

**The Passagini:  
Sabbatarians  
of the Middle Ages**

**Kelly McDonald, Jr.**



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First Edition Published October 2021

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## **Introduction**

Starting in the eleventh century, a movement began to stir among the common people of Western Europe. The traditional institutions of religion available to them were not satisfying their spiritual needs. Pockets of groups began to spring up in France and other cities throughout the surrounding countries. By the latter part of the twelfth century, specific groups had formed with distinct doctrines. They emerged as alternatives to the Roman Church.

The Roman Church authorities responded to the threat posed by these groups by holding regional councils that formally condemned them as heretics. Additionally, they sent agents into these areas to convert heretics away from their beliefs. As these initial tactics proved to be unsuccessful, the Roman Church enlisted the help of secular rulers to harass, arrest, and even kill these dissidents. This struggle grabbed the attention of the highest authorities in Europe, including the pope, kings, and the Western Roman Emperor.

Among the non-conformist Christian groups that formed during the twelfth century were the Passagini (variant names: Pasagini, Passaginos, Pasagii, Passagii). They were distinct in that they took principles first established in the Old Testament and literally applied them. This included obedience to the seventh-day Sabbath.

In this study, we will review the primary sources relating to the Passagini. Admittedly, there are not many primary sources that mention this group. However, we will extract as much as we can from what we have available. We will also expand our approach to include the sources leading up to the appearance of the Passag-

ini, the events during the time that they were active, and even the events after their disappearance.

This approach will allow us to better understand this group, but also to paint a broader picture of what this era of time was like for the Passagini and similar groups. What factors contributed to their development? Did the political environment contribute to their existence? What prior religious movements could have contributed to their development? By examining these and other questions, we will be able to view the overall atmosphere of this era. This study will also provide a template for us to study other non-conformist groups of the Middle Ages.

# Chapter 1

## Antecedents

The Passagini are first mentioned in a letter written by Pope Lucius III in 1183 (some say 1184). In it, they are mentioned alongside six other non-conformist groups. Another source from near that date mention some specific beliefs for the Passagini. During that era of time, a religious group with a defined belief system did not spring up overnight. It took years for a cohesive group to form and develop.

To understand the rise of the Passagini (as well as other groups), it is important to understand antecedents or events that occurred leading up to the time in which they are mentioned. A series of events were set into place over many years that merged in the twelfth century. They created an environment by which these non-conformist groups could exist and spread, at least for a time.

There are nine antecedents we will review in this chapter. Roman Law, Canon Law, Intertwining of Roman Church and Western Roman Empire, Conflict Between Roman Church and Western Roman Empire, Moral Decay of the Roman Church, Complexity of the Roman Church Practices, the Crusades, the Independent Spirit of Lombardy, and Judaism in Lombardy. Some of these I will group together because they are intertwined.

(Side note: The Roman Church labeled non-conformist groups like the Passagini as heretics, which is a term used to demean them. At times I may use the term heretics because the primary sources refer to them in this manner. This does not mean that I view them in that light.)

### **Roman Law and Canon Law**

The first antecedent that must be examined is Roman Law. The Codex Theodosianus (CT) was a code of laws issued during the reign of Theodosius II about 438/439 AD. It was a compilation of Roman laws decreed between the years 311 and 438. In it, we learn about key source material for the persecution of heretics in

the Middle Ages.

Constantine brought the Roman Church under the control of the Roman State through laws that governed church operations. Mechanisms of the church, such as qualifications for offices like deacon or what classes of people could be priests, were enshrined and governed by these laws. Below, I have summarized some of these laws:

He ruled that clergy and their families did not have to pay taxes (CT: 16.2.10, Pharr notes that this law properly belongs to 320 AD). By law, people were allowed to leave property to the Roman Church at death (CT: 16.2.4 [321]). In 326, he decreed that the Roman Church were to be allowed special privileges. All other Christian groups were not allowed these privileges and were bound to public service (CT: 16.5.1). He regulated the number of clergy in Christianity (CT: 16.2.6 [326]). The wealthy were prevented from serving in the clergy; only the poor could serve in those positions (CT: 16.2.6 [326 or 329]). He prevented clerics from being summoned to municipal councils for public service (CT: 16.2.6, 16.2.7 [330]). Secular judges were required to enforce the decisions of Roman Catholic Bishops; when such a bishop testified or judged, their witness was considered supreme and voided all others (CS: 1 [333]).

Despite such a strong support for the Roman Church (which waned in his later years), Constantine only issued two known laws against heresy. It was during the reign of Theodosius I (379-395 AD) that that the intermingling of Roman Church and Roman State was taken to another level. In 380, Theodosius tried to force all Christians to become Roman Catholic and submit to the authority of the Bishop of Rome (CT: 16.1.2). During his reign, at least twenty laws against heretics/heresy were written. Another 42 laws were enacted after his reign.

Book 16, Title 5 contains the laws against heretics. Below, I have summarized some of the punitive actions found in this portion of the codex that were enacted against people who disagreed with the Roman Church (I have included the year of the law in parenthesis):

Section 1: Privileges were withheld and compulsory service (326

AD).

Section 3: A specific group called Manichaens were declared **infamous\*** (372).

\* Term infamous was a technical term in Roman Law.

Section 4: Assemblies of heretics were banned (376 or 378).

Section 5: Bishops, priests, deacons were punished for spreading or meeting views contrary to the Roman Church (379).

Section 6: Arians, Photians, Eunomians and other groups were forced to confess the Nicene creed or be condemned as guilty of heresy. They were driven from cities and their buildings were given to those that confess the Nicene faith (381).

Section 7: Manichaeans were banned from having wills or receiving or leaving an inheritance. Their property was confiscated and given to the royal treasury. The law was made retroactive so that they could immediately deprive others of their property. The children of Manichaeans could receive an inheritance if they abandoned that heresy. A list of alternative names that Manichaeans may be found under was also given: Encratites, Apotactites, Hydroparastatae, or Saccophori (381).

The first Roman law in this title to sanction heretics to be hunted down was section 31 (396). In section 34, the books of heretics were to be burned with fire (398). In section 40, heresy was declared a public crime (407). In section 41, an opportunity to repent was granted to heretics before being punished (407). The death penalty was eventually prescribed (section 56, 410).

Over time, other groups such as the Nestorians were added to the list of banned sects. Buildings were taken away in various sections. Re-Baptism was outlawed in Title 6 of the same book (to read book 16, title 5, see pp 450-463 in Pharr).

In title four of the same book, we learn that Theodosius ordered draconian laws against teachings contra the Roman Church. In 386, he pronounced that those who disrupted the peace of the Church were to be charged with treason and put to death (16.4.1). Two years later, he enacted a law that people were not allowed to

quarrel or discuss religions matters in public (16.4.2). If they violated this precept, then they would be punished. Anyone caught disturbing the “Catholic faith” was to be exiled (16.4.3 [392]).

The laws of Theodosius’ I reign targeted non-Trinitarian groups. As fanatical as these laws may seem, they were often not carried out. It seems that he wanted to intimidate people into changing their views about God. Sozomen, a Christian historian, wrote the following about Theodosius:

“The emperor, after receiving their formularies, expressed himself in favor of that one alone in which consubstantiality of the Trinity was recognized...[he] enacted a law, prohibiting heretics from holding churches, from giving public instructions in the faith, and from conferring ordination on bishops or others. Some of the herodox were expelled from the cities and villages, while others were disgraced and deprived of the privileges enjoyed by other subjects of the empire. Great as were the punishments adjudged by the laws against heretics, they were not always carried into execution, for the emperor had no desire to persecute his subjects; he only desired to enforce uniformity of view about God through the medium of intimidation...” (*Church History*, 7:12).

A number of these same laws were preserved in the monumental update to Roman Law during the reign of Justinian called the *Corpus Juris Civilis* or Codex Justinus (530s AD). Book 1 of this codex repeated Theodosius’ law of 380 that forced everyone to become Roman Catholic. Similar decrees followed. Book 1, Title 5 addressed heretics. In it, more laws from Codex Theodosianus were repeated. However, there were several laws added which are very severe. The fact that these laws were placed at the forefront of the codex re-emphasized the interconnectedness of Roman Church and Roman State. The Codex Justinus became a major standard for European law from then until modern times.

Roman law was one basis for Canon law in the Catholic Church. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia: “The civil law of different nations, and especially the Roman law, may be numbered among the accessory sources of canon law.” The article goes on to state that the Roman Church for centuries did not have any system of law for itself. During the middle ages, such a system was developed. “Later when the canonists of the twelfth century be-

gan to systemize the ecclesiastical law, they found themselves in presence, on the one hand, of a fragmentary canon law, and on the other hand of the complete methodical Roman code; they had recourse to the latter to supply what was wanting in the former, whence the maxim was adopted by the canonists and inserted in the Corpus Juris (of Justinian), that the Church acts according to Roman law when canon is silent” (article: Canon Law).

Roman Catholic leaders as well as temporal rulers often referred to heretics with a name previously found in Roman law, such as Manichean, Arian, Nestorian, etc. As we look at the primary sources in the following chapters, this will be apparent. They did this to prove that the basis for charging these peoples was anchored in ancient Roman law.

At the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelve centuries, a revival of Roman law occurred in Western Europe. Eventually clergy studied it. About the same time, a revival of canon law also occurred. Collections of early church synods and councils were also studied and organized in a fashion like Roman law to compose the Decretum of Gratian. The fuller, more developed Roman law allowed the Catholic Church to fill in the gaps of canon law. As Roman law was incorporated into papal decrees and letters in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it became more firmly entrenched into Church law. During the time of Pope Gregory IX (1234-1235), a comprehensive work on prior canon law was composed; it is known as the decretals of Gregory IX. This work on Church law was monumental and used until about the time of World War I.

The Roman Church viewed itself as connected to the original Roman Empire, but so did the Western Roman Empire of the Middle Ages. The revival of Roman law in the Empire and in the Roman Church occurred simultaneously with the rise of heresy in Europe. The Roman Church and the Western Roman Empire used Roman Law as a source from which to derive their response to heresy. These laws gave the church some of the power it wielded so heavily in the Middle Ages and beyond.

### **Intertwining of Roman Church and Western Roman Empire and Conflict Between Church and Empire**

The Western Roman Empire proper was briefly interrupted in 476

AD when Odoacer overthrew the Romulus Augustulus. Many of the institutions of Rome, such as the Senate and Roman Law, continued to operate despite this change in leadership. Odoacer was displaced by Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, in 493. He also allowed many Roman institutions to continue. After Theodoric's death in 526, strife arose within the Ostrogoth camp.

The Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian was zealous to reinstitute the borders of the original Roman Empire (or as much as he could recover). He conquered much of northern Africa from the Vandals and then proceeded to invade Italy. Though it took some time, by 553 much of the peninsula was recovered from the Ostrogoths. Justinian's legate, or representative, ruled from Ravenna in the northeastern part of the country.

While it seemed that Justinian's initial goal was achieved, it was not long lived. In about 568, the Germanic tribe called the Lombards invaded Italy and took over much of the northern and central parts of the peninsula. They made the northern Italian city of Pavia their capital. Much of the Italian coastlands and southern Italy, including the city of Rome, remained in Eastern Roman control. The land still under their hegemony was called the Exarchate of Ravenna. The Lombards gradually took away land from the Exarchate. Until the mid-eighth century, the city of Rome and its surrounding territory was under the protection of the Eastern Roman Emperors.

The Eastern Roman Emperors Leo III and Constantine IV (717-775) shifted away from their support of the Roman Church. First, they accepted iconoclasm. This means that they banned religious images, statues, and icons; these items were either removed from places of worship or destroyed. This position created much hostility with the papacy as the Latin-controlled churches venerated images and icons. Secondly, the churches in the Eastern Roman Empire began to develop divergent views from the Roman churches in the West on subjects such as marriage and the Sabbath. The Roman Church moved towards celibacy for the clergy, whereas the Eastern Church allowed them to marry. The Roman Church instituted fasting on the Sabbath, whereas the Eastern Church still considered it a feast day. The first two factors led to a third one. When the Lombards attempted to overthrow the city of Rome in the 750s, the Eastern Roman Emperors abandoned it and

their land holdings in the northern half of Italy.

When these events unfolded, Pope Stephen II (or III) was forced to find a capable ruler to deliver the city from the Lombard siege. He crossed the Alps and requested assistance from Pepin, King of the Franks. Stephen anointed Pepin and his sons Patricians, which was an ancient Roman title, and proclaimed them protectors of the Romans. Pepin then led his troops into Italy and defeated the Lombards. He also gave the pope some of the lands abandoned by the Eastern Roman Empire, which included the city of Rome and the northern and central portions of the Exarchate of Ravenna. This land gift became known as the Donation of Pepin.

This made Pope Stephen the first pope-king, as he became the chief spiritual and temporal ruler over those lands. While this seemed like a noble gift from Pepin, it would become a source of great conflict for the Pope and other temporal rulers in later years. Because the Pope controlled large amounts of land in Italy, he would eventually become a competitor to other feudal lords in the way of raising armies, taxes, prestige, and controlling travel and trade on the Italian peninsula.

In the 770s, the Lombards threatened Rome again. Pope Adrian I called upon the son of Pepin, Charlemagne, to honor his commitment to protect the city. He agreed and subdued the Lombard tribe one last time. He affirmed the donation of Pepin; it then became known as the Donation of Charlemagne. This stretch of land in Italy later became known as the Papal States. Another event in history would cement the relationship between the Franks and the Roman Church.

The course of history was changed on Christmas Day, 800 AD. Pope Leo III anointed Charlemagne Emperor and Augustus. According to the papal view, the Western Roman Empire was restored by this act. Charlemagne was christened the protector of the Church and a source of promoting its spread into other lands. Coins minted during that time depict the name of both Leo and Charlemagne, which showed their closeness and cooperation.

This act set the following precedent: To be King of the Germans and Romans, one would be elected such by the diet or a meeting of nobles (later the college of electors). The Pope would then be-

stow the title of Roman Emperor to the elected King. This arrangement was originally designed to be beneficial to both parties.

As the Western Roman Empire conquered territories, it gave the Roman Church an opportunity to evangelize regions under the protection of the Empire. Dioceses could be established, churches built, new converts made and the church could subsequently grow its influence in the natural and spiritual realms. In return, they could preach the benefits and importance of obedience to the emperor. If pope and emperor had similar views of their respective roles in this arrangement, then the two could work together for mutual benefit.

During the reign of Charlemagne, the canons of Church Councils and Synods were often repeated as civil laws or vice/versa. Charlemagne and later kings convened Church Councils to establish proper religious conduct for clergy and general population. For example, Charlemagne issued a series of general admonitions in 789. Among them is capitulary 81, which forced Sunday rest upon his subjects (*Capitularia*, Boretius, p. 61). When he conquered the Saxons, he issued capitularies for them (years 775-790). Among them was the admonition of Sunday rest (capitulary 18; *ibid*, p 69).

In 813, Charlemagne's life was coming to a close. He commanded several councils to be convened to establish his vision for proper Christian religious observances in his dominions. The cities included Mentz (or Mayence), Rheims, Tours, Chalons, and Arles. Each of them forbade work on Sunday. Some of these councils decried the neglect of observing Sunday. Court cases, servile work, and trade were forbidden (Arles, Canon 16 in Labbe, 7:1237; Chalons, Canon 15 in Labbe 7:1283, Mainz, Canon 37, Labbe 7:1250, Rheims, Canon 35, Labbe 7:1257, Tours, Canon 40 in Labbe 7:1267). This provides an example to see how the civil capitularies of the Charlemagne were included in the canons of Church Councils. Later councils, such as Ravenna in 898, repeated the command to obey the same capitularies.

As part of this effort, clergy were utilized by kings to help craft civil law. Certain clergy were also invited to the annual diet of German nobility. One church representative and one temporal

representative were appointed over every province in the Empire. To help govern this vast expanse of territory, Roman Church Bishops were given land grants by both the spiritual and temporal rulers over them.

Why might kings prefer bishops to be placed over territories rather than feudal lords? Feudal nobility often held hereditary positions. Trying to depose one of them often incurred violent conflict from other lords who each desired their own independence. By utilizing bishops, the kings could appoint or depose the position at will often with the support of feudal lords. They were used like pieces in a chess game.

The union of Germanic Kingdom and Roman Church also set the stage of for a monumental battle that took place over centuries. If either heads of these two entities – one temporal and the other spiritual – had divergent views about the proper place of Church and/or Empire, then great conflict would ensue. Sometimes a divergent view existed, but one party would not press the issue with the other. It required a delicate balance – one that did not always exist after Charlemagne.

Through this intertwining, Roman Church leaders could proclaim to the common people either obedience, disobedience, or outright rebellion against a ruler (including the emperor). The clergy could turn temporal rulers against each other, including against the emperor. The emperor might try to convince or compel the Roman Church leaders in a region to come against another temporal ruler, spiritual ruler, or even the pope himself.

Many of the policies of Charlemagne were continued by other powerful Emperors. The next strong Monarch and Western Roman Emperor was Otto I (the great). He sought to control the Church and use it as a tool of the state. This caused an imbalance in the union between the two powers. Otto influenced the nomination of bishops and abbots – either placing a favorable candidate in the position or deposing an unfavorable one. The royal courts were allowed to judge a bishop who violated the law (spiritual or civil). In the past, this situation was usually reserved for clergy to handle. The emperor had to approve Church Councils and Synods before they could be held. In essence, the Ottonian perspective was that all Roman Church authority must be un-

der submission to the Royal, Imperial authority. While Charlemagne did not take such an authoritarian view, it was his policies of merging church and state that enabled the Ottonian approach. Said another way, his reign established the precedents for Ottonian rulers. As went the monarch, so went the kingdom and the church.

There were attempts by the pope to break free from this control. Pope John XII betrayed an oath made to Otto I and then fomented revolt against him, but it was subdued. As a result, Otto required that a pope never be elected without royal approval. In one instance, a pope was approved without Otto's consent. He simply deposed that pope and put a favored candidate in his place. Papal power was weaker during this time both in morals and influence.

Otto I and his sons continued to protect Rome from threats. However, their control mechanisms were continued for a few generations. Otto II chose a pope, who was named John XIV. Otto III continued similar policies as his grandfather. He headed Church councils and synods, proclaimed to possess the right to cancel papal decrees (known as bulls), and influenced papal elections. For instance, he placed Gregory V (996) and Sylvester II (999) on the papal chair. Towards the end of his life, he unilaterally established a new Archbishop position.

After the death of Otto III, the Archbishop of Milan crowned Henry II king of Italy in 1004. He continued the Ottonian ideal of State controlling the Church. He deposed Bishops who did not yield to his imperial aims. Henry used Bishops to solidify his own power or even project that power in new ways. For instance, the See of Bamberg was unilaterally established by him. As time passed, he made some concessions to the Roman Church, but the church remained subservient to the empire.

The death of Henry II ended the Ottonian Dynasty. The election of Conrad II as Emperor started the Salian line of Emperors. Conrad continued many of Henry's same policies towards the church. However, his son Henry III made some different decisions that would mark a transition period; power gradually shifted back towards the Roman Church.

Henry III had a somewhat different view of the church than his

predecessors. He thoroughly implemented church discipline. He wanted the canons and laws of the Church to guide his royal principles. He allowed bishops to be subject to the authority of the Roman Church, which was a reversal of previous Ottonian policy. He thought that a pure church was important to help him be a better king.

But one way that Henry continued to imitate Emperors before him was regarding investitures. This was the power to invest a person with the title and benefits of bishop or abbot. The Catholic Encyclopedia defines investiture as “on the death of a bishop or abbot, the king was accustomed to select a successor and to bestow on him the ring and staff with the words: ‘accept this church’ (article: Investitures). He also controlled synods and councils and went so far as to make decisions in church affairs.

During this era, the Roman Church had a crisis of leadership. At one point, there were three men vying for the papal chair. In the past, the emperors would settle such disputes unilaterally, but Henry III took a different approach. He allowed the rightfully elected pope to decide the matter rather than interfere. Precedents such as this began to grant more autonomy to the Roman Church. Henry died in 1056.

Gregory VII (called Hildebrand) was elected pope in 1073. He began to press the issue of restoring more autonomy to the Roman Church. He wanted to reverse the policies of previous German rulers, especially those connected to investitures. During previous times, the pope did not have enough power and influence to overcome the royal authority. Things would quickly change.

Why did investitures exist? Recall from earlier in this chapter that bishops were made spiritual and temporal rulers in the original union of Roman Church/Western Roman Empire established during the reign of Charlemagne. This gave them much influence and power; they held great spiritual and temporal power as they ruled over swaths of land important to both papal and imperial designs. While the Empire had asserted its authority over these bishops for many years, Gregory VII now wanted to see the pendulum swing the other way. If successful, this would result in a blow to imperial power but an increase in papal power. In this way, the original Carolinian and Ottonian projects collided with papal concerns.

In 1074, Gregory forbade investitures. In some ways, this was a risky move as it was unprecedented for a pope to challenge the King of Germany, who was Henry IV, in such a manner. The next year, Gregory removed from the royal power any influence in setting up or removing bishops and abbots. In essence, lay persons (such as the king or emperor) were not allowed to perform investiture.

Gregory VII's move to stop royal control over the church would only work if one of two conditions existed: 1) the king would voluntarily submit to it or 2) enough temporal rulers could force the king to concede it. As one might expect, Henry IV continued to appoint Bishops unopposed. Gregory then set a deadline for the German King to cease the practice or be excommunicated and deprived of his kingdom.

In 1076, Gregory kept his word and followed through with the promised excommunication. He declared that all Christian subjects were released from any oaths to Henry. This was the first time in history that a pope tried such a tactic. In response, Henry held a diet and declared Gregory was not pope. This created the largest combat (up to that time) between pope and empire since its inception.

During this time, the notion that the Roman Church as the vehicle by which a true Christian worships God was deeply engrained in the common people and nobles. This means that loyalty to the spiritual authority of the pope superseded loyalty to Germanic Kingdom/Roman Empire. The bishops appointed by Henry were divided. On one hand, Henry appointed them. On the other hand, they viewed the pope as their ultimate spiritual authority.

The feudal nobility held a diet and required Henry's submission to the pope; the king consented. Then Gregory restored Henry, but trouble stirred in Germany. Some princes desired to overthrow Henry completely, and an anti-king was elected in 1077. In this conflict, the weakness of the feudal structure was exposed because the political enemies of Henry IV used this incident as an opportunity to weaken him.

Henry threatened that if the pope did not excommunicate this ri-

val king, he would raise up an anti-pope. In 1080, the pope excommunicated Henry again. This second excommunication was not received as well as the first one and the struggle continued. An anti-pope was set up. While Gregory called for assistance, Henry assaulted Rome multiple times and eventually took the city. He was crowned Emperor by the anti-pope in 1084. Gregory was forced to flee the city and lived in Southern Italy for a time where he died.

Gregory's goal was to restore autonomy to the Roman Church so that church matters were handled internally. Simultaneously, he wanted to remove civil authority/lay members from interfering in property and processes of the church. While this was not realized in his lifetime, it would come to fruition in the decades which followed.

After the death of Gregory, chaos reigned. Some areas were represented by two men, one pro-Henry and the other pro-Gregory. Through writing and preaching, each side expressed why their representative was right and the opposite side was wrong. A lull in the issue occurred, which was then revived by Urban II (1088-1099). He excommunicated Henry again over the same issue. Paschall II (1099-1118) followed the previous example and once again demanded the surrender of investitures. Henry spent his last years fighting against his own son and the princes who defected to Paschall's side. He died in 1106.

His son, Henry V appeared to take a different stance regarding investitures. For instance, he removed the bishops appointed by his father. Unfortunately for the pope, Henry's actions quickly changed; he returned to old practices. At that time, many clergy in Germany had no problem with investiture because it benefited them.

In 1108, Paschall II excommunicated Henry. He declared that both the giver and receiver of investitures by a lay person were to be excommunicated. Henry countered by taking an army and marching towards Rome. The pope then attempted a compromise. He proposed that the lands and authority be given to the royal power, but tithes and donations be kept by the clergy. This was an attempt to separate out the temporal and spiritual duties of the bishops. The German princes did not approve.

Three years later, Henry V sent troops to Rome to force the issue again. It appeared that the two had a compromise; Henry renounced the investiture practice and Paschall restored temporal domains to the king. This arrangement, however, did not last long. The king demanded to have the investiture privilege restored and to be crowned Emperor. He had the pope imprisoned, who then conceded to the king. Paschall declared the investiture privilege as an imperial privilege. Henry V was also crowned Emperor and the pope on oath promised not to excommunicate him.

Despite this agreement, the ban on investitures by lay persons was renewed at the Lateran Synod of 1112. At the Council of Vienna, the imperial privilege of investitures was removed from Henry who was also excommunicated. The canons of this council were repeated throughout imperial domains by papal legates. Bishops who did not agree with the pope's decision were deposed.

Henry's support from bishops and feudal princes eroded; the princes rebelled against Henry and he suffered military defeat. Despite this set back, he led an army to Rome and had himself crowned Emperor in 1117. To solidify his rule in northern Italy, he granted the independent cities more privileges and gave gifts to nobles. Paschall died in 1118.

Callistus II, who was pope from 1119-1124, pursued the same policy against investitures. Henry finally sought peace and in 1122 the Concordat of Worms was signed. The compromise allowed the Roman Church to elect and consecrate their officials, but it allowed the King of Germany to have witnesses in attendance at Bishop and Abbot elections in Germany. The spiritual office of bishop was separated from the concept of land domains belonging to the empire.

The First Lateran Council was convened in 1123 to establish order in the church regarding the issue. It renewed previous prohibitions of lay people bestowing investiture and established other points of order regarding Roman Church discipline. Pope Innocent II renewed the autonomy of the Church in elections of clergy without lay involvement.

This back-and-forth battle was renewed at times. On occasion the King of Germany was strong and tried to assert superiority, such as during the days of Frederick I (1152-1190). At other times, the pope tried to wrestle power from the king, such as in the days of Innocent II (1198-1216).

The Roman Church desired to have autonomous elections for their clergy, to conduct church councils without royal interference, and to adjudicate internal disputes without royal representatives. The Western Roman Emperors were not always willing to grant such autonomy because they wanted to control the Roman Church for Imperial aims. At the same time, the emperor desired to maintain the title of emperor and its prestige. These rulers clamored to have the approval of the papacy. As time passed, it became increasingly necessary to have that approval as it granted a connection between ruler and subjects through the common thread of religion.

The pope viewed himself as the authority over the emperor and all Christendom. Emperors often viewed things quite the opposite. There was also the issue that the pope was a temporal land holder in Italy and offered temporal competition to the emperor. It was a volatile, tangled web of power and control.

How does this issue tie into the subject of the Passagini and heresy of that time?

Roman law established a responsibility to eliminate heresy for both Roman Church and Medieval Roman Empire. However, their conflicts both internal and with each other often prevented unified action. This problem provided a great distraction for non-conformist groups to become established, prosper, and even spread in Western Europe.

This means that local authorities (ecclesiastical or temporal) were needed to stop heresy. Their attempts were sometimes thwarted because their power was limited to a specific geographic region or just a city. Surrounding locales did not always cooperate with investigations into those matters, especially during times of religious and political division. In this way, feudalism could be looked at as its own antecedent (but it is certainly connected to the intertwining between Roman Church and Roman State and

subsequent battles). If the spiritual and temporal rulers combined their efforts to exterminate heresy, it proved to be catastrophic for non-conformist groups.

Side note: The conflict between Roman Church and revived Roman Empire serves as a great example of the iron and clay toes from the statue of Daniel chapter two. While at times strong, the two sides could never maintain a coherent existence for long.

### **Moral Decay of Roman Church**

By the Middle Ages, corruption was rife among the Roman clergy. One practice that reflects this moral decay is simony. The root word for simony is Simon. This term comes from Simon Magus, who attempted to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit with money in Acts 8:10-24.

Between 305 and 796 AD, there were at least 20 church councils or church decrees that tried to suppress simony. Clergy sold various positions within the Church, such as bishop or abbot, for money. Around the time of Pope John II (530s AD), even the sacred vessels in Rome that were used for communion were sold for money. Baptism, communion, dedications to virginity, and other spiritual practices were sold for a price. Simony was the foundation for selling indulgences (which Luther fought against in the Reformation).

The most repeated practice of simony is that of one person giving money, gifts, or other promises to another person to obtain an ordination as a member of the clergy (deacon, priest, bishop, or abbot). Bishop was the most sought position through simony. Why might bishops be more desired than other positions?

Under Constantine's rule, bishops were protected from secular judges; we discussed this in the last section. The Roman Church was allowed to handle issues with bishops internally. Moreover, the office of bishop required that a person ascend through a specific hierarchy called holy orders. If a person could buy the position of bishop, then he would be immune from some civil authorities and not be required to ascend through holy orders (which required greater commitment).

During the time of Pope Gregory (late 500s/early 600s), simony was rife. He wrote many letters condemning the practice among clergy,

including charging money for ordinations and marriages (for some examples, see *Registrum Epistolarum*, 4.27; 5.53, 57, 58; 6.8; 9.11). In a letter to the bishop of Jerusalem, he stated that nearly all ordinations of the East took place with money (ibid, 11.46). In the councils of Rheims (624/625) and Toledo (633) Bishops were accused of taking money or property away from churches for their own gain. The situation was so bad that there was not enough money to pay other clergy and church buildings fell into disrepair.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the intertwining of Roman Church and Western Roman Empire led to bishops being placed over territories of land. This afforded them significant power and wealth. Sometimes they sold church property for their own gain as a temporal lord. There were 23 Church Councils in Western Europe condemning simony between 1047 and 1123. Several of these same councils addressed the issue of investitures.

The morals of the clergy were lax in other ways. Several councils during a similar time condemned concubines and mistresses among the clergy (Rome 1059, Thuringia 1105, Rheims 1119, Lateran 1123, 1139). In 1022, a council held in Pavia condemned the licentious lifestyle of the clergy.

Among the reasons that many non-conformist groups emerged in the Middle Ages is because they viewed the Roman Church as being corrupt. The decadence and wealth of clergy and extravagant church buildings/adornments caused many common people to feel out of touch with the Roman Church. They viewed the intermingling of church and state as a factor which enabled clergy to serve more than one master. Lastly, the lax morals of the clergy deprived the people of any moral example to follow. In the Middle Ages, the common people were ripe to follow leaders and movements that called for a morally pure lifestyle without the decadence of the Roman Church.

### **Complexity of the Roman Church Practices**

Another antecedent, which will be briefly discussed, is the complicated traditions of the Roman Church. The amount of feast days, fast days, food regulations for certain days and seasons, prayers, theology, and lack of Bibles in the common languages comprised a complicated and sometimes confusing system of reli-

gion. This was another factor that caused the common person to feel disconnected from the Roman Church. A form of religion which was simple and empowered the common person to worship God directly was an attractive alternative to the status quo. The Roman Church recognized this and tried to simplify their minimum requirements as a result, which included mandatory attendance on a certain day or certain days throughout the year.

### **The Crusades**

The Crusades were an important antecedent for this subject. Pilgrimages to certain locations in Israel that were associated with Jesus' life were encouraged as early as the fourth century.

Charlemagne was given keys to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and a banner to the city. He was considered a protector of Christendom in the city and had churches built in the area. Though Muslims controlled this region, pilgrimages continued often without interference. Things changed in the early eleventh century when the Caliph of Egypt ordered the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and any other Christian buildings in the city of Jerusalem.

While the goal was to keep Christians from coming to Jerusalem, which is also a holy site for Islam, the opposite occurred. Christians increased their interest, and a Christian quarter was developed in the city. Many accommodations were formed there to facilitate pilgrims. In 1070 AD, the Turks conquered Jerusalem and the surrounding area. Western Christendom certainly wanted to respond. However, the investiture conflict initially hindered unified action. By 1092, nearly all of Asia Minor was controlled by the Turks.

About this same time, the Turks invaded the Balkans and occupied territory. This action triggered a papal response. In 1095 Pope Urban II started to preach something called a crusade at the Council of Clermont. The term crusade comes from the word *crux*, which is the cross worn by those who participated in the quest. Over the next few years, the crusader armies would conquer considerable amounts of land in the Middle East. Eventually, four kingdoms were established in that region.

Of course, the Muslim nations countered this attack. A back-and-

forth struggle ensued for control of the region, which lasted centuries into the future. How do the crusades tie into the subject matter?

The crusades demonstrated that the pope had within his arsenal the ability to convince or at times compel secular rulers to take up arms for Roman Church interests. Sometimes these interests coincided with that of other kingdoms and sometimes it did not. Thus, the foundation was laid for the pope to use the crusade as a tool against political or spiritual enemies of the church. For example, consider the non-conformist group called the Albigenses. In the early thirteenth century, a crusade was declared against them because they were labeled heretics. A second example would be the German King and Roman Emperor Frederick II, who had a political crusade declared against him later in the same century.

When the pope called for violent actions or armed conflict against groups labeled heretics, such actions would be recognized as legitimate and having historical precedent (with or without the term crusade being used). Thus, violence could be a normalized response to non-conformist groups. Of course, temporal rulers needed to respond to these demands in some way. Sometimes they responded according to the Roman Church's demands and sometimes they did not.

### **Independent Spirit of Lombardy**

The primary seat of the Passagini was the region called Lombardy. Another antecedent that contributed to their development was the independent spirit of this area. Some provinces and regions of Western Europe tended to have an independent streak from spiritual and temporal rulers; Lombardy was among them.

As discussed earlier, the original idea of church and state united in a revived Roman Empire included the placement of bishops over certain areas. They wielded both spiritual and temporal authority. This original idea was problematic in places like Lombardy. The temporal lords that lived around a bishop-controlled territory often wanted the church leader to take a side in feuds. No matter the choice made by the bishop, consequences arose. This sometimes made the bishops weaker than they were originally intended to be.

During the Middle Ages, the idea of communes arose in Lombardy. In fact, this era is sometimes labeled “The age of the communes.” The people of that time defined a commune as “a group of persons acting together for purposes of self-government, especially in towns” (Encycl. Brit: Commune). As the cities of Lombardy drifted from dependence on the Roman Church and Kingdom of Germany/Western Roman Empire, they developed independent states. They elected their own rulers, called consuls, who served one-year terms. The term consul and its one-year terms recalled the days of ancient Rome when the Senate elected consuls to rule their republic.

The major cities in Lombardy were Milan, Bergamo, Cremona, Pavia, Como, and Brescia. Some of the writers who mention the Passagini lived in these cities. We will briefly review the history of several cities.

### **Milan**

Milan was originally fortified and built up through Roman Church Bishops. In the late 890s, the Huns invaded northern Italy. In Milan, the people rallied together, fortified the city, and fended off this threat. Roman Emperor Conrad II tried to overthrow the city in 1037 but was unsuccessful. Not long after this, they formed a commune or self-contained governing system to benefit the people and provided for their own defenses. The city refused to pay Henry V tribute in 1110 and several years later the people decided to elect consuls to rule over them. Milan is unique in that they warred against the other cities in the region, especially those that tried to become loyal to the empire or pope.

### **Cremona**

Cremona was another important city in Lombardy. The Ottonian policy of appointing pro-imperial bishops was implemented in the city. This situation continued until 1022 when the locals drove out the appointee of Henry II. By the eleventh century, the people had formed a commune and established self-governance. Emperor Henry IV attempted to deprive them of some independence, but Henry V restored it as a check against the pope in the ongoing investiture conflict.

### **Pavia**

This city was the capital of the Lombard Kingdom before Charle-

magne's conquest of northern Italy in the 770s. During the Carolingian era (Charlemagne and his successors), Pavia became a city where schools flourished. The laws of the Lombards continued to be taught at these schools despite the kingdom's fall. They resisted imperial control during Henry II's reign and like the other cities in the region decided in favor of self-governance. This city assisted Milan against Henry V in 1110. Starting with the time of Frederick I (1152) they supported the empire.

### **Como**

In the eleventh century, the Bishop of Milan also governed Como. By the century's end, the people founded a free commune. The city was destroyed by the Milanese in the early twelfth century, but Frederick I rebuilt it to gain an ally in his struggle to subdue the region.

### **Brescia**

Like the other Lombard cities, Brescia resisted bishops appointed by the emperors. Early in the eleventh century, Henry II granted the city a degree of independence. They eventually founded their own commune.

During the reign of Henry II and the next few decades, emperors were generally pre-occupied with Germany. This development facilitated the independent growth of northern Italian cities. They also held disdain for the control of their cities by the bishops. The struggle between church and state, a previously discussed antecedent, often prevented either group from imposing their will on Lombardy. Thus, the cities of this region formed governments originally designed to be free from imperial and papal control. While these cities sometimes fought with each other, they often banded together to defend against advances from a larger power, such as the emperor or pope.

These independent cities facilitated the progress of religious non-conformists who wanted to be free from the harassment of the Roman Church. Thus, the political spirit of the time had a concurrent religious movement. As we will see in the following chapters, a high concentration of heretics lived in Lombardy. One primary source from the thirteenth century claimed that as many as seventeen sects of non-Catholic Christian groups lived in the city of Milan alone!

## **Judaism and Lombardy**

The Passagini viewed the Old Testament and New Testament as equally important to their beliefs; this was not wholly uncommon. The Waldenses placed value on the Old Testament as the inspired Word of God. Some Cathar groups did value at least part of the Old Testament. One characteristic that set the Passagini apart from other groups deemed ‘heretical’ is that they literally applied practices in the Old Testament. They had a greater affinity to practices that are typically deemed Jewish, such as the Sabbath, food distinctions, and circumcision. To this end, they have been accused of Judaizing.

One factor that could have contributed to the unique development of the Passagini is any Jewish influence that was particular to north Italy. Evidence on this is not conclusive, but it is certainly possible.

The Arian Lombards who conquered much of northern Italy allowed religious freedom for Jewish people. It should be noted that Roman Church Councils against Jews and Jewish practices were not uncommon in former Arian domains (see McDonald article: “Roman Church Councils Between 506-796 AD” on [www.sabbathsentinel.org](http://www.sabbathsentinel.org)). In 796, the Council of Friuli in northern Italy condemned peasants and Jews who kept the Sabbath (Landon, 1:285; Mansi, 13:873). While Friuli was on the opposite end of northern Italy from Lombardy, the Lombard tribe once controlled it.

At the Council of Pavia in 850, the Jewish people were forbidden from exacting taxes (*vectigalia exigent*) or exercising any judicial authority over Christians (Canon 20; Mansi, 14:937). This indicates that the Jewish people had significant influence in that city or region. However, the length of time it may have lasted or the degree to which it existed is not known.

Louis Israel Newman attempted to pull together some more sources on this subject (*Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements*, pp 242-244). He claimed that from the middle of the ninth through the middle of the eleventh centuries, a theocratic state was established in at least part of the city of Milan. The first five books of the Bible or Torah were the foundation for the rule

of law. Replicas were made of at least parts of the Tabernacle. The city organization was patterned off the Old Testament. He wrote that this lasted until about 1058. However, I have been unable to independently verify these claims and others made by Newman. If they are true, then it affirms a strong Jewish influence in that city.

Anacletus II was a Jewish anti-pope who ruled from 1130-1138. An anti-pope is one who is placed in the position of pope to oppose the one who was considered legitimately elected. Milan was one diocese that initially supported the efforts of Anacletus. Most other places in Western Europe opposed him.

There is some evidence that Jewish people lived in certain cities in Lombardy. Moses de Pavia is listed as a Rabbi for the city of Pavia in the eleventh century, and Jewish settlement in Cremona dates to the twelfth century. Both cities expelled Jewish people in the thirteenth century. The Jewish people were expelled from Milan in 1320. This is near the time that the Passagini disappear from history.

The degree to which Judaism in Lombardy directly affected the development of the Passagini is uncertain. That there was a Jewish population with some degree of influence in the cities of Lombardy is certain based just on the fact that they were expelled. To be expelled from a city, one must have lived there!

The antecedents discussed in this chapter came together in the twelfth century to contribute to the overall environment that the Passagini developed within and thrived. Over the next few chapters, we will review the primary sources that describe the Passagini and other non-conformist groups which developed in France and Italy during the Middle Ages.

## **Chapter Appendix**

There were two men that were considered forerunners for heretical groups in northern Italy and southern France. The first was Claudius, Bishop of Turin, who served from about 817 to 827. Turin was a diocese not far from Lombardy. He was an iconoclast, so he condemned the use of images/idols. Additionally, he detested pilgrimages for penance or absolution. This brought him into conflict with the Roman Church. It is interesting that his

stand took place during the same time that the iconoclast controversy was still going on in the Eastern Roman Empire. One might call him a forerunner of non-conformist groups in the Middle Ages.

Berengar of Tours (died in 1088) was among the first teachers against the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. He taught a form of consubstantiation, which he thought was supported by past writers such as Augustine. His views on the eucharist and those similar to his were repeated in the eleventh century onwards.

Could the works of Claudius or Berengar have survived and somehow inspired some groups which arose during the Middle Ages? It is certainly possible. One way or another, they were forerunners of what was to come.

## Chapter 2

### Period I: 1022-1184

In the early eleventh century, the beginning of religious change sprung up in parts of Western Europe. A new movement was stirring which was larger than what any one group or sub-group of Christians could contain. The common people were disconnected from the institution of the Roman Church, yet they still sought spiritual fulfillment. As time passed, groups formed in certain cities and regions with unique belief systems. Variations of beliefs between them were due in part to local influences.

The initial evidence for this development is found in the Roman Church councils held during this time. In them, we find people being condemned as heretics. They were either given no name or they were called by a name found in ancient Roman law and/or church canons. Often when they were called some ancient name it was not representative of the group, but at that time, they did not have any way of coming up with new categories (or they didn't have enough information to come up with a new category). We have some examples of these councils below:

1022 – A national council was held at Orleans, France. Several people labeled as Manichaeans were condemned to be burned (Landon, 2:9).

1025 – A council held at Arris condemned heretics who had come from Italy (Landon, 1:60).

1028 – A council at Charroux condemned people labeled as Manichaeans (Landon, 1:150-151).

1049 – The Council of Rheims excommunicated new heretics who sprung up in Gaul (France). No name is specifically ascribed to them. "...et quia novi haeretici in Gallacianis partibus emergant; eos excommunicavit, illis additis..." (Mansi, 19:742; Landon, 2:71-72).

1056 – The Council of Toulouse excommunicated those who participate with heretics and excommunicated people who talked to them unless their goal was to correct and admonish those peoples (Canon 13, Mansi, 19:849 and Landon, 2:170-171).

While it appeared that the attention given to these groups by the Roman Church was on the increase, councils which addressed this issue suddenly decrease for a time. We do not find many councils condemning heretics in the period of the late eleventh and early part of the twelfth century. This is most likely due to the conflict of investitures, which distracted the energies and focus of both Roman Church and Roman Empire from systematic suppression of non-conformist groups.

Many councils held in this epoch address the investitures issue, anti-popes, and simony (see Sutri 1046; Rome 1059, 1061, 1074, 1076, 1080, 1081, 1083, 1084, 1099; Placenza 1095; Rouen 1074, 1096; Poitiers 1078, 1100; Benevento 1087, 1091). This period also witnessed lax morals in the clergy which was addressed in several of the same meetings. One major council, Clermont in 1095, focused on the first Crusade and simony. Some councils addressed the specific errors of Berengar (Rouen 1063; Rome 1078; Placenza 1095).

Towards the middle of the twelfth century, the Roman Church began to take constructive action against these ‘heretical’ groups. This means that there was no comprehensive, cohesive strategy by the Roman Church to deal with these groups until over 100 years after they first appeared. It was during this long period that the non-conformists developed their beliefs and spread throughout Western Europe. They paved the way for later groups to form. To learn about the development of heresy in France in the twelfth century, see **Appendix A: The Rise of Heresy in France**.

In our explanation of the events that relate to the Passagini, we will start with the 1130s. In this decade, a man named Arnold, who lived in the city of Brescia, began a movement to depose the temporal power and wealth of the Roman Church.

Arnold taught that the clergy should live in poverty so as to serve the gospel message and not any cause that was their own. Thus, he preached that the clergy who held wealth and earthly authority were eternally condemned. His movement was a response to the corruption and moral decay within the Roman Church at that time. His goal was to give earthly possessions and authority solely to civil authorities. In his view, this was the only way to restore

morality in the Roman Church.

At one point, Arnold was exiled from Italy and France. He appeared to surrender his movement when he submitted to Pope Eugenius III in 1145. But Arnold later changed his mind and fomented revolt against the pope in Rome. Through the democratic process, he secured the first step towards removing the pope from earthly authority. Eugenius fled the city out of concern for his life. For a few years it seemed that Arnold was successful in his efforts.

In 1152, the election of Frederick I (called Barbarossa) as King of Germany and the Romans initiated a series of events that ended Arnold's revolution. In the early part of Frederick's reign, it appeared that he would serve church interests; many popes hoped for such an arrangement. He made an agreement with Pope Adrian IV to oppose the enemies of the church, which included Arnold. In return, Adrian would crown Frederick Roman Emperor.

Frederick fulfilled his promise and captured Arnold from the Campagnatico area of Italy where he was being protected. The revolutionary was placed into Roman custody where he was eventually put to death (there is some controversy regarding how he died). His followers were called Arnoldists (or Arnaldists) and they persisted for years into the future. Frederick was then crowned Roman Emperor. The arrangement between church and state seemed to be coming into balance as these events unfolded, but it did not last long.

A diet or meeting of German nobles was convened at Besancon in 1157. During it, the papal legate Cardinal Orlando called the title and dignity of emperor a *beneficium* or benefit bestowed by the popes rather than an obligation, meaning something that the popes owed the king of Germany. This angered the German nobility, but Fredrick waited to respond.

About this same time, the city of Milan rebelled against Frederick. He invaded the area and defeated them in 1158. He then held a diet at Roncaglia where constitutions or laws were drawn up to define his imperial vision and strengthen his grip over the independent cities of northern Italy. He appointed imperial officials called Podestas to secure imperial interests in this region, includ-

ing raising more taxes.

Pope Adrian IV died in 1159. The cardinals convened to elect the next pope. While the vast majority voted for Cardinal Orlando, only a few voted for a different candidate, Cardinal Octavian. Frederick desired to have a pope more favorable to imperial goals, so he sent representatives to disrupt the election process. Fearing for his life, Orlando fled south to a territory controlled by the Normans to receive papal crowning as Alexander III. Cardinal Octavian was crowned by pro-imperial cardinals as Victor IV.

Frederick held a conference with the two papal contenders and pretended to sort out the mess. At this synod, held in Pavia in 1160, Frederick acted as if he were the supreme ruler of Christendom instead of the pope. Not surprisingly, the tribunal ruled in favor of Victor IV, and Alexander III went into exile.

Not long after this meeting, the Lombard cities rebelled again; they did not approve of Frederick's previous rulings against them. This conflict was not successful either as Milan surrendered to Frederick a second time in 1162. Victor IV died that same year, but Frederick had another pope elected who was given the name Paschal III.

In 1165, Frederick held a diet at Wurzburg to demand from nobles and clergy their loyalty to Paschal III, but the clergy remained divided on the issue as some still thought Alexander III was the rightful pope. During these years, Frederick's growing power was noticed and opposed by cities in northern Italy, Sicily, and Constantinople. Ecclesiastical authorities also opposed him. The cities of Lombardy formed an alliance with each other called the Lombard League in the mid-1160s. Pope Alexander III partnered with them.

Two military campaigns resulted from this league. In the first one, Frederick I had to withdraw because illness struck his army. He also had to break away from it to establish another anti-pope as Paschal died in 1168. The Roman Emperor had another pro-imperial pope elected named Callistus III; he remained until 1177.

The second military campaign between Frederick and the Lom-

ard League was a disaster for the emperor. He was already at a disadvantage because one of his major feudal lords, Henry the Lion, refused to join him for the expedition. He was defeated at the battle of Legnano in 1176. The pope and emperor settled for peace. Frederick finally acknowledged Alexander's legitimate claim to the papal chair with the Treaty of Venice in 1177. Henry was severely punished for his lack of support.

The third Lateran council was convened in 1179. It had nearly one thousand attendees, with over three hundred of them being bishops. The council was summoned chiefly to heal the nearly twenty-year schism within the Roman Church and to prevent future conflicts. Significant damage was caused by the anti-popes such as pro-imperial church ordinations and appointments. Many of these officials served imperial interests rather than that of the church. They neglected their spiritual duties. Lateran III reversed many of their decisions, addressed discipline within the church and attempted to heal the damage caused by the pro-imperial appointees. Lastly, the council affirmed the proper process for Papal elections; anyone who did not follow it was to be immediately relieved of position and excommunicated. To some degree, Lateran Council III was successful; there were not many anti-popes after it.

A final issue briefly discussed at the council was heresy. During those twenty years of infighting, various non-conformist groups such as the Cathars, Albigenses, Patarenes, and Publicani grew their numbers. Newer groups were allowed to form, such as the Waldenses.

According to primary sources, such as Stephen of Bourbon, sometime between 1170 and 1173, a wealthy man named Waldo (or Valdese) paid priests to translate many books of the Bible and even some early church writers into his language. Being moved by the story of Jesus and the rich young ruler, he then sold all his goods and took a vow of poverty only to preach the gospel (Deanesly, p 26). He called others to follow the same path and promoted both men and women teachers. They traveled two by two and preached in homes. Their vow of poverty caused them to be called the poor of Lyon. His group was not connected to the Cathars as their doctrines were distinctly different.

Below we have an English translation of the twenty-seventh canon from Lateran III. The Cathars, Patarenes, and Publicani are specifically mentioned. Many Roman Catholic authors agree (based on other primary sources) that the Waldenses were included in this rebuke against non-conformist groups.

“Though ecclesiastical discipline contents itself with spiritual judgment and does not inflict bloody punishments, it is, however, aided by the ordinances of Catholic princes, for men often seek a salutary remedy for their souls only when they fear that some severe corporal punishment will be imposed upon them. Wherefore, since in Gascogne, in the territory of Albi, in Toulouse and its neighborhood, and in other places, the perversity of the heretics, whom some call Cathari, others Patarini, and others again Publicani, has assumed such proportions that they practice their wickedness no longer in secret as some do, but preach their error publicly and thus mislead the simple and the weak, we decree that they and all who defend and receive them are anathematized, and under penalty of anathema we forbid everyone to give them shelter, to admit them to his land, or to transact business with them. If anyone should fail herein and die in that sin, not under pretext of privileges granted him by us nor by any other subterfuge, shall an offering be made for him nor shall he receive Christian burial.

With regard to the Brabantians, Aragonians, Basques, Navarese, and others who practice such cruelty toward the Christians that they respect neither churches nor monasteries, spare neither widows nor orphans, age nor sex, but after the manner of pagans destroy and lay waste everything, we decree likewise that those who hire or patronize them throughout the regions in which they rave so madly, shall be publicly denounced in the churches on Sundays and on solemn festivals and shall be regarded as subject to the same punishment as the aforesaid heretics ; nor shall they be restored to the communion of the Church till they have abjured that pestiferous • society and its heresy . Those who are bound to them by any agreement are hereby released from the obligation of fealty, deference, and all service so long as they (the heretics) continue in their iniquity. These and all the faithful we command in remission of their sins that they vigorously oppose such pests and defend with arms the Christian people. Let their possessions be confiscated and let the princes be allowed to reduce to slavery men of this kind.

Those who may in conflict with these heretics die in true repentance, let them not doubt that they will receive the remission of their sins and the fruit of eternal reward. Trusting in the mercy of God and in the authority of the Apostles Peter and Paul, we also grant to the faithful who take up arms against them and at the advice of the bishops or other prelates undertake to conquer them, a remission of two years' penance ; or if they are engaged there for a longer period, we leave it to the discretion of the bishops, to whom the care of this matter has been committed, to grant further remission in accordance with the character of the labor performed. Those who refuse obedience to the admonition of the bishops in this matter, are to be denied the reception of the body and blood of the Lord. In the meantime we place under the protection of the Church, as we do the crusaders to the Holy Land, those who in the ardor of faith take up this work of conquering them, and we decree that they remain secure from all disturbances in their possessions as well as in their persons.

If anyone shall presume to molest them, let him be excommunicated by the bishop of the locality and let the sentence be observed by all till the things taken from them be returned and a suitable satisfaction made for the loss incurred. Bishops and priests who do not vigorously resist the aforesaid evils shall be deprived of their office till they have obtained the mercy of the Apostolic See" (Shroeder, pp 234-235).

According to Walter Map, a primary source from this time, Waldo was called to testify before Alexander III at this council. He gave a profession of his faith and presented the pope with a copy of the Bible in Waldo's native tongue. The pope commended some of Waldo's actions but forbid him from preaching as he was not an approved clergy member (Deansely, p 26-27). In fact, the council as a whole forbade anyone who was a lay person from preaching the gospel. The Roman Church leadership desired that only those that they chose and sent out could be given such a task.

Once the council was over, Waldo went back to preaching. His group increased in number because they appealed to the common people. They preached Jesus Christ with a belief in the Bible as the literal word of God. They mostly stripped themselves of all the complicated formalities, feasts, and other traditions of the Ro-

man Church. It was indeed a religion for the common person. While they started out in Lyons, France, they eventually spread out over much of Europe.

In the years following Lateran III, the group targeted moral and financial abuses of the Roman Catholic clergy, which brought upon them the indignation of the pope. They were mistreated with increasing severity as time passed. While this work does not address their history in its entirety, we will mention them from time to time because they are significant to the history of the Passagini.

Alexander III died in 1181 and Lucius III was elected in his place. Lucius' brief time in office was marred by conflict with local Romans who desired more political freedoms. He was driven from Rome twice and did not spend much time in the city. In 1183, the treaty of Constance was signed where Frederick and the Lombards mended their long-time feud. This deprived the pope of a much-needed ally. Lucius responded to this agreement with a letter entitled *ad abolendam* calling for Frederick I and other temporal rulers to act against heretics.

In November 1184, a Synod was held at Verona where Lucius' letter was formally presented to Frederick, who claimed to accept the challenge. No records are found that he did anything about the matter, but the letter and subsequent council are historically significant because they show the two powers (Roman Church and Roman State) realizing that they have a united cause against heresy. We have included an English translation of Lucius' letter below:

“In modern times in most parts of the world, the power of the church ought to be aroused ; when, indeed, with the sanction of imperial power, both the insolence of heretics, in their attempts to promote falsehood, may be put down, and the truth of Catholic unity, shining forth in the Holy Church, may display her, free from all charge of false doctrine.

We, therefore, supported by the power, and presence, of our most dear son Frederic, the illustrious Emperor of the Romans, semper Augustus, with the common consent of our brethren, and of other Patriarchs, Archbishops, and many Princes, who have assembled from various parts of the world, have, with the general sanction of

this present decree, risen up against those heretics, to whom divers names have ascribed the profession of various errors, and, by the tenor of this constitution, with apostolical authority, we condemn all heresy, howsoever it may be named.

In the first place, therefore we lay under a perpetual anathema, the Cathari, Patarini, and those who falsely call themselves Humiliati, or poor men of Lyons, Passagini, Josepini, and Arnaldistae; and since some, having a form of godliness, but, as the apostle has said, denying- the power of it, have assumed to themselves the office of preaching—though the same Apostle says, ' how shall they preach, except they be sent ?'—we include, in the same perpetual anathema, all who shall have presumed to preach, either publicly, or privately, either being forbidden, or not sent, or not having the authority of the Apostolic See (IE the Roman Church), or of the Bishop of the diocese; and, also, all who presume to think, or to teach, concerning the Sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, or of Baptism, or of the Remission of Sins, or of Matrimony, or of the other Sacraments of the Church, otherwise, than as the Holy Roman Church teaches and observes ; and, generally, all persons whom the said Roman Church, or the individual Bishops in their dioceses, with the concurrence of their clergy, or the clergy themselves, if the see be vacant, with the consent, if need be, of the neighbouring Bishops, shall have adjudged to be heretics.

And we decree, that their receivers, and defenders, and, in like manner, all who shew any countenance, or favour, to the aforesaid heretics, to encourage them in their heretical pravity—whether they be consolati, or credenies, or perfecti, or by whatever superstitious names they may be called, shall be subjected to a similar sentence.

Since, however, it sometimes happens, that the severity of ecclesiastical discipline which is required by offences, may be condemned by those who do not understand its benefits, we farther decree, by this present ordinance, that, whosoever shall be manifestly convicted of the errors aforesaid, if he be a clerk, or in any pretended Holy Orders, shall be stripped of all the prerogatives of the ecclesiastical order; and being thus deprived of all ecclesiastical office, as well as privilege, he shall be left to the discretion of the secular power, to receive due punishment ; unless, immediate-

ly after the detection of his error, he shall consent, voluntarily to return to the unity of the catholic faith, and publicly to abjure his error, as the Bishop of the diocese shall direct, and shall make such satisfaction as shall be fitting. A layman, however, to whom the guilt of the aforesaid pests shall, either publicly or privately, attach, (unless, as before said, he immediately returns to the orthodox faith, abjuring his heresy, and making satisfaction) shall be left to the discretion of the secular judge, to receive due punishment, according to the nature of his offence.

Those who shall be found to be only suspected by the church, shall be subjected to a like sentence, unless they shall demonstrate their innocence by a sufficient proof, at the discretion of the Bishop, according to the nature of the suspicion, and the quality of the person. Those, however, who, after the abjuration of error, or after they have (as we have said) cleared themselves under the examination of their own Bishop, shall be convicted of having relapsed into their abjured heresy, we decree to be left to the secular judgment, without any farther hearing ; and that the goods of the condemned persons shall be applied to the service of those churches to which they belong, under proper regulations.

Moreover, we decree that the aforesaid excommunication, under which we desire that all heretics should lie, shall be renewed by all Patriarchs, Archbishops, and Bishops, on the principal festivals, and as often as public solemnities, or any other occasion, shall offer, for the Glory of God, and the rebuke of heresy; ordaining, by apostolical authority, that, if any member of the episcopal order shall be found negligent, or slothful, in this matter, he shall be considered as suspended from his episcopal dignity, and ministry, for the space of three years.

To these things we add, with the concurrence of the Bishops, and by the suggestion of the Emperor and his Princes, that every Archbishop or Bishop, by himself, or his Archdeacon, or by other trustworthy and fit persons, shall twice, or once, in the year, go round any parish in which it shall have been reported that heretics reside ; and there call upon three or more persons of good credit, or, if it seem expedient, on the whole neighbourhood, to take an oath, that if any one shall know that there are heretics in the place, or any persons holding secret conventicles, or differing in life and manners from the common conversation of the faithful, he will

make it his business to point them out to the Bishop or Archdeacon.

Moreover, the Bishop, or Archdeacon, shall cite the accused to appear before him, who, unless they shall clear themselves from the charges brought against them to their satisfaction, according to the custom of the country—or if, after such clearance, they shall relapse into their error, they shall be punished by the judgment of the Bishop. If, however, any of them, through damnable superstition, denying the lawfulness of oaths, shall refuse to swear, they are, from that very circumstance, to be adjudged heretics, and to be subjected to the punishment aforesaid.

Moreover, we ordain that Counts, Barons, Rectors, Consuls of Cities, and other places, being called upon by the Archbishops and Bishops, shall bind themselves with an oath, that, in all the matters aforesaid, they will stoutly and effectually aid the church against heretics, and their associates, when they shall be called upon so to do; and will bona fide, endeavour, according to their office and power, to put in execution the ecclesiastical, and, at the same time, imperial, statutes of which we have spoken.

If, however, they fail to observe this, let them be deprived of that honour which they possess ; and on no account be raised to any other ; their persons being bound by excommunication, and their lands subjected to an interdict. Also, let any city which shall think fit to resist these decretal ordinances, or which, when called upon by the Bishop, shall neglect to punish those who do so, be cut off from intercourse with other cities, and understand that it is deprived of its episcopal dignity.

We also decree, that all favourers of heretics, as being condemned to perpetual infamy, are not to be admitted as advocates, and witnesses, or to other public offices. If, however, there should be any who, being exempt from the control of diocesan jurisdiction, are subject only to the authority of the Apostolic See, let them, with regard to all matters hereinbefore ordained respecting heretics, submit to the judgments of the Archbishops and Bishops, and obey them on this behalf, as Legates of the Roman See, notwithstanding their privileges of exemption” (English translation from Maitland, pp 176-180; Latin found in Labbe, 10:1737-1742).

The Council of Verona was significant for a few reasons. First, from that time forward, more attention was given to heretics by both pope and temporal rulers. Moreover, the cooperation between the Roman Church and Roman Empire increased with this common purpose. Lastly, it laid the foundation for the inquisition.

This document is the first time that the Passagini are mentioned. While it appears that we did not learn much about them, there are some things we can glean through inference. Pope Lucius condemned seven specific groups: Cathari, Patarnes, Humiliati, Poor of Lyons, Passagini, Arnadlists, and Josephini.

A brief review of the history and location of these groups gives us a reference point for period in which the Passagini arose to prominence.

**Cathari** – This group first appeared in France in the early eleventh century and by the mid-eleventh century in northern Italy.

**Patarnes** – This group first appeared in the mid-eleventh century. They rejected the dominance of the clergy over the common people. They were based out of Milan. By the thirteenth century, the word was used in primary sources as a generic term for heretics.

**Humiliati** – This group dates to at least the first half of the twelfth century. They were based out of Lombardy; their strongest following was in Milan.

**Poor of Lyons** – This group started in the early 1170s in Lyons, France (see Waldo above). Some of them migrated to northern Italy.

**Passagini** – Started in Lombardy at an unknown date.

**Arnaldists** – Started in the 1130s with Arnold of Brescia; Brescia was a city in Lombardy (we discussed him earlier in this chapter).

**Josephini** – Not much is known about this group, but they could have been an offshoot of the others or similar to them.

Of the seven groups mentioned, we know that five of them once had or still had strong support in Lombardy by the end of the twelfth century. The newest of these groups was the poor of Lyons or Waldenses who started about a decade before the Council of Verona.

In his work *Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements*,

Louis Newman lists the Passagini beginnings to 1163, but he does not provide a reason for this date (*idem*, p 245). It is safe to say that the group started at the latest at a time near the Waldenses, but they could have started significantly before that period. As we will see in the next chapter, two people who lived in the late twelfth century attest to the developed beliefs of the Passagini. They did not appear overnight.

The rise and development of the Passagini and other groups was aided by the fact that they dwelt in Lombardy. As discussed in chapter one, this area was known for its independence from both papal and imperial schemes. Secondly, Arnold of Brescia's movement caused upheaval within Italy and certainly distracted authorities from other non-conformist groups. Third, their formation can also be attributed to the ongoing conflict between Roman Church and Western Roman Empire in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This controversy crippled efforts to curb the spread of established groups like the Cathari and Patarenes.

While we know more about the growth of the Waldenses than the Passagini, we can identify the Passagini's formation to the period anterior the Synod of Verona (at least a decade or more before it). In the next chapter, we will learn more about the beliefs of the Passagini and the increased pressure from the Roman Church to subdue groups like them.

## Chapter 3

### Period II: 1198-1227

In this chapter, we will review the beliefs of the Passagini and more history about the region in which they operated. Moreover, we will examine the precedents that continued to be set in place to uproot heresy from Europe. The imperial and papal goals on this subject began to align themselves closer together starting at the Council of Verona. Also, a counter movement was established by the Roman Church in hopes of turning the common people away from heresy and back towards their cause. We will start this chapter with the term of Innocent III, which began in 1198.

Innocent was a vigorous opponent of heresy and started early in his tenure to combat it. During his pontificate, two themes emerge which shaped the thirteenth century in general and affect this subject. First, the pope continued to assert lordship over the Western Roman Empire and all other temporal rulers. Secondly, the pope exerted pressure on other temporal rulers to physically assault those convicted of heresy. These themes will become evident from the source material in this chapter.

In 1198, Innocent wrote three letters that reflected his views about these subjects. The first was a letter to Acerbius, the prior in Tuscany. In it, the pope affirmed that authority and power was given to the Roman Catholic Church over the temporal rulers, particularly the Western Roman Emperor. A sample is provided below:

“Innocent III to Acerbius, prior, and to the other clergy in Tuscany. As God, the creator of the universe, set two great lights in the firmament of heaven, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night [Gen. 1:15, 16], so He set two great dignities in the firmament of the universal church, ... the greater to rule the day, that is souls, and the lesser to rule the night, that is bodies. These dignities are the papal authority and the royal power. And just as the moon gets her light from the sun, and is inferior to the sun in quality, quantity, position, and effect, so the royal power gets the splendor of its dignity from the papal authority.

ty...” (English from Thatcher and Holmes, p 208; Latin found in Migne, PL 214:377).

That same year, Innocent wrote a letter to the Archbishop of Auch in Gascony, a region of France. The Albigenses were very numerous in this area; their dates of activity in this region trace back at least several decades prior (perhaps longer). He commanded the archbishop to take action to suppress and curtail their actions. Moreover, this clergy member was granted permission to ask temporal rulers to suppress heresy with the sword. An excerpt is below:

“The little boat of St. Peter is beaten by many storms and tossed about upon the sea, but it grieves us most of all that, against the orthodox faith, there are now arising more unrestrainedly and with more injurious results than ever before, ministers of diabolical error who are ensnaring the souls of the simple and ruining them. With their superstitions and false inventions they are perverting the meaning of the Holy Scriptures and trying to destroy the unity of the catholic church. Since we have learned from you and others that this pestilential error is growing in Gascony and in the neighboring territories, we wish you and your fellow bishops to resist it with all your might, because it is to be feared that it will spread and that by its contagion the minds of the faithful will be corrupted. And therefore by this present apostolic writing we give you a strict command that, by whatever means you can, you destroy all these heresies and expel from your diocese all who are polluted with them. You shall exercise the rigor of the ecclesiastical power against them and all those who have made themselves suspected by associating with them. They may not appeal from your judgements, and if necessary, you may cause the princes and people to suppress them with the sword” (Thatcher and Holmes, pp 209-210; Migne, PL 214, 71).

In a third letter of this same year, the pope issued a command for all archbishops and bishops to help a Roman Church agent named Guido to extinguish heretics from these areas as Guido directed them to act. Another agent named Rainerius was dispatched to Spain. Innocent also instructed the bishops to command lay persons (meaning anyone who was not approved clergy) to seize the possessions of those who were considered heretics and oust them from their territories. He also granted indulgences to those who

participated in this struggle, which I believe is the first time such a promise was made; it was repeated over time. In this letter, he wrote:

“In order to catch the little foxes which are destroying the vineyard of the Lord [Song of Sol. 2:15], and to separate heretics from the society of the faithful, we have sent to you our beloved son and brother, Rainerius, who, by the divine aid, is powerful in both word and deed, and with him our beloved son and brother, Guido, who fears God and is devoted to works of love. We ask, warn, exhort, and for the forgiveness of your sins command you to receive them kindly and render them assistance against the heretics by giving them advice and aid. We have ordered Rainerius to go on into Spain on certain important ecclesiastical matters, and so we order all archbishops and bishops to use, at the command of Guido, the spiritual sword against all heretics whom he shall name to you. And we order the laymen to confiscate their goods and drive them out of your territories, and thus separate the chaff from the wheat. Moreover to all who faithfully and devoutly aid the church in preserving the faith in this time of great danger which is threatening her, we grant the same indulgence of sins as to those who make a pilgrimage to the churches of St. Peter or of St. James” (Thatcher and Holmes, pp 210-211; Migne, PL 214:142).

The next year, on March 25, 1199, Innocent III ordered all temporal rulers in the Papal States to act against heretics. It was not asked of them or suggested; these actions were required. As reviewed in the last chapter, the pope was the spiritual **and** temporal head of these lands. The title of this epistle is *Vergentis in senium*, which is partially translated below:

“To the clerics, consuls, and population of Viterbien...In the lands subject to our temporal jurisdiction we order the property of heretics to be confiscated; in other lands we command this to be done by the temporal princes and powers, who, if they show themselves negligent therein, shall be compelled to do it by ecclesiastical censures. Nor shall the property of heretics who withdraw from heresy revert to them, unless some one pleases to take pity on them. For as, according to the legal sanctions, in addition to capital punishment, the property of those guilty of majestas is confiscated, and life simply is allowed to their children through

mercy alone, so much the more should those who wander from the faith and offend the Son of God be cut off from Christ and be despoiled of their temporal goods, since it is a far greater crime to assail spiritual than temporal majesty” (English from Lea, 1:502; Latin: Migne, PL 214: 537-539).

This letter is significant in that it linked heresy with treason against the Roman Empire. In later years, this precedent would give temporal authorities more capacity to prosecute, steal from, and kill those accused of heresy since they were officially viewed as criminals and enemies of the state.

Innocent’s goal was not just the suppression of heresy but also hegemony over the Roman Empire. In 1202, he wrote letter 62, which was one of the more famous papal letters of the Middle Ages. In it, he acknowledged that the princes of Germany elected their king. However, he declared that the title of emperor required papal approval. He claimed that this right was first exercised when Pope Leo III anointed Charlemagne as Emperor and Augustus. Moreover, he asserted that this act transferred the right of declaring Western Roman Emperors into the hands of the pope. Simultaneously, this act also transferred the imperial title away from the Greeks (Eastern Roman Empire) and onto the German Kings. Lastly, he wrote that the pope reserved the right to approve or deny a king based upon his examination. The pope could also refuse to anoint a king, which would then require the German princes to choose a new one who was better suited for the position. If the German princes refused, then Innocent avowed that the pope could unilaterally choose one (Migne, PL 216:1065-1067).

This letter affirms that the popes considered themselves continuing the traditions of ancient Rome. It is true that Charlemagne likely would not have been crowned Emperor and Augustus if it had not been for papal intervention. During Charlemagne’s reign, the cooperative model was developed between the Roman Church and the revived Western Roman Empire. This act changed the course of history.

Innocent continued to pressure temporal rulers to stop the spread of heresy. The following is an excerpt of a letter sent from the pope to the King of Aragon, composed in 1206:

“Since according to the gospel, the ‘laborer is worthy of his hire’ [Luke 10:7], and in another place it is said, ‘Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn’ [1 Cor. 9:1], it is certainly even more fitting that a proper reward should be given those who, zealous for the divine law, labor to destroy the little foxes which are ruining the vineyard of the Lord [Song of Sol. 2:15]; we mean those who are endeavoring to pervert the Christian faith. Their reward should be all the greater, because if these foxes are killed the vineyard will be able to bear much greater fruit in works of piety. Led by such considerations, we concede to you, by this present writing, the right to reserve for your own use all the movable as well as immovable goods of heretics and of their supporters, of which you are able to get possession” (Thatcher and Holmes, p 211; Migne, PL 215:915).

This composition seems to clearly sanction the murder of heretics. Additionally, it enabled a temporal ruler to confiscate the property of heretics as a just reward for their labor. The use of the Bible to defend these behaviors is just one example of how the Scriptures were twisted to induce violence against other people. The next year, the pope issued another well-known decree against heresy from the papal palace in Viterbo entitled *Cum ex officii nostri*. We have the opening statement in English below:

“In order altogether to remove from the patrimony of St. Peter the defilement of heretics, we decree, **as a perpetual law**, that whatsoever heretic, especially if he be a Patarene, shall be found therein, shall immediately be taken, and delivered to the secular court, to be punished according to law. All his goods also shall be sold, so that he who took him shall receive one part, another shall go to the court which convicted him, and the third shall be applied to the building of prisons in the country wherein he was taken. The house, however, in which a heretic had been received shall be altogether destroyed; nor shall any one presume to rebuild it; but let that which was a den of iniquity, become a receptacle of filth. Moreover, their believers, and defenders, and favourers, shall be fined one fourth part of their goods ; which shall be applied to the service of the public” (Maitland, pp 188-189; emphasis mine).

Innocent expressed that this decree was to be preserved as a permanent part of Roman Church law. *Cum ex officii nostri* was later

enshrined as a standard to be used by Roman Church authorities as part of the inquisitorial process in all places. In some ways, it was different than earlier letters he authored.

The decree continued the rule of seizure, but it also directed to whom that property should be redistributed (it was split between the informant, the court, and building prisons). Even the dwellings of those condemned were to be torn down and never rebuilt. Lastly, the “believers, defenders, and favoursers” of heretics were also fined and that property was to be given to the public treasury. The use of these terms became customary in later papal letter because it cast a much wider net to trap anyone who might be connected to heretics.

### **Beliefs of the Passagini**

There are three key primary sources relating to the Passagini which date to near the same time as these papal letters. All three authors are from Lombardy, and they provide us with valuable insight into their beliefs.

Among the heretics in Lombardy was a man named Bonacursus (which in Latin means “good journey” or “good course”). He was a teacher of the Cathari in that region. At some point he turned away from this sect and joined the Roman Church. He then composed a work against his former associates and other groups entitled “Against the Cathari.” His writing is generally dated between 1184 and 1210; JP Migne lists the date as 1190.

In the introduction of this work, Bonacursus discussed how he was formerly a teacher of the Cathari in the city of Milan among the public/people. He explained their beliefs and then tried to refute them using the Roman Church perspective. He followed this introduction with a section against the Cathars (*Adversus Haereticos Qui Cathari Vocantur* – “Against the Heretics who are called Cathari”). Though the goal of this work is not to analyze the Cathar belief system, it is still important to review them to the degree that we can juxtapose their beliefs against those of the Passagini. This will help us differentiate between them.

Bonacursus wrote ten chapters against the Cathari; we will discuss a few of them. They were dualists, so they had some very unorthodox views. For instance, they believed that the evil god,

satan, created the world, gave the law to Moses, and did miracles for the Israelites. Furthermore, they ascribed the works of John the Baptist, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses to the devil. They thought that the good God created only spiritual things. In chapters three and four, Bonacursus tried to refute these beliefs by explaining how the Old Testament patriarchs were part of the elect and friends of the True God. In chapter six, he addressed the Cathari notion that Christ did not assume real flesh. He affirmed that Christ was physically born, literally suffered, and rose again (Migne, PL 204:779-782).

After the section against the Cathari, Bonacursus transitioned to a discourse against a group called the Pasaggi (*Adversus Haereticos Qui Pasaggi Nuncupantur*, *ibid*, p 784). This was another name for the Passagini. He wrote five chapters against them. While the second section of this work had less chapters in it, it took up a similar amount of space as the first section.

He started with an introduction; the translation of it is found below. It is a decent summary of their beliefs:

**“Not a few, but many know** what are the errors of those who are called Pasagini, and how nefarious their belief and doctrine are. But because there are some who do not know them, it does not annoy me to write what I think of them, partly from precaution and for their salvation, and partly for their shame and confusion, in order that their foolishness might become more widely known, and that they might be the more condemned and despised of all. As we ought to know the good in order to do it, so likewise should we know the evil that we might shun it...Let those who are not yet acquainted with them, please note how perverse their belief and doctrine are. First, they teach that we should obey the law of Moses according to the letter-- the Sabbath, and circumcision, and the legal precepts still being in force. They also teach that Christ, the Son of God, is not equal with God, and that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit-- these three persons are not one God and one being. Furthermore, to increase their error, they condemn and reject all the church Fathers, and the whole Roman church. But because they seek to base their errors upon the witness of the New Testament and the prophets, let us slay them with their own sword by the aid of the grace of Christ, as David once slew Goliath” (English from Andrews and Conradi, pp 547-548;

Latin from Migne, PL 204:784-794).

In the introduction to this section, Bonacursus testified that many people knew about the Passagini. This may be one way for us to establish that the group had exposure to the broader population and not just those with Judaizing tendencies. He discussed their beliefs and then tried to refute them using Roman Church theology in a similar format to the first section. I have the content of these chapters summarized below.

Chapter 1: He argued that the law of Moses was to be spiritually observed and not literally observed. In subsections within this chapter, he argued that the Sabbath was not to be literally observed and that circumcision was spiritual instead of literal. From this chapter, we learn that the Passagini literally observed the law of Moses (except sacrifices), which included the Sabbath and circumcision.

Chapter 2: He argued that Christ was equal to the Father and equal in substance (*consubstantialis*). The Passagini did not think that Christ was equal to the Father.

Chapter 3: He argued that Christ was from the beginning and the same was with the Father. From this chapter, we learn that the Passagini believed Christ to either be a created being or not eternal. Their full doctrine on this subject is not clear. Whatever they thought about Christ, it was not considered orthodox.

Chapter 4: He argued that the Holy Spirit was God and was with the Father and Son with one substance. Moreover, he said that this one God was omnipotent and not three gods. In this section, we learn that the Passagini rejected the Trinity and likely did not consider the Father and Son to be the same substance. The extent of their beliefs on this subject is not clear. The accusation that they believed in three gods was not likely based in fact (there is no corroborating evidence to support this claim).

Chapter 5: He argued against their prohibitions of certain kinds of animal flesh. The discussion seems to be focused on their refusal to eat meat of animals that had been strangled or with blood not properly drained.

Bonacursus concluded his work with a short section against the Arnaldistas, which is a reference to the followers of Arnold of Brescia.

As we survey this work, one question arises: Why are the Cathari and Passagini mentioned together? They had many beliefs that were diametrically opposed to each other. The Cathari were dualists who believed that the Old Testament was given by satan; the Passagini believed that the entire Bible was given by the one True God and that the Old Testament was still to be literally observed. Did Bonacursus put them in the same work because their ideals were so opposed? Bonacursus may have had disdain for the Passagini even when he was a member of the Cathari. Were the Passagini thought to be a branch of the Cathari? It is easy to see how the casual researcher could confuse the two groups without looking deeper at the primary sources.

The most likely reason that these two groups were mentioned together is that they dwelt in a similar locale. This explains why the Arnaldists were mentioned as well. Lombardy, especially Milan, was a center for all three groups.

Another primary source on this subject was written in Cremona, Lombardy. *Summa contra haereticos* was written about 1200 and is usually ascribed to Praepositinus of Cremona (original Latin compiled by Garvin and Corbett, *The Summa Contra Haereticos by Praepositinus of Cremona*). The main brunt of his writing is to refute the teachings and practices of the Cathars and the Passagini. He addressed each group separately. In it, he listed the Cathar or Passagini belief and then tried to oppose it using the Roman Church view of that subject. This method is like that employed by Bonacursus.

Praepositinus wrote fourteen chapters about the Passagini. Among them, we learn that they believed that the entire law of God was still applicable, except sacrifices (chapter six). In chapter eight, we learn that they literally practiced the Sabbath.

The author lists a series of Bible verses that they used in their defense of Sabbath keeping along with some commentary about it. Apparently, the Passagini started this defense by quoting Genesis chapter 2:1-3 with the explanation that God gave the sabbath to

all nations before the law. They then quoted Ex. 20:8-10, Ex. 35:2-3, Ex. 31:15-17, and Deut. 5:12-14 to affirm that it was discussed at the same time as the law. They concluded their arguments with Jeremiah 17:21-22 to demonstrate that the Sabbath was to be perpetually observed after the law was given. After providing this account, the author gave the Catholic response, which involved refuting the verses they quoted and then explaining their view against literal sabbath observance.

In another chapter, we learn their perspective on the nature of God. First, they believed that Christ was not equal to the Father, but that the Father was greater (using John 14:28 and I Cor. 15:28). Apparently, they viewed the Son as the beginning of God's works; He proceeded out from the Father. They believed that He was God, but by adoption. Adoptionism was an old view of the nature of God and Christ. They rejected the Trinity. The writer then claimed that they believed in more than one God, which does not match the rest of their belief system. The author may have been confused because many Cathars held the dualistic view of two gods. The Passagini were certainly not dualists.

We also learn that this group observed the Old Testament to the letter, including Sabbath, foods, and circumcision. Their basis for this belief was Matthew 5:17-20, Romans 3:31, and Romans 7:12-14. They believed that the law and the gospel were supposed to be simultaneously observed; they believed in both the decalogue and the faith of Christ.

In chapter nine of this work, Praepositinus described how they kept Passover literally on the fourteenth of Nissan. In chapter eleven, we learn that the Passagini declared the laws of catholic church null void and labeled them as human institutions not put in place by God based on Isaiah 29:13 (which says that the doctrines and commandments of men were worshiping God in vain). They viewed Catholic rules as null and void on the basis that no one could edit the Law of God, add to the law of God, or preach another gospel (using the verses Matthew 5:17, Gal. 1:4-7, and Rev. 22:18).

As we compare Bonacursus of Milan with Praepositinus of Cremona, we find areas of agreement between the two primary sources. However, we learn more information and greater depth

about the Passagini in the latter source.

There is a third document discussed by Döllinger and Muratori under the name G. Bergamensis (although I have seen G. Pergamensis as the heading) with a date of about 1230 AD. Bergamo was also a city in Lombardy. The author's first name was likely Gregory or Giovanni. Garvin and Corbett list this document as belonging to Praepositinus's work rather than being separate, which would make the dating a little earlier. We have an English translation of this document below:

“After what has been said of the Cathari, there still remains the sect of the Pasagini. They teach Christ to be the first and pure creature; that the Old Testament festivals are to be observed-- circumcision, distinction of foods, and in nearly all other matters, save the sacrifices, the Old Testament is to be observed as literally as the New-- circumcision is to be kept according to the letter. They say that no good person before the advent of Christ descended into the lower regions; and that there is no one in the lower regions and in paradise until now, nor will there be until sentence has been rendered on the day of Judgement” (Andrews and Condradi, pp 548-549).

These three works – Bonacursus, Praepositinus, and G. Bergamensis – serve as the main sources for our knowledge about the practices and beliefs of the Passagini. This fascinating group was extremely knowledgeable in the Bible and utilized a literal interpretation of it. They took this view to its logical conclusion and practiced accordingly. One might consider them the best example of *sola scriptura* of the Middle Ages. Their closest comparison would be the Waldenses, who also believed in the divine inspiration of the whole Bible and sometimes utilized a literal interpretation to them (though not always).

In about 1205, the Waldenses split. Some remained in France while others migrated to Italy, particularly Lombardy. The group in northern Italy became known as the Poor of Lombardy.

A writer from this era, Salvo Burci (1235-1238), wrote about dissent among them. He related that the first leader of the Waldenses in Lombardy was named John Roncarola (Runcharola). From him the term Runcarii developed as alternative name for the Poor of

Lombardy (Wakefield and Evans, p 277).

The Lombardy sect eventually evangelized in Germany. In Strasbourg (which was owned by Germany at the time), some Waldenses were captured and burned at the stake in 1212. They confessed that their leader was in Milan and that they sent money to him (Lea, 2:195).

By the early thirteenth century, heresy had multiplied in France and Italy. The initial efforts of Innocent against them did not receive much backing. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, the Cathari influenced as many as 1,000 towns and villages, with the greatest concentration of them dwelling in southern France (article: Albigenses). From the region of Albi, a sect of Cathari were called Albigenses first in 1163; in the thirteenth century many heretics in France were just called Albigenses. After a series of events, Innocent III proclaimed a crusade against them in 1209. It was a brutal conflict which lasted nearly twenty years; thousands of innocent people died.

During the war, Innocent wrote a letter to Count Montfort, who was fighting against the Albigenses. He told Montfort that the conflict was God's work and used various Bible verses to justify it (such as Paul's reference to running the race in I Cor 9:27). Innocent promised Montfort that a crown of righteousness was be stored up for him, and that he would be granted the remission of sins for completing the work of defeating the pope's enemies (*Albigensian Crusade*, sec. 555,556, pp 248-249), Indulgences were granted to all crusaders who fought for at least forty days (*ibid*, sec. 184, p 97).

In the midst of this crusade, the pope pulled off a monumental achievement. In 1215, he was able to organize a general Council of all Christendom in Europe and the Near East. Sometimes this gathering is called "the Great Council", but it is more commonly known as Lateran IV.

There were an incredible number of high-ranking representatives present. Seventy-one patriarchs and metropolitans attended, including the ones from Constantinople and Jerusalem. Delegates came from Antioch and Alexandria. 412 Bishops were also present. Representatives came from the rulers of Germany, France,

England, Aragon, Hungary, Cyprus, Jerusalem, and Constantinople (during that time, Constantinople was controlled by the West). Princes from other domains attended as well.

Seventy canons were produced by the effort. While most of them addressed issues of discipline in the Roman Church, heresy was among the subjects they covered. It was a very weighty subject at the meeting as the first three canons almost exclusively address it. The first canon starts out with a review of the beliefs of the Catholic Church. Almost every point enumerated in it was designed to counter the Cathari. The second canon condemned two specific heretics.

The third canon excommunicated anyone who disagreed with the “holy, orthodox catholic faith” as defined in the first canon. It further excommunicated those who protected or helped them. Furthermore, it enjoined on all ecclesiastical and temporal rulers to prosecute heresy. It repeated many of the same judgments and rulings against heresy found in ancient Roman law and previous papal letters (especially Lucius III’s letter from the synod of Verona). Lastly, this canon promised indulgences and remission of sins for anyone who participated in the crusade against heresy.

In canon twenty-one, the council ruled that all peoples should receive communion at least once a year on Easter. Anyone who failed to do this was excommunicated. Non-Catholic Christian sects of this time often did not keep Easter or most other Roman Church celebrations. This ruling created another way to expose heretics as they would not attend such an event. It was also an attempt to introduce simplicity into an already complicated belief system. Canons one, three, and twenty-one are translated below:

Canon 1: “We firmly believe and openly confess that there is only one true God, eternal and immense, omnipotent, unchangeable, incomprehensible, and ineffable, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; three Persons indeed but one essence, substance, or nature absolutely simple; the Father (proceeding) from no one, but the Son from the Father only, and the Holy Ghost equally from both, always without beginning and end. The Father begetting, the Son begotten, and the Holy Ghost proceeding; consubstantial and coequal, co-omnipotent and coeternal, the one principle of the universe, Creator of all things invisible and visible, spiritual and cor-

poreal, who from the beginning of time and by His omnipotent power made from nothing creatures both spiritual and corporeal, angelic, namely, and mundane, and then human, as it were, common, composed of spirit and body. The devil and the other demons were indeed created by God good by nature but they became bad through themselves; man, however, sinned at the suggestion of the devil. This Holy Trinity in its common essence undivided and in personal properties divided, through Moses, the holy prophets, and other servants gave to the human race at the most opportune intervals of time the doctrine of salvation.

And finally, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God made flesh by the entire Trinity, conceived with the co-operation of the Holy Ghost of Mary ever Virgin, made true man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh, one Person in two natures, pointed out more clearly the way of life. Who according to His divinity is immortal and impassable, according to His humanity was made passable and mortal, suffered on the cross for the salvation of the human race, and being dead descended into hell, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. But He descended in soul, arose in flesh, and ascended equally in both; He will come at the end of the world to judge the living and the dead and will render to the reprobate and to the elect according to their works. Who all shall rise with their own bodies which they now have that they may receive according to their merits, whether good or bad, the latter eternal punishment with the devil, the former eternal glory with Christ.

There is one Universal Church of the faithful, outside of which there is absolutely no salvation. In which there is the same priest and sacrifice, Jesus Christ, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine; the bread being changed (*transsubstantiatio*) by divine power into the body, and the wine into the blood, so that to realize the mystery of unity we may receive of Him what He has received of us. And this sacrament no one can effect except the priest who has been duly ordained in accordance with the keys of the Church, which Jesus Christ Himself gave to the Apostles and their successors.

But the sacrament of baptism, which by the invocation of each Person of the Trinity, namely of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,

is effected in water, duly conferred on children and adults in the form prescribed by the Church by anyone whatsoever, leads to salvation. And should anyone after the reception of baptism have fallen into sin, by true repentance he can always be restored. Not only virgins and those practicing chastity, but also those united in marriage, through the right faith and through works pleasing to God, can merit eternal salvation” (Schroeder, pp 237-239).

Canon 3: “We excommunicate and anathematize every heresy that raises against the holy, orthodox and Catholic faith which we have above explained (in the first canon); condemning all heretics under whatever names they may be known, for while they have different faces they are nevertheless bound to each other by their tails, since in all of them vanity is a common element. Those condemned, being handed over to the secular rulers of their bailiffs, let them be abandoned, to be punished with due justice, clerics being first degraded from their orders.

As to the property of the condemned, if they are laymen, let it be confiscated; if clerics, let it be applied to the churches from which they received revenues. But those who are only suspected, due consideration being given to the nature of the suspicion and the character of the person, unless they prove their innocence by a proper defense, let them be anathematized and avoided by all until they have made suitable satisfaction; but if they have been under excommunication for one year, then let them be condemned as heretics.

Secular authorities, whatever office they may hold, shall be admonished and induced and if necessary compelled by ecclesiastical censure, that as they wish to be esteemed and numbered among the faithful, so for the defense of the faith they ought publicly to take an oath that they will strive in good faith and to the best of their ability to exterminate in the territories subject to their jurisdiction all heretics pointed out by the Church; so that whenever anyone shall have assumed authority, whether spiritual or temporal, let him be bound to confirm this decree by oath.

But if a temporal ruler, after having been requested and admonished by the Church, should neglect to cleanse his territory of this heretical foulness, let him be excommunicated by the metropolitan and the other bishops of the province. If he refuses to make

satisfaction within a year, let the matter be made known to the supreme pontiff, that he may declare the ruler's vassals absolved from their allegiance and may offer the territory to be ruled by lay Catholics, who on the extermination of the heretics may possess it without hindrance and preserve it in the purity of faith; the right, however, of the chief ruler is to be respected as long as he offers no obstacle in this matter and permits freedom of action. The same law is to be observed in regard to those who have no chief rulers (that is, are independent). **Catholics who have girded themselves with the cross for the extermination of the heretics, shall enjoy the indulgences and privileges granted to those who go in defense of the Holy Land.**

We decree that those who give credence to the teachings of the heretics, as well as those who receive, defend, and patronize them, are excommunicated; and we firmly declare that after any one of them has been branded with excommunication, if he has deliberately failed to make satisfaction within a year, let him incur *ipso jure* the stigma of infamy and let him not be admitted to public offices or deliberations, and let him not take part in the election of others to such offices or use his right to give testimony in a court of law. Let him also be intestable, that he may not have the free exercise of making a will, and let him be deprived of the right of inheritance. Let no one be urged to give an account to him in any matter, but let him be urged to give an account to others. If perchance he be a judge, let his decisions have no force, nor let any cause be brought to his attention. If he be an advocate, let his assistance by no means be sought. If a notary, let the instruments drawn up by him be considered worthless, for, the author being condemned, let them enjoy a similar fate. In all similar cases we command that the same be observed. If, however, he be a cleric, let him be deposed from every office and benefice, that the greater the fault the graver may be the punishment inflicted.

If any refuse to avoid such after they have been ostracized by the Church, let them be excommunicated till they have made suitable satisfaction. Clerics shall not give the sacraments of the Church to such pestilential people, nor shall they presume to give them Christian burial, or to receive their alms or offerings; otherwise they shall be deprived of their office, to which they may not be restored without a special indult of the Apostolic See. Similarly, all regulars, on whom also this punishment may be imposed, let

their privileges be nullified in that diocese in which they have presumed to perpetrate such excesses.

But since some, under ‘the appearance of godliness, but denying the power thereof,’ as the Apostle says (II Tim. 3: 5), arrogate to themselves the authority to preach, as the same Apostle says: ‘How shall they preach unless they be sent?’ (Rom. 10:15), all those prohibited or not sent, who, without the authority of the Apostolic See or of the Catholic bishop of the locality, shall presume to usurp the office of preaching either publicly or privately, shall be excommunicated and unless they amend, and the sooner the better, they shall be visited with a further suitable penalty. We add, moreover, that every archbishop or bishop should himself or through his archdeacon or some other suitable persons, twice or at least once a year make the rounds of his diocese in which report has it that heretics dwell, and there compel three or more men of good character or, if it should be deemed advisable, the entire neighborhood, to swear that if anyone know of the presence there of heretics or others holding secret assemblies, or differing from the common way of the faithful in faith and morals, they will make them known to the bishop. The latter shall then call together before him those accused, who, if they do not purge themselves of the matter of which they are accused, or if after the rejection of their error they lapse into their former wickedness, shall be canonically punished. But if any of them by damnable obstinacy should disapprove of the oath and should perchance be unwilling to swear, from this very fact let them be regarded as heretics.

We wish, therefore, and in virtue of obedience strictly command, that to carry out these instructions effectively the bishops exercise throughout their dioceses a scrupulous vigilance if they wish to escape canonical punishment. If from sufficient evidence it is apparent that a bishop is negligent or remiss in cleansing his diocese of the ferment of heretical wickedness, let him be deposed from the episcopal office and let another, who will and can confound heretical depravity, be substituted” (ibid, pp 242-244, emphasis mine).

Canon 21: “All the faithful of both sexes shall after they have reached the age of discretion faithfully confess all their sins at least once a year to their own (parish) priest and perform to the best of their ability the penance imposed, receiving reverently at

least at Easter the sacrament of the Eucharist, unless perchance at the advice of their own priest they may for a good reason abstain for a time from its reception; otherwise they shall be cut off from the Church (excommunicated) during life and deprived of Christian burial in death. Wherefore, let this salutary decree be published frequently in the churches, that no one may find in the plea of ignorance a shadow of excuse. But if anyone for a good reason should wish to confess his sins to another priest, let him first seek and obtain permission from his own (parish) priest, since otherwise he (the other priest) cannot loose or bind him” (ibid, pp 259-260).

In 1218, a conference was held to reconcile the poor of Lyon and the poor of Lombardy in Bergamo. The Albigensian Crusade was still in process, so a gathering of in France was not feasible. The two sides were unable to come together (see Wakefield and Evans, pp 278-289).

Another source, Anslem of Alessandria discussed the similarities and differences between the Poor of Lyon and the Poor of Lombardy (his work is dated between 1266 and 1276). We will summarize these points below.

The Poor of Lyons took a vow of poverty and did not work at all whereas the Lombards worked and performed trades. The Poor of Lombardy thought that a person could own worldly goods and still be saved. The Poor of Lyon believed the opposite. Waldo took the parable of Jesus and the rich man as literally applying to all people. In this way, the Poor of Lyon took an original teaching of Waldo to its extreme position.

The Poor of Lombardy believed that a person must live in state of grace to administer communion or eucharist; this means the eucharist offered by evil priests was rejected. The Poor of Lyon again took the opposite view – anyone regardless of lifestyle could bless eucharist. The Lombards gave ‘good advice’ to those who sinned, which the Roman church looked at as a form of penance.

Neither group bowed to the symbol of the cross. However, the Poor of Lyons put the cross upon himself/herself before eating. The Lombards did not.

Despite these differences, similarities did exist. Both rejected hierarchy, laws, and feasts of the Roman Church. They both believed that only God forgives sins and that the mass of the Roman Church was viewed as worthless. Furthermore, the Roman Church was depicted as a harlot and not God's Church (Wakefield and Evans, pp 369-372).

The differences between the two groups were too much to overcome. Being separated from one another allowed each group to develop independently. As we will discuss later in this work, the Poor of Lombardy may have a special connection to the Passagini.

## **Frederick II**

Up until this point, we have not mentioned much about the political aspects of the early thirteenth century. Some of that is due to instability in Germany, but that was gradually halted with the reign of Frederick II.

Frederick II is among the storied monarchs of Medieval Europe, especially on this subject. In many ways, he could be viewed as a true son of the Roman Church. His father died when he was young, and his mother died not long afterwards. Before her death, the young child was entrusted to the care of Pope Innocent III. A future pope, Honorius III, was his tutor.

Frederick had a celebrated family lineage from his father and mother. On his father's side, he was the son of Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI and grandson of Emperor Frederick I (Barbarossa). On his mother's side, he was the grandson of Roger II, the Norman King of Sicily. Truly, the Roman Church had a grand opportunity through Frederick to assert itself as an influencer of imperial policy and perhaps control the political stage of Europe.

Throughout his life, Frederick had to contend with the desires of the Roman Church on one hand and the needs of his domains on the other hand. He issued many stout laws and constitutions against heresy; they were modeled after Roman law and Innocent III's decrees from 1199 and 1207. In this way, he satisfied his obligations to continue the tradition of the Roman Empire and

please his former custodians, the Roman Church.

It appeared early on that Frederick would indeed be the royal and spiritual son that the pope desired to have (in a similar fashion to grandfather, Frederick I). In 1213, Frederick had not yet ascended to the throne of Germany. However, he wrote a letter to Innocent III in which he pledged to honor the Roman Church in several ways. Among his promises was to stay out of spiritual elections and to persecute heretics. He acknowledged that past German rulers had transgressed in these manners; he expressed a desire to do things differently. Below, we have a portion of this letter translated into English:

“In the name of the holy and undivided Trinity. Frederick II, etc ... To you, most holy father, and to all your successors, and to the holy Roman church, who has been a true mother to us, with a humble heart and devout spirit we will always show all obedience, honor, and reverence, such as our ancestors catholic kings and emperors, have shown your predecessors. And in order that our devotion to you may be shown to be greater than theirs we will pay you greater obedience, honor, and reverence than they did. Wishing therefore to abolish that abuse which some of our predecessors are said to have practised, we grant that the election of bishops may be free and canonical, so that he whom the whole chapter, or the majority of it, may elect may be established over the vacant church, provided there is nothing in the canon law against his election. Appeals in all ecclesiastical matters may freely be made to Rome, and no one shall attempt to interfere with them. We also will cease from that abuse which our predecessors practised, and will no longer seize the property [spolia] of deceased bishops or of vacant churches. Jurisdiction in all spiritual matters we yield to you and the other bishops, that those things which are Caesar's may be rendered to Caesar, and those which are God's to God. Moreover we will give our best help and aid in the destruction of heresy. We grant to the Roman church the free and undisturbed possession of all those lands which she has recovered from our predecessors who had despoiled her of them. If there are any such lands which she has not yet succeeded in recovering, we will, with all our strength, aid her to recover them; and if any of them shall fall into our hands we will freely restore them to her. In this we understand that the following lands are included:

All the land from Radicofano to Ceperano, the march of Ancona, the duchy of Spoleto, the land of the countess Matilda, the county of Bertinoro, the exarchate of Ravenna, the Pentapolis, with the other lands lying adjacent to them, as described in many documents given by kings and emperors from the time of Ludwig, in which it is said that these lands shall belong forever to the jurisdiction and control of the Roman church. And whenever we shall be called by the pope to come and receive the imperial crown or to render any service to the church, we will receive from them *fodrum* and other entertainment only as the pope shall give his consent As a devoted son and catholic prince we will aid the Roman Catholic church to keep and defend the kingdom of Sicily and all other rights which she possesses..." (Thatcher and Holmes, pp 230-232, Migne, PL 217:301).

Innocent III never got to see Frederick try to meet these promises as the pope died in 1216. He was succeeded by Honorius III, who continued many of Innocent's policies. For instance, Honorius made similar promises of indulgences to all who fought in the ongoing crusade against the Albigenses (*Albigensian Crusade*, sec. 617, p 278).

In that same year, Honorius issued a bull allowing the creation of the Dominican Order, which is also called *Ordinis Praedicatorum* or the Order of Preachers (in some primary source documents you may see the shortened form of 'OP' or 'op'). The people who belonged to this order were also called friars. Their job was to assist in evangelizing the common people, but they were later utilized to convert heretics and proclaim crusades. Originally, they were required to take a vow of poverty and pledge to help other people. This order was one way that the Roman Church sought to counter the influence that non-conformist groups had on common people through their vows of poverty and simplicity of faith. It was also a much easier way to infiltrate these groups and learn about their beliefs without detection.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the friars were responsible for writing many volumes about heretical groups and how to deal with them. Their work provides us with detailed information about these groups.

In 1220, Frederick II was coronated Holy Roman Emperor by Honorius. This event took place in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. During it, Frederick issued ten constitutions to set the attitude of how the empire would be governed. Of them, two sections deal solely with heresy.

Pope Honorius took these ten constitutions and included them as part of a papal bull (a bull is also known as a decree or command). He issued a letter giving full approval to them and commanding Christians everywhere to obey them. The beginning section of this letter and some of Frederick's constitutions against heretics are translated below:

Dated November 22, 1220: "And we Honorius, Bishop, servant of the servants of God, do praise, approve, and confirm these laws, to continue for ever, which are made by Frederick, Emperor of the Romans, our dearest son, for the good of all Christians. And in case any man, by a presumptuous attempt, being instigated thereto by the enemy of mankind, shall any way endeavor the infraction of them, let him be assured, that by so doing he will incur the indignation of Almighty God, and of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul."

"Frederick, by the grace of God, Emperor of the Romans, always Increaser of the Empire, to all Marquesses, Earls, and all people under our government, health and grace... We do condemn to perpetual infamy the Cathari, Paterines, Leonists, Speronists, Arnoldists, Circumcised, and all other heretics of both sexes, by what names soever they are called, commanding their goods to be confiscated, so as never to return to them again, or by way of inheritance to devolve to their children; since it is a much more heinous crime to offend the majesty of the eternal God, than any temporal prince. And as for those who are only suspected of heresy, except at the command of the Church, according to the degree of suspicion and quality of the person, they make their innocence to appear by a sufficient vindication of themselves, shall be accounted infamous and outlawed; and if they continue so for a whole year, we condemn them for heretics.

"We also ordain by this perpetual edict, that all that are in authority, Consuls and Rectors, whatsoever their office may be, do publicly take an oath, for defense of the faith, that they will faithfully

endeavor, to the utmost of their power, to exterminate all heretics in the places subject to their jurisdiction; so that from henceforward, as soon as any one shall be taken into any place of power, either perpetual or temporary, he shall be obliged to swear to this article; and that in case of failure, they shall neither be accounted persons in power or consuls; and we from thenceforward declare all their acts and sentences null and void.

And in case that any temporal lord, being required and admonished by the Church, shall neglect to purge his territories from heretical pravity, after a whole year elapsed from the time of his admonition, we give leave to Catholics to possess themselves of his lands, who, after having rooted out the heretics, shall quietly possess the same, and preserve it in piety. Provided always that the rights of the principal lord of the fee be preserved but that the foresaid law shall be wholly in force against those who have no such superior lords of the fee.

Moreover, we proscribe all heretics, entertainers and favorers of heretics, firmly ordaining, that as soon as any such, being excommunicated by the Church, shall contemptuously refuse to make satisfaction within a year's time, that then he be made infamous by law, and incapable of any office, or of being a member of any council, or of having a voice in the choice of officers, or being a witness: that moreover he be deprived of the power of making a will, and of succeeding into an inheritance. Furthermore, that nobody shall be bound to answer to his complaint or charge, but he be obliged to answer the charge of others against him: and if he be a judge, that his sentence be of no force, and that no causes be brought before him; if he be a lawyer, that his pleading be not admitted; and if a scrivener, that the writings drawn up by him be invalid..." (English: Allix, pp 263-265; Latin: *Medii Aevi Bibliotheca Patristica*, 3:911-916). To read the full constitutions of Frederick from his coronation, see MGH, *Legum* 2:243-245 or MGH, *Const.* 2:106-109.

At first it seems that the Passagini are missing from the list of heretical groups in Frederick's constitutions. However, the Circumcisi are mentioned, and it is generally thought that they are simply another reference to the Passagini because they believed in a literal application of the Old Testament, the Sabbath, and circumcision. This connection will become more evident as we progress in

this work. For another example, consider the Waldenses. They are identified in these constitutions under the name Leonists because they started in Lyons. This further affirms that alternative names for these groups were sometimes used.

Less than four years later, on March 12, 1224, Frederick issued a constitution against heretics in Lombardy. If heretics were detected, the decree required that they be either burned at the stake or have their tongues cut out (MGH, Constitutions, 2:126-127, no. 100). The papal legate over Lombardy, who would later become known as Gregory IX, approved and promulgated this law.

A manuscript commonly dated to between 1225 and 1250 has been found that briefly reviewed the names and beliefs of heretical groups as well as attempts to refute them. Though it is incomplete, its contents are still significant to this study. In chapter 3, sections 20-22, the Passagini and Circumcisi were mentioned together. The work described them as literally observing the Old Testament, the Sabbath, and circumcision (Wakefield and Evans, pp 296-300). If not one and the same group, they were definitely considered two branches of the same tree, so to speak.

Pope Honorius III died in 1227. He was succeeded by Gregory IX, who was the papal legate for Lombardy. As mentioned earlier, he published Frederick's law that heretics should be burned at the stake or have their tongues removed. The reign of Gregory IX marked a time of increased violence towards non-conformist groups. Frederick continued to enact laws that could be used to fully persecute these people. However, the two rulers had a rocky relationship, to say the least.

## Chapter 4

### Period III: 1227-1254

On many occasions, Frederick promised Pope Honorius III that he would embark upon a Crusade, but he requested a postponement each time. In 1227, he made the same promise to Gregory IX, but sickness hit his army and reduced his numbers so badly that he could not proceed. Gregory, having known of Frederick's previous delays, excommunicated him.

In March 1228, a pro-imperial mob threatened to trample the pope for this political move, and he was forced to flee Rome. Despite the excommunication, many leaders in the empire stayed loyal to Frederick. He ventured on the crusade anyways and won territory in the Holy Land without a battle. While he was gone, the pope sent an army to invade Sicily. However, the emperor defeated these troops upon his return in 1229.

The Council of Toulouse was held in 1229 under the direction of the archbishop over that city. This was just after the conclusion of the Albigensian Crusade. Many significant canons were established in this council for the persecution of heretics.

Canon 1: "We appoint, therefore, that the Archbishops and Bishops shall swear in one priest, and two or three laymen of good report, or more if they think fit, in every parish, both in and out of cities, who shall diligently, faithfully, and frequently, seek out the heretics in those parishes, by searching all houses, and subterranean chambers, which lie under any suspicion. And looking out for appendages, or outbuildings, in the roofs themselves, or any other kind of hiding places; all which we direct to be destroyed."

Canon 6: "Directs that the house in which any heretic shall be found shall be destroyed."

Canon 10: "Also we decree that if any *haeretici vestiti*, having voluntarily abandoned their heresy, shall return to the catholic faith, acknowledging their error, they shall not remain in the town

in which they previously dwelt, if that town be suspected of heresy; but shall be placed in a catholic town, which lies under no suspicion of heresy. Moreover, in detestation of their ancient error, they shall thenceforth wear two conspicuous crosses, of a different colour from their garments; nor shall any such person be allowed to discontinue these crosses, without letters testimonial of his reconciliation from his Bishop. Nor in future shall any public office be intrusted to any such persons, nor shall they be admitted in any matters of law, unless they shall have been restored to unity, with a sufficient penance by the Lord Pope, or by his Legate a latere.”

Canon 14: “We prohibit also that the laity should be permitted to have the books of the old, or the new, testament; unless any one, from motives of devotion, should wish to have the Psalter, or the Breviary for divine offices, or the hours of the blessed Virgin; but we most strictly forbid their having any translation of these books” (English found in Maitland, pp 192-195).

The first canon directed the bishops to establish people of credibility to search for heretics in any place that they could be found, including underground passages, and report them when found. The sixth canon directs that any house where heretics are found is to be destroyed. The tenth canon required that those who recanted of heresy were to wear two crosses on their garments until a bishop shall determine otherwise. They were also relocated to a town where no heresy was found. This was a way to separate heretics from their companions. The fourteenth canon prohibits lay persons from possessing any books of the Bible and prohibits any translations of them. It was common for heretical groups to possess books of the Bible in their own language. As discussed earlier in this work, the Waldenses had this advantage and other groups such as the Passagini must have had at least parts of the Bible in their own language. This allowed them to develop their beliefs and spread them to the common people.

Other canons from this council to note: In canon 13, people are required to confess to a priest three times a year and receive the eucharist: Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. Those that refuse were considered heretics. Canon 16 required that all wills be made in the presence of a priest; if it were done otherwise then the will was not considered valid. This was one way to prevent

heretics from making legitimate wills. Canon 25 prohibited people from being absent from Sunday gatherings. In canon 26, all the feast days of the Catholic Church were listed (Latin for the canons from this council found in Mansi, 23:192-204).

This council illustrates the length by which the Roman Church officials went to rid areas of heresy. It also displays another attempt to simplify the minimum required standards to be considered a faithful member of the Roman Church.

Frederick and Gregory reconciled in 1230. During the pope's absence from Rome, which lasted about three years, heretics increased in the city. Many of them were arrested. While most were imprisoned, some were burned at the stake (Catholic Encyclopedia: Gregory IX). While the pope generally disdained Frederick, he supported imperial laws against heresy and implemented them on occasion.

The pope and emperor had competing visions for Western Christendom which reflected prior struggles in this arena. Frederick wanted to control the Roman Church and keep the pope out of imperial business. On the other hand, Gregory wanted to be the supreme leader and final arbiter of all lands and rulers confessing to be Christian, which included the empire.

In 1231, Frederick allowed feudal lords in Germany to have more independence. This act afforded him allies for years to come, but it weakened the empire after his time. He also declared a land peace between rulers; this measure was designed to prevent wars between landowners. Ultimately, these efforts reduced disputes in Germany and enabled Frederick to devote much of his energy and resources to his ongoing feud with the papacy.

In the same year, Frederick issued the *Liber Augustalis* or the Constitutions of Melfi as the code of law for the Kingdom of Sicily. These remained the main source of law for that area until at least the time of Napoleon. As reviewed in chapter one, there was a movement during this time to revive Roman law; these constitutions reflected it. This body of law is considered by some to be the most comprehensive and proficient one issued since the time of Charlemagne (Encyclopedia Britannica 11<sup>th</sup> edition: Frederick II).

In it, Frederick described his vision for the Roman Empire, which would be imposed on the Kingdom of Sicily. He viewed the job of the temporal rulers to protect the mother Roman Church from heresy and slanderers. He thought that temporal rulers would answer to God for how well they carried out this task. His prior rearing by papal custodians likely contributed to this view. Perhaps he thought that it was necessary to return the favor to them. However, it could have been a ploy by him to control the Roman Church.

In the introduction to these laws, Frederick asserted that he ruled the continued Roman Empire and that he was the right hand of the power of God ruling on earth. He even compared his codex of laws as a sacrificial animal to God. To affirm his vision, he began the constitutions with two sections against heretics.

Title 1, section 1 is titled “About Heretics and Patarines.” While the term Patarine was originally applied to a specific sect, by this time it was also used in a generic sense for any heretic. He accused them of dividing God’s church and compared all heretics to wolves, evil angels, sons of satan, and serpents. He then likened them to early church groups that opposed the Roman Church such as the Arians and Nestorians. As discussed in chapter one, this was necessary for his laws to be viewed as a continuation of ancient Roman law. He claimed that Lombardy was the source of this heresy and that their doctrines had spread from there into Sicily.

While much of this section was dedicated to condemnation against the Patarines, other groups are generally referenced. Ancient Roman laws were referenced as well. Among the punishments for non-conformist groups were as follows: heretics were condemned to death, their goods were allowed to be confiscated, and their memories were cursed. An inquisition was established against heretics through Roman Church authorities. He charged the inquisitors to first lead heretics away from their errors. If they refused to recant, then they were condemned to die in front of others. Anyone who tried to intervene in their punishment was rendered the same judgment.

Title II of the same constitutions condemns any helpers of here-

tics to banishment and confiscation of goods. The sons of the heretics were also condemned with the punishment of perpetual infamy. If the son of a heretic reported his parents, then full restoration was to be granted to him (Powell, pp 3-5, 7-10). This title is translated in English below:

“We condemn the Receivers, Accomplices, and Abettors of the Patarenes, to Forfeiture of their Goods and perpetual Banishment ; who by their Care to save others from Punishment, have no Fear or Regard for themselves. Let not their Children, be in any wife admitted to Honours, but always accounted **infamous\***; nor let them be allowed as Witnesses in any Cases, in which infamous Persons are refused. But if the Children of those who favour the Patarenes shall discover any one of them, so that he shall be convicted, let them, as the Reward of their Acknowledgment of the Faith, be entirely restored by our imperial Favour, to their forfeited Honour and Estate” (Limborch (1731), vol. 1, chapter 12, p 75).

\*Notice that the word infamous is used. This was a technical term in Roman Law (Pharr, p 585). Once again, Frederick evoked ancient Roman law in his condemnation of heretics. Additionally, he continued the standard established by Innocent III in 1199 and 1207 to connect heresy against the Roman Church with treason against the Roman State (including legal ramifications for this transgression).

On Feb. 22, 1232, Frederick issued more constitutions against heretics and repeated two constitutions against heretics from coronation in 1220. They were issued at Ravenna (MGH, Const., 2:194-196).

In 1238 and 1239, Frederick II issued three severe laws against heretics from the city of Padua (which is in northern Italy). The dates are listed as May 14 and June 26, 1238 and Feb. 22, 1239. Among the groups condemned are the Circumcised and Passagini. We have English translations of these laws below:

First: “Frederick, by the Grace of God, Emperor of the Romans, and always Augustus, King of Jerusalem and Sicily, to his beloved Princes, the venerable Archbishops, Bishops, and other Prelates of the Church; to the Dukes, Marquisses, Earls, Barons,

Governors, Scultets, Burgraves, Advocates, Judges, Ministers, Officials, and all other his faithful subject, throughout the whole Empire, to whom these letters shall come, Greeting and all Happiness.

The Care of the Imperial Government, committed to us from Heaven, and over which we preside, by the Gift of God, and the Height of our Dignity, demand the material Sword, which is given to us separately from the Priesthood, against the Enemies of the Faith, and for the Extirpation of heretical Pravity, that we should pursue, with Judgment and Justice, those Vipers and perfidious Children, who insult the Lord and his Church, as though they would tare out the very Bowels of their Mother. We shall not suffer these Wretches to live, who infect the World by their seducing Doctrines, and being themselves corrupted, more grievously taint the Flock of the Faithful.

We therefore appoint and ordain, that Hereticks, of whatsoever Name, throughout our Empire, being condemned by the Church, and delivered over to the Secular Power, shall be punished according to their Deserts. If any of them, after their being apprehended, shall return to the Unity of the Faith, through the Fear of Death, let them suffer perpetual imprisonment, and do Penance according to the Canons. Farther, whatsoever Hereticks shall be found in the Cities, Towns, or other Places of the Empire, by the Inquisitors appointed by the Apostolick See, or other orthodox Persons zealous for the Faith ; let those who have Jurisdiction there, seize their Persons, at the Inflammation of the Inquisitors and other Catholicks, and keep them in Strict Custody, till being condemned by the Censure of the Church, they perish by an accursed Death, for their denying the Sacraments of Faith, and Life.

We condemn also to the same Punishment, all whom the Craft of the deceitful Enemy shall employ as Advocates, unlawfully to defend the Error of these Hereticks, especially since those who are defiled with such Wickedness, are equal in Guilt ; unless they desist upon proper Admonition, and wisely consult the Preservation of their Lives. We subject also to the same just Punishment, those, who being convicted of Heresy in any one Place, fly to another, that they may more safely pour out the Poison of their heretical depravity -, unless in this Instance, they have a Testimony in their Favour from those who have been converted to the Faith

from the same Error, or from those who have convinced them of their Heresy, which in this case we allow may lawfully be done.

We condemn also to Death, all such Hereticks, who being brought to Trial, shall abjure their Heresy when in extreme Danger of Life, if afterwards convicted of having dissembled and taken a false Oath, and of having willingly relapsed into the same Error, that thereby their vile Dissimulation may be more definitive to themselves, and their Falsehood meet with its deserved Punishment. We farther deprive Hereticks, their Receivers and Favourers, of all Benefit of Proclamation and Appeal -, being willing that every Seed of this heretical Stain should, by all Means, be extirpated out of our Empire, in which the true Faith ought ever to be preserved.

Moreover, as we have received greater Favours from the Divine Mercy, and are exalted to an higher Dignity than the Children of Men, we ought to pay the more solemn Services of Gratitude. If then we manifest our Displeasure against those who contemn us, and condemn Traitors in their Persons, and by stripping their Children of their Inheritance, how justly shall we be more incensed against those who blaspheme the Name of God, and revile the Catholick Faith, and deprive, by our Imperial Authority, all Hereticks, their Receivers, Abettors and Advocates, and their Heirs and Posterity, even to the second Generation, of their temporal Estates, publick Offices and Honours, that they may continually mourn at the Remembrance of their Fathers Crimes, and certainly know that God is a jealous God, punishing the Iniquities of the Fathers upon their Children. Not that we would exclude from our Mercy those, who keeping themselves free from the Heresy of their Fathers, shall discover their secret Perfidiousness : For whatever Punishment their Guilt may receive, we would not subject their innocent Children to it. We hereby also declare our Pleasure, that we appoint the Friars Predicant of the Order of Predicants, to take Care of the Faith against Hereticks, in all Parts of our Empire. We also take under our special Imperial Protection, all others whatsoever, that shall come to judge Hereticks, and grant them Leave to go, flay or return, except those who are under the Ban of the Empire ; and Will that none shall injure them ; but that they shall have the Assistance and Recommendation of all the Faithful in the Empire. We farther command all, and singular of you, that wheresoever, and to whomsoever of you

they shall come, ye receive them kindly, and keep their Persons safe from all the Attempts of Hereticks, who may lay in wait for them, and grant them your Advice, safe Conduct and Assistance in the Execution of Affairs, so acceptable before God. And as to all Hereticks they shall discover to you in their Jurisdiction, let them be apprehended, and kept in safe Custody, till being ecclesiastically condemned, they shall Suffer the deserved Punishment ; as knowing that info doing, their Obedience will be pleasing to God, and acceptable to us, viz. in assisting, with their utmost Endeavours, the said Friars to root out of all the Parts of our Empire, this new unheard of, and infamous heretical Pravity. And if any one shall be negligent and remiss in this Matter, let him know that he shall be unprofitable before God, and justly incur our highest Displeasure” (English: Limborch (1731), vol. 1, chapter 12, pp 72 -74, Latin: MGH, Legum, 2:326-327).

Second: “Frederick, by the Grace of God, &c. The Hereticks are endeavouring to rent the seamless Coat of our God, and raging with deceitful Words, which declare their schismatical Intention, strive to divide the Unity of the indivisible Faith it self, and to separate the Sheep from the Care of Peter, to whom they were committed, by the good Shepherd, to be fed. These are the ravenous Wolves within\*, who put on the Meekness of the Sheep, that they may the better enter into the Lord’s Sheepfold. These are the worst Angels : These are Sons of Naughtiness, of the Father of Wickedness, and Author of Deceit, appointed to deceive simple Souls : These are Adders who deceive the Doves : These are Serpents, which crawl in privately and under the Sweetness of Honey, vomit out Poison : So that whilst they pretend to administer the Food of Life, they fling with their Tail, and mingle the most bitter Poison into the Cup of Death. These Sects are not now known by their ancient Names either that they may conceal themselves, or what is yet more execrable, not content to be called by a Name from amongst themselves, as the Arians were from Arius, and the Nestorians from Nestorius ; they call themselves Patarenes, after the Example of the Martyrs, who suffered Martyrdom for the Catholick Faiths as though they themselves were exposed to Sufferings. These miserable Patarenes, who do not believe the eternal Trinity, by their complicated Wickedness offend against Three, viz. God, their Neighbours and Themselves.

Against God, because they do not acknowledge the Son and the

true Faith, They deceive their Neighbours, whilst under the Presence of Spiritual Food, they minister the Delights of heretical Pravity. But their Cruelty to them/elves is yet more Savage ; since, besides the Loss of their immortal Souls, they expose their Bodies to a cruel Death -, being prodigal of their Lives, and fearless of Destruction, which by acknowledging the true Faith they might escape, and which is horrible to express, their Survivors are not terrified by their Example. Against such Enemies to God and Man we cannot contain our Indignation, nor refuse to punish them with the Sword of just Vengeance ; but shall pursue them with so much the greater Vigour, as they appear to spread wider the Crimes of their Superstition, to the more evident Injury of the Christian Faith, and of the Church of Rome, which is adjudged to be the Head of all other Churches ; insomuch that they have propagated their Falsehood from the Borders of Italy, and the Parts of Lombardy, where we are certainly informed their Wickedness doth more especially abound, even to our Kingdom of Sicily. This being most highly offensive to us, we ordain in the first Place, that the Crime of Heresy, and of every condemned Sect, whatever be the Name of it. shall be reckoned amongst the publick Crimes, as the ancient Laws declare.

Yea, let such know that they shall be deemed guilty of High Treason it self For as the Crime of Rebellion reaches to the Loss of the Life and Goods of the Persons condemned, and after they are dead, makes their Memory infamous ; let the fame be observed as to the aforesaid Crime, of which the Patarenes are guilty. And that the Wickedness of those who walk in Darkness, because they are not Followers of God, may be discovered, we Will, that if there be none to accuse them, strict Enquiry be made by our Officials after such who commit these Crimes, as well as after other Malefactors -, and that all who are informed against, if there be but the least Suspicion, be examined by the Ecclesiasticks and Prelates : And if they (hall find them to err in any one Point from the Catholick Faith, we, by this our present Edict, condemn the Patarenes, and all other Hereticks, of every Kind and Name, to suffer Death, committing them to the Punishment of the Flames that they may be buried alive in publick View ; if after being pastorally admonished to forsake the dark Snares of the Devil, they will not acknowledge the God of Light. Nor are we displeas'd that herein we gratify them, since we are assured they can reap no other Fruit of their Error but Punishment only. For such, let no one

dare to intercede with us ; if any shall presume to do it, let him know he shall justly incur our Indignation” (English: Limborch (1731), vol. 1, chapter 12, pp 74-75, MGH, Leges, 2:327-328).

Third: “Emperor Frederick, always increaser of the empire. We condemn the Receivers, Accomplices, and Abettors of the Patarenes, to Forfeiture of their Goods and perpetual Banishment ; who by their Care to save others from Punishment, have no Fear or Regard for themselves. Let not their Children, be in any wise admitted to Honours, but always accounted infamous ; nor let them be allowed as Witnesses in any Cases, in which infamous Persons are refused. But if the Children of those who favour the Patarenes shall discover any one of them, so that he shall be convicted, let them, as the Reward of their Acknowledgment of the Faith, be entirely restored by our imperial Favour, to their forfeited Honour and Estate. (this section is the same as Frederick’s second law against heresy in the Constitutions of Melfi). We begin with the chapters constitutional against Paterenes issued by lord Frederick illustrious man Roman Emperor, always increaser of the Empire, King of Jerusalem and Sicily.

We do condemn to perpetual infamy, withdraw our Protection from, and put under our Ban, the Cathari, Paterines, Leonists, Speronists, Arnoldists, Circumcised, Passagines, Josephines, Garatenses, Albanenses, Francisci, Begardi, Commissi, Waldenses, Romanuli, Communelli, Varini, Ortuleni, those of the black water, and all other heretics of both sexes, by whatsoever Names they are called; and ordain that their Goods shall be confiscated insuch Manner, that their Children may never inherit them, since ‘tis much more heinous to offend the eternal, than the temporal Majesty.

But if any come under a bare Suspicion, unless by a proper Purgation they shall demonstrate their Innocence, at the Command of the Church, according to the Degree of their Suspicion, and the Quality of their Person, let them be accounted infamous by all, and as under our Ban: And if they remain such by the Space of one Tear, we condemn them as Hereticks. We ordain also, by this our perpetual Edict, that our Officers and Consuls, or Rectors, whatever be their Offices, shall take a publick Oath for the Defence of the Faith; and that they will, bona fide, study to their utmost, to exterminate from all the Lands subject to their Jurisdic-

tion, all Hereticks specified by the Church, so that who so ever shall at any Time henceforward be admitted into any Office, either perpetual or temporary, he shall be obliged to confirm this Edict by an Oath ; otherwise let them not be owned as our Officers or Consuls, or any Thing like it. We pronounce all their Sentences null and void. But if any temporal Lord, having been cited and admonished by the Church, shall have neglected to purge his Dominions from heretical Pravity, after a Tear elapsed from the Time of his Admonition, let his Country be seized by the Catholicks, .and let them possess it without Opposition, and preserve it in the Purity of the Faith, by the Extirpation of Hereticks saving the Right of the principal Lord, provided that he gives no Impediment or Obstruction. But let those who have no principal Lord be subject to the same Law, Furthermore, we put under our Ban, those who believe, receive, defend, and favour Hereticks; ordaining that if any such Person shall refuse to give Satisfaction within a Year after his Excommunication, he shall be, *ipso jure*, infamous, and not admitted to any Kind of publick Offices, or the like, nor to choose any Persons to them, nor to be a Witness. Let him also be intestable, and let him not have the Power of making a Will, nor of receiving any Thing by Succession or Inheritance.

Furthermore, let no one answer for him in any Affair, but let him be obliged to answer others. If he should be a Judge, let his Sentence be of no Effect, nor any Causes be heard before him. If an Advocate, let him never be admitted to plead in any ones Defence. If a Notary, let no Instruments made by him be valid. Moreover we add, that an Heretick may be convicted by an Heretick; and that the Houses of the Patarnes, their Abettors and Favourers, either where they have taught, or where they have laid Hands on others, shall be destroyed, never to be rebuilt” (English: Limborch (1731), vol. 1, chapter 12, pp 75-77; Latin: MGH, Legum, 2:328-329; I translated some parts of it that were not listed in Limborch).

The content presented in these constitutions reflected previous papal letters and bulls. Frederick added more force to them and enshrined these ideals as law. This put the full force of the Medieval Roman Empire behind the ongoing battle with heresy. While these laws were draconian, they were usually not enforced by Frederick. This echoed the actions of a previous Roman Emperor, Theodosius I. Later rulers and popes most certainly used them in

a fuller measure.

In Frederick's third law, several non-conformist groups are mentioned. Among them were the Circumcised and Passagini. As discussed in the last chapter, these were likely different names for the same group just like terms Leonists, Waldenses, and Poor of Lyon each refer to the same group. For this reason, some have suggested that the name of the group could be better worded as "Circumcised Passagines."

Nineteen different non-conforming groups were deemed heretical in this law. This number is fascinating because it echoes another primary source.

Stephen of Bourbon was a contemporary to the reign of Frederick. In one writing, he recorded an encounter with a heretic from Milan who informed him that seventeen heterodox sects lived in that city alone. He pointed out that each group bitterly disputed with each other about points of doctrine.

Among the groups referenced were the Poor of Lyon or Waldenses, The Poor of Lombardy, Tortolani, Communiati, Rebaptisati, Arnoldists, Speronists, Leonists, Cathars, Patarenes, Manichees, and Burgari (d'Argentre, p 86). Of the twelve groups mentioned in Stephen's account, most of them are repeated exactly or similarly in Frederick's laws. Five of the groups were omitted from Stephen's narrative; we would then use Frederick's law to fill in the rest.

Between 1235 and 1238, Salvo Burci composed a lengthy work against heretics. Among the groups he discussed as a minor sect was the Circumcisers, who claimed that both the Old Law and New Law were to be literally observed. This echoes comments about the Passagini from previous decades and adds more credence to the idea that the Circumcisers and Passagini were one and the same group (Wakefield and Evans, p 276). He lived in Piacenza, which is near Lombardy. His writing indicates that the influence of the Passagini was likely exerted beyond the cities normally connected with them (Milan and Cremona).

In 1236, Pope Gregory IX issued a chapter against the Patarenos (*contra Paraernos*) which begins *excommunicamus & anathe-*

*matizamus*. The letter excommunicated and anathemized the “Catharos, Patarenos, the Poor of Lyons (Waldenses), Passagani, Josephinos, Arnoldists, Speronistas, and all other names that heretics may go by...” (Latin: Labbe, 11i:334-335). The content of this document is important because it broadened the search for heretics to anyone who differed in their lifestyle from that which was approved by the Roman Church. Thus, the net was widened more to catch non-conformists. An excerpt from it is found below:

“Likewise if any person knows any heretics, or such who hold private conventicles, or who differ in their Life and Manners from the Conversation of the Faithful, let him endeavour to discover them to his Confessor, or someone else, who he believes may give Notice to the Prelate, otherwise let him be excommunicated” (Limborch (1816), pp 308-309).

A fragment of a decretal (number 160) entitled “punishment of heretics” dates to the time of Gregory IX. It reads very similarly to the chapter of the *Contra Patarenos* we just reviewed. It excommunicates and anathemizes all heretics, specifically condemning the “Catharos, Patarenos, Pauperes de Lugduno (poor of Lyons), Passaginos, Tossepinos, Arnaldistas, Speronistas, and all other names they go by” (Labbe, 11i:406). One difference is that Tossepinos are mentioned instead of Josephinos. This was most likely due to an error in spelling or copying the manuscript.

In 1238, Gregory wrote a letter against heretics in Lombardy (Listed as epistle 9 in Labbe, 11i: 335-336). He explained that the heretics were concealed for a long time, but that they had recently come out in the open. The letter is unique in that it calls for the brotherly order of preachers to head the inquisition proceedings in that region. We have quotes from two sections of this letter below:

“To the Fraternal Order of Preachers in Lombardy. Issued for them to execute constitutions against the heretics... That inflexible enemy of the human race, the instigator of all evil, whom his pride cast down from the highest to the lowest estate, not content that, by the wickedness of his fraud, he led man to a fall, beset with cares and misery, craftily endeavours to ensnare him in his pestilential nets, artfully contriving against him, lest he should

rise again to obtain that place from which he had fallen. Very lately however in these days (*novissime autem diebus istis*) perfidiously endeavouring to destroy the faith by his ministers of iniquity, he has spread deadly poison; rebelliously considering that domestic enemies would be efficacious in doing mischief, who, putting forth fair appearances, sting with their tails like scorpions, and would, at length, infuse their pestilential poison in the golden cup of Babylon. **For although the heretics hitherto for a long while being concealed (*hactenus diutius latitantes*) have spread like a cancer in secret, and, like foxes, have rejoiced to demolish the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts, now, however, led on by their sins, they presume avowedly to rise up against it in open day**, like horses prepared for the battle, publicly preaching in some places, seeking food in the simple, and a prey in the unlearned. Moreover, desiring to ensnare some of the faithful by their artifices, they have become masters of error, who never were disciples of truth. It is expedient, therefore, that we should rise up manfully against them....(Maitland, pp 201-202; emphasis mine) ...Add to these things, in order to their more freely and effectually executing the office committed to them in all the premises: everyone who shall attend on their preaching, twenty days in their several stations; and all those who shall, from their heart, afford assistance, counsel, and favour to the subduing of heretics, and their favourers, receivers, and defenders, in their fortified places and castles, or any other that rebel against the church, we presently confide in the mercy of Almighty God, and in the authority of the blessed Peter and Paul, his apostles, do release for three years from the penance enjoined them. And if any such should happen to die in the prosecution of this affair, we grant them full pardon of all their sins, for which they are contrite in their heart, and which they confess with their mouths” (Limborch (1816), pp 216-217).

Apparently, Lombardy continued to be a popular place for non-conformist groups despite the previous edicts against them. Similar letters were sent out years before to other areas, such as Germany (1231) and Provincia (1233). By these communications, the Dominican order became established as the pope’s chosen instrument to try and turn the tide in the war against heresy.

From the reign of Gregory onward, the friars increased significantly in number and influence. Many bishops and clergy could

only conduct their ecclesiastical functions within a specific jurisdiction. The friars were allowed more independence in where they could travel and exercise papal authority. This caused friction between the friars and clergy; the latter wanted friars to submit to their authority before acting against heretics. One might say that friars functioned much like evangelists.

While the order of preachers only started with sixteen men in 1216, they rapidly grew to over sixty chapters in five years. By 1228, they had chapters in over a dozen different regions across Europe and one in Israel. It is estimated that over 5,000 priests belonged to the order by 1256. Over 400 Dominican convents, or compounds for training, existed by 1277. A pro-Catholic source claims that by 1233 they had converted over 100,000 persons to the Roman Church just in the province of Lombardy (Catholic Encyclopedia: Mendicant Friars, Order of Preachers).

It was a popular movement that rapidly spread. They proclaimed simple messages that appealed to the masses, wore plain dress, and many times lived in poverty. They continued to serve as a counter movement to non-conformist groups of the time.

Even if the numbers of converted persons in Lombardy by 1233 was accurately recounted in the primary sources, heresy still existed in significant numbers. Gregory IX was the former papal legate for Lombardy, and he knew the region better than most clergy. He issued his decrees and letters to stop their efforts.

The monumental achievement of Pope Gregory IX was to direct the compilation of bulls and letters issued by previous popes and church councils into one book of decretals. The material was organized by category. It became known as the *Corpus Juris Canonici*; it was completed about 1235. It was later added to and revised, but his original work was used as the chief source of Roman Church law until just after World War I.

Book five, title seven is devoted to heretics. It included their names and punishments. Below, I have summarized the contents from many of these chapters:

Chapter 2: Contains a quote from Pope Leo I in about 447 AD who wrote: “He who, when he is able, does not recall others from

error, proves that he errs himself” (Stopford, p 10).

Chapter 3: Includes a quote from Augustine that heretics and schismatics will burn in hell with the devil and his angels if they do not return to the Catholic Church.

Chapter 7: This includes Alexander III’s letter entitled *Remensi*.

Chapter 8: Includes the twenty-first canon from Lateran III.

Chapter 9: Contains the entirety of Pope Lucius III’s letter *Ad Abolendam*.

Chapter 10: Contains the entirety of Innocent III’s decree *Vergeris in senium* from 1199.

Chapter 13: Includes canon three from Lateran IV in 1215 (Mansi, 22:986-990).

Chapter 14: Includes Gregorius IX’s letter to the Archbishop of Milan that forbids lay people from preaching.

Chapter 15: Includes Gregory IX’s letter against heretics taken from the chapter against the Patarines and Decretal 160.

Chapter 16 reads: “Those who were held bound to heretics, are freed from every obligation...Let all those who were held bound by any agreement, by whatsoever conditions it was secured to those who have manifestly lapsed into heresy, know that they are absolved from the debt of fealty to their Lord, and of all sorts of obedience?” (*Selection of Reports and Papers of the House of Commons*, Page 257).

(Latin found in *Corpus Juris Canonici*, vol 1, part 2, pp 749-760)

The Roman Church places a high value on tradition, which helps us to understand the layout of these chapters. In a work of this magnitude, it was necessary for Gregory to establish the teachings of earlier church writers, which they term the church fathers. They view these earlier church works as important for determining correct doctrine, whether their writings align with the Bible or not. Such reasoning gave them a second ancient basis – Roman law being the first – for persecuting heresy from the Middle Ages onward.

After establishing the will of the fathers, subsequent papal writings against heresy were repeated mostly word for word. Several of these items we have included in this work, such as the twenty-first canon from Lateran III, Lucius III’s letter, Innocent III’s *Vergeris in senium*, the third canon from Lateran IV in 1215, and Gregory IX’s letter against heretics.

In Book 5, title 39, chapter 49, the *Corpus* referenced Honorius III's letter concerning Frederick's statutes from 1220 against heretics. It did not include an exact copy like the previously reviewed title against heretics (*ibid*, p 874).

Through this compilation of Roman Church law, the Passagini and other groups became enshrined as permanent enemies of the Roman Church and all Christian peoples who were under her influence.

The strife between Gregory and Frederick continued. In the mid-1230s, the communes of Lombardy allied with the pope to break free of imperial control. Frederick invaded northern Italy and soundly defeated the Lombard League at the battle of Cortenuova in 1237. Some cities, such as Brescia, were able to resist this invasion. Gregory wrote to Frederick that he wanted to see his arms better used in the Middle East, but the emperor responded that the people of Milan were a greater threat to him than the Saracens (Lea, 2:194).

Gregory excommunicated Frederick in the spring of 1239. He went so far as to label the German king the "beast of the Apocalypse" and called for a crusade to be launched against him. The emperor still had many loyal followers at this time, even among the clergy. Like a game of chess, Frederick responded to this overture.

Frederick appealed to the temporal rulers of Christendom to fight against the pope. He then invaded the Papal States and occupied them. This move crippled Gregory's position. While the pope tried to call a general church council in 1241 to condemn Frederick, he was unable to do so because the emperor arrested delegates in route to the council. He took his army and encamped near Rome; Gregory IX suddenly died. The infighting between these two parties provided a smoke screen by which heresy continued to spread.

In 1240, primary sources reveal that the heretics in northern Italy sent their youth to schools in Paris to be educated in theology so that they could better defend their beliefs (Lea, 2:193). Many heretics, especially Cathari, would sometimes outwardly conform to the practices of the Roman Church in public to avoid detection.

The fact that they could send youths to a faraway Roman Church stronghold and not be discovered shows the skill by which they could penetrate deep into opposition territory.

Between 1241 and 1244, Moneta of Cremona composed a lengthy treatise against the Cathars and Waldenses. Chapter 10 of book 5 is titled “De Sabbato & de die Dominico.” This chapter of the work was a defense against the accusation by Jewish people that the Roman Church did not keep the Sabbath. In it, he explained that the Sabbath should not be literally observed. He continued the traditional Roman Church idea that Sunday should be observed because they thought that Jesus rose from the dead on that day. This chapter is puzzling and fascinating in that no other document from this period (mid-thirteenth century) connects the Cathari or Waldenses with Sabbath observance. We will discuss its content and significance more in the conclusion (Ricchini, pp 475-477).

After Gregory’s death, Celestine IV was elected to the papal chair, but he died in less than a month. Nearly eighteen months passed before Innocent IV became pope in 1243. During his tenure, the back-and-forth struggle of pope and emperor continued, but it ended much differently than previous episodes in the conflict.

In 1244, Frederick sent overtures to Innocent that he desired to submit to his authority and make restitution of wrongs he committed during the reign of Gregory. This advance did not seem genuine to the pope, so he left Rome. He took a six-month journey to Lyons, France where he stayed for several years. At this time, the French were viewed as very loyal to the Roman Church cause.

Innocent IV convened the Council of Lyons in 1245 and excommunicated Frederick. From that time forward, the tide of the struggle turned against the emperor. His ecclesiastical support in Germany eroded because many thought he had too much power.

The pope then evoked Innocent III’s Letter 62 (written in 1202) which stated that the pope had the authority to cause a new king to be elected if he found the present one unfit for service. Innocent IV then had Henry Raspe, landgrave of Thuringia, elected

King of the Germans and Romans in 1246 as the papal-approved alternative.

Many temporal princes ignored the election. In fact, some temporal princes abstained from voting because they did not support him. He died the next year, and the pope caused William of Holland to be elected in his place. All but one elector was from the clergy. This anti-king was also not considered a serious contender. Nevertheless, the times had come full circle for Frederick. His former custodian (Innocent III) wrote a letter which a later pope (Innocent IV) used to try and depose him. The move was rife with irony!

Innocent then fomented revolt against Frederick in Italy. While these attempts were initially subdued, they eventually took their toll on the emperor. Like his grandfather before him, Frederick was defeated near northern Italy in 1248. Revolts broke out against him in various regions. One of his sons was captured. In 1249, Innocent ordered that a crusade be formed against the emperor, but Frederick died the next year.

A manual for inquisitors dating to about the same year contained a letter from the Apostolic see granting them the remission of sins for attempting to turn heretics to the Roman faith (Peters, p 200).

In 1250, Rainerius Sacconi, one of the famed inquisitors of this era, wrote a work against the Cathars and Poor of Lyons. He was converted from being a heretic in 1245 through the work of Peter of Verona (Wakefield and Evans, p 329). He attested that over 2,000 Cathars lived in northern Italy with the greatest concentration being in Lombardy. However, we must remember that those were only the ones he knew of and not the total (ibid, 337). Refugees from other persecuted areas continued to appear in Lombardy either temporarily or on a more permanent basis.

### **Innocent IV's policy against heretics**

While Innocent greatly disdained Frederick, he incorporated the emperor's laws against heretics as part of papal policy. I suppose that he did not view Frederick's reign as completely void of usefulness to the Roman Church.

Innocent immediately rekindled the work against heretics. In 1243, Innocent composed an epistle which was addressed to Lombardy, Romagno, and the March of Treviso. In it, he expressed his approval of Frederick II's three laws against heretics from 1238/1239 with the expectation that they should be enforced, especially in Lombardy. He also repeated word for word all three laws in the letter. Because the laws were repeated, the same list of heretical groups were denounced: "Cathari, Patarenos, Speronists, Leonists, Arnoldists, Circumcised, Passaginos, Josephines, Garatenses, Albanenses, Francisci, Bagnarolos, Commixtos, Waldenses, Roncarolos, Communellos, Warinos, Ortuleni, those of the black water, and all heretics of both sexes whatever names they may go by" (Labbe, 11i:618-623, *Rom. Bull.*, 3:503-507). He condemned these groups to the perpetual damnation of hell.

The back-and-forth contest between Innocent and Frederick prevented the full force of these laws from being executed. But once it concluded in 1250, Innocent refocused his efforts on Lombardy. The death of Frederick II initiated a series of events which led to a decline in heresy in the region.

Not long after Frederick's death, Innocent continued to pursue the goal of ridding heresy from Lombardy. The tug of war between independent Lombard cities, empire, and pope had previously prevented the success of the inquisition. In 1252, he appointed the friars Vivianus Bergomensis and Peter of Verona as inquisitors of Milan with letters to encourage them to pursue the removal of heresy to its fullest extent. He commissioned them with the following words:

"Innocent, etc. Whilst that perfidious tyrant lived, we could not so freely proceed against this plague, especially in Italy, through his opposition; who, instead of putting any check to it, rather encouraged it. When he became evidently suspected of this, he was condemned by us in the council of Lyons, as well as on account of his many other enormous excesses : and, therefore, we strictly command and enjoin your discretion, by these our apostolic writings, as you expect the remission of your sins, that ye prosecute this affair of the faith, which lies principally upon our heart, with all your powers and with fervent minds; and that ye go personally

to Cremona ; since we have thought proper to depute for the same business other discreet persons in the other cities and places of Lombardy; and that after having called a council in that diocese, ye do carefully and effectually labour to extirpate heretical pravity out of that city and its district; and that if you find any persons culpable upon this account, or infected, or defamed, unless upon examination they will absolutely obey the commands of the church, to proceed against them, their receivers, abettors and favourers, by the apostolic authority, according to the canonical sanctions, laying aside all fear of men; and that if there be need, ye call into your assistance the secular arm.” (English from Limborch (1816), p 119; Latin from Mansi, 23:583-591).

While traveling to Milan in the same year, Peter of Verona was killed (Limborch (1816), p 119). This shows that the people fought back against the inquisition in Lombardy. Their independent spirit was not easily subdued. Moreover, this episode demonstrates that there were dangers with being an inquisitor. Resistance of the people could prevent or hinder its work.

This same year, Innocent issued an epistle which was the most severe edict against heretics by the pope up to that point (it is listed as epistle 8 in Mansi). It was not addressed to clergy or friars (as previous letters had been addressed). Instead, it called upon the temporal rulers of Lombardy to take action. The title reads: “*Ad potestates rectores consilia, and communitates per Lombardiam*” (to the rulers, rectors, consuls, and communes of Lombardy).

Thirty-eight total Constitutions were established for the extirpation of heresy from Lombardy. In reference material, it is often listed under the title *Ad extirpanda*. This letter established an extensive set of rules for temporal rulers to pursue systematic inquisitorial proceedings against heresy. It built upon previous papal bulls, but it also established some new precedents. For instance, it became the basis for the use of torture by papal agents. Below, we have excerpts from many of its constitutions:

Const. 3: “Let the governor or ruler be obliged, within three days after his entrance into his government, to appoint twelve honest and Catholic men, and two notaries, and two servitors, or as many as shall be necessary, whom the diocesan, if present, and willing

to be concerned, and two friars predicants, and two minorites, deputed to this service by their priors, if there should be there convents of the said order, shall think proper to be chosen.”

Const. 4: “Such persons, when appointed and chosen, may and ought to take up heretical men and women, to seize on their effects, and to cause them to be seized on by others, and to cause that these things be fully done, as well in the city, as in his whole jurisdiction and district, and to bring them, and cause them to be brought, into the power of the diocesan or his vicars.”

Const. 5: “Let the chief magistrate or governor be obliged, at the expense of the place where he presides, to cause such heretics, when apprehended, to be carried wheresoever the diocesan, or his vicars, or the inquisitors, or inquisitor, shall order them to be carried, within the jurisdiction or district of such diocesan bishop, or of such city or place.”

Const. 6: “Let full credit be given to these aforesaid officials, concerning all things which are known to belong to their office, without requiring from them any special oath, or admitting any proof to the contrary, when two or more of them shall be present.”

Const. 7: “Farther, when these officials are chosen, let them swear to execute all these things faithfully, and according to their power, and to speak nothing but the truth concerning all these things, so that they may be more fully obeyed in all things appertaining to their office,

Const. 8: “and let the said twelve and their servitors, and the before appointed notaries, together or separately, have full power of commanding, upon pain of punishment and the ban, (or curse) all things appertaining to their office”

Const. 9: “...and let the governor or ruler, be obliged to confirm and ratify, all their commands which they shall give relating to their office, and punish those who do not observe them.”

Const. 10: “That if any loss shall at any time happen to the said officials, in their persons and effects, in executing their office, they shall be indemnified with full restitution by such city, or place, and that the said officials, or their heirs, shall not at any

time, be sued for any thing they have done, or belonging to their office, any farther than as the said diocesan and friars think fit.”

Const. 12: “Let their office continue only during six months, after which let the governor be obliged to substitute so many other officials, according to the prescribed form, who may execute the aforesaid office, according to the said form, for the six months next following.”

Const. 13: “The officials shall be allowed out of the chamber of such city or place, when they go without the said city or place, in execution of their office, every one of them eighteen Imperials in ready money per diem, which the magistrate or governor shall give, or cause to be given them, within three days after their return to such city or place.”

Const. 14: “They shall also have the third part of the effects of heretics they seize on, and of the fines to which they shall be condemned, according as it is contained below, and with this salary shall be content. Neither shall they be compelled by any means to any other office and service, that may hinder them in the exercise of this.”

Const. 16: “But let them not be compelled to any other office or employment, that doth, or may in any manner, hinder the said office, nor let any statute made, or to be made, hinder, by any means, their office.”

Const. 17: “And if the aforesaid diocesan or friars shall think fit to remove any one of the said officials, for being unskilful or improper, or for any engagement, or excess, the governor or chief officer shall be obliged to remove him at their command and appointment, and to substitute another in his place, according to the prescribed form.”

Const. 18: “But if any one of them shall, contrary to his oath, or duty of his office, be found to have favoured heresy; besides the mark of perpetual infamy which he shall incur, as a favourer of heretics, let him be punished by the governor or chief officer, at the pleasure of the Diocesan of the place and the said friars.”

Const. 19: “Farther, let the governor be obliged to send with their

officials, one of his soldiers, or some other assistant, if the diocesan, or his vicar, or the inquisitors deputed by the apostolic see, or the said officials shall demand it; and let such soldier faithfully execute his office with them. Let every one also, if he be present, or required, whether in the city jurisdiction or district, be obliged to grant to these officials or their companions, counsel and assistance, when they will apprehend, seize the effects of, or make enquiry concerning any heretical man or woman, or enter into any house or place, or passage, to take heretics, under the punishment of twenty-five imperial pounds, or the ban. Let every corporate town be obliged to it, under the penalty of an hundred pounds and ban, and a village under the penalty of fifty, to be paid every time in ready money.” (Limborch (1816), pp 199-201, 201-202, 259, 462)

Const. 20a: “Whosoever shall dare to rescue an heretical man or woman when taken from him or those who have apprehended them, or to prevent their being taken, or to hinder any one’s entrance into an house or tower in order to size or search for them, let such an one according to the Padua law of Frederick the Emperor, suffer confiscation of goods, and perpetual banishment, and let the house from which they were excluded be razed to the ground and never rebuilt; and let the effects found there be his who can seize them as if Hereticks had been actually found there....” (Limborch (1731), vol 2, chapter 8, p 45).

Const. 22: “If at any time any man or woman not hereticks, shall with their consent, be taken and out in the place of heretics or themselves personate heretics, let them suffer perpetual imprisonment and at the same time let the hereticks themselves be compelled to return and deliver up themselves. And as for those who contrived the deceit, let them according to the aforesaid law, suffer confiscation of their goods and perpetual banishment” (Limborch (1731), vol. 2, chapter 8, p 44).

Const. 24: “:— As to those who are condemned for heresy, by the diocesan or his vicar, or by the aforesaid inquisitors, let the chief magistrate or ruler, or his special messenger, receive them when they are left to him, and immediately, or within five days at least, put in execution the constitutions made against such persons” (Limborch (1731), vol. 2, chapter 40, p 291).

Const. 25: “The podesta or ruler is hereby ordered to force all captured heretics to confess and accuse their accomplices by torture which will not imperil life or injure limb, just as thieves and robbers are forced to accuse their accomplices, and to confess their crimes; for these heretics are true thieves, murderers of souls and robbers of the sacraments of God...” (Vacandard, p 108).

(Latin for *ad extirpanda* found in Mansi, 23:569-575 and Rom. Bull., 3:552-558)

In its full context, this bull increased the penalties and requirements for secular rulers to prosecute the inquisition. It was the first to authorize the use of torture to extract confessions. In constitutions 20 and 30, Innocent IV once again referenced the laws of Frederick II against heretics as a standard to be used in the proceedings. Those laws established the punishments to be rendered by temporal rulers against non-conformist groups. He demanded action from them.

In 1253, the pope continued to make his case to eradicate heresy. That year he issued two more papal bulls for the prosecution of heresy in Lombardy (Jan. 29 and 30). In them, he addressed heresy in “Romaniola, Marchia Anconitana et Tervisina”. In *Bullarium Romanum* they are listed under numbers 29 and 30 (idem, 3:561-562)

In 1254, Pope Innocent IV composed an epistle which was written to the faithful (*Ad omnes fideles*) against the heretics (*contra haereticos*). In it, he recalled and renewed the previous writing of Gregory IX against heresy entitled *excommunicamus & anathematizamus*. Thus, the same group of heretics is repeated: “Catharos, Patarenos, the Poor of Lyons (Waldenses), Passaginos, Josephinos, Arnaldistas, Speronistas, and all other names that heretics may go by.” It further condemned their receivers and defenders using similar language as Gregory (Latin: It is listed as epistle eleven in Labbe, 11i:616-617; it is also found in *Rom. Bull.*, 3:588-589, no 40).

In the same year, he wrote another letter for the extirpation of heresy in Lombardy and the March of Genoa. Once again, the Dominican order was assigned to carry out the inquisition in those areas with the greetings and blessing of the Apostolic See

(Labbe, 11i:617-618 and *Rom. Bull.*, 3:590-591, no 41).

Innocent's multiple decrees reflect the focus the papacy placed on this issue. Some rulers did not respond to these requests, but others obeyed them rigorously. Over the next several decades, the heretics or their defenders fell one by one to pro-papal forces.

For instance, a Milanese nobleman named Roberto Patta da Giussano protected heretics for nearly twenty years in a castle near Milan and its surrounding area. The inquisitors Rainerius Sacconi and Guido condemned him as a heretic and threatened him with the punishments described in the aforementioned papal bulls. Once Roberto saw the seriousness of the situation, he recanted his beliefs. In 1254, the castle and its surrounding houses were burned down. The bones of dead heretics were dug up and burned as well. These things were carried out at the command of the pope (Lea, 2:220).

Later that same year, Innocent IV died. His work increased the penalties and intensity by which church authorities and temporal rulers could implement the inquisition against heretics. It was another precedent established in the ongoing battle against non-conformist groups. His efforts would be repeated by later popes.

## Chapter 5

### Period IV: 1254-1326

After the death of Innocent IV in 1254, Alexander IV came to the papal chair. Extinguishing heresy was also a major goal of his administration. He worked quickly to continue the momentum established by his predecessor.

On March 6 and April 30, 1255, he repeated Innocent's constitution against heretics titled *Ad Extirpanda* and directed the Dominican order to continue the inquisition against heretics in Lombardy (*Rom. Bull.*, 3:611-613).

That same year, Alexander also decreed that the cities who refused to comply with the inquisition would be fined two hundred silver marks. Rainerius Sacconi was the inquisitor in Milan during this time. On August 1, he read this decree to a public gathering in the city. It was not well received. People mocked the demand and purposefully impeded progress of the inquisition (Lea, 2:222).

In 1256, Alexander increased the number of inquisitors in Lombardy from four to eight. The next year, Rainerius was appointed grand inquisitor over Lombardy, the Marches of Genoa, and Treviso with the power to appoint deputies (*ibid*). A papal bull from that year and another in October 1260 continued to promote the inquisition in Lombardy and the March of Genoa (*Rom. Bull.*, 3:646-647, no 36; 3:672-673, no 56).

While it would be logical to think these efforts would hinder heresy, they actually had the opposite effect. In a letter dated December 11, 1260, Alexander asks the Dominican order and the minor orders (*Minorum ordinum*) to root out heretical pravity that had infected "different parts of Italy" (*per diversas Italiae partes*). In the early part of the letter, he mentioned Lombardy and Tuscany as two specific areas, but he emphasized that heresy impacted in all parts of Italy (*quam de omnibus aliis Italiae partibus*) (*Rom. Bull.*, 3:673-674, no 57).

Much of Alexander's time as pope was marred by battles with the son of Frederick II, Manfred, who engaged in a political game of tug and war as much as he did physical battles. Manfred had supporters in central Italy that undermined the pope's support in Rome; old supporters of Frederick II also continued to irritate the Roman Church.

Ezzelino de Romano was one of these men. He controlled territory in Treviso as early as the 1220s. He served Frederick II and became the ruler of the March of Treviso around 1237. He was known for cruelty to his enemies, but a favorer of those deemed heretical. This latter attribute likely results from his disdain for the Roman Church (Lea, 2:224-226). This provides at least one reason that several previous papal bulls targeted Treviso.

In 1253/1254, Innocent IV excommunicated Ezzelino and preached a crusade against him. He promised indulgences to those who participated, including forgiveness for those who stole during this endeavor (ibid, 2:226-227).

In 1256, the crusade began against the foe of Alexander; they conquered Padua and ransacked it. Two years later they were defeated by Ezzelino's forces near Brescia (ibid, 2:227). Despite the victory, Ezzelino took actions that alienated himself from some of his allies. To retaliate, these jaded friends joined the crusaders and helped bring Ezzelino's reign to an end; he died in 1259 (ibid, 2:228). His death marked the beginning of serious inquisition hearings in the March of Treviso.

The author of *Passau Anonymous*, which is generally dated to 1260, attested to the widespread influence of heresy in northern Italy at this time. In the early nineteenth century, the work was generally thought to be written by Rainerius Sacconi, but later in the same century the authorship was changed to anonymous. An excerpt from this work is found below:

“In all the cities, however, of Lombardy and Provence, and in other kingdoms and countries, there were more schools of heretics, than of Theologians, and more hearers, who disputed publicly and assembled the people at solemn disputations, preached in the market-place and the fields, and in houses, and there was no

one who dared to hinder them, on account of the power and number of their favourers...I have frequently been present at the inquisition and examination of heretics; and the schools of the heretics in the Diocese of Passau, have been reckoned at forty one. In a place which is called Clemmate, were ten congregations; and the priest of that church was killed by the heretics, and for that matter no trial followed” (Maitland, p 404).

He goes on to list many areas, likely in Germany, where heretics were found. He then goes on to write: “In the fourth place, observe, that there have been more than seventy sects of heretics; which, by the grace of God, are all destroyed, except the Sects of the Manichaens, Arians, Runcarii and Leonists, which have infected Germany” (ibid, 405). Passau Anonymous thought that most heretical groups had been extinguished except a few, who had exerted their influence in Germany.

Alexander died in 1261 and the term of Urban IV (1261-1264) witnessed equal difficulties and developments. He continued to fight against Manfred, who remained the chief opposition for the papacy. While he only controlled Sicily and parts of southern Italy, Manfred retained powerful allies in northern Italy.

To oppose him, Urban bestowed the kingdom of Sicily on the Frenchman Charles of Anjou and included a proviso that he could not join it with Lombardy, Tuscany, or the Roman Empire. This seemed like a great idea at the time and perhaps the only way to combat Manfred, but in later years it proved problematic.

On March 20, 1262, Urban issued a bull against heresy in Italy. The first encouraged the order of preachers to continue the inquisitorial work in Lombardy and the March of Genoa (Treviso was left out – remember that it had been conquered). In section 12, he contended that the laws of Frederick II promulgated at Padua (1238-1239) needed to be enforced (*Bull. Rom.*, 3:687, no 4).

A manuscript found in 1263 reads that: “...in spite of the efforts of the inquisitors and the rigor of the punishments the heresy of the Patarini or of the various Manichaen sects instead of being eradicated spread more and more. From Rome there came nothing but excommunications and interdicts. One can imagine how religion and the devotion of Christians suffered thereby...” (De Salvio, p 252).

After Urban's death, Clement IV became pope (1265-1268). He continued the ongoing battle with Manfred and helped to organize the money and alliances necessary to achieve victory. This included an agreement by the strong military leader Charles de Anjou to help the Roman Church. Clement crowned Charles king of Sicily. He then guided a crusading army to victory against Manfred at the battle of Benevento (1266). Conradin, the nephew of Manfred, died two years later in a vain attempt to defeat Charles. Clement passed away that same year.

During this time, another opponent of the church and proponent of heretics was vanquished. Uberto Pallavicino, who served under Frederick II, controlled significant territory in northern Italy, especially in Lombardy, in about 1250. After helping to defeat Ezzelino, he controlled even more territory and became the podesta of Milan in 1260.

The inquisitor Rainerius opposed his appointment to that position due to Uberto's protection for heretics, but it was in vain. The people of Milan reacted fiercely to the inquisitor and drove him from the city (Lea, 2:229). Like his former friend Ezzelino, Uberto opposed the inquisition (*ibid*, 2:229, 219). At times he helped free those who had been convicted of heresy.

During the time that Uberto controlled such large portions of Lombardy, heretical groups still had a haven from other areas which were under persecution. Even those convicted of heresy in one area of Europe could flee to Lombardy and escape consequences from Roman Church authorities, including the pope (*ibid*, 2:230). Once Manfred, the last son of Frederick II, and Conradin, the grandson of Frederick II, were dead, Uberto's days were numbered. He died in 1269.

Another protector of heretics was Egidio of Cortenouva. He used the castle of Mogardo near Bergamo in Lombardy as a safe place for non-conformist groups until 1269 when it was destroyed (*ibid*, 2:219).

Clement's bulls against heresy mirrored those of popes before him. On October 18, 1265, he repeated Urban's previous decree from 1262 against heretics in Lombardy. (Potthast, no 19406, p

1569; Ripoll, *Bull. ordin. FF. Praed.*, 1:460, no 29).

On November 1, he wrote to all the rulers, communities, and cities of Italy (“*potestatibus, sive rectoribus, consulibus, capitaneis, antianis, consiliis et communitatibus civitatum aliorumque locorum per Italiam constitutes...*”) He enjoined upon them to enforce the laws of Frederick II against heretics from 1238/1239, which were referenced by Innocent IV and Alexander IV (Ripoll, 1:460).

Two days later, he wrote to all the rulers, communities, and cities of Italy again (“*potestatibus, sive rectoribus, consulibus, capitaneis, antianis, consiliis et communitatibus civitatum aliorumque locorum per Italiam constitutes...*”). In it, he recollected and renewed *ad extirpanda* from Innocent IV and Alexander IV. Moreover, he expressed that all their laws and constitutions against heretics were to be renewed (*Bull. Rom.*, 3:744, no 10).

Two months later, on January 18, 1266, *ad extirpanda* was renewed and sent out to the Dominican friars “*fratribus Praedicatorum et Minorum ordinum*” to continue the inquisition in Italy (ibid, 3:763, no 15).

A unique bull was issued by him on July 26, 1267; it was titled *turbato corde*. It was issued against many Christians (*quod quamplurimi*) who abandoned the Catholic faith to practice Jewish rituals and the Jews who lured them to do so. He advised the “*fratribus Praedicatorum et Minorum ordinum...*” to establish the inquisition to address this heresy (ibid, 3:785-786, no 24). Clement labeled them reprobate and heretical.

After Clement’s death, division ensued within the Roman Church. The Cardinals responsible for electing the pope were divided among Italian and French factions. Because of their respective allegiances, an impasse occurred which resulted in a three-year interregnum period for the papal chair. It ended when Gregory X was crowned in 1272. His greatest achievement was the short-lived reunion of Latin and Greek churches at the Council of Lyons (1274).

On March 1, 1274, he issued a bull against Christians who practiced Jewish rituals and those Jews who had gone completely

back to Judaism. He directed the Dominicans and minor orders to perform the inquisition against them (ibid, 4:24-25, no 7). In it, he recalled Clement IV's previous writings on the same subject. The bull was issued from Lyons.

The bulls issued by Clement and Gregory against Christians who practiced Jewish rituals sound very similar to how someone would describe the Passagini, but it may not have been their evangelistic work which caused these commotions. One way or the other, the groups rebuked in these decrees mirror that of the Passagini and at the very least attest to a broader Christian-Jewish connection in some areas of Europe at that time.

The three popes who followed Gregory X served short periods and their work did not result in much that relates to this subject. In 1277, Nicholas III was elected to the position. He tried to strengthen Roman Church ties to Lombardy, but he also had to check the power of Charles de Anjou and the elected King of Germany, Rudolf of Hapsburg.

On August 4, 1278, Nicolas III directed the order of preachers in Lombardy to convert Hebrews to Christianity (ibid, 4:45-46, no 3). This is likely an indication that the Jewish population in the area grew and that they had increased influence.

On March 3, 1280, he issued a bull which closely followed that of Lucius III, Honorius III, and Innocent IV in condemning the "Catharos, Paterenos, Pauperes de Lugduno, Passignos, Iosepinos, Arnaldistas, Speronistas et alios quibuscumque nominibus censeantur." An English translation is listed below:

"Nicholas, etc. We hereby, excommunicate and anathematize all heretics, the Cathari, Patareni, the Poor Men of Lyon, Passageni, Josepheni, the Arnoldists, Speronists, and all others by whatever name they may be called. (1) When condemned by the church, they shall be given over to the secular judge to be punished. Clergymen shall be degraded before being punished. (2) If any, after being seized, repent and wish to do proper penance, they shall be imprisoned for life. (3) We condemn as heretics all who believe the errors of heretics. (4) We decree that all who receive, defend, or aid heretics, shall be excommunicated. If anyone remains under excommunication a year and a day, he shall be proscribed. (5)

He shall not be eligible to hold a public office, or to vote in the election of officials. (6) His word shall not be accepted. (7) He cannot serve as a witness nor can he make a will. (8) He shall not succeed to an inheritance. (9) He cannot bring suit against anyone, but suit may be brought against him. (10) If he is a judge, his sentences shall be invalid, and he shall not be permitted to hear cases. (11) If he is an advocate, he shall not be permitted to perform the duties of his office. (12) If he is a notary, the documents which he draws up shall be invalid and condemned with him. (13) If he is a clergyman, he shall be deposed from his office and deprived of every benefice. (14) Those who associate with the excommunicated shall themselves be excommunicated and properly punished. (15) If those who are suspected of heresy can not prove their innocence, they shall be excommunicated. If they remain under the ban of excommunication a year, they shall be condemned as heretics. (16) They shall have no right of appeal. (17) If judges, advocates, or notaries serve them in an official way, they shall be deprived of their office. (18) The clergy shall not administer to them the sacraments, nor give them a part of the alms. If they do, they shall be deprived of their office and they can never be restored to it without the special permission of the pope. Whoever grants them Christian burial shall be excommunicated until he makes proper satisfaction. He shall not be absolved until he has with his own hands publicly dug up their bodies and cast them forth, and no one shall ever be buried in the same place. (19) We prohibit all laymen to discuss matters of the catholic faith. If anyone does so, he shall be excommunicated. (20) Whoever knows of heretics, or those who are holding secret meetings, or those who do not conform in all respects to the orthodox faith, shall make it known to his confessor, or to someone else who will bring it to the knowledge of the bishop or the inquisitor. If he does not do so, he shall be excommunicated. (21) Heretics and all who receive, support, or aid them, and all their children to the second generation, shall not be admitted to an ecclesiastical office or benefice. If any such have been admitted, their admission is illegal and invalid. For we now deprive all such of their benefices forever, and they shall never be admitted to others. If parents with their children have been freed [from excommunication], and their parents afterwards return to the heresy, their children are, by their parents' act, again brought under excommunication” (Thatcher and Holmes, pp 309-310; Latin: *Rom. Bull.*, 4:47, no 4).

Clement died the same year of this bull. Martin IV became the next pope due to the influence of Charles of Anjou, who imprisoned some of the Italian cardinals. The efforts of this pope against heresy were stymied with Sicily, which broke away from Charles of Anjou's control. This action was a rejection of papal control because a previous pope gave Charles the kingdom and opened the way for him to conquer it.

Honorius IV was the next pope. On November 18, 1286, he issued a bull from Rome to end the fraternization of Christians and Jews in southern France (Newman, pp 406-407). It was reissued on November 30 in England. In these locations, apparently Jewish people invited Christians to their synagogues and homes for the Sabbath and the festivals days. The Christians sometimes worked on Sunday and other Roman Church feast days. These letters indicate that Jews and Christians had friendly interactions with each other in these areas. Any such friendly interactions were condemned. Other actions he might have taken against heresy were hindered by the ongoing Sicilian situation.

On Sept. 5, 1288, Nicholas IV condemned Christians who practiced Jewish rituals and other Jewish converts. He commanded the order of preachers and the minor order to institute the inquisition against such heretical pravity. This injunction was worded very similarly to those by Clement IV and Gregory X (*Rom. Bull.*, 4:88, no 2; Potthast, no 22795, p 1840).

On April 22, 1289, he mandated that all temporal rulers in Italy observe and enforce the constitutions against heretics issued by Innocent IV, Alexander IV, and Clement IV (Potthast, no 22946, pp 1850-1851). On July 7 of the same year, he commanded all archbishops, bishops, podestas and rectors throughout Italy to assist the inquisition (ibid, no 23000, p 1854).

In 1290, Nicholas IV wrote a letter to the *Fratribus Ordinis Minorum* to establish the inquisition against heresy in three areas: Arelatense, Aquen.: & Ebrodunen. These three areas translate to Arles, Aix, and Embrun, which are all located in southern and southeastern France. This specifically targeted Christians who were practicing those beliefs labeled as Jewish (Wadding, 5:232). Charles Lea summarizes some contents of this letter:

“... many Christians to frequent the Jewish synagogues with lighted candles, offering oblations and watching through the vigils of the Sabbath, when afflicted with sickness or other tribulations, anxious for friends at sea or for approaching child-birth...” (idem, 2:118).

On March 3, 1291, he excommunicated and anathemized the “universos haereticos catharos, patarenos, pauperes de lugduno, passignos, Josephinos, arnaldistsas, speronistas et alios quibuscumque cominibus censeantur” (Potthast, 23589, p 1891; *Bull. Rom.* 4:105-107, no 9).

During the end of the thirteenth and beginning part of the fourteenth centuries, most of the secular authorities holding out against the inquisition in northern Italy were subdued. Among the more powerful of these figures was Matteo Visconti. He was a leader in northern Italy from 1280s until the early 1320s. He ruled Milan and other parts of Lombardy off and on during this time. He battled with papal powers for control of the region and was often accused of protecting heretics.

In 1287, the Archbishop of Milan called for a council to address the problem of heresy. In the first canon, he commanded that the speeches, constitutions, statutes, canons, councils, and decrees of the Roman Church were to be properly observed. In the second canon, he commanded the enforcement of Frederick II’s laws against heretics (Mansi, 24:873). Any of the public servants who were even suspected of heresy could be punished (Lea, 2:238).

In 1304, the number of Dominican inquisitors in Lombardy increased to 10 overall, with 7 in upper and 3 in lower region (Lea, 2:233). Seven years later, the Archbishop Gastone della Torre of Milan held a council where he ordered the temporal rulers to help inquisitors rid the region of heresy. He ordered the secular powers to aid the inquisitors in the destruction of heresy in Lombardy; as part of this process Mattaeo was condemned (Mansi, 25:597, sections 92, 93, and 94). The next year, on June 28, 1312, Emperor Henry VII issued “Constitutions against heretics and sacrilegious”, which reads much like a condensed version of Frederick’s three laws from 1238/1239 (MGH, *Leges*, 2:535-536).

During this same period, primary sources report that heretics still

traversed to and from Lombardy relatively unmolested. In the 1290s, Pierre Autiere went to the region for protection from the accusations of heresy (Lea, 2:105). Heretics from other persecuted regions came to the region seeking reprieve and guidance from leaders there (ibid, 2:50). The political battle for supremacy over the region distracted from papal interests in exterminating heresy for a little bit longer.

Pope John XXII wanted complete control over the unruly region and with a decree stated that anyone who assumed the position of Imperial Vicar without papal approval was to be excommunicated (1317). The endgame was obvious: the pope wanted to remove anti-papal rulers from northern Italy, especially Lombardy. Matteo surrendered the title and took the term “Lord of Milan” instead.

Eventually, the pope’s efforts against Matteo were successful. A papal bull dated May 2, 1321, declared an inquisition in the province of Lombardy to exterminate heresy in the region, but part of the goal was to find wrongs with the Visconti family (*Rom. Bull.*, 4:298-299, no 31). In 1322, at the council of Borgolii, Matteo was condemned as a heretic (Mansi, 25:689). He died that same year.

While battles between the Visconti family and the papacy continued for several years in the future, the two sides eventually made peace. Massive amounts of money were spent by the papacy to combat heresy and political rebels during this time. Records reveal that three hundred gold florins were spent by the Roman Church to fight against the Visconti family in 1321-1322; 20,000 florins were used to fight against them in 1324; and money was also collected a few years later to fight heresy in the region (De Salvio, p 256).

On August 21, 1326, John announced a bull assigning the Dominican order to continue the inquisition against heresy in the inferior or lesser part of Lombardy (*Bull. Rom.*, 4:315, no 40). This is one piece of evidence to signify the decline of heretical activity in this region. As Lombardy was increasingly under papal influence, it gradually faded as a haven for heretics. However, the area likely held a small presence of non-conformist groups for many years into the future.

As Henry Lea observed: “In the collected statutes of the Dukes of Milan from 1343 to 1495 there is no allusion of any kind to the inquisition or the punishment of heretics” (idem, 2:270). The mention of Lombardy among the papal bulls is mostly absent after John XXII’s bull of 1326. A Roman minister from this era, Giordano da Rivalto, claimed that early in the fourteenth century most heresy had disappeared (Catholic Encyclopedia: Mendicant Friars, Order of Preachers). While heresy certainly did not disappear in this era, it certainly experienced a period of decline and regional shifting. Certain groups disappeared, but others spread out and exerted influence in new regions.

The last mention of the Passagini in this period is a papal bull from Gregory XI on March 25, 1372 which excommunicated and anathemized all heresy. It listed the traditional names of the “Cataros, Patarenos, Pauperes de Lugduno, Arnaldistas, Speronistas, Passignos, et Fraticellos ac quoscumque alios haereticos quocumque nomine censeantur” (*Rom. Bull.* 4:539-541, n 7). One newer group mentioned in the decree was the Fraticellos.

The others referenced by Gregory XI followed the literary tradition started by Lucius III in 1184. The mere mention of those groups is not necessarily evidence that the Passagini or other groups were still active or that they still existed in their original form from so many years before. The use of that specific list of heretics had become normalized by the fourteenth century. What ultimately happened to the Passagini? Many possibilities arise from the evidence reviewed in this work. In our conclusion we will explore the possibility that they continued to exist under a different name.

## Conclusion

### What Happened to the Passagini?

Before we address the big question of “What happened to the Passagini?”, it is important that we review the material that we have covered thus far.

Starting in the eleventh century, a non-conformist movement began in Europe. Gradually, different groups formed as people broke away from tradition. Sometimes these groups were connected to each other or previously existing groups, but at other times they independently formed. While they had a variation of beliefs, one common thread found among them all is a discontentment with the status quo. The complex traditions, formalities, abuses, and wealth of the Roman Church turned significant numbers of people away from their ranks. The common person was not allowed to access the Scriptures in their own language except when a non-conformist decided to do so. People desired God and wanted something which could appeal to their need for Him. There were many antecedents that set up this Medieval conflict between Roman Church and heresy.

The Passagini were among the groups which emerged from this era. We first learn about them in Pope Lucius III’s letter against heretics, which was formally pronounced in 1184 at the Council of Verona. They are listed beside some other very well-known groups such as the Cathari, Waldenses, Arnaldists, and Patarines. As time passed, more groups formed. Later papal and imperial decrees increased the punishment of these groups and their supporters.

One can only imagine how difficult it would have been to live in these times. Those branded with the label of heresy were not allowed to have a will, receive an inheritance, build a home, or hardly live without the threat of constant harassment. Owning property at all was difficult as church and imperial decrees ruled that it could be confiscated by anyone at any time without recourse. They could not have a job working for a non-conformist

(at least in the open) because they would have been reported. At times they had a support network of helpers in various places to keep them hidden and supplied, but their helpers were placed under the same threats. Anyone who entertained their teachings to them could be punished.

At times they were pushed out of one area and into another. At other times, they were arrested in prison with an uncertain future. The possibility of betrayal from within their own group was always present. They also faced the prospects of torture and death simply for practicing their faith differently. A marauding army could choose to unleash upon them devastation without notice. The thousands of lives lost during this epoch is truly tragic. To be a non-conformist Christian during those times was a life of constant uncertainty.

Despite the perilous circumstances in which they lived, many of these people thought it was worth the risk. From their viewpoint: “Why be spiritually dead yet physically alive? Instead, why not be spiritually alive yet physically sounded by death?” It brings to mind the Scriptures which read: “...and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth...” (Hebrews 11:35b-38, ASV).

These non-conformist groups relied heavily on areas or regions which were considered havens for their kind. Lombardy was one such place. It was the headquarters for Christian sects to operate from and be mostly safe from papal and imperial threats. People were sent from this region to attend institutions of learning in other cities so that they could better defend their beliefs. Teachers and evangelists were sent out to spread the message. But this benefit only existed as long as the temporal rulers of the region sided with their cause. Though there was a back and forth struggle between the independent cities of Lombardy and papal/imperial interests, by the early fourteenth century it was subdued.

We are left to wonder what could have happened to the Passagini in these turbulent years. They seem to have disappeared sometime around the mid-thirteenth century, but they could have lasted much longer under a different name.

One difference between the Passagini and lesser known groups, such as the Josephinos, is that we have writings which recall the existence and developed belief system of the former. In the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we learn about their beliefs from contemporary sources who lived in the areas where they were known to operate. The city of Milan was probably their chief center, followed by other cities in the region of Lombardy such as Cremona and Bergamo.

The Passagini had beliefs which were common to other groups, which we will discuss in a moment, but also beliefs which were unique and not shared by any other known group of that period. They believed in a literal application of the Old Testament, except sacrifices. This included the practice of the Sabbath, circumcision, at least some dietary distinctions, and at least some of the annual festivals (possibly all festivals). They also went by the name Circumcisi because of their belief in circumcision.

Some have considered them to simply be a sect of Judaism, but this is not possible. They emphasized faith in Christ and a literal application of New Testament principles. They used both Old and New Testaments to defend their beliefs; they viewed the two as complimentary. Their view of the nature of God would historically be considered at least Semi-Arian, which is fascinating as Arianism was thought to have died out many centuries before. They also incorporated a form of adoptionism in their view of Christ. Jesus Christ proceeded from the Father. He was adopted as God at His Baptism, suffered for the sins of the world, and rose again.

This brief summary of their beliefs indicates that distinct differences existed between them and other groups, such as the Cathari and Waldenses. The Cathari were dualists. All matter was viewed as the creation of the “evil god”, but the spiritual world was created by the “good god”. Thus, they viewed most manifestations of God in the Old Testament as appearances by the “evil god”, including the giving of the law on Sinai. They did not even consider most of the Old Testament as part of their canon of Scripture.

They would have viewed many practices established in that part of the Bible as not necessary for the true believer as they would only reflect the evil material world or the “evil god.” They went so far as to not even eat meat and a sect of them did not marry as part of their quest to separate from the material world. Being dualists, most of them rejected the belief that the good God Jesus came down in literal flesh, literally suffered, and bodily resurrected.

The Waldenses, on the other hand, took the Old and New Testaments as totally inspired by God. However, they rejected literal applications of much of the Old Testament. At the same time, they were not dualists. They emphasized the life of Jesus and moral precepts taught in the New Testament. Some of them took a vow of poverty modeled after the story of Jesus and the rich man in Luke 18:18-27. Others worked hard with their hands to earn a living but did not believe in accumulating much wealth. They believed in the literal suffering, death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus. Their view of God’s nature was most likely Trinitarian.

The Cathari and Waldenses had commonalities. They both had a degree of iconoclasm. They mostly rejected the Roman Church festivals, its hierarchy, church fathers, and in general the entire institution. When the groups were persecuted, they would sometimes conceal themselves by outwardly conforming to Roman Church practices. This would make them hard to identify.

The Passagini held these commonalities, except that there is no record that they would outwardly conform to Roman Church practices when adverse circumstances arose. Another detail that set them apart is the literal application of the Old Testament. We know nothing of their hierarchy or manner of life outside of that (such as, vows of poverty taken or other idiosyncrasies). Their beliefs are closer to being Waldensian than Cathari, for certain.

Perhaps the name of this group can help us understand a little more about them. We do not have any existent writings of the Passagini other than the arguments to defend their beliefs as recorded by contemporaries, particularly Praepositinus of Cremona and Bonacursus. We do not know what they called themselves. The Waldenses were named after Waldo, who was considered

their founder. Their other names were Leonist and Poor of Lyons; they were based on the city in which they were founded. Other groups tended to follow the same or similar pattern in the name ascribed to them. Among the exceptions would be the Cathari, who were given that name because they tried to purify themselves from the Roman Church (the Greek word *katharos* means purify). However, even among this sect various alternative names were used such as Concorrezenses, Tolosani, Albigenses, and others which were usually connected to a town or region in which those Cathari dwelled.

When we look at the records of the inquisition, we learn that the Cathari, Waldenses, and many other groups considered themselves Christians. They each tended to look at their group as the true church who was separating themselves from the corrupt Roman Church. Thus, the common names ascribed to them by primary sources were used by their accusers and not necessarily by the people in that group. We must remember this key detail when we look at the name Passagini.

Newman (pp 274-285) provides seven theories on the name of the Passagini, which he condensed from learned writers and glossaries. I have summarized his findings below with some commentary:

The first theory about the name Passagini is that it comes from the Greek words *pantos* and *agioi*, meaning all holy. The group emphasized holiness according to the Old Testament. This appellation is certainly possible, but I have yet to see a primary source make such a connection.

The second possibility is that their name came from the word *passagenes*, referring to passengers who traveled back and forth or even a vagabond. Newman further puts forth that this could come from a connection to traveling Jewish merchants; after all, the Passagini did share practices with Jewish people. It is possible that they traveled back and forth across Lombardy or in later times to other regions as the inquisition increased in Lombardy.

The third view is that their name comes from the Latin word *passagium*, which could refer to mountain passes. The primary sources never mention them as living in mountain passes but re-

member that their opponents may have thought this one way or the other. It is certainly possible that times of persecution would drive a group to that kind of terrain.

The fourth view is that their name is connected to the term *pas-sagium*, which refers to crusades in the east. This is very unlikely as the group was never known to come from the east or embark on journeys there.

The fifth opinion is that the Passagini or one of its variants was the name of a medieval village that is no longer in use. Some groups were identified by the city that they were founded in, such as the poor of Lyons or poor of Lombardy. This is a possibility.

The sixth theory is that their name comes from a tax called a *pas-sagium* in Latin which was collected by people termed *passagers*. The main issue with this view is that we do not have any record of their professions or if they had any at all.

Lastly, some think that Passagii is derived from the term *pesachii*, meaning Passover-observers. They did observe Passover, but I have not found any etymological links to affirm this claim.

When it comes to these theories, some of these are more likely than others. Ultimately, we must remember that Passagini was a term given to them by their opponents. More likely than not, the term was used to describe some characteristic of them rather than a person. Another term used for this group was Circumcisers, which originated from the practice of them circumcising.

The first writer to mentioned them is Lucius III, but we are not sure how he and others heard of them. When we review the other groups of this period, Roman Church writers typically used the term that they thought best to describe the group. It would be logical to conclude that some actual practice of the Passagini, such being travelers within a region or those who dwell in mountain passes, is the origin for their name.

There are many possibilities as to what happened to this group. Many of the groups from this period were affected by the following variables: Being converted by the friars back to the Roman Church; being imprisoned and tortured and/or martyred for their

faith; being dispersed in other lands when persecution increased; or being forced to hide and dwindle away. More likely than not, some in the group were affected by all or some of these variables.

However, there is one possibility which is more intriguing than others and offers some historical backing. It involves the seventh-day Sabbath.

In 1241, Moneta of Cremona wrote a work against the Cathars and Waldenses (which we mentioned in chapter four). We discussed it in a previous chapter of this work. In book five, chapter ten is titled “Of that commandment: Remember the Sabbath Day” (Ex. 20:8). There is a note that says “Unicus” below that which means that the section is unique, single, or uncommon. Another subtitle reads “De Sabbato & de die Dominico” or “The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day”.

In the opening section, Moneta tried to explain why the Lord gave the Sabbath commandment to the Jewish people. He gives two reasons. First, he wrote that the Jewish people needed to be mindful of the beginning of the world; he quoted Exodus 31:16, 17. Secondly, he recorded that they were commanded to keep the Sabbath to remind them of the Lord’s kindness to lead them out of slavery in Egypt (because they could not keep the Sabbath in that land). He referenced the book of Exodus and Deut. 5:15.

He then transitioned and stated that the Jews accused the Catholics of breaking the fourth commandment because the Sabbath was made eternal. He retorted that it was not given to Catholics literally. He also implied that there were Jewish people who accused the Apostles of not observing the Sabbath.

After a brief argument where he tried to connect the seven-year cycle and the Jubilee to the subject, he transitioned again to defending the Roman Church view. He said that the Sabbath of the Old Testament was a sign and figure of the spiritual Sabbath observed among Christian people. He then argued that the Jews observed the Sabbath, but true Christians observed the Lord’s Day. Moneta provided two arguments for keeping the Lord’s Day instead of the Sabbath. He believed Christ resurrected on that day, and it that was the day that the Holy Spirit was sent (which is Pentecost).

His arguments continue with the reasoning that the Sabbath was only tied to freedom from the material creation whereas the Lord's Day was given as a symbol of freedom from the devil's spiritual realm and the perfect state of eternal happiness. He discussed other feasts established by the Roman Church including veneration of the saints.

Moneta explained that the Cathari and Waldenses were against this view. They objected to those days by quoting Galatians 4:10-11, and they say it is a sin to observe days. Though this point is not abundantly clear. Were they saying it was a sin to observe all days or just those days instituted by the Roman Church?

He used Galatians 5:1-2 as a reason to not to observe what was written in the law of the Lord. He used Gal. 4:10-11 to argue that Paul was rebuking the Jewish people for observing their days, not the days of the Roman Church (he also tied the argument to Colossians 2:15-17). He concluded the section by saying "Therefore Jewish feast days are not to be observed, but the days instituted by the Church, as said above" (Latin taken from Ricchinius, 1743, pp 475-477).

The beginning of the chapter seems to indicate that Moneta was initially defending himself against the argument from Jewish people that Catholics were guilty of breaking the Sabbath. As the content develops, it appears that he may have been correcting some Cathari and Waldenses who were observing these days; they are the topic of the entire work.

This chapter is puzzling because neither Cathars nor Waldenses were known to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. The Cathars typically did not observe any days and the earliest Waldenses followed the same pattern. Some of the ordained Waldenses might have kept Sunday as special in some form or fashion. Below, we have testimony about these two groups. The first is from the Cathari.

"In this year certain heretics of the sect of the Cathari, coming from the parts of Flanders to Cologne, took up their abode secretly in a barn near the city. But, as on the Lord's day they did not go to church, they were seized by the neighbors, and detected. On

their being brought before the Catholic church, when, after long examination respecting their sect, they would be convinced by no evidence however convincing, but most pertinaciously persisted in their doctrine and resolution, they were cast out from the church, and delivered into the hands of Laics. These, leading them without the city, committed them to the flames, being four men and one little girl (*juveneula*). The latter was by the compassion of the bystanders held back, with a view to her preservation: in hopes that terrified by the death of others, she might acquiesce in saner counsels. But, suddenly escaping from the hands of those that held her, she resolutely cast herself into the flames, and perished. – It was the Nones of August” (Elliot, pp 269-270).

A Dominican inquisitor in Italy named Anslem of Alessandria wrote between 1266-1276 that Cathars do not fast on any of the vigils, and they do not observe feasts of the church including Sunday (which is called The Lord’s Day) nor days of rest. However, he attested that they might do so to avoid detection (Wakefield and Evans, p 365).

We would not expect Cathars to observe days as that would connect them to the material world, which they viewed as evil. Many Waldenses treated every day the same.

Passau Anonymous in 1260 writes about the Waldenses: “All approved customs of the church that they do not read in the gospel they despise, and the feast of candles, of psalms, the reconciliation of penitents, adoration of the cross, the feast of Easter; and they spurn the feasts of the saints on account of the multiplication of saints. And they say that one day is just like another, therefore they secretly work on feast days...” (Vedder, pp 482-483).

The writer goes on to say that the group of Waldenses he interviewed thought that if the decalogue was to be observed that they must be circumcised also (Peters, p 161). This might be a statement connected to the Passagini (who did both). David of Augsburg was a Franciscan who wrote about them near the year 1270.

“They affirmed that they alone are the church of Christ and the disciples of Christ...All laws of the church since the ascension of Christ they say are not to be obeyed, nor are they of any value whatsoever. Feasts, fast days, orders, benedictions, offices of the

church, and similar things they altogether reject...on feast days, where they can do it, secretly, they work, arguing that since it is a good thing to work, it cannot be bad to work on a good day. In Lent and on other fast days of the church they do not fast, but eat flesh where they dare, saying that God is not pleased by the afflictions of his friends, but is able to save them without these things...In consequence of the name dissimulation they frequent with us the churches, they are present at divine service, they offer at the altar, they receive the sacraments, they confess to the priests, they keep the fasts of the church and observe the feasts... just as sometimes a wolf covers himself with a sheepskin, that the world may not be known from the sheep (Vedder, p 483).

Bernard Gui lived between 1261 and 1331. He was a Dominican friar who conducted the inquisition mainly in parts of southern France between 1290 and the end of his life. He wrote extensively about heretical groups, including their way of life and manner of teaching. One such work dates to about 1323-1324. He claimed that the Waldenses had a subgroup of them called the perfect who did not keep any holy days except the Lord's day (*diem dominicum*) and the feast of the blessed virgin Mary. Some of this group might have kept the Roman Church feasts for the apostles and evangelists (English: Wakefield and Evans, p 391; Latin: *Practica*, p 248).

The testimony regarding Cathari and days is generally consistent and clear. When we look at the three sources presented regarding the Waldenses and days, there appears to be contradictions. The first two sources indicate that they regarded no day and the third testified that a sect of them kept the Lord's Day. At the very least, this conveys that some later Waldenses were open to practicing specific days.

Amid these testimonies is Moneta of Cremona. The only known non-conformist group of the twelve and thirteenth centuries to practice the seventh day Sabbath or annual festivals in Leviticus 23 was the Passagini. Is it possible that he simply mislabeled the Passagini as Cathars and Waldenses. It is possible that a segment of the Passagini faded into or merged with elements of the Waldensian group that were amenable to the seventh-day Sabbath. The Cathari were clearly anti-Sabbatarian.

We are already aware that regional differences existed within the Waldenses, such as those between the French and Lombard groups. At least one primary source testified that the Poor of Lombardy were known to mix themselves with other groups.

Stephen of Bourbon was extremely familiar with heretical practices because of the inquisition. He wrote "...as I know and have found out by many inquisitions and confessions of theirs under trial as well of the perfect as of the believers, written down from their mouths and received from many witnesses against them..." (Vedder, p 470).

In one of his works, *De Septem Donis Spiritus Sancti*, he stated the following about the Waldenses: "Afterward, driven from that land, being cited to the council held at Rome before the Lateran (III), and proving persistent, they were afterward adjudged schismatics. **Later, in the land of Provence and Lombardy, mingling with other heretics and imbibing their errors, and sowing them,** they were adjudged the most pestilent heretics, the most corrupt (*infectissimi*, most deeply dyed) and dangerous, running everywhere and feigning a likeness of holiness and faith, but not having the reality – the most dangerous because hidden, changing their appearance by various dresses and trades" (Vedder, pp 470-471; emphasis mine).

He goes on to say that they frequently changed disguises and trades to avoid detection. In Lombardy, the Waldenses mixed with other groups, were influenced by them, and then spread an altered form of their original teaching. The beliefs of the Waldenses in Lombardy had significantly been altered from their French brethren between 1205 and 1218 when the council of Bergamo was held (we briefly discussed these differences in chapter three).

We can provide a corollary example. One detail we learn in the primary sources about some Waldenses is that they would outwardly conform to the practices of the Roman Church when persecuted or threatened. Such behavior is not Waldensian in origin. It was borrowed from the Cathars, who borrowed it from the Bogomils in the east (something we hope to discuss more in a future work). We know for certain that at least some Waldenses began to adopt celebrations by the fourteenth century.

Let us return for a moment to Moneta of Cremona. Why did he mention the seventh-day Sabbath in a conversation about two groups which have no connection to the practice? Bonacursus of Milan wrote about the Cathar and Passagini. Praepositinus of Cremona wrote about Cathars and Passagini. It is also possible that the Passagini were mislabeled as Cathari or Waldenses at times. One thing I have learned in this study is that the terms for heretics were sometimes thrown around without the exactness which was appropriate to each group. What was a specific group in one era became a generic name in another, such as the term Patarine (or Paterine).

While it is a bit later than the time we are studying, it is important to note that testimonies from the fifteenth century identify groups of Waldensians that kept the Sabbath and some that kept Sunday.

A document from the fifteenth century mentions a group called the Picardians. The beginning of section LXI reads: "...the summary of the impious and pharisaical picardorum religion, which is a false and abominable religion" (Dollinger, p 661). A section from it reads as follows: "They consider the image of the crucifixion to be of the devil, feasts of the Virgin Mary and Apostles they do not celebrate, except some the Lord's day. Not a few celebrate the Sabbath of the Jews, and do not admit the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, the angels, and the saints..." (ibid, p 662).

Another section of the same document connected the Waldenses to the Picardians (*Errores Valdneisium fratrum circa Eucharistiam*; ibid, p 663). According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, the Picards were connected to Bohemian Brethren from the fifteenth century. This same article mentions the Waldensian connection (Article: Bohemian Brethren). The group may also be connected to Hussites (ibid, Article: Olmutz).

We know that the Waldenses in Lombardy eventually transitioned their scene of activity to Padua and Verona (Lea, 2:255). In the late 1280s, the region protected heretics (ibid, 2:254). From northern Italy they projected their influence into Germany. As Henry Lea wrote: "As late as 1368, the Poor of Lombardy maintained contact with those of their sect in Germany" (ibid, 2:255). Modern research has shown this to be the case. In his article "Pre-Hussite Heresy in Bohemia", Thomson explains that the Walden-

ses first appeared in Bohemia in the mid-thirteenth century and the sect there was always connected to the Waldenses of Lombardy (idem, pp 28-42).

If the Passagini (either wholly or partly) did indeed merge with or become identified with Waldenses in northern Italy, it would be from there that their beliefs would make it into Germany. This is where we find a testimony of Sabbath keepers among the Waldenses in the fifteenth century.

The hypothesis that the Passagini became known as a branch or sect of the Waldenses receives backing in some Roman Catholic literature. In the seventeenth century, Du Cange wrote a glossary of Latin words from Roman Church documents in the Middle Ages. In it, he reviewed specific people, terms, and groups with analysis from primary sources. We will start with names that we know are connected to the Waldenses and then bring in the Passagini.

The Poor of Lyons were a name for the Waldenses. In the appropriate entry, titled *Pauperes de Lugduno*, Du Cange wrote: “*Haeretici qui vulgo Valdenses*” or “common language for heretical Waldenses”. He acknowledged that this was just the common language used to refer to them. He goes on to explain how they were descended from Leonistarum. He also identified that the group was divided into two parts, the *Pauperes Ultramontani* (in France) and the *Pauperes Lombardi* (in Lombardy) (idem, 5:292-293).

Leonists were another name for the Waldenses. Under the entry *Leonistae*, we read “*haeretici qui alias Valdenses, a quodam Leone...*” or that this heretical name was an alias for the Waldenses because of Leon or Lyon (ibid, 4:125).

We know that the *Runcarii* were another name for the Poor of Lombardy. Under the entry for *Runcarii*, we find “*Haeretici, Valdensium and Paterinorum, asseclae*”, meaning “Heretical followers of Waldo and the Paterines”. He referenced their efforts in Germany and informed readers to view Rainerius’ work against the Waldenses, specifically chapters 4 and 6 (ibid, 5:1548-1549).

Under the entry *Passagini*, he wrote: “*Haeretici Valdensium Sec-*

*tarii...*” which means heretical of the Waldenses (ibid, 5:231). He referenced some of the literature in which they are mentioned, which we have mostly reviewed in this work.

Roman Church glossators such as Du Cange certainly considered the Passagini to be a sect of the Waldenses. The line of reasoning we have developed on this subject is more consistent with their conclusions than one might initially think. Du Cange also discussed that the Bohemian Picardians were connected to the Waldenses (ibid, 5:457-461).

Another possible connection between the two groups could be their names. Another name for the Waldenses is Vaudois, which means valley dwellers. A possible reason for the name Passagini is that they had a connection to mountain passes.

It would be good to have more evidence of Sabbath keeping in northern Italy or central/eastern Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to better affirm this conclusion. However, there is not much primary source evidence from these areas and period that mentions the Waldenses. Yet we know that they existed and are mentioned much more often starting in the mid fifteenth century. This fact makes the argument from a lack of evidence not necessarily the correct one. We must ask ourselves: is it possible that a group could exist either in whole or as a sect of another group without having much primary source evidence about them?

In the fourteenth century, the inquisitors began to keep records of the people that they persecuted. While we do not find any records of a group called the Passagini, we do have records of the Waldenses, Cathari, and other groups which are not named.

When the inquisition against groups was conducted, they typically preached a sermon to convince the people to renounce their errors. Then they began to ask each person questions to learn more about their heretical beliefs. Between 1307 and 1323, we have fifteen instances of these situations in southeastern France in the cities of Toulouse, Carcassone, Cordua, and Pamiers.

Hundreds of people were convicted of heresy, but their classifications are interesting. 92 were classified as Waldenses, 15 as Beguins, 5 as “Jews, and other heretics, obviously neither Albigen-

ses nor Waldenses”, and 495 were classified as “persons not called Albigenses, but who appear to have been of one and the same sect; and who were obviously what are popularly called Albigenses” (Maitland, pp 215,218-219).

Keep in mind that these classifications may not have been accurate, judging by the names given them. It was left up to inquisitors how to classify these people and they may or may not have had the identification correct. However, notice that one small class of them were called “...Jews, and other heretics, obviously neither Albigenses nor Waldenses...” This record does show that it was possible for lesser-known sects to still exist in this time which were classified as neither Albigenses nor Waldenses but could also be lumped together as Jews. We would not expect any Passagini to be found in this region because it was not in their sphere of influence. But it appears that similar groups may have existed in small numbers even in a place like southeastern France.

While the Roman Church authorities and their political allies worked hard to suffocate non-conformist groups in Lombardy, many of them either succumbed to these efforts or transitioned to other areas more favorable to their existence. The Poor of Lombardy were known to absorb beliefs from other groups and then spread a mixed message. Thus, it is not unreasonable to think that the Passagini influenced even just a segment of their population to keep the Sabbath (in a similar manner as Sunday began to affect a segment of French Waldenses, who were originally more resistant to other practices). The evidence in this work conveys that it is possible that the Passagini continued to exist under the name Waldneses or merged with some of them in the mid-thirteenth century. This would mean that they had to jettison some of their beliefs, but still be allowed to retain the seventh-day Sabbath.

To summarize, here is what we have learned so far about the possible connection between the Passagini and Waldenses:

- About 1205, the Waldenses split into two groups. One stayed in France (Poor of Lyon) while the other went to Lombardy (Poor of Lombardy).
- By 1218, the differences in belief between the two groups were so significant that they could not reconcile.
- The Poor of Lombardy were known to mingle with other groups

and spread a mixed message.

- The Poor of Lombardy established Waldnesian groups in Germany which always had contact with each other.
- The Passagini dwelt in Lombardy during the same period and clearly kept the Sabbath.
- Moneta of Cremona spoke of those connected with either the Cathari or Waldenses who kept the Sabbath, but not the festivals of the Church. This description more matches the Passagini than any other group.
- By the fifteenth century, there are Waldensians who observed Sunday, but also those who observed the Sabbath. Those that observed the Sabbath lived in Germany.
- Roman Catholic authors such as Du Cange thought that the Passagini were a sect of the Waldenses.
- We do not have much documentation of northern Italian or German Waldenses in the fourteenth century, but we know that they lived in these locations.
- In the early fourteenth century, we learn that other non-conformist groups continued to exist in small numbers in places like France.

As aforementioned, the Roman Catholic writers such as Du Cange certainly viewed the Passagini as a sect of the Waldenses based on analysis of the primary sources. We know that by the thirteenth century a sub-group of Waldenses began to accept the practice of the Lord's Day. For some of them to accept the Sabbath would be more consistent with their religious ethic as it has more Scriptural support (it is also contrary to Roman Church practice). Such a situation would allow them to exist within a broader network of churches than just what was in Lombardy and allow them to *passagenes* between regions much easier.

Even if the Passagini merged with a sub-group of the Waldenses or simply became identified by that name, we do not know for certain if they were responsible for influencing the later Sabbath-keeping Waldenses in Germany in the fifteenth century. There is a break in the primary sources that prevent us from nailing down a conclusion one way or the other. We will have to keep our minds open and continue our search to find out for sure what happened to this fascinating group of believers.

Until then, the mystery of the Passagini remains.

## Appendix A: The Rise of Heresy in France

In this appendix, we will review the rise of heresy in France in the twelfth century. While this is not the main subject of this work, it still has bearing on our study. As mentioned in chapter two, the Roman Church did not take systematic action against heretics for nearly 100 years after it was first given serious attention. This allowed groups to form with a belief structure and many followers.

In 1119, a church council was held in Toulouse. The third canon condemned heretics who were described as a “simulating a species of religion.” Apparently, they denied the Lord’s Body and His Blood as sacraments, baptism of children, the hierarchy of the Roman Church, and all Roman Church ordinations. It compels those with civil authority to coerce them or face consequences. Those being accused as heretics are not named. The reference to those who denied the body and blood of the Lord could be a reference to denying transubstantiation or any eucharist offered by the Catholic Church. The council had representatives from Italy, Spain, Gascony, Britain, and Gotia. This council is believed to be a condemnation of Peter de Bruys and his followers, called Petrobrussians (Labbe, 10:856-857).

In 1138, Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, wrote “*Epistola Sive Tractus adversus Petrobrusianos Haereticos*.” It is the main source document for our knowledge of the Petrobrusians. In it, five errors are listed: 1) Denies child baptism. It was reserved only for when a person made a private confession of salvation. 2) Temples and churches were not necessary; Christians could assemble anywhere because God is able to hear His people wherever they are together. This could have been a reaction to opulent structures of stone that cost significant money to build/upkeep. 3) Crosses were to be broken up and destroyed. They were usually burned in the fire. 4) They did not believe in the daily administration of communion. They rejected all administration of communion or just the belief in transubstantiation. 5) All sacrifices, prayers, gifts, and words for the dead were considered worthless. Further, he believed in a literal interpretation of the Bible (The entire work of Peter on this subject is found in Migne, 189:719-850; my

reference is found on pages 719-722 of it).

Furthermore, Peter gave the Four Gospels literal authority in doctrine. He was accused of placing lesser authority on the rest of the New Testament. He considered the writings of the Catholic Church Fathers worthless. He may have preached violence against priests and monks, but I have yet to find enough evidence to prove this point. Peter was put to death by burning. His movement started in southeastern France, but quickly migrated to Gascony and Aquitaine on the East/Southeastern part of France.

In 1139, the Second Lateran Council was held. The twenty-third canon condemned those who “simulate a species of religion”, and condemned those who have the following beliefs: 1) deny the Lord’s body and blood; 2) deny the baptism of children; 3) reject priesthood and other ecclesiastical orders; 4) reject legitimate marriages. Those are expelled from the church as heretics. In the introduction to this council, Peter De Bruis was referenced. The Henricans, who continued the group after Peter’s death, were also mentioned. The beliefs condemned in canon twenty-three are like that of Petrobrussians. They were labeled Manichaeans (Catholic Encyclopedia: Petrobrussians; Labbe, 10, pp 1000-1008).

In 1147, Bernard of Clairvaux wrote letter 241 to Alfonso, Count of S. (Eloy) Eligii and Toulouse (son of Raymond IV, Count of Toulouse) about Heretic Henry (the one who continued Peter’s teachings). He claimed that Henry was a heretic and a “wolf in sheep’s clothing.” He claims the heresy had grown so much that “the churches are without congregations, congregations without priests, priests without their due reverence, and worst of all, Christians without Christ. Churches are regarded as synagogues, the sanctuary of God is said to have no sanctity, the sacraments are not thought to be sacred, feast days (of the Catholic Church) are deprived of their wonted solemnities, Men are dying in their sins, souls being dragged everywhere before the dread tribunal neither reconciled by repentance nor fortified by Holy Christians....” (Maitland, p 19 and Eales, pp 232-233).

He also discussed that Henry was a former monk who gained a large following with these teachings. Bernard claimed that those who heard him were all stricken with Jewish blindness. He had previous interactions in Lausanne, Les Mans, Poitiers, and Bor-

deaux. Bernard accused Alfonso of not doing enough to stop his movement.

In 1157 or 1158, the Council of Rheims was held. It condemned a group called the Manichaeans. This is believed to be a reference to the Albigenses (Landon, 2:75-76).

In 1163, the Council of Tours was convoked by Frederic I. Canon four condemned the Albigenses. The name is specifically listed in the title for the canon; people are instructed to flee them. All interaction with them is forbidden. One is forbidden from protecting, buying, or selling from them. They were accused of infecting many in Gascony and other provinces. This is the first time that the term Albigenses was used. The term likely comes from the village of Albi, which is near Toulouse (see Labbe, 10:1411-1425 and Mansi, 21:1167-1185).

The opening line from canon 4 reads: “In partibus Tolosae damnata haeresis dudum emersit, quae paulatim more cancri ad vicina loca se diffundens, per Guasconiam & alias provincias quamplurimos iam infecit.” (Mansi, 21:1177)

The Council at Lombez in 1176 condemned the *Bonshommes*, which means good men in Latin. This was a class of the Cathars who were labeled as Manichaeans (Labbe, 10:1470).

The spread of heresy worsened in central and southern France; it became so odious to the Roman Church that a crusade was proclaimed in the early thirteenth century. We discuss this event briefly in chapter three of this work and the beginning of chapter four.

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## **More Materials (Page 1 of 2)**

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### **A Beginner's Guide to the Sabbath**

The Sabbath is a weekly celebration from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. This delight was given to mankind to help us spend more time with God and our family. In this booklet, you will learn answers to basic questions such as “What is the Sabbath?”; “When is the Sabbath?”; and “How Do We Keep the Sabbath?” You will also learn important reasons to keep this holy day. You will also learn important ways to practice this special day so that you can be in tune with God’s Sacred Rhythm.

### **A Beginner's Guide to Understanding the Bible**

This booklet will help you understand the Bible on a very basic level. It will give you practical tips to help you get the most out of your Bible. These simple tips will transform your view of the Bible and your walk with

### **Defending the Ten Commandments**

There is a general hostility towards the commandments of God (see Matthew 24:12). Many people believe that the Law of God is done away with, including the Sabbath. In particular, there are verses from Paul and Jesus people use to try and explain them away. This booklet will explain these verses and other questions people have about God’s Law. This resource will teach you to defend your faith. It is also a way to reach out to other believers and help them understand the truth of God’s Word.

### **How Do We Know Jesus Really Lived?**

Imagine for a moment that you did not have a Bible to learn about Jesus. How would you know that He ever lived on earth? Would it be possible to prove His existence? In modern times, there has been skepticism about the historical validity of Jesus’ existence and the New Testament account. In this book, we will address the historical, archaeological, and textual evidence to see if Jesus and His earliest followers ever existed.

## **More Materials (Page 2 of 2)**

Below are listed more short books available for FREE download on [www.sabbathsentinel.org](http://www.sabbathsentinel.org) Look at the Free Resources page.

### **A Brief History of the Sabbath in Early Christianity**

The majority of people who attend Church today meet on Sunday. In the New Testament, the early Church met on Sabbath, which is from Friday sunset through Saturday sunset. Did you know that most Christians 400 years after Jesus still honored the Sabbath? In this informative booklet, you will learn the seven major historical factors that affected the Sabbath in the early Church.

### **Sabbath and Sunday Laws in the Roman Empire**

In the Roman Empire, a series of laws were passed concerning the Sabbath. Hundreds of years later, Sunday laws were also passed. These laws help us to understand the protection of Sabbath observance in broader Judaism and Christianity as well as the development of Sunday as a day of rest in the Roman Church.

### **Prevalence of the Sabbath in the Early Roman Empire**

When the Gentiles heard the early gospel message, how did they respond as it relates to the Sabbath? Were Gentile converts persuaded to keep the Sabbath like their Jewish counterparts? Did they seek to abandon it? In this work, the author reviews two Jewish, two Christian, and fifteen Gentile primary sources as well as the New Testament to examine the prevalence of the Sabbath in the early Roman Empire.

### **How Did Sunday Become the First Day of the Week?**

How did the first day of the week, which does not have a name in the Bible, come to be called Sunday? How did the other days of the week come to have their names? In this work, you will learn about the history of two seven-day cycles in the early Roman Empire: The Biblical week and the pagan week. This study will also reveal insight into early Church history in the development of Sunday as a day of gathering among certain groups in early Christianity.

## **What Is the Bible Sabbath Association?**

The Bible Sabbath Association, also called the BSA, is a group of believers from all Sabbath keeping backgrounds who have a common belief in three things:

- 1) Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation.
- 2) The Ten Commandments are God's guiding principles for the Christian Life.
- 3) The Sabbath is from Friday Sunset to Saturday Sunset.

Founded in 1943, the purpose of the BSA is not to bring all churches under an umbrella. Instead, we serve as a support group to all Sabbath keeping groups.

We have a wide variety of materials to help you defend and affirm your belief in the Sabbath. Additionally, we provide materials to help churches reach their communities.

Our main purpose is to promote fellowship and cooperation between Sabbath-keepers of various groups; to promote Sabbath observance on a nondenominational basis; to restore respect and honor for the Ten Commandments as a whole, with special emphasis on the Fourth, which has been forgotten by most of the world; to encourage the repeal of laws which enforce the keeping of Sunday (or any day) by any unit of man's government; and to defeat the adoption of any calendar which would disrupt the seven-day weekly cycle.

Residents of the United States can deduct the offerings from their income, for tax purposes.

Our main website is: [www.biblesabbath.org](http://www.biblesabbath.org)

Follow our blog at [www.sabbathsentinel.org](http://www.sabbathsentinel.org)





In the Middle Ages, several non-conformist groups arose to challenge the traditions and authority of the Roman Church. Among them were the Passagini, who were particularly known for keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. In this work, you will learn about this group and the difficulties that existed for groups like them.



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