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Regere animas: Bernard of Clairvaux's Ways of Handling Heresy as a Technology of Power

MATINA NOUTSOU*

Bernard, the first abbot of Clairvaux (1090-1153), has been described by modern historians as a pivotal figure not only of the early years of the Cistercian order but also more broadly of twelfth-century Europe. Bernard was a monastic reformer, a devoted Cistercian, and a theologian, but also a figure who did not hesitate to engage in life outside the monastic walls. He got involved in political controversies and earthly matters, such as dealing with groups and individuals that were labelled by the ecclesiastical authorities as heretical. Bernard's role and importance in the anti-heresy struggle has been a subject of detailed research. His texts have been related to the centralization of the anti-heretical struggle, and especially his preaching activities are considered to have been a model for the following generations of monks and clerics, who became engaged in the same cause.[1] On the other hand, historians have also noted Bernard's limited

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1 Thus, Raoul Manselli marks a development that found place in the Church's attitude against heresy in the years 1144-1145. Before this time, he notes, heresy was quite sporadic. However, the situation changed and the anti-heretical struggle attained a more centralized and universal character, due also to the writings and activities of Bernard of Clairvaux: Raoul Manselli, "De la *persuasio* à la *coercitio*", in: *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* VI: *Le Crédo, la morale et l'Inquisition*, Toulouse: Privat 1971, 175-197: 180-181. A similar argument has been proposed by Robert Moore, who saw Bernard's mission of 1145 as a decisive step in the creation of a more centralized attack on heresy: Robert Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 1987, 24. Beverly Kienzle, meanwhile, has underlined the importance of the preaching activities of the Cistercian abbot, as he created a powerful example of anti-heretical polemic, which was followed by successive generations of Cistercians and clerics who became engaged in the fight against heresy. Beverly Mayne Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229: Preaching in the Lord's Vineyard*, York: York Medieval Press 2001, 8.

interest in heresy, as religious dissidence occupies only a small place in his writings. Scholars argue that the abbot of Clairvaux did not bring any important innovations to the tradition of anti-heretical writing, as in this area, he simply followed the tradition of moral theology, using numerous references to the Scriptures.[2] Therefore, Bernard's anti-heretical writings are not very informative about the historical forms of Christian dissent in the twelfth century. However, as Karen Sullivan has rightfully suggested, the Bernardine texts are extremely informative in a different area: they shed new light on Bernard's thought and how he could reconcile his actions against heresy with his contemplative monastic identity.[3]

Building on Sullivan's suggestion, this paper seeks to move the inquiry into Bernard's anti-heretical writings one step further and connect Bernard's anti-heretical endeavours with his ecclesiology. So far, the focus has been on how his anti-heretical work can be understood as a logical result of his ecclesiology. In his effort to defend the unity of Christianity and fight for its salvation, or to promote its reformation, the abbot fought against heresy, as for him it represented a major threat that the Church should resist and finally overcome.[4] However, the reverse question of what Bernard's anti-heretical writing brings to the understanding of his ecclesiology has remained almost entirely unexplored.

This paper seeks to fill this gap by placing Bernard's anti-heretical discourse at the centre of inquiry in order to enrich our understanding of his ecclesiology and to carefully follow how this ecclesiology was realized through specific means against heresy, which functioned as *disciplinary practices*. Following the work of Talal Asad, I apply this term in the sense of ways of imposing a certain worldview and regulating the disciplined subject.[5] The point of departure for addressing this question is to be found

2 Cf. Karen Sullivan, *The Inner Lives of Medieval Inquisitors*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 2011, 32-33; Jean Leclercq, "L'Hérésie d'après les écrits de S. Bernard de Clairvaux", in: Willem Lourdaux – Daniel Verhelst (eds.), *The Concept of Heresy in the Middle Ages (11th-13th C.): Proceedings of the International Conference Louvain May 13-16, 1973*, Leuven: Leuven University Press 1976, 12-26; Dominique Iogna Prat, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism and Islam (1000-1150)*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2003, 126-128; Gillian Rosemary Evans, *The Mind of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*, Oxford: Clarendon 1985.

3 K. Sullivan, *The Inner Lives*…, 32.

4 Cf. Martha Newman, *The Boundaries of Charity: Cistercian Culture and Ecclesiastical Reform, 1098-1180*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 1996, 1-15, 219-234; Stephen Robson, *With the Spirit and Power of Elijah (Lk 1,17): The Prophetic Reforming Spirituality of Bernard of Clairvaux as Evidenced Particularly in His Letters*, Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana 2004, 280-284.

5 Talal Asad, "On Discipline and Humility in Medieval Christian Monasticism", in: id., *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, Baltimore – London: The John Hopkins University Press 1993, 125-167: 125.

in the theoretical works of Michel Foucault and Talal Asad and insights of modern sociology and critical theory, which underline the importance of heterodoxy or abnormality for the understanding of normality. In other words, if deviancy is to be understood not as a stable and fixed entity, but rather as a set of social relations, accusations of deviancy can shed light on what was considered the norm.[6] Moreover, the means that are implemented in the treatment of "deviants" can be quite revealing about society[7] when we interrogate their "implicit or explicit rationality".[8] This means that by examining both the way in which they operate and the logic behind them, we can observe the process through which a discourse was articulated and imposed on society. At the same time, we can examine how a specific subjectivity was shaped and regulated through this discourse. In other words, the means used against heresy not only targeted particular individuals but also had a wider influence on the whole of the society.

Governing the souls

The Church's response to religious dissent has been examined from different angles. Historians have noted a transition from persuasion to coercion in the way heresy was treated; Raoul Manselli and Henri Maisonneuve pointed out a development in the anti-heretical struggle in which physical force became a more widely used weapon.[9] On the other hand, Grado Merlo argues that even if the violent coercion of heretics became more frequent, persuasion as a way of handling heresy continued to coexist with it.[10] Especially in light of the publication of the seminal work *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* by Robert Moore in 1987, scholars

6 Heinz Steinert, "Sociology as Deviance: The Disciplines of Social Exclusion", in: Craig Calhoon – Chris Rojek – Brian Turner (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Sociology*, London: Sage 2005, 471-490: 472.

7 Michel Foucault notes that "it seemed to me to be interesting to try to understand our society and civilization in terms of exclusion, of rejection, of refusal, in terms of what it does not want, its limits, the way it is obliged to suppress a number of things, people, processes" (Michel Foucault, "Rituals of Exclusion", in: id., *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, New York: Semiotext[e] ^{2}1996 [1st ed. 1989], 68-73: 69).

8 Johanna Oksala, *Foucault, Politics and Violence*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press 2012, 9; Michel Foucault, "Truth is in the Future", in: id., *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, New York: Semiotext(e) ^{2}1996 (1st ed. 1989), 298-301: 299.

9 R. Manselli, "De la *persuasio* à la *coercitio*…"; Henri Maisonneuve, *Études sur les origines de l'Inquisition*, Paris: J. Vrin 1960.

10 Grado Giovanni Merlo, "Militare per Cristo Contro gli eretici", in: id., *Contro gli eretici: La coercizione all'ortodossia prima dell'Inquisizione*, Bologna: Il Mulino 1996, 11-49.

have long presented the Church's response as part of a wider process that was connected to the centralization and bureaucratization of the Church and to political and social developments in medieval Europe.

Moore's theory linking the rise of persecution to the centralization of the Church has found ample following,[11] but has not been exempt from criticism. Quite importantly for this article, Christine Caldwell Ames has recently pointed out that the dominant focus on socio-political conditions has left little room for the religious dimensions of the fight against heresy and has thus created a one-sided image of an unavoidable persecution.[12] In her work on the Dominican Order and the Inquisition, she successfully relocates the persecution of medieval heresy within religious history and traces how the anti-heretical struggle was an expression of a religious mindset and, furthermore, a process within the "monasticization" of the world, a phrase that originates in the work of André Vauchez.[13] Under this process of "interior reconquest", the concept of the "monastery" was expanded beyond the monastic walls to the whole of Christian society, so that all Christians were supposed to live in accordance with the monastic ideals of obedience and proper behaviour.[14]

I would like to argue that the perception of Bernard's anti-heretical efforts either as a way of securing more power or as a mere expression of a specific religious mentality results in an incomplete picture of Bernard's activities. These two dimensions, the political and the religious, are, indeed, connected with each other, but without one being simply the cause of, let alone the pretext for, the other. Thus, in order to overcome this division between the socio-political and the religious dimensions and give a more comprehensive picture of Bernard's anti-heretical endeavours and ecclesiology, I suggest that it is useful not to limit our perception of power as an entity possessed by individuals and groups and exercised over

11 Scott L. Waugh – Peter D. Diehl (eds.), *Christendom and Its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000-1500*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996; John Christian Larsen – Cary Nederman (eds.), *Beyond the Persecuting Society: Religious Toleration before the Enlightenment*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1997; Michael Frassetto (ed.), *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages: Essays on the Work of R.I. Moore*, Leiden: Brill 2006.

12 Christine Caldwell Ames, "Does the Inquisition Belong to Religious History?", *The American Historical Review* 110/1, 2005, 11-37: 13-15; ead., *Righteous Persecution: Inquisition, Dominicans, and Christianity in the Middle Ages*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2009, 10-13.

13 C. C. Ames, *Righteous Persecution*…, 10-13.

14 André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*, ed. Daniel Bornstein, trans. Margery Schneider, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame 1993, 72.

others[15] but to borrow analytical tools from social scientific theory, which allow us to broaden the concept of power. In this article, I will utilize some central Foucauldian concepts and see in which ways they can assist us in examining Bernard's endeavours in relation to his ecclesiology but also inside a specific framework of power relations and the governing of others.

Power and its techniques

Following the work of historians who were directly or indirectly inspired by Foucault's ideas,[16] the Foucauldian definition of power and Foucault's conception of how power operates in a society are important analytical keys to this inquiry about Bernard's anti-heretical writings.

By focusing on the question of how power was exercised instead of who had the power, Foucault differentiated himself from understanding power primarily as dominion and force.[17] He argued that power should not be seen as a commodity possessed or attained by certain individuals, groups, or institutions but rather as being diffused in a society and embedded in every social relation.[18] Individuals, groups or institutions are merely shaped by historically contingent forms of power and at the same time are the carriers through whom and through which power is circulated via specific techniques, tactics, and practices.[19] Foucault was not so much interested in power as an object of confrontation among rivals but mostly in the question of government. He understood government as "the way in which the conduct of individuals might be directed".[20] Thus, power is articulated through certain power relations, techniques and practices, these resulting

15 Cf. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, ed. Talcott Parsons, trans. A. M. Henderson – Talcott Parsons, New York: The Free Press 1964, 152; Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* I: *The History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986, 6.

16 Cf. John Arnold, *Inquisition and Power, Catharism and the Confessing Subject in Medieval Languedoc*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2001, 10; James Given, *Inquisition and Medieval Society: Power, Discipline, and Resistance in Languedoc*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1997, 34.

17 Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power", in: Paul Rabinow – Hubert Dreyfus (eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics: Second Edition with an Afterword by and an Interview with Michel Foucault*, Chicago: Chicago University Press 1983, 208-226: 217.

18 Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures", in: Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, New York: Pantheon Books 1980, 78-108: 98.

19 Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self", in: Luther Martin – Huch Gutman – Patrick Hutton (eds.), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, London: Tavistock 1988, 16-49: 18.

20 M. Foucault, "The Subject and Power…", 221.

in the "governance" and "proper conduct of others".[21] According to the Foucauldian understanding, power is not only negative but also has a productive character, as power does not only repress but also produces discourses and constructs certain subjectivities.[22]

This shift in the understanding of power has two important implications for the study of Bernard's anti-heretical writings. Firstly, Bernard might be viewed not as a figure seeking to possess power over others, hiding this ultimate goal behind the pretext of religious ideas, but rather as one who is transformed into a vehicle which articulates, through his writings and actions, a certain form of power to society; he is himself shaped by this power, which he also circulates. Secondly, by utilizing the Foucauldian understanding, the means against heresy are not only conceived instrumentally as measures to punish heretics or to protect the unity of the Church, but also as measures that attain a broader social function as productive disciplinary practices which result in the construction of certain subjectivities – in other words, subjects who would behave and act in a certain way inside the framework of this power. Thus, studying Bernard's writings in dialogue with Foucault's work will allow us to inquire how a specific kind of power could operate through anti-heretical measures.

Even if the aim of this inquiry is not so much to follow how Bernard defined power but rather how power worked practically through his writings, it is nevertheless important to understand aspects of power as they appear in Bernardine work. In her article on Bernard's understanding of *auctoritas* and *potestas*, Alice Chapman points out that whereas the notion of *auctoritas* is more clear and connected with the authority of the Church in Bernardine work, the term *potestas*, which appears much more often, lacks any specific definition, as it can refer both to ecclesiastical and secular power.[23] Therefore, as Chapman suggests, we should look more to the specific terms, such as the *power of the two keys* (*potestas ligandi et solvendi*).[24] Appealing to Pope Eugenius III, Bernard reminds him that the pope's power is connected with Peter's two keys: "Clearly your power is over sin and not property, since it is because of sin that you have received the keys of the heavenly kingdom (Mt 16:19), to exclude sinners not

21 *Ibid*.
22 Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power", in: Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, New York: Pantheon Books 1980, 109-133: 119.
23 Alice Chapman, "Disentangling Potestas in the Works of St. Bernard of Clairvaux", *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 60/3, 2004, 587-600.
24 *Ibid*., 594.

possessors."[25] Bernard reminds the pope that this power is greater than the power of domination: "Tell me, which seems to you the greater honor and greater power: to forgive sins or to divide estates? But there is no comparison."[26]

In order to better understand the nature of this power, we should look carefully, as Chapman mentions, at the pope's ministry in contrast to his dominion.[27] The abbot of Clairvaux repeatedly reminds Eugenius that his task is neither domination nor ruling but ministry.[28] The pope, as Peter, received the responsibility to govern the whole world,[29] and therefore should act as a "sweating peasant"[30] and a "steward",[31] whose duty is "to oversee and to manage that for which you must render an account".[32] Moreover he should be the "shepherd",[33] "the one to whom the keys have been given, to whom the sheep have been entrusted".[34] He is responsible for caring for his flock. So, the power of the papacy, which derives from the two keys, does not consist in domination but constant labour. The pope has to serve and manage the world, watch and protect. Bernard is both an effect and a bearer of this form of power. It is inside the framework of this specific form of power that anti-heretical measures will be studied as disciplinary practices through which this power is circulated and exercised, by the construction of specific subjectivities.

Bernard's engagement with heresy: A chronology

Bernard belonged to the generation that succeeded in centralizing the anti-heretical struggle and creating a picture of heresy as a general and urgent danger.[35] The years between the Second Lateran Council (1139) and the Council of Reims (1148) were crucial, as ecclesiastical leaders "put in place what can be recognized in retrospect as the essential foundations of the church for the rest of the Middle Ages, both governmentally

25 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration: Advice to a Pope*, trans. John Anderson – Elisabeth Kennan, Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications 1976, 36; cf. *SBOp* III, 402.
26 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration*…, 36, cf. *SBOp* III, 402.
27 A. Chapman, "Disentangling Potestas…", 594.
28 *SBOp* III, 417, 418; cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration*…, 56, 58, 59.
29 *SBOp* III, 424; cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration*…, 68.
30 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration*…, 56; cf. *SBOp* III, 417.
31 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration*…, 60; cf. *SBOp* III, 419.
32 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration*…, 60; cf. *SBOp* III, 419.
33 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration*…, 66-67; cf. *SBOp* III, 423-424.
34 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration*…, 66-67; cf. *SBOp* III, 423-424.
35 R. Manselli, "De la *persuasio* à la *coercitio*…", 181; Robert Moore, "The War against Heresy in Medieval Europe", *Historical Research* 81/212, 2008, 189-210: 204.

and intellectually" and "rejected the most radical implications of the apostolic movement".[36]

Already from 1135, Bernard was active against heresy. He had a leading role in the Council of Pisa,[37] before which the wandering preacher Henry of Lausanne was hauled and condemned as a heretic.[38] However, Henry continued preaching and in 1145, Bernard of Clairvaux undertook a preaching mission against heresy in southern France,[39] where Henry was captured, chained and delivered to the bishop of the city.[40] Similarly, as Uwe Brunn has shown, Bernard, during his preaching mission for the Second Crusade in Cologne in 1146, used this opportunity also to preach against heresy in the area.[41] In addition, the Cistercian abbot attended the Council of Reims in 1148, which was crucial for the crystallization of the distinction between clergy and laity. The council dealt with cases of heresy – those of Eon de Stella, who was recognized as a lunatic and kept in custody, and Gilbert de la Porée – and condemned the remaining followers of Henry of Lausanne and Peter of Bruys in Gascony and Provence.[42]

Besides his active engagement in the councils of Pisa and Reims and his two preaching missions, the abbot of Clairvaux also managed in his writings, which were widely distributed,[43] to influence anti-heretical polemics. Generally, the anti-heretical struggle in the Bernardine discourse had the dimension of expansion; it became the duty of the Church but also of every Christian. Between 1149 and 1153, Bernard wrote the treatise *Five Books on Consideration* (*De Consideratione*), which is regarded by modern historians as an expression of his political philosophy.[44] In this work, which was dedicated to Pope Eugenius, the abbot reminded him that it was his responsibility to find a solution to the problem of heresy. In his epistles, he reached a broader audience by appealing to, among others, the count of Toulouse and to the people of the same city, with the aim of

36 Robert Moore, *The War On Heresy: Faith and Power in Medieval Europe*, London: Profile Books 2012, 144.
37 Robert Somerville, *Papacy, Councils and Canon Law in the 11th and 12th Centuries*, Aldershot: Ashgate 1970, 101.
38 Robert Moore, *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, London: Arnold 1975, 39.
39 R. Moore, *The War on Heresy*…, 121.
40 B. Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*…, 90-93.
41 Uwe Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "cathares": Discours de réforme et propagande antihérétique dans les pays du Rhin et de la Meuse avant l'Inquisition*, (Collection des Études Augustiniennes: Moyen Âge et Temps Modernes 41), Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes 2006, 124-125.
42 R. Moore, *The War on Heresy*…, 151-155.
43 B. Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*…, 81.
44 Ian Stuart Robinson, "Church and Papacy" in: James Henderson Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350-c. 1450*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988, 252-305: 257.

mobilizing them in the fight against heresy. The first letter was written before the preaching mission of 1145 and the second after he had accomplished the mission. Bernard's anti-heretical writings also include sermons 64, 65, and 66 from his major work, *On the Song of Songs*.[45] The exact dating of Sermons 65 and 66 has been subject to discussion, as they were traditionally dated to before the preaching mission of 1145 and were supposed to be an answer to the letter of Everwin, Provost of Steinfeld, to Bernard.[46] Brunn challenges this dating, arguing that both sermons mirror a feeling of failure and powerlessness arising from the failure of the preaching missions. While Sermon 64 was composed before the preaching mission, he suggests that Sermons 65 and 66 were written only after 1147, like Everwin's letter. Furthermore, while both Sermons have traditionally been perceived as an answer to Everwin's letter, Brunn suggests that only Sermon 66 was written as an answer.[47]

An analysis of these sources shows the means that Bernard of Clairvaux considered useful in handling heresy. These means were preaching against heresy, physical persecution, exclusion, making heretics publicly declare their beliefs and way of life, and controlling everyday behaviour, especially relationships between women and men.

Physical violence against heretics

In the Bernardine anti-heretical discourse, references to physical violence as a way of combatting heresy are limited. However, in Sermon 66, Bernard refers to an incident that took place in Cologne and touches upon violent persecution:

> So the people have attacked them, making new martyrs for the cause of godless heresy. We applaud their zeal, but do not recommend their action, because faith should be a matter of persuasion, not of force, though no doubt it is better for them to be restrained by the sword of someone who bears not the sword in vain (Rom 13:4) than to be allowed to lead others into heresy. Anyone who punishes a wrongdoer in righteousness wrath is a servant of God.[48]

This passage has attracted the attention of those historians who have sought to understand Bernard's relation to violence. In his study on Bernard's attitude towards war, Leclercq suggests that the Cistercian abbot

45 *SBOp* II, 161-188.
46 B. Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*…, 82.
47 U. Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "cathares"*…, 169.
48 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III, trans. Kilian Walsh, O.S.C.O. – Irene M. Edmonds, Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications 1979, 204; cf. *SBOp* II, 186-187.

sought to limit the use of violence "by imposing conditions as to its use and motivation",[49] whereas Manselli interprets the image of the *gladio coercere* not as a call for the systematic persecution of heretics but mostly as a symbol of self-defence.[50] Meanwhile, Maisonneuve argues that Bernard, in line with Augustine, was mostly in favour of preaching in order to make heretics understand their mistakes and return to the Church. However, when this was not possible, then the Church had the right to ask for help from secular elites, who had a duty to deliver it.[51] Maisonneuve points out the interesting juxtaposition of conscience and obedience when it comes to the defence of the Church in the Bernardine discourse: while the use of force is not useful in persuading heretics of the wrongness of their beliefs, it is, however, helpful when it comes to questions of discipline and the defence of Christian society.[52]

Building on the above-mentioned conclusions, I suggest that the issue of violence against heretics was linked to the question of who had the right to use it. Indeed, Bernard sets some limitations, which, however, are more related to the issue of authority and to the question of controlling the right to use physical violence. The abbot of Clairvaux refers to a passage from Paul's letter to the Romans in which Paul deals with the relationship between Christians and the state of Rome, and propagates the need to be subordinate to the Roman rulers and to show obedience to those who have the right to execute God's wrath.[53]

The relation of the image of the sword to issues of obedience and authority is supported by the fact that Bernard used the image of two swords in his writings: in the letter of 1150 to the pope as well as in *De Consideratione*,[54] where he reminded the pope that both swords belonged to the papacy but only secular leaders could use force, whenever the Church impelled it. The clergy should not be actively involved in any violent actions;[55] thus, there was a clear distinction between the roles of clerics and of secular leaders. The interpretation of the formula of the two swords has been a topic of substantial scholarly discussion on the nature

49 Jean Leclercq, "Bernard's Attitudes towards War", in: John Sommerfeldt, *Studies in Medieval Cistercian History* II, (Cistercian Studies Series 24), Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publication 1976, 1-39.

50 R. Manselli, "De la *persuasio* à la *coercitio*…", 182.

51 H. Maisonneuve, *Études sur les origines*…, 104-105.

52 *Ibid*.

53 Robert Jewett, "Romans", in: James Duun (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to St Paul*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003, 103-104.

54 *SBOp* VIII, 163; *SBOp* III, 454; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration*…, 117-118.

55 James Brundage, "St Bernard and the Jurists", in: Michael Gervers (ed.), *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians*, New York: St Martin Press 1992, 25-33.

of the relation between ecclesiastical and secular authorities.[56] For this inquiry, however, it is important to note that the abbot of Clairvaux does make a sharp distinction when it comes to the use of violence. Being "a man of order",[57] he attempted to make some clear distinctions among the roles of the clergy, the secular elites, and the laity at large, based on the legitimate use of force. Only secular authorities had the right to use violence, even when it came to the punishment of the Church's enemies. Moreover, the ordinary laity had to obey this societal structure by not exercising violence.

Physical violence is integrated into the Bernardine anti-heretical discourse not so much in order to propagate the physical coercion of heretics but mostly as a means of underlining the hierarchical structure of Christian society and the need to obey it. Thereby, the abbot of Clairvaux controlled the use of violence and shaped the limits of its use by each of the three societal orders.

Exclusion of heretics

The social exclusion of heretics was not a Bernardine novelty. On the contrary, since the early Christian centuries, the expulsion of heretics had been a common and widespread policy against heresy.[58] Following this tradition, as Manselli notes, Bernard believed that the exclusion of heretics was a justifiable step when the persuasion of heretics by non-violent means had failed.[59]

In Bernardine anti-heretical texts, social exclusion comes frequently into play. In Sermon 65 on the topic of heresy, he addresses this way of handling heresy:

> What is the Church to do but remove the man who will not remove the scandal, unless like him, she is to be disobedient? (Jn 8:55) For she has this command from the Gospel, not to spare her own eye if it gives offense, or her hand or her foot, but to pluck it out or cut it off and cast it away from her (Matt 5:29). "If he will not listen to the Church," it says, "let him be to you as a stranger and a tax collector" (Matt 18:17).[60]

56 Elizabeth Kennan, "The 'De Consideratione' of St. Bernard of Clairvaux and the Papacy in the Mid-Twelfth Century: A Review on Scholarship", *Tradition* 23, 1967, 73-115.

57 Gillian Evans, *Bernard of Clairvaux*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000, 158.

58 Christine Caldwell Ames, *Medieval Heresies: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam*, New York: Cambridge University Press 2015, 78.

59 R. Manselli, "De la *persuasio* à la *coercitio*…", 181.

60 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 187; cf. *SBOp* II, 176-177.

It is worth noting how closely in this passage Bernard, building on biblical citations, links the exclusion of heretics with the issue of obedience and the sound functioning of the body of the Church. The point of interest is not heretics and how they can come back to the Church but the Church itself.

It is not surprising that obedience played such a central role in Bernard's thought, as he considered it as one of the fundamental principles not only of religious life inside the cloister but also of the life of every Christian who seeks perfection and the love for God.[61] The importance of obedience for the Cistercian Order, which was grounded on the strict observance of Benedictine Rule, has long been recognized by historians.[62] But what exactly does this obedience tell us about Bernard's "sociology"?

In his lectures "On the Government of the Living", Foucault examined the value of obedience in the monastic environment and more generally in the spiritual context by addressing the question: "What does obedience produce?"[63] Bearing in mind the centrality of obedience in Bernard's anti-heretical discourse, this question needs be readdressed in the context of the Bernardine discourse.

According to the abbot, the Church must obey the Scriptures, which represent, in his mind, the highest authority. This obedience must have some specific characteristics: to begin with, it is the absolute and highest form of obedience, and an exhaustive one, where the need to be obedient is not discussed but taken for granted. According to Bernardine sources, the Church must obey in order to show its obedience; it is merely a state of being, a permanent disposition rather than a procedure that is followed in order to achieve a result. The Church must be in a permanent state of obedience, just as the young monks who entered the monastery should obey "their master's commands": "Obey the abbot's orders in all things, even if, God forbid, he does otherwise, remembering this teaching of the Lord: 'Do what they say, not what they do' (Matt 23:3)."[64] In this way, the absolute and highest form of obedience, as the foremost monastic ideal, transcends the walls of the monastery and becomes a necessary requirement for the whole Church and for the construction of the obedient subject.

61 G. Evans, *Bernard of Clairvaux*…, 32-37.

62 *Ibid*.

63 Michel Foucault, *On the Government of the Living: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1979-1980*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell, New York: Palgrave 2014, 270.

64 Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 6), ed. and trans. Bruce L. Venarde, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2011, 34-35.

This obedience is also related to the well-being of the Church. By protecting itself, the Church is obedient to the Scriptures. Thus, the exclusion of heretics is not presented as a form of revenge, a pure punishment coming from wrath, but is a beneficial measure, as it is destined to secure the well-being and unity of the body of the Church. The survival of the Church is also an act of obedience. In the economy of salvation, which is obligatory for all,[65] being obedient is the only choice: if the Church is to survive, it must be obedient to the Scriptures and must ideally remain in this condition permanently and definitively.

Exclusion is an act of obedience, but also of protection, as heretics represent a danger. In Sermon 65, citing a broadly used passage from the *Epistle to Titus*, the abbot of Clairvaux declares: "I shall without hesitation reject a heretic after a first and second admonition (Tit 3:10), knowing that such a man is corrupt, and that I must take care he does not corrupt me also."[66]

Likewise, in Sermon 66, the idea of the righteous expulsion of heretics from the Church is connected with the notion of protection: "They should be dealt with, then, either by being forced to send away their women or to leave the Church, as they cause scandal in the Church by their way of life and their consorting with women."[67] And again: "If they do not accept this, you will be completely justified in expelling them from the Church to which they have caused scandal by their blatant and illicit cohabitation."[68] Here, exclusion becomes, again, a beneficial act; it has the function inside the economy of salvation to secure the salvation of the Church and Christians.

Apart from the Sermons, the imperative of expulsion as one of the main measures against heresy is a common theme in Bernard's letters. The abbot appeals to the Count of Toulouse to expel heretics away from his territories in order not only to protect people but also to maintain his good reputation. In this way, the struggle against heresy becomes a personal matter not only for the Church but also for the secular elites: "When he [i.e. Henry] was chased from France for his wickedness, the only territory open to him was yours. Only under your protection could he ferociously ravage Christ's flock. But whether or not this is in keeping with your hon-

65 Michel Foucault, "Sexuality and Power", in: Jeremy Carrette (ed.), *Religion and Culture*, New York: Routledge 1999, 115-130: 124.

66 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 188; cf. *SBOp* II, 177.

67 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 205; cf. *SBOp* II, 187.

68 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 206; cf. *SBOp* II, 188. The accusation of sexual misconduct was a well-known *topos* in the anti-heretical polemic; cf. note 109 in this article.

our, you alone must judge."[69] In Bernard's viewpoint, Henry was a dangerous man, who, by abandoning his order, had become a wandering preacher, a danger to the Church and to Christians, due to the attractiveness of his preaching and lifestyle. The notion of protecting the Christian flock is repeated:

"Enquire if you like why he left Lausanne, Le Mans, Poitiers and Bordeaux. There is no way at all of return open to him in any of these places, because of the foul traces he has left behind him. Do you really hope to collect good fruit from such a bad tree as this?"[70] Bernard reminds the people of Toulouse of the danger caused by heresy and, therefore, the need to protect themselves: "And also, very dear friends, pursue them and seize them, until they have all gone, fled from your midst, for it is not safe to sleep near serpents: 'they agree with the rich to lie in wait at dark corners, and kill the man who never wronged them (Ps 37:39)'."[71]

Likewise, in the Bernardine epistles, the exclusion of heretics is represented as an act of protection and self-defence. The Church, secular leaders, and ultimately all Christians share a duty to exclude religious dissidents, as they present a danger to the Church's good function, mainly with their behaviour and way of living. Bernard justifies this need by presenting the defence of the Church and the protection of its people as the highest goal. Importantly, though the need for obedience is equally necessary for the Church, secular leaders, and the people, their duties are different: the Church has the duty to expel heretics in order to save itself and thus all Christians; secular leaders must assist the Church and save Christians; and people must help themselves by "pursuing and seizing" heretics. Just as monks have different duties in the monastery, in the anti-heretical struggle every part has a different function but the same aim: self-defence, self-protection, and maintaining the unity of the Church.[72]

Bernard justifies the need to expel heretics by presenting exclusion as self-chosen. In Sermon 65, he wonders: "When they dismiss everyone within the Church as dogs and swine, is this not an open admission that they themselves are not within the Church?"[73] Heretics, through their rejection of the Church's prelates, demonstrate their disobedience and, therefore, they choose to be outside the Church. There is no room for heretics in the Church, where absolute obedience is a necessary requirement. Heretics are the ones who place themselves outside the Church due to their

69 Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, trans. Bruno Scott James, London: Burns Oates 1953, 318; cf. *SBOp* VIII, 126.
70 Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Letters*…, 318; cf. *SBOp* VIII, 127.
71 Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Letters*…, 319; cf. *SBOp* VIII, 128.
72 Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*…, 163-164.
73 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 182; cf. *SBOp* II, 173.

behaviour: "They take themselves out of his mighty heritage,"[74] declares the abbot of Clairvaux to his monastic audience. Then, referring to the *Gospel of Mark*, he warns: "'Who does not believe shall be lost' (Mk 16:16), for what is believing but having faith?"[75] Heretics cannot have a place within the economy of salvation, as they do not possess one of the basic virtues: faith. And if one does not have faith or does not search for salvation, then exclusion is unavoidable: the search for salvation is obligatory.

Can heresy be defeated by preaching?

One of the most controversial aspects of Bernardine anti-heretical discourse is his position on preaching and persuasion and their effectiveness as means of handling heresy.

On the one hand, the abbot of Clairvaux *did* engage in the preaching mission of 1145 in Southern France. This preaching mission was, Moore claims, a decisive moment in the history of anti-heretical persecution, as it created the precedent of an organized mission and an attack against "not only the heretic but [also] his sympathizers".[76] Bernard seemed to understand the significance of preaching and decided to embark on a long journey: "Although weak in body I have taken the road to those parts which the boar is more especially ravaging without anyone to resist it or save them."[77] He expresses his satisfaction with the results of the preaching mission:

> Our stay was short but the fruit of it was not small. When I made the truth clear to you, not only by word but also by power, the wolves who came among you in the guise of sheep and were devouring you like bread were found out; so too were the foxes who were spoiling that most precious vineyard of the Lord, your city, but they were not caught.[78]

Furthermore, as Brunn argues, during his preaching mission in favour of the Second Crusade in 1146-1147 in the Rhineland, Bernard also preached on the need to reform the clergy but also against heresy.[79]

The question of Bernard's participation in a preaching mission outside monastic walls despite his monastic status has been addressed by historians, who link his endeavours with his ecclesiology of *Caritas*. His

74 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III..., 199; cf. *SBOp* II, 183.
75 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III..., 201; cf. *SBOp* II, 184-185.
76 R. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting*..., 24.
77 Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Letters*..., 317; cf. *SBOp* VIII, 126.
78 Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Letters*..., 319; cf. *SBOp* VIII, 128.
79 U. Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "cathares"*..., 124-125.

worldview "compelled" him to perceive the defence of society as his duty.[80] Brunn connects Bernard's actions with his ambition to reform the clergy, especially in the Rhineland.[81] More generally, the question of the right to preach was connected to the conflict between monks and clerics on whether monks also had a duty to become involved with the *cura animarum*.[82] Indeed, in Bernard's above-mentioned passages, there is a discreet and indirect critique of the clergy, as it was their lack of effectiveness that allowed heresy to flourish. The notions of duty and moral responsibility are likewise present: Bernard, even though weak in body, had a duty to save the population from heresy, as everyone else had failed to do so. Thus, the preaching mission against heresy is also located at the core of the question on who had the ultimate right and duty to be the pastor, i.e. the one who takes care of, and leads souls. The analysis of these passages shows that in Bernard's worldview, monks did not only have this right but also the responsibility. Preaching against heresy outside the monastery became a process essential to the "monasticization" of the world, where the abbot of a monastery became the abbot of all Christians, who, like the monks, had an obligation to defend themselves and fight against heresy.

The abbot of Clairvaux did not have any hesitation when it came to preaching against heresy. But did he perceive preaching and persuasion as effective ways of dealing with heresy? His writings can give contradictory answers. To begin with, the Cistercian abbot *did* participate in preaching missions, which indicated that he believed that he could handle heresy by homiletic means. In his sermons on the *Song of Songs*, however, the picture is somewhat different, as in some cases he approves of preaching and persuasion and in some others he seems to find them inadequate.

In Sermon 64 of the *Song of Songs*, where Bernard deals with the issue of unauthorized preaching and the conversion of heretics,[83] he explains to his audience: "[T]he Bridegroom has given orders that they are not to be exterminated or driven away or killed, but caught. Cunning little beasts of this kind must obviously be watched with the utmost vigilance and caution, and so trapped, that is caught in the toils of their own subtlety (Job 5:13)."[84] And also: "Heretics are to be caught rather than driven away.

80 B. Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*…, 202-203; Beverly Kienzle, "Tending the Lord's Vineyard: Cistercians, Rhetoric and Heresy, 1143-1229: Part I: Bernard of Clairvaux, the 1143 Sermons and the 1145 Preaching Mission", *Heresis* 25, 1995, 29-61; M. Newman, *The Boundaries of Charity*…, 219-299; Janet Burton – Julie Kerr, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press 2011, 189-190.

81 U. Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "cathares"*…, 124-125.

82 Carolyn Muessig, "What Is Medieval Monastic Preaching? An Introduction", in: ead. (ed.), *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, Leiden: Brill 1998, 1-16: 5.

83 B. Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*…, 82.

84 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 174; cf. *SBOp* II, 169.

They are to be caught, I repeat, not by force of arms but by arguments by which their error may be refuted. They themselves, if it can be done, are to be reconciled with the Catholic (Church) and brought back to the true faith."[85] The aim of preaching must therefore be persuasion and the conversion of the heretic. Bernard, however, did not ignore the possibility that preaching could be unsuccessful. In such case the exclusion of the heretic for the protection of the *vines* was necessary.[86]

The tone is, however, different in Sermon 65: "I say this not because I intend to reply to them all – that would be unnecessary."[87] And the same argument repeats even more strongly:

> Many other persuasive arguments are adduced by lying and hypocritical spirits to deceive these dull-witted and foolish people, but it is not necessary to answer all of them. For who can perceive all of them? Besides, it would be an endless task and quite unnecessary. For these men are not to be convinced by logical reasoning, which they do not understand, nor prevailed upon by references to authority, which they do not accept, nor can they be won over by persuasive arguments, for they are utterly perverted.[88]

The Cistercian abbot concludes: "It is unnecessary and useless, therefore, to utter long tirades against these foolish and obstinate men. It is enough that they should be known for what they are, so that you may be on your guard against them."[89]

This lack of consistency in his polemical writings on this issue has been noticed by historians, who seek to explain it in different ways. Kienzle links Bernard's contradictory ideas on preaching and persuasion with his "inner conflicts over the engagement in the Lord's vineyard".[90] Interestingly, Brunn, noting the change in tone between Sermons 64 and 66, argues that Sermon 64 was written before the preaching missions of 1145 and 1146/1147, while Sermons 65 and 66 were written afterwards and mirror the disappointment and sense of failure the abbot felt when the ineffectiveness of preaching became evident.[91] Brunn also argues that because of this feeling of powerlessness, Bernard did not wish to become a prominent figure of the anti-heretical struggle, and thought that the best

85 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 175; cf. *SBOp* II, 170.
86 Cf. *SBOp* II, 170; cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 175-176.
87 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 188-189; cf. *SBOp* II, 177.
88 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 203; cf. *SBOp* II, 186.
89 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 205; cf. *SBOp* II, 187.
90 B. Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*…, 107.
91 U. Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "cathares"*…, 163-164, 175.

solution to heresy would be to make publicly known the measures taken at the Council of Pisa in 1135.[92]

It is difficult to disagree with Brunn when he argues that Sermons 65 and 66 express a feeling of powerlessness and despair resulting from the negative outcomes of the two preaching missions. It is natural that Bernard was influenced by external factors such as the developments around him and the personal failures that he experienced. The fact that in Sermon 64 Bernard already mentioned what should be done if heretics insist in their beliefs suggests that he was already at that time aware that preaching might not always be an effective way of dealing with heresy.

The analysis of the passages in question shows that in Bernard's ecclesiology, coercive elements such as the expulsion of heretics and persuasion could co-exist. Bernard, being the good abbot, should be interested in every sheep of his flock.[93] However, the idea that as a last resort, heretics should be expelled proves again that in his ecclesiology the salvation of the whole was more important than the salvation of particular individuals.

The need to reveal the truth

According to Manselli, for the abbot of Clairvaux it was more important to know who the heretics were and what they wanted rather than violently to persecute them.[94] A careful reading of Bernardine sources shows that there are several passages, especially in his sermons on the *Song of Songs*, that support this view.

Addressing his monastic audience, the Cistercian abbot claims that "[i]t is enough that they should be known for what they are, so that you may be on your guard against them".[95] Even in situations where the "persuasion" of heretics did not yield satisfactory results, the disclosure of their ideas was considered a success: "The perverse may be directed towards righteousness, the corrupted called back to the truth, and the corruptors refuted by invincible arguments so that they either correct their error, if that is possible, or, if it is not, they lose their authority and the means of corrupting others."[96]

Not only heretical ideas but also the heretics' way of life should be made known: "What sign will you give us that this vile heresy may be

92 *Ibid*., 177-178.
93 Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell, New York: Palgrave 2007, 231.
94 R. Manselli, "De la *persuasio* à la *coercitio*…", 182.
95 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 205; cf. *SBOp* II, 187.
96 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration*…, 82-84; cf. *SBOp* III, 433.

brought into the open, this heresy which knows so well how to dissemble not only with its tongue but in its life?"[97]

In other passages of the sermons, the need to uncover heretical ideas is connected with God's will and glory: "Let them either disclose their secret to the glory of God or else admit that it is not a mystery of God and cease to deny that they are heretics; or at least let them recognize that they are openly hostile to the glory of God, since they refuse to disclose what they know would be to his glory (Prov 25:2)."[98]

Bernard asks rhetorically: "How long will you keep secret what God commands should be revealed? How long is your gospel to remain hidden?"[99]

Bernard was indeed interested in the need for heretics openly to reveal their "errors", and this "establishment of truth" became a way of handling heresy, a fact which can also inform us on Bernardine ecclesiology. Telling the truth is an act of obedience, a sign of humility towards God and an expression of the recognition of the divine glory. The monks in a monastery should immediately recognize and declare their mistakes in front of the abbot and the rest of the community whenever they do something wrong.[100] According to the Benedictine Rule, the abbot should know not only the daily acts but also the thoughts of his monks through observation and also through their confession.[101] Indeed, knowing an individual's inner feelings was a condition for the right governance of souls in a monastery, the *regere animas*. It was an integral part of the abbot-monk relationship and a necessary step on the road to salvation.[102] Likewise, heretics should also tell the truth. The "establishment of the truth" became a way of handling heresy and secured the salvation of the unity and well-being of the Church. Thus, this relation went beyond the monastic walls and the "obedient subject" became also the "confessing subject".

However, in his writings, Bernard does not grant everybody the ability or the authority to know what is hidden in the minds and souls of others. He sets some specific rules: "Teach us, suggest to us how this trickery may be found out. Then the fox will be caught, for a dishonest Catholic does far more harm than an honest heretic. It is not for man to know what is in

97 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 185; cf. *SBOp* II, 175.
98 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 182-183; cf. *SBOp* II, 174.
99 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 183; cf. *SBOp* II, 174.
100 Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*…, 157.
101 *Ibid*., 21-27.
102 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters of Ascent: Spiritual Direction in the Letters of Bernard of Clairvaux*, trans. Michael C. Voigts, Cambridge: James Clarke and Co. 2014, 18-19; Aquinata Böckmann, *A Listening Community: A Commentary on the Prologue and Chapters 1-3 of the Rule of St. Benedict*, Minnesota: Liturgical Press 2015, 156.

man (Jn 2:25), unless he is enlightened for this very purpose by the Script of God or guided by angelic activity."[103]

The model of the specific relation between the abbot and the monks for the direction and guidance of souls in a monastery is transferred in a privileged way through Bernard's anti-heretical sermons to the rest of the society: those who are "enlightened by the Scriptures" or "guided by angelic activity" are those who are able to know – and should know – "what is in a man".

How did this need to reveal one's ideas and everyday acts publicly or to people with spiritual authority become so important? Problematizing this question from a Foucauldian perspective will help us to better understand the complexity of this way of handling heresy. In his series of lectures *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling: The Function of Avowal in Justice*, Foucault speaks about two kinds of obligations concerning the role of truth in Christianity. The first is the obligation that is imposed on Christians to recognize, respect and manifest the truth of a specific set of beliefs and "a teaching which is guaranteed and authenticated … by an institutional authority".[104] He then goes on to describe the second form of truth obligation in Christianity, which has played an important role in the history of "subjectivity", namely the obligation of the Christian to search for the hidden truth inside his or her mind and then declare it publicly to a representative of authority or to God.[105] For Foucault, Christianity is a "confessional religion".[106] This obligation to find and manifest the truth about one's self is at the core of the road to salvation, but it can only be successful if there is someone to provide the right guidance, a role only for the abbot; therefore, it is not surprising that such an obligation appears in Bernard's anti-heretical discourse if we think of it as an expression and instance of the principle of *regere animas*.

Confession acquired more and more importance in the 12th century until it became obligatory for all and institutionalized in 1215.[107] The power the ecclesiastical authorities could exercise was strengthened via this process, as "the domain of confession is considerably extended since it is no longer a question of confessing only serious transgressions but of

103 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 185; cf. *SBOp* II, 175.

104 Michel Foucault, *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling: The Function of Avowal in Justice*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2014, 92.

105 *Ibid*.

106 M. Foucault, "Technologies of the Self…", 40.

107 Peter Biller, "Confession in the Middle Ages: Introduction", in: Peter Biller – Alastair Minnis (eds.), *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, York: York Medieval Press 1988, 1-35: 30.

confessing everything".[108] I suggest that this way of handling heresy should be located in the general procedure of the institutionalization of confession.

At the same time, the abbot of Clairvaux "exported" the relation between the abbot and the monk outside the walls of the monastery. The abbatial shepherd should know every detail of the thoughts and daily life of his sheep in order to direct their conscience. That is, Christians should admit their truth as an act of obedience and humility, in order to secure their salvation; conversely, heretics would lose their power to harm others and the unity of the Church as soon as their errors became known. In this way, Bernard could achieve the construction of a subject that would always be in a position to know the truth about itself and to declare this truth to the authorities.

The control of everyday life as a way of handling heresy

Bernard of Clairvaux was interested in the daily practices of heretics, and accusations of immorality and abnormal sexual activity were repeated throughout his anti-heretical writings. Accusations concerning sexual misconduct were a well-known *topos* in texts against heresy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[109] In his letter to the Count of Toulouse, Bernard notes that "frequently after a day of popular adulation this notable preacher is to be found with prostitutes, sometimes even with married women".[110] In Sermons 65 and 66 of the *Song of Songs*, the abbot of Clairvaux attacks heretics, who "take women not as traveling companions but as mistresses".[111]

Since the very first centuries of Christianity, lay sexuality and its regulation was an issue that concerned ecclesiastical authorities, and very often sexual misbehaviour was linked with heresy.[112] Especially in the years after the Gregorian reform, "the growing concern of church officials with

108 Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975*, ed. Valerio Marchetti – Antonella Salomoni, trans. Graham Burchell, London: Verso 2003, 167.

109 James Simpson, "Dogging Cornwall's 'Secret Freaks': Beroul on the Limits of European Orthodoxy", in: Andrew Roach – James Simpson (eds.), *Heresy and the Making of European Culture, Medieval and Modern Perspectives*, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing 2013, 207-236: 210; Peter Dinzelbacher, "Gruppensex im Untergrund: Chaotische Ketzer und kirchliche Keuscheit im Mittelater", in: Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: New Approaches to a Fundamental Cultural-Historical and Literary-Anthropological Theme*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 2008, 405-427: 405.

110 Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Letters*…., 317-318; cf. *SBOp* VIII, 127.

111 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 184; cf. *SBOp* II, 174.

112 Jeffrey Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation: Minority Groups in the Middle Ages*, London – New York: Routledge 1991, 1-22.

lay sexuality was only one shift, as the Church paid increasing attention to lay conduct".[113] Even the canon law became more strict when it came to the regulation of sexual activity, and attempts to establish clerical celibacy were connected with the supremacy of the clergy in relation to the laity.[114] Bernard's anti-heretical discourse belongs to this tradition of condemning the sexual practices of his "enemies". What is interesting is that in his writings the control of sexuality and thus of everyday life becomes a way of fighting against heresy. In Sermon 65, the abbot of Clairvaux instructs his monastic audience on how to identify and fight heresy:

> How then are we to catch them? Let us return to the question of associating and cohabiting with women, for all of them have some experience of this. "Now, my good man, who is this woman, and where does she come from? Is she your wife?" "No," he says, "that is forbidden by my vows." "Your daughter then?" "No." "What then? Not a sister or niece, or at least related to you by birth or marriage?" "No, not at all." "And how will you preserve your chastity with her here? You can't behave like this. Perhaps you don't know that the Church forbids cohabitation of men and women if they are vowed to celibacy. If you do not wish to cause scandal to the Church, send the women away."[115]

Likewise, Bernard repeats his instruction:

> As I have said, you must separate the man from the woman, although they claim they are living chaste lives, and require the women to live with others of their sex who are under similar vows, and similarly, men with men of the same way of life. In this way you will protect the vows and the reputations of both, and they will have you as a witness and guardians of their chastity.[116]

Bernard seems to find it more problematic that women and men who have taken the vow of celibacy continue to live together contrary to the monastic example of separation between men and women rather than cohabitation as such. It was difficult for the abbot of Clairvaux to tolerate this kind of hybridity between laity and monks, which was expressed with the new religiosity that had emerged at that time. As a response, the abbot of Clairvaux preached that women and men who had taken the vow of chastity should live separately, as in monasteries.

113 Sara McDougall, "The Persecution of Sex in Late Medieval Troyes", in: Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: New Approaches to a Fundamental Cultural-Historical and Literary-Anthropological Theme*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 2008, 691-714: 692.

114 Paul Beaudette, "'In the World but Not of It': Clerical Celibacy as a Symbol of the Medieval Church", in: Michael Frassetto (ed.), *Medieval Purity and Piety: Essays on Medieval Clerical Celibacy and Religious Reform*, New York – London: Garland 1998, 23-46: 35.

115 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 186; cf. *SBOp* II, 176.

116 Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III…, 206; cf. *SBOp* II, 187-188.

Bernardine texts allow a better understanding of the reasons why this daily cohabitation caused anxiety. To begin with, the fact that unmarried women and men associated with each other was a sign of disobedience towards both the Scriptures and the Church. The vows of chastity that these men and women undertook outside the Church's authority became a challenge to societal order, as such people did not belong to the clergy or to the monks but wished, at the same time, to imitate them. Their condemnation of marriage also represented a threat to society's structure, which was supposed to be ordered in such a way that "the entire company of the Catholic Church are either virgins or continent or married. Whoever is outside these three orders, therefore, is not numbered among the sons of the Church or within the limits of the Christian religion".[117] Thus, the issue of obedience arises again – obedience to the authority of the Scriptures but also to societal expectations. Bernard's anti-heretical passages operate as a mechanism for the construction of the obedient subject, who allows even her/his everyday life to be governed by others.

As in the case of the public establishment of truth, monks played the important role of "witness" or "guardian", who assisted others on their path to salvation. In Bernard's ecclesiology, the beneficial role of the abbot goes beyond monastic walls and becomes a model for society. In the perfect society which he envisioned, the roles of the laity and clergy were clearly demarcated; the laity were to show obedience and the clergy were to guide, control and regulate the conduct of others in everyday life.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to shed light on Bernard of Clairvaux's ecclesiology by examining his anti-heretical discourse. Despite the fact that his writings do not inform us very much about heretics themselves, they do manage to set the boundaries of what was acceptable and thus sketch Bernard's vision of the perfect society. Through his anti-heresy texts, the Cistercian abbot constructed a vision of society in which the boundaries between the clergy and the laity were clearly marked, as presented in others of his texts.[118] Churchmen had the duty to guide and lead people to salvation, while the laity had to show obedience to the Church, as the monks obeyed their abbot in a monastery. The abbot had the duty to guide monks through his authority to preach and through his right as well as obligation to know the "truth" and to control their everyday lives.

117 Giles Constable, "The Orders of Society", in: id., *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995, 249-360: 305.

118 See, for example, *SBOp* VII, 203.

However, the abbot also had the responsibility to defend the flock from individuals who threatened unity; therefore, he had to exclude those who did not show obedience, as, for Bernard, the defence of the whole was more important than the salvation of the few.

The "internal rationality" of violence against heretics reveals that violence is connected to the issue of obedience. This means that one should obey the instruction, coming from Paul, that only those who have the authority can exercise violence. In this way one shows obedience to the societal order. As the analysis of the means used against heresy shows, Bernard's anti-heretical endeavours belonged to the wider process of the "monasticization of the world" and to the governing of souls outside the monastery according to the monastic model. The Cistercian abbot – being the carrier of a certain form of productive power – could govern souls by modifying the conduct of others; he controlled and shaped their behaviour by constructing a certain subjectivity of obedience. In Bernard of Clairvaux's polemical writings, the engagement against heresy attained a self-serving purpose: it not only suppressed heresy but became an instance of how Bernard's ecclesiology could be implemented through the governing of souls.

SUMMARY

Regere animas: Bernard of Clairvaux's Ways of Handling Heresy as a Technology of Power

Bernard of Clairvaux's engagement in the struggle against heresy in the 12th century has so far been understood as a logical result of his ecclesiology. In his effort to defend the unity of Christianity, the abbot fought against heresy, as, for him, it represented a major threat to the Church. However, the reverse question of what Bernard's anti-heretical writing brings to the understanding of his ecclesiology has remained almost entirely unexplored, despite the importance of these polemical writings for the "discovery" of Bernard.

This article seeks to fill this gap by placing Bernard's anti-heretical discourse at the centre of inquiry in order to understand a crucial aspect of his ecclesiology and to follow how this ecclesiology was realized through specific means against heresy, these functioning as *disciplinary practices*. Using the theoretical works of Michel Foucault and Talal Asad and insights of modern sociology, the goal is to examine both the way in which the means against heresy operated and the logic behind them. In this way, the article demonstrates the process through which a discourse is articulated and imposed on society and, at the same time, through which a specific subjectivity is shaped and regulated.

Keywords: Bernard of Clairvaux; heresy; persecution; power; subjectivity; governance.

Department for the Study of Religions
Faculty of Arts
Masaryk University
Arna Nováka 1
602 00 Brno
Czech Republic

MATINA NOUTSOU

mat.noutsou@gmail.com