

Zitierhinweis

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## **Beverly Mayne Kienzle: Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229**

Before moving to the actual review, a short explanation is in order. This book was originally published in 2001. What is now being reviewed is a paperback edition of 2023. It is essentially a re-print of the original publication; there is no new content and even the bibliography is not updated. It is not necessary to repeat extensively the (mostly positive) content of the original reviews. The main complain some reviewers presented was that Beverly Mayne Kienzle takes firmly the position that there existed a Cathar church or at least something closely resembling it. Those reviewers took, or at least were closer to the view that it never existed outside the minds of the inquisitors and modern historians. The problem of the existence or inexistence of Cathar church has not been solved yet, in fact the discussion is as heated as it ever was. [ 1 ]

To avoid unnecessary repetition of the earlier reviews two decades ago, this review concentrates on the question whether the Beverly Mayne Kienzle's publication still stands time after twenty odd years of new research in the fields of medieval sermon studies, Cistercian studies, and history of the crusades.

The basic idea of Beverly Mayne Kienzle's book is to reconstruct what the Cistercian anti-heretical preaching was like from the beginning to the 1229 when the Albigensian crusade ended. Preaching to the heretics or dissidents that eventually involved into crusade preaching was a novel idea within the Cistercian order. It was also very extraneous to the idea of monastic life, and hence it developed slowly and changed its form during the roughly eight decades period this book covers. This is why Beverly Mayne Kienzle had decided to use chronological approach in four chapters.

Not surprisingly, the first of these chapters deals with Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons and preaching mission in 1145. The second chapter covers the next generation of Cistercian anti-heretical preachers and the missions of 1178 and 1181 against the Cathars and also the contemporary anti-Waldensian preaching. The main protagonist of this chapter is Henry of Clairvaux (also known as Henry of Marcy), who became abbot of Clairvaux in 1177 and the bishop of Toulouse. He participated to both above-mentioned preaching campaigns against heretics as the righthand man of papal legate, Cardinal Peter of St Chrysogonus.

The third chapter covers the pontificate of Innocent III and the Albigensian crusade years, 1198-1229. The main characters of this chapter are few Cistercian abbots who participated in this campaign and not always only in a purely spiritual role. For example, Abbot Arnaud Amaury, whom Beverly Mayne Kienzle calls "most notorious of the Cistercians during the crusade", served as a military leader during the crusade. He also played an important role in the massacre of inhabitants of the town of Béziers.

The fourth chapter concentrates on Hélinand of Froidmont and his sermons in Toulouse. Hélinand preached the inaugural sermon for the newly founded university of Toulouse, and he also preached the opening and closing sermons of the Synod of Toulouse. This synod was important in the early history of inquisition and Hélinand's sermons dealt extensively with the problem of heresy and how it should be dealt with.

In these chapters Kienzle establishes two important things. Firstly, she shows that the Cistercian attitudes and the tone of the preaching towards heretics became more and more militant during this period. Secondly, she shows that there was an important rhetoric and homiletic continuity in Cistercian dealings with the heretics, same passages of the Bible come up time and time again, most notably Song of Songs 2,15: "Seize for us the little foxes that are destroying the vineyard" where the vineyard is interpreted as the Church and the foxes stand for the heretics. Using this and other biblical passages the preachers weaved a network of accusations against the dissidents. They were demonized, accused of moral and physical pollution, seen as a threat to social order, and connected to Anti-Christ and his minions in Apocalypse.

Methodologically the biggest challenge of the book is the need to reconstruct Cistercian anti-heretical preaching without that many surviving sermons. For example, the chapter on Henry of Clairvaux is based on chronicles, few exempla where he is mentioned, three of his own letters, and Canon 27 of the Third Lateran Council, which "he probably helped to draft" (35). It needs to be said, however, that Beverly Mayne Kienzle is very careful with her reconstructions and does not fall into the trap of overinterpretation. Even in the cases where she actually has sermons available, she does not content herself in just reading the *Patrologia Latina* editions but has checked them against the surviving manuscript evidence.

Despite the less than satisfactory source material Beverly Mayne Kienzle manages to establish a coherent and plausible picture of Cistercian anti-heretical preaching. She even manages to find several biblical passages and exegetic *topoi* that were repeated from one preacher to another and from one generation to another.

Has Beverly Mayne Kienzle's book stood the test of time? There is plenty of new scholarship on the crusades, heresy, and preaching - indeed, there is even some that combines all these fields. As I am no specialist of the history of inquisition, I will not say anything definite on that subject, but from the point of view of medieval sermon studies, Kienzle's book is still relevant reading. Some aspects of it may have been further clarified and some details corrected, but the overall picture remains valid and hence the book is still useful for the students and wider scholarly community. To gain a wider and more comprehensive picture, it should be read together with some new contributions on the field, such as Jessalynn Bird's and Miikka Tamminen's writings. [ 2 ]

Despite the continuous utility of this book as it is, one would have hoped that some revisions, or at least updating the bibliography would have been done, but sadly this was not the case.

Notes :

[ 1 ] See for example Antonio Sennes (ed.): *Cathars in Question*, York 2016 (Heresy and Inquisition; 4); Jean-Louis Biget / Sylvie Caucanas / Michelle Fournié / Daniel Le Blévec (éds.): *Le "catharisme" en question*, Fanjeaux 2020 (Cahiers de Fanjeaux; 55).

[ 2 ] Jessalynn Bird: *The Victorines, Peter the Chanter's Circle, and the Crusade: Two Unpublished Crusading Appeals in Paris*, Bibliothèque Nationale MS Latin 14470, in: *Medieval Sermon Studies* 48 (2004), 5-28; Jessalynn Bird: *Paris Masters and the Justification of the Albigensian Crusade*, in: *Crusades* 6 (2007), 117-55; Jessalynn Bird: *Theologians know best: Paris-trained crusade preachers as mediators between papal, popular, and learned crusading*, in: *Journal of Medieval History* 49/3 (2023), 320-338; Miikka Tamminen: *Crusade Preaching and the Ideal Crusader*, Turnhout 2018 (SERMO; 14).