and in a collection of the Miracles of St Nicholas thought to have been compiled around 1140 at Bec's priory of Conflans near Paris.<sup>51</sup> In contrast, the episode is ignored by all the English

<sup>48</sup> On the episode, see now H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Lanfranc: Scholar, Monk, and Archbishop* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 59274; Margaret Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 63-97; Richard W. Southern, 'Lanfranc of Bec and Berengar of Tours', in R. W. Hunt, W. A. Partin and Richard W. Southern (eds.) *Studies in Medieval History presented to F. M. Powicke* (Oxford, 1948), pp. 27248; Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983), pp. 273-315, and the other works cited here.

<sup>49</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. and trs. Marjorie Chibnall, OMT (6 vols, Oxford, 1968280), vol. 4, pp. 25123. It should be noted that this is the only passage where Orderic shows a sustained interest in heresy, although he uses the term a number of times, mostly to refer to the sin of simony or to that of rebellion against the authority of pope (e.g. *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 238; vol 3, pp. 58, 64, 72; vol. 4, pp. 10, 26). But note also the curious and as yet unexplained reference to a tithe-paying knight of William Pantulf called *Rodbertus hereticus* (*ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 156-7). How did this surname arise? On Orderic's concept of heresy and his sense of its role in ecclesiastical history, see Marjorie Chibnall, 'A Twelfth-Century View of the Historical Church: Orderic Vitalis', in Robert Swanson (ed.), *The Church Retrospective*, SCH 33 (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 115-34 (esp. 125); Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 160266.

<sup>50</sup> *Vita magni gloriosi Lanfranci Cantuariensium archiepiscopi* (BHL 4719), § 3, ed. Margaret Gibson in Giulio d'Onofrio (ed.), *Lanfranco di Pavia e l'Europa del secolo XI nel IX centenario della morte (1089-1989)*, Italia sacra: studi e documenti di storia ecclesiastica 51 (Rome, 1993), pp. 667-715, at 669-73.

<sup>51</sup> *Miracula Sancti Nicholai* (BHL 6208), printed in *Catalogus codicum*

historians except William of Malmesbury. This is even true of the Canterbury historian Eadmer, whose *Historia novorum* includes a long eulogy celebrating Lanfranc's achievements.<sup>52</sup>

Another episode of intellectual heresy which ought arguably to have been reported since it again involved an archbishop of Canterbury is the exchange between Anselm and another pioneer of dialectical theology, Roscelin of Compiègne. It is true that Roscelin had avoided condemnation for heresy by declaring his orthodoxy at the Council of Soissons (held between 1090 and May 1092), but he had resumed teaching his views about the Trinity soon afterwards, possibly during a visit to England. Anselm responded by issuing a new version of his *Epistola de incarnatione uerbi* in which he clearly implied that his opponent was a heretic, though he did not identify him by name.<sup>53</sup> Eadmer, alone of the English historians in this period,<sup>54</sup> celebrates the composition of this work, but he does so without explaining the context in which it was written.<sup>55</sup>

#### 4. Some Hypotheses

It is possible that part of the explanation for the thin treatment of these episodes is that the issues involved were simply too difficult for our historians. By the twelfth century the Benedictines had begun to lag behind the great cathedral schools in the intellectual training which they offered to their monks,<sup>56</sup> but in general the kind of

*hagiographorum latinorum antiquiorum saeculo XVI qui asservantur in bibliotheca nationali Parisiensi*, Subsidia Hagiographica 2 (3 vols, Brussels, 1889-93), vol. 2, pp. 405-32. This work draws heavily on Gilbert Crispin's *Vita Herluini* and the *Vita Lanfranci* whilst adding further detail. See Gibson, *Lanfranc*, p. 199.

<sup>52</sup> *Historia novorum in Anglia*, ed. Martin Rule, RS 81 (London, 1884), pp. 10-23.

Franciscus S. Schmitt (ed.), *Sancti Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia* (6 vols, Edinburgh, 1946-61), vol. 2, pp. 1-17 (esp. 4). For the context, see Constant J. Mews, 'St Anselm and Roscelin of Compiègne: Some New Texts and Their Implications: II. A Vocalist Essay on the Trinity and Intellectual Debate c. 1080-1120', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 65 (1998): 39-90 (esp. 41-45, and the other works cited there).

<sup>54</sup> The full implications of this episode may not, however, have been clear to William of Malmesbury, since he knew the milder, first, edition of *De incarnatione uerbi*, which he copied into London, Lambeth Palace, MS 224. See Rodney M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 87289.

<sup>55</sup> *Vita S. Anselmi, archiepiscopi Cantuariensis* (BHL 526a), ii.10, ed. W. Southern, *The Life of St Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury*, OMT (2nd edn, London, 1972), pp. 1-145, at 72-73): 'egregium et pro illius temporis statu pernecessarium opus *De Incarnatione Verbi* composuit'.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Robert Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Manchester, 1999), p. 120.



reportage given to heresy in medieval chronicles does not require a deep understanding of the intellectual issues, and, in any case, this point cannot apply to a writer as capable and as well read as William of Malmesbury. Stronger explanations for the absence of the rhetoric of heresy from post-Conquest historiography are perhaps to be found in a profound change in the relationship between the English episcopate and the English historical community, which was largely comprised of Benedictine monks.

One element in this change was the withdrawal of the Benedictines from the pastoral sphere. In the conversion period, very few *monasteria* had been pure 'monasteries' in the high medieval sense; rather, they were hybrid institutions which combined many of the functions that would later be divided between the collegiate church and the monastery.<sup>57</sup> These 'minsters' were heavily involved in pastoral work: all had a complement of priests and deacons who were involved in the administration of baptism, marriage, the provision of various services, especially the mass and the burial of the dead. In some but not all cases, these priests and deacons also lived according to a monastic rule alongside people who might be more properly described as monks. It was through these institutions, moreover, that bishops directed pastoral work in their dioceses. In this period monastic and secular churches were so profoundly intertwined with one another that it was only natural that in the great minsters like the double monastery of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow there would be scholars like Bede who would take a strong interest in issues relating to pastoral work. This tradition of close involvement by the monastic order in the 'secular' Church remained strong throughout the pre-Conquest period, even through the ideological justifications that accompanied the 'monastic' reforms of the late tenth century required the differentiation of authentic monasteries from houses of secular canons.<sup>58</sup>

Though England's monastic cathedral chapters survived attempts to bring about their replacement with colleges of secular canons,<sup>59</sup> the Norman Conquest greatly accelerated the trend towards a separation of monastic and pastoral spheres.<sup>60</sup> In part this was achieved by the great proliferation of parish churches in

<sup>57</sup> See esp. Henry R. Loyn, *The English Church, 940-1154* (London, 2000), pp. 28-29; John Blair, 'Local Churches in Domesday Book and Before', in James C. Holt (ed.), *Domesday Studies* (Woodbridge, 1987), 265-78; John Blair (ed.), *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition, 950-1200* (Oxford, 1988); and the debate between Eric Cambridge, David Rollason, John Blair and David Palliser in *Early Medieval Europe*, 4 (1995): 87-104 and 193-212.

<sup>58</sup> See Eadmer, *Historia novorum*, pp. 18-22; Loyn, *The English Church*, pp. 87-97.

<sup>59</sup> See Cowdrey, *Lanfranc*, pp. 149-50, 160-63.

<sup>60</sup> A curious sidelight on this process is provided by William of Malmesbury's *Vita S. Wulfstani* (BHL 8756), i.8.2, ed. Winterbottom and Thomson, *Saints' Lives*, pp. 8-155, at 36, where the English saint is found, in the period when he was still prior of Worcester, having to vindicate himself for preaching in public after he is criticised for doing so by a

the century after 1066, but a more crucial element for present purposes was the emergence of separate episcopal households at the monastic cathedrals. Whereas the later Anglo-Saxon bishop had almost invariably come from a monastic background and was expected to live among the monks attached to his cathedral, the post-Conquest bishop was typically a secular cleric whose route to episcopal office had been through service at the royal court.<sup>61</sup> The prince-bishops of the Norman era lived apart from their monks, and relied on the clerks of their households for help in the administration of their dioceses. Thus, even at the monastic cathedrals, monks were increasingly isolated from the work of bishops. This deepening divide is reflected in the attitudes of England's monastic historians towards their bishops. In their works, bishops figure less often as allies in the work of the Church than as enemies of monastic communities in their struggles to protect their rights and properties.<sup>62</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that the rhetoric of heresy, which is a discourse that had generally redounded to the benefit of episcopal authority, should be largely absent from their work.

As if to prove the point, one of the few English historical texts of this period which deploys the rhetoric of heresy without restraint is one which was produced in an episcopal context. The work in question is a collection of the miracles of St Erkenwald which was compiled around 1140 by Arcoïd, a canon of St Paul's Cathedral, London, and a nephew of its bishop, Gilbert the Universal (1128-34).<sup>63</sup> It includes at the conclusion of one of its miracle stories a long diatribe against

foreigner, a 'German' monk called Winrich. Significantly, his criticisms reflect the reforming attitudes which were becoming current in the post-Conquest period when William was at work: 'A monk's role is silence in the cloister, not assaulting the ears of the people with sermons as melodramatic as the gestures that accompanied them'.

<sup>61</sup> Compare the processes of appointment and administration discussed by Stephanie Moers Christelow, 'Chancellors and Curial Bishops: Ecclesiastical Power in Anglo-Norman England', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 22 (2000): 49-69, and Everett U. Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter in Twelfth-Century England: A Study of the 'Mena Episcopalis'*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 4th ser. 23 (Cambridge, 1994), with those described by the still fundamental R. R. Darlington, 'Ecclesiastical Reform in the Late Old English Period', *English Historical Review*, 51 (1936): 386-428.

<sup>62</sup> Note, for example, the striking comparison between seventh- and twelfth-century bishops drawn by the author of the twelfth-century *Vita sanctissimi et gloriosissimi regis Deirorum Oswini* (BHL 6382): 'Nec erant tunc temporis pontifices ut nunc, uel diuitiarum affluentia insolentes, uel uestium preciosarum pomposo fastu, etiam diuitibus secularibus preeminentes, sed pauperes spiritu' (Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 134, fol. 12r). On the composition of this work, see my 'Sanctity and Lordship in Twelfth-Century England: Saint Albans, Durham, and the Cult of Saint Oswine, King and Martyr', *Viator*, 30 (1999): 105-44.

<sup>63</sup> *Miracula S. Erkenwaldi* (BHL 2601), ed. E. Gordon Whatley, *The Saint of London: The Life and Miracles of St Erkenwald* (Binghampton, 1989), pp. 100-65. For the dating of the work, see *ibid.*, pp. 36-40.

Vigilantius of Calagurris, an early fifth-century cleric who had been condemned by Jerome for questioning the practice of venerating the bodily remains of the saints: 'So blush with shame, Vigilantius, worst of heretics...' <sup>64</sup> This outburst, which is far too long to quote here, is most unusual for an English miracle collection of this period. To be sure, stories directed against those who expressed doubt about the validity of the cult of saints are quite common in post-Conquest miracle collections, <sup>65</sup> but only rarely is such scepticism stigmatized as heresy. The editor of the collection has plausibly suggested that this passage was 'less an attack on the long-dead pamphleteer... than on the many and various revivers and developers of his ideas who were active in Arcoid's own time'. <sup>66</sup> Early twelfth-century heretics such as Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys are known to have been sceptical about the material aspects of the cult of saints, <sup>67</sup> and it is tempting to suggest that their ideas had reached London. Indeed, if heresy were in England, the most likely place to find them is a mercantile centre such as this city. London certainly enjoyed strong trading links with the Low Countries and the Rhineland — that is, with the major growth areas for heretical movements during the first half of the twelfth century. <sup>68</sup> A better explanation may be, however, that Arcoid is using the rhetoric of heresy to attack the everyday materialism of the local population. Observers based in the city — such as Peter of Cornwall, prior of Holy Trinity, Aldgate (1197-1221) — certainly report that indifference to the basic tenets of the Christian faith was widespread in their world. <sup>69</sup> But whatever the actual explanation for its composition, it is telling that the author of this diatribe was a cathedral canon rather than a Benedictine hagiographer.

However, the general movement of the Benedictines out of the pastoral sphere cannot explain the absence of similar rhetoric from the works of historians such as Eadmer and Henry of Huntingdon. Eadmer was, after all, Archbishop Anselm's secretary, whilst Henry was the archdeacon of Huntingdon. Thus, it may be suggested that the most important factor in this absence in the work of English historians between 1066 and 1154 is the Conquest itself, since it brought about the

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., § 4, pp. 126-29.

<sup>65</sup> For example, Goscelin of Canterbury, *Miracula S. Ivonis* (BHL 4622), ed. W. D. Macray, *Chronicon Abbatiae Ramesiensis*, RS 83 (London, 1886), pp. lxxi-lxxii.

<sup>66</sup> Whatley, *Saint of London*, p. 55.

<sup>67</sup> Marcia L. Colish, 'Peter of Bruys, Henry of Lausanne, and the Facade of St-Gilles', *Traditio*, 28 (1972): 451-59.

See Biller, 'Newburgh and the Cathar Mission', 23-25; Biller, 'The Northern Cathars and Higher Learning', in Peter Biller and R. B. Dobson (eds.), *The Medieval Church: Universities, Heresy, and the Religious Life. Essays in Honour of Gordon Leff SCH: Subsidia* 11 (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 25-53.

<sup>69</sup> *Liber revelationum*, in London, Lambeth Palace, MS 51, fol. 2r. On Peter and his work, see C. S. Nicholls et al. (eds.), *The Dictionary of National Biography: Missing Persons* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 519220.

appointment of Normans to all the major episcopal and abbatial offices, whilst the majority of the historians working in England during this period (and here we can include Henry of Huntingdon) were men of lesser rank who identified with the English and their suffering.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, the effect of the Norman takeover on these historians' use of the rhetoric of heresy can be seen in William of Malmesbury's treatment of Lanfranc's role in the defeat of Berengar of Tours, for his approach could not be more different from that of Orderic and the monks of Bec.

To put it more fully, William's view of Lanfranc was shaped by the part which the Italian prelate had played in the Norman colonisation of the English Church.<sup>71</sup> It was at synods held under his authority during the 1070s and 1080s that one English abbot or bishop after another had been deposed. However, William was prevented from openly criticising Lanfranc by the very real dangers involved in showing disrespect for the Norman regime.<sup>72</sup> It is true that he was writing in the 1120s, some three generations after the Battle of Hastings, but those who had benefited from the dispossession of the English were still anxious to defend its legitimacy and the reputations of their ancestors. Thus, William is compelled to treat figures such as Lanfranc as great men, but he subtly subverts his praise by mixing it with innuendo, as in the following passage:

Nor was Odo far wrong [in his suspicion that Lanfranc had played a role in his imprisonment], for once when William was complaining to Lanfranc of his brother's treachery, the archbishop's reply was: 'Arrest him and lock him up!' 'What!' , said the king, 'a clergyman?' The archbishop laughed, balancing, as Persius says, 'charge against charge in neat antithesis'. 'No', he retorted, 'you will not be arresting the bishop of Bayeux, you will be taking into custody the earl of Kent'.<sup>73</sup>

This passage needs to be read in conjunction with William's many cynical comments about the power of rhetoric, about the ability of the eloquent to manipulate those around them.<sup>74</sup> William's insinuation was that Lanfranc was, like other rhetoricians, a clever and sometimes quite sinister man who provided words to justify the policies of the moment no matter how dubious their morality. Indeed, he makes Lanfranc's complicity in the regime all but explicit in a long passage which, in a wiser moment, he cut out of later editions of his *Gesta pontificum*.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. Elizabeth M. C. Van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200* (Basingstoke, 1999), esp. pp. 138-9.

<sup>71</sup> The points made in this paragraph are developed further in my, 'William of Malmesbury on the Saints of the Anglo-Saxon (and Norman) Churches' (forthcoming).

<sup>72</sup> Cf. *Gesta regum*, iv, prefatio.

<sup>73</sup> *Gesta regum*, iv.306. See, similarly, *ibid.*, iii.267.

<sup>74</sup> E.g. *Gesta Regum*, v.406: 'General considerations can be adapted to either side of an argument according to the skill of the advocate'. Likewise, *ibid.*, iii.238.7-8.

<sup>75</sup> The passage has recently been rediscovered: see M. Winterbottom, 'A New

William's account of the Berengar episode is written in a similar vein. Here he twice damns Lanfranc with faint praise. He damns him a first time by contrasting his contribution with that of another Norman prelate, Guitmund of Aversa (d. 1094): Berengar 'was answered in books by Archbishop Lanfranc and, *with particular force*, by Guitmund... *the most eloquent man of our time*'.<sup>76</sup> Though Guitmund's treatise was generally regarded as being better than Lanfranc's,<sup>77</sup> William might, like Orderic, have ignored this. The implication is that Lanfranc's contribution was second-rate. Moreover, having reduced the archbishop's role to a single sentence, William damns Lanfranc a second time by going on to explore Berengar's merits at great length. Indeed, he seems almost to want to exculpate him. Though he begins by saying that Berengar was a 'heresiarch' and with a summary account of how his teachings were condemned by Popes Leo IX and Gregory VII, he goes on to emphasise his change of heart: 'In fact, though Berengar disgraced himself in the warmth of early manhood by defending some heresies, he repented as he grew more austere, to such effect that he is unhesitatingly held by some to be a saint, recommended by countless good qualities, humility and almsgiving in particular'.<sup>78</sup> After more comments to similar effect, he then quotes at length the obituary composed in Berengar's honour by Hildebert of Le Mans,<sup>79</sup> and in the comments that follow the poem he emphasises his humility at the moment of his death — his remorse that his teachings had once led men astray. William's treatment of this episode reflects a deep unwillingness to credit Lanfranc with the honour and authority that was to be derived from having helped to vindicate catholic orthodoxy. It seems likely that jealousy arising from

Passage of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum*', *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 11 (2001): 50-59. I am grateful to Rod Thomson for alerting me to this discovery.

<sup>76</sup> *Gesta regum*, iii.284, alluding to Guitmund of Aversa, *De corporis et sanguinis Christi veritate*, ed. Luciano Orabona, *La Verna dell'Eucharista* (Naples, 1995). Guitmund is also known from Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ii, 270-79, as someone who had refused an offer from William the Conqueror of a bishopric in England on the basis that it would be sinful to accept the 'spoils of plunder'. Doubt is sometimes expressed about this story as Guitmund later accepted the bishopric of Aversa, but by 1088 this town had been in Norman hands for over fifty years and he was appointed to the office by Pope Urban II (*ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 280-81). The words that Orderic puts in Guitmund's mouth are certainly fictitious, but the story may still derive from an actual event. It would be nice if it could be shown that this event was known to William and his audience, since it would lend richness to the comparison he makes; but even if the event was not as famous as Orderic suggests, there is no denying the element of faint praise in William's account.

Cf. Peter the Venerable, *Contra Petrobusianos hereticos*, § 153, ed. J. Fearn, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, vol. 10 (Turnhout, 1968), pp. 87-88.

<sup>78</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum*, iii.284.

<sup>79</sup> *Carmina minora*, ed. A. Brian Scott, Bibliotheca Teubneriana (Leipzig, 1969), no. 18, pp. 7-9.

this source is one reason why the Eucharistic controversy was ignored by the other major English historians of this period.

In short, the near total absence of the rhetoric of heresy from the new wave of historical writing that emerged in the first half of the twelfth century is significant. Heresy was a central topic of ecclesiastical history, and its omission from works in this tradition needs to be explained. In the present case the key factors seem to have been less a lack of interest in the issue or an inability to understand the new doctrinal heresies of the period than the great array of political and institutional changes which divorced the historians at work in England from those who would have benefitted from the deployment of the rhetoric of heresy. For the most part the latter were the great Norman prelates of the day, but the majority of the historians at work in England in the century after the Conquest spoke for those who resented the authority of these men.