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*THE CHRONICLE OF WILLIAM PELHISSON: A MICROCOSM OF EARLY
THIRTEENTH CENTURY PAPAL INQUISITION*

by

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**PROFESSOR TAZZARA
PROFESSOR WOLF**

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When a group of Dominican monks, deputized to act as inquisitors, arrested a man named John Texor on suspicion of heresy, he protested, “I am not a heretic, for I have a wife and I sleep with her I have sons. I eat meat, and I lie and swear, and I am a faithful Christian.”¹ This strange, yet forceful protestation of his innocent was intended to prove that he was not part of the Cathars, a heretical sect that disdained earthy pursuits like sex and eating meat. But despite his attempts to prove that he was an ordinary, orthodox Catholic, he was thrown in prison, where he apparently met a group of actual Cathar heretics, and decided to follow them. During his trial, he claimed that he had not been a Cathar before, but he was now. John Texor was then burned, leaving his family, supporters, and opponents thoroughly confused. This type of incident, as recorded by William of Pelhison in his account of the early inquisition in the Languedoc, was common in the early thirteenth century. The region was riddled with both political and religious instability, and the presence of Dominican inquisitors in the town of Toulouse quickly became a flashpoint of conflict between the monks, the town council, and those accused of heresy. In many ways, Pelhison's account is a microcosm of the causes, process, and ultimate effects of the early Inquisition. Pelhison records the mindset of his fellow inquisitors, provides clues to the motivations of the local resistance, and chronicles the evolution and calcification of the process of inquisition. In reading his account, one can see why the inquisition was so powerful, and how a process that began with the suspicions of a small sect of Dominicans grew into a region-wide conflict between secular and religious authorities.

This study will use Pelhison’s account of the Toulouse inquisition of 1230-1238 as a case study into the causes of the inquisition, the mindset of the Dominicans who carried it out,

¹ Walter Wakefield, “Chronicle of William Pelhison” in *Heresy, Crusade, and Inquisition in Southern France, 1100-1250* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), 213.

and the institutionalization of the inquisition process. The influence of larger historical trends, such as the expansion of papal power, the “peace of god” movement, and the rise of the Cathar heresy all created the perfect environment for the inquisition to begin. In this environment, the unique temperament of the Dominican sect, with their emphasis on martyrdom and interest in stamping out heresy, made the Dominicans strident and aggressive inquisitors. As the inquisition began in Toulouse and the surrounding towns, certain procedures became routine. These procedures include parading dead heretics through the town, offering people a chance to confess their heresies in exchange for leniency, and appealing to Pope Gregory when they encountered resistance. As Pelhisson was a part of one of the earliest inquisition efforts, his writing helped solidify the procedural elements of an inquisition, and served as a template for later texts. In short, this study will use the *Chronicle of William Pelhisson* as a way to examine the causes, players, and effects of the inquisition in the Languedoc.

The question of the origins and evolution of the papal inquisition has commanded the attention of scholars for centuries. The study of the inquisition has become a historiographical phenomenon, in addition to being a historical one. Different historians have looked at the institution from a variety of perspectives, from Catholic apologists to Protestant reformers to post-modern dissections. These viewpoints have been shaped by a number of elements, from the political, social and ideological beliefs of the scholars, the access to and interpretation of relevant sources, and the dominant historiographical trends of the age in which they were written. Some of the common points of contention are questions of what the accused heretics actually believed, the motivation of the inquisitors themselves, and the best way to analyze the surviving inquisition records.

Scholarly opinions on the actual beliefs of the accused heretics of the early thirteenth century vary wildly. The Cathars were main heretical sect that the early papal inquisition focused on stamping out, but the origins and exact beliefs of the Cathars remain disputed. The traditional view, as elucidated by Malcolm Lambert in his 1998 book *The Cathars*, is that Catharism was a dualist belief that came from Byzantium, and was spread in the Languedoc region by itinerant preachers during the early eleventh century.² Cathars rejected all earthly pleasures, such as meat, sex, and marriage, and strove to live an aesthetic life. Lambert writes that the Cathars were the first “counter-religious movement,” and believed they were the group that embodied the true church, which had been corrupted by the Catholic institutions. Lambert believes that the Cathars were an organized church with a hierarchy, a liturgy, and a system of doctrine. Other historians have challenged this view of the Cathars. In *The Corruption of Angels: The Great Inquisition of 1245-1246*, Mark Pegg attempts to dispel the view that there was a formal Cathar church, or supporting structure. Pegg does not believe that any existing heretics had a Church, formal headquarters, any sort of hierarchy, bishops, formal rituals, or a set of texts.³ Pegg subscribes to the idea that rather than a unified Cathar belief system, there were loosely connected communities of people who held dualist beliefs, and these beliefs were “quite malleable, not always opposed to the Church, and distinctly localized.”⁴ R.I. Moore agrees with Pegg about the Cathar’s lack of a unified system of churches, and attributes the incidents of heresy to sociological factors. In his book *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, Moore writes that the actual contents of the heretical beliefs do not matter, and the theological disagreements are less

² Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars* (Oxford, Great Britain: Blackwell Press, 1889), 32.

³ Mark Gregory Pegg, *The Corruption of Angels: The Great Inquisition of 1245-1246*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001)

⁴ Mark Gregory Pegg, “Review: Malcolm Lambert: *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian*,” *Journal of Religious History* Vol 29, Issue 1 (2005): 82.

important than the sociological atmosphere that produced the heresy.⁵ In this view, heresy is about dissent, not the actual belief involved. Moore uses the innovating approach of using different instances of heresy and inquisition as case studies that do not look into specifics of theology, but as a conduit to the anthropology of the culture of the time and place the heresy took place, or even the psychology of the heretics themselves. This study will borrow elements from all three of these authors' viewpoints on the Cathar heresy. Pellisson clearly believed that there was a unified Cathar conspiracy against the Catholic church, as this was one of the motivating forces behind the inquisition in the first place. He also references some elements commonly associated with the Cathar belief system, if it did exist, like "perfected" Cathars and an emphasis on death rites. But there is also evidence in the text that supports Pegg's view that many of the heretics were not part of a larger anti-Catholic plot, and were just individuals who disagreed with their local friars, or even just with the concept of a papal inquisition. Moore's approach, which uses documents like Pellisson's *Chronicle* as a way to examine the sociology of a specific town at a particular point in history, is especially influential, as it provides a model for using one event as a lens to examine the influence of larger historical trends on the lives of ordinary people.

Another point where the scholarship around the inquisition has evolved is the treatment of the inquisitors themselves. Brian Hove, in "The Inquisitions of History," divides the treatment of the inquisition up until the twentieth century into two parts: Protestant-inspired literature, which "tended to be hostile to the Catholic Church," and Catholic literature, which "tended to be narrowly apologetic and justificatory."⁶ The typical Protestant take on the inquisition, according to Hove, was that it was a tool to keep dissenting communities in line, and that the inquisitors

⁵ RI Moore, *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005): 8-9

⁶ Brian Hove, "The Inquisitions of History: The Mythology and the Reality," *Ignatian Insight*, (January 2012)

were afraid of the proto-Protestant thought that some heretics espoused. Some of these historians, like 19th century author William H Prescott, thought the inquisition represented "the arch symbol of religious intolerance and ecclesiastical power."⁷ Catholic apologists, on the other hand, insisted that heretical sects were a "menace to Christian society."⁸ Edward Peters' *Inquisition*, published in 1989, is known for beginning the trend of trying to correct inquisition narratives that were either Catholic apologist works, or Protestant works that championed heretics.⁹ He focuses on identifying and correcting what he argues are common modern misconceptions about the inquisition process. He believes that the early inquisition was an attempt on the part of the Catholic Church to turn the violent, anti-heretical secular courts and prejudiced mobs into a more legal, proscribed process, and that any violence on the part of the inquisitors were "tasks that were not only – or even primarily – to convict the contumacious heretic, but...to preserve the unity of the Church."¹⁰ Christine Caldwell Ames, in her work *Righteous Persecution: Inquisition, Dominicans, and Christianity in the Middle Ages*, takes this view one step further. She focuses on the mind of the Inquisitor, and tries to show how the people in the Dominican order were psychologically conditioned to believe that what they were doing was right. She looks at the intimate details and letters of the life of multiple inquisitors, and attempts to reconstruct what their motivations and fears were. She critiques the trend towards casting the Inquisitors as brainwashed villains, and their interrogations as power grabs. She wrote that the process of turning ordinary monks into inquisitors was a marker of the

⁷ Richard L Kagan, "A Kinder, Gentler Inquisition", *The New York Times* (book review), (1998)

⁸ Joseph Blötzer, "Inquisition." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 8. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910). 12 Dec. 2018 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08026a.htm>>.

⁹ Edward Peters, "A History of Medieval Heresy and inquisition (review)." *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 98 no. 4 (2012): 783-784.

¹⁰ Edward Peters, *Inquisition* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989): 65

expansion of papal power, and a precursor to more modern forms of institutionalization within the papacy.

William Pelhisson has been largely relegated to footnotes in the scholarship surrounding the inquisition. When he is mentioned, it is usually in the context of his connection with the more famous Bernard of Caux and John of St Pierre, who led a more famous inquisition in 1245, but worked with Pelhisson during the earlier inquisition in 1230. In Zoe Oldenbourg's book *Massacre At Montsegur: A History Of The Albigensian Crusade*, his account is used to reflect on the lingering results of the Albigensian Crusade, as the Catholic Church acted to stamp out the last remaining Cathars in the region.¹¹ Malcolm Barber describes his account similarly, as evidence of the decline of the last Cathar loyalists.¹² This study seeks to reexamine *The Chronicle of William Pelhisson* in a new light, using it as a case study into the causes and effects of the papal inquisition.

William Pelhisson probably joined the Dominican order in the early 1230s. He was probably around twenty-five years old when he acted as an inquisitor in the Toulouse inquisition, because he wrote that he and his fellow friars were “young,”¹³ and 25 was the minimum age that Dominican friars were allowed to preach outside the convent.¹⁴ His familiarity with the geography of the area and the dynamics between various families indicate he was a Toulouse native. He wrote this account in 1244, continued to be associated with the inquisition in 1245, before becoming custodian of records of property for the convent in 1263. He died on January

¹¹ Zoe Oldenbourg, “The Church's Dilemma” in *Massacre At Montsegur: A History Of The Albigensian Crusade*, (United Kingdom: Orion Publishing Group, 2015): 311

¹² Malcolm Barber, “The Decline of Catharism” in *The Cathars: Dualist Heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages*, (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2014):152

¹³ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 208.

¹⁴ GR Galbraith, *The Constitution of the Dominican Order, 1216-1360*, (Manchester, UK: University of Manchester Publishing, 1925) 43

8th, 1268. Pelhisson's account is unpolished and informal, especially compared to formal inquisition records, which were usually closer to direct transcripts of the interrogation of heretics. Pelhisson, on the other hand, provides direct insight into the mindset of the Dominicans, and a behind the scenes look at the process of inquisition. The *Chronicle* begins with Pelhisson touting the credentials and education of the leaders of the Toulouse Dominicans, especially Master Roland, who had recently studied in Paris, with leading theologians of the day.¹⁵ Roland had heard rumors about heretics in Toulouse, and gave a sermon declaring that "heretics lived in the town and that they held assemblies and disseminated their heresies there."¹⁶ This declaration caused agitation among the listeners, and the town's secular authorities, the consuls, ordered Roland to stop preaching that there were heretics among them. Roland refused, stating that "Surely it behooves us now to preach more and more against heretics and their believers."¹⁷ After this initial confrontation, the Dominicans began their inquisition in earnest: disinterring and burning the bodies of dead suspected heretics, interviewing townspeople, holding trials, and burning the convicted. Throughout this, the town consuls continued to try to exert their authority and push back against the inquisitors by banishing them from the town, threatening them with death if they returned, and appealing to the local lord, Raymond. Raymond initially sided with the town consuls, and ordered the Dominicans not to disturb the peace. However, the Dominican refused to suspend their inquisition, and continued to enter the town and arrest those they suspected of heresy. After a series of power struggles and confrontations, the heads of the Dominicans, Friar Pons and Friar Raymond, went to Pope Gregory IX in 1236 to complain about the inaction of Lord Raymond. Pope Gregory commanded Lord Raymond to "return the

¹⁵ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 211

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 211

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 210

Friars to Toulouse, to allow inquisition against heretics to be conducted in his lands, and to aid the friars therein,”¹⁸ and the Lord obeyed. From 1236 on, the Dominican Friars were given free reign to conduct the inquisition as they saw fit, and successfully prosecuted and burned at least twenty-five people they believed to be heretics. Pelhisson’s account was placed with the other Dominican records from the inquisition, and was transcribed by Bernard Gui, a Dominican inquisitor from the fourteenth century, as a part of Gui’s history of the Dominican order.

The papacy had been expanding its power for a century before Gregory officially began the inquisition in 1231. Gregory’s two predecessors, Innocent III and Honorius III, had both waged crusades against both heretics and foreign infidels. Innocent in particular worked hard to expand the reach of the papacy, by claiming supremacy over all of Europe’s kings, directing the Albigensian Crusade against heretics in southern France, and holding the Fourth Lateran Council. All of these efforts caused clashes with the existing power structures, especially the king and the local bishops who were used to having more autonomy. The Fourth Lateran Council in particular helped centralize papal power, by creating one set of political and ecclesiastical doctrines that all of Christendom was supposed to follow. Where before, each countries’ or provinces’ bishop had at least some hand in shaping the belief system for their congregation, the Fourth Lateran Council created a standardized set of beliefs that everyone had to adhere to. The creation of a set of orthodox beliefs also had the effect of creating clear lines of demarcation for who was and was not a heretic. Whereas before 1213, the definition of a heretic depended on the guidelines set by each province’s bishop, who was often appointed by the King or other secular authorities, now there was a clear universal standard for orthodoxy and heresy. When Gregory

¹⁸ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 223

IX launched the papal inquisition, the inquisitors were able to have an explicit list of beliefs and practices that did not follow the church's doctrine, and seek out those beliefs and practices accordingly. Pelhisson's account shows an understanding of this in his conviction about who was and was not a heretic. He writes about an elderly woman who, when talking to the Dominican Friar Raymond, told him about her "contempt for the world and for earthly things." The Friar responded by "drawing from her what she believed on many points," and then instantly condemned her as a heretic, telling her "you are a heretic! For what you have confessed is the faith of the heretics, and you may know assuredly that the heresies and manifest and condemned."¹⁹ For the Dominicans, any divergence from the accepted Catholic doctrine was automatically heretical: there were no allowances made for confusion or mistaken confessions, even for an elderly woman on her sickbed. One did not need to carry out heretical actions, or join a Cathar church, in order to be a heretic: their belief alone was enough to condemn them. After Friar Raymond exposed this woman's beliefs, he had her "carried on the bed in which she lay to the count's meadow and burned at once."²⁰ Both Friar Raymond and the author show no hesitation or doubt in their actions, because the Dominicans were firmly convinced that anyone who displayed these heretical tendencies was in violation of the church's teaching, so they deserved to be punished. Dominicans were able to be confident in their own spiritual authority because the work the papacy had put into establishing its ecclesiastical power.

However, this expansion of power did not happen without confusion. The confusion largely came from ordinary, lower class people, like the elderly woman who was burned by Friar Raymond, who were not used to being held to stricter doctrine. Even though the Dominicans had

¹⁹ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 216

²⁰ *Ibid*, 216

been thoroughly trained in the exact parameters set out by the Fourth Lateran Council, this did not automatically transfer to the population at large. While there was definitely an active Cathar presence in the Languedoc region, as proven by events of the Albigensian Crusade, Ellison's account also contains examples that seem to be a series of misunderstandings between the ultra orthodox Dominicans and the less educated population. John Texor was a local merchant who was accused of heresy, and summoned in front of the inquisitors. In response to this, Texor grew indignant, and swore in front of the town that "I am not a heretic, for I have a wife and I sleep with her. I have sons. I eat meat, and I lie and swear, and I am a faithful Christian."²¹ While this may initially seem like a random and strange protestation of innocence, all of his statements are trying to prove that he does not follow the Cathar belief system. Many of the Cathars were celibate, believed having children was wrong, and eschewed meat, because all of these pleasures were too worldly, and anything worldly was sinful. So Texor was really making a claim of innocence based on tangible, identifiable behaviors that were contrary to Cathar beliefs, but in line with Catholic ones. He went on beyond just his actions, to make claims about his thoughts as well, pleading "so don't let them say these things about me, for I truly believe in God." Interestingly, at this point, Texor is not arguing that Catharism is correct, or that it would be wrong to prosecute someone who was actually heretical. His objection is that he has not done anything wrong, because he is a Catholic: this is just a case of mistaken identity, or false accusation. Implicitly, when he promises that he eats meat and engages in other pleasures of the flesh, he is rejecting the Cathar notion that these actions are sinful, and agreeing with the

²¹ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 213

Dominicans that proper Christians reject them. He is defending himself as a Catholic, not as a Cathar.

Texor moved beyond defending himself, and pivoted to attacking the inquisition, arguing that “They can accuse you as well as me. Look out for yourselves, for these wicked men want to ruin the town and honest men and take the town away from its lord.”²² This is the first actually rebellious statement that Texor offers, but it is still not strictly heretical. He is not arguing that the Inquisitors lack the authority to pursue heretics, or defending the rights of heretics to hold their beliefs: his argument is that the inquisitors are going after “honest men,” not actual Cathars. In Texor’s view, he is not a Cathar, and his listeners are not Cathars, so any attempt to prosecute them is wicked. He also seems to view the inquisition as more of a political maneuver than a religious one, when he casts the true goal of the inquisition as a power grab on the part of the church, to “take the town away from its lord.” His objection to the process is not an attack on its religious authority, but it's political authority. Texor was then tried by the friars and condemned. But his pleas evidently struck a nerve with the townspeople, because “when the vicar...sought to drag him awake to the stake, those who defended the man raised an outcry against his doing any such thing, and everyone was muttering against the friars and the vicar.”²³ Pellishon places the town’s resistant into two categories: those who actually actively defended Texor, who were presumably his friends and associates, and “everyone” else, who were more passively opposed to the proceedings. Texor’s public speeches had had an effect, as “the town was now very much stirred up against the friars.”²⁴ This statement indicates that Texor’s arrest was a turning point, because if the town was “now” against the inquisitors, it implies that before this, they were at

²² Wakefield, *Heresy*, 213

²³ *Ibid*, 213

²⁴ *Ibid*, 213

least neutral, if not in favor, of the inquisition. In fact, many of the people had enthusiastically participated in some of the early rituals of the inquisition, like when the friars dug up the body of a dead heretic, and “ in a great procession dragged his body through the town and burned it in the common field outside the town.”²⁵ This shows that the people were against certain heretics, and probably believed the sermons about the danger of heresy in general. In the abstract, they support the religious objectives of the Dominicans. But now that a well established, ordinary member of the town, someone who they know is a “decently married man”²⁶ had been accused, public sentiment turned against the friars. This is when Pelhisson's story grows more complicated.

Texor, after receiving this reprieve from his public burning, was thrown into prison with “heretics” from the district of Lavaur, a neighboring town. When he was thrown into prison, Texor was still protesting that he was a “good Christian and a Catholic.”²⁷ After some time in prison, Texor became sick, and asked, “albeit falsely,” Pellison assures his reader, for the “body of christ.”²⁸ He was denied this request. Then, according to Pellston, he saw the heretics from Lavaur and “he gave himself to them and they hereticated him.”²⁹ This raises a logical question beliefs: if Texor was already a heretic, as Pellishon previously stated he was, then why would he need to be hereticated? One possible explanation comes from the Cathar practice of *Consolamentum*. This was a sacrament of Catharism that occurred twice in a lifetime, when a person was confirmed as a Cathar, and when someone was on their deathbed. It can only be performed by perfected Cathars: those who totally abstains from sex and eating meat, and spend their lives preaching and converting. So there are multiple possibilities for what happens in this

²⁵ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 210

²⁶ *Ibid*, 213

²⁷ *Ibid*, 213

²⁸ *Ibid*, 214

²⁹ *Ibid*, 214

jail cell between Texor and these heretics. The first is that Texor really was a Cathar all along, or at the very least held some Cathar beliefs, and he had been lying when he denied it. It was only now, when he believed that he was dying, that he gave up the pretense of being a good Catholic and took Consolamentum from his fellow Cathars. But the fact that he asked his jailors for communion seems to bely this option, as an actual Cathar would not believe in the value of a Catholic last rites. The second is that Texor had not been a Cathar when he entered the jail, and had been truthful in his statements to the town of Toulouse. It was only after being prosecuted by the Dominicans, sentenced to burn, thrown in jail, and denied communion or Last Rites on his deathbed that he turned to the jailed heretics and became a Cathar, desperate to find some ritual of communion before he died. A final possibility is that neither Texor nor the other jailed individuals were Cathars. It is not clear from Pelhisson's text who the heretics from Lavaur were, and whether they were actual Cathars, or men more like Texor himself, who considered themselves to be Catholic. So ritual that Pellison reports could be jailed Catholics trying to aid each other before they die as best they can. But whichever of these options is more likely, Texor did not actually die, and was taken out for trial the next day. At this point, Texor broke with his past protestations of orthodoxy, and “when the heretics were taken out for trial, John said that he wished to go with them and to follow their way in all things.”³⁰ At his trial, Texor doubled down on this statement, saying that “his faith was in every respect that of the aforesaid heretics and he wished to follow their way.”³¹ Whatever Texor had originally believed, he was now openly disavowing the Catholic faith, and throwing his lot in with the heretics. He had already condemned the institution of Inquisition, but his time in jail represented a shift against the

³⁰ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 214

³¹ *Ibid*, 214

religious aspect of the Dominicans as well. After this trial, Texor was burned, and this time, he did not have the same clamoring of support. In the town, “all who had previously defended him were now covered with confusion, and they damned and cursed him, as least as far as words go.”

³² This confusion among the town indicates that they were not all secretly heretical sympathizers, and their condemnation of Texor suggests continued loyalty to the Catholic faith, if not necessarily to the Dominican inquisitors. Pelhisson's addendum of “at least as far as words go” shows that the Dominicans were still suspicious of the townspeople, and suspected that they still harbored sympathy for Texor and his heresy. But the clearest emotion among the town of Toulouse after the John Texor affair appears to be confusion, as the people try to determine what the new set of religious or political requirements the expansion of papal power, and its instrument of inquisition, will mean for their lives.

While the common people might have experienced confusion and dismay due to the power of the Inquisition, secular authorities, from kings like King Frederick II to town councils like the one in Toulouse, actively resented and pushed back on this new incursion on their political power. Since the moment the Dominicans began preaching against heresy, “the consuls of the town summoned the prior to the town hall and ordered him to tell the friars not to dare to preach such things in the future.... These and other remarks to the same effect they uttered as threats.” This immediate response indicates that the consuls were aware of the threat posed by the Dominicans once they began to suspect heresy. The consul clearly believed that their command to stop preaching had at least a chance at success, showing they believed the Dominicans were under their jurisdiction. However, the Dominicans clearly disagreed. They

³² Wakefield, *Heresy*, 215

responded to this threat with escalation, stating that it “behooves us now to preach more and more against heretics and their believers.”³³ There is an implicit threat in this response alone: it suggests that the consuls themselves might count among the heretics, and if they were, it would be the right of the Dominicans to move against them. Throughout his account, Pelhisson remains unsure about whether or not the consuls were all heretics, or were acting to protect their legal and political authority. His chronicle sometimes explicitly states that the Dominican saw the consuls as heretical sympathizers, but other times does not characterize them as such, and instead states they are motivated by dislike of the inquisition, or belief in their own authority. But regardless of their motives, Pelhisson is clear that the town consul was working against every step of the Inquisition. When Friar William Arnold returned to Toulouse and cited twelve heretics, who “refused to appear or answer concerning their faith,”³⁴ the consuls took the side of the heretics, and refused to use the secular court system to force them to appear for questioning. Friar William Arnold took the individuals in for questioning anyway, and tried them in front of a panel of Dominican monks. The town consul went to Lord Raymond, and “acting at the wish and with the assent of the count of Toulouse, they ordered him to leave the town or halt the Inquisition.”³⁵ When Friar Arnold refused to follow this order, the consul expelled the friar inquisitor from the covent and town, manhandling him along the way. Pelhisson expected his reader to be outraged over the rough treatment of a man of God, and indigent over the expulsion of a friar from his own covenant. The Dominicans refused to back down, escalating the conflict again. The Dominican friars acted as a collective, and the entire covent accompanied Friar Arnold back to the Daurade Bridge, which lead into the town. The consuls met them there, and offered an olive

³³ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 210

³⁴ *Ibid*, 219

³⁵ *Ibid*, 219

branch, as they “announced that they would allow him to stay in the town with the other friars if he would give up the inquisition; otherwise, on behalf of the Count and themselves, they enjoined him strictly to leave the count’s lands without delay.”³⁶ Even as they offered to let the friar come back into Toulouse, the consul attempted to make their authority clear by dictating the terms of the agreement, and by invoking the name of the Count in order to give themselves legitimacy. The subtext is that he would be allowed back to preach, as long as he was restricted to religious matters alone: the political and judicial power, like the power to issue summons, would remain with the consul and the Count.

Unsurprisingly, the Dominicans did not back down. Friar William Arnold wrote instructions to the priests in Toulouse to “issue a second citation on his behalf to those same persons who had once been summoned.”³⁷ The town did not take this provocation lightly. By issuing orders to the priests within the town, the Dominicans were demonstrating that even when they were physically expelled, their influence extended within the town. Additionally, it was proof that the local parish priests would be loyal to the friars over the consuls, and the people were more likely to listen to their local priests. The consuls sent after the priests who had issued the citation and held them at the town hall for part of the night; then they “expelled them from the town, with the declaration and threat that if anyone issued summons for them in this affair in the future, he would be killed at once.”³⁸ Even though this is clearly an escalation, the consuls were not finished. They then exerted their authority over the people directly, and “made proclamations by herald throughout the town on behalf of the Count and themselves that, on penalty of corporal punishment and fine, no one was to give, sell, or lend anything to the Friars

³⁶ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 219

³⁷ *Ibid*, 220

³⁸ *Ibid*, 220

Preachers.”³⁹ This edict showed that the consuls had power over certain economic realities that the friars did not: while the Dominicans who lived in the convent outside of town were able to sustain themselves, anyone who lived in the town would not be able to. So this proclamation had the effect of banishing the friars outside the city limits, without needing to resort to violence again, and risk the backlash that came with it. The punishments of a beating or a fine were also beyond the reach of the Inquisitors: while they could inflict certain religious punishments if a person was found guilty of heresy, they needed the pretense to do it. The town consuls were not restrained by religious considerations, so they could target the Dominicans directly with the threat of a fine or corporal punishment. These restrictions had the desired effect, as “the bishop had to leave the town, because he would not obtain the necessities of life within it: no one dared to bake him bread or do other such things.”⁴⁰ But the Dominicans were able to live off of the lands that belonged to their covant, and continued to try and issue summons, and preach against heresy within the town limits. When two Dominicans were sent to reissue the forbidden summons, the consuls faced a dilemma. The Dominicans were ready to make themselves martyrs for the cause, and “did not seem to fear death,”⁴¹ where the consuls had to make sure they kept the townspeople and Count Raymond on their side. The optics of murdering friars who were attempting to preach against heresy, even if they had been explicitly forbidden to do so, would not be good. So the consuls agreed that “it would be much better for us if we expelled them from the town than if they were killed.”⁴² So the consuls backed down from their previous promise to kill anyone who issued the forbidden summons, because the Dominicans successfully called their

³⁹ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 220

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 220

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 221

⁴² *Ibid*, 221

bluff. But the consuls held firm on their banishment, and when the friars refused to leave, they “took the prior by the arms and dragged him roughly out of the cloister.”⁴³ It was this act of aggression against a high ranking Dominican, the Prior of the covenant, that helped seal their fate. The friars went to Rome and reported a sensationalized account of the persecution of the Dominicans, casting the consuls as evil heretics acting violently against men of God. The negative stereotypes the consuls had tried to avoid playing into worked against them, as Pope Gregory admonished Count Raymond, who had backed the consuls at every past confrontation, to support the inquisitors, or risk papal displeasure. Count Raymond had won the town of Toulouse during the Albigensian Crusade, when he fought on behalf of the papacy against the Cathar forces, so the fact that up to this point he had supported the consuls is another piece of evidence that the consuls were not heretics, or Cathar sympathizers, but were acting to preserve their own authority. But Count Raymond depended on the support of Pope Gregory to help defend his title against other Catholic Princes who wanted to annex his recently gained territory, so he obeyed the Pope’s command, and “did recall the bishop and inquisitors”⁴⁴ to Toulouse in 1236. The town consuls, having lost their secular champion, were now subject to the commands of the Dominican inquisitors, and Pelhisson does not recount any further resistance from them.

The town consul was not the only secular authority the Dominicans faced backlash from. When the inquisition attempted to summon and question the local nobility, they faced open threats of war and flat refusal to be cowed by the inquisition process. Friar William Arnold summoned a three noblemen, Bernard Oth of Niort, lord of Laurac, and his two brothers, William and Gerald. The men responded to the summons, but “would confess nothing about

⁴³ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 222

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 224

heresy and, having received permission to leave, withdrew.”⁴⁵ The fact that the men responded to the summons at all, and agreed to an interview, shows that they had at least some respect for the authority of the inquisitors. They, like John Texor in Toulouse, seemed to believe that it was all right for the Dominicans to conduct an inquisition, even of the nobility, but that they were innocent of any heresies. Initially, the nobility seemed less worried about the threat of the inquisition than the town consuls did, possibly because they believed they would be protected from any consequences. But the Oths of Niort miscalculated here, as they were soon arrested by the seneschal of the King of France. This is an interesting shift in the prosecution of the Oth brothers, as the seneschal, a man named John of Friscamps, was not a Dominican. He was appointed by King Louis IX to oversee the Langdoloc, so legal authority was secular, not religious. But John of Friscamps had been instructed by King Louis IX, a devout Catholic king, to work closely with the Dominicans to expand the scope of the Inquisition.⁴⁶ So even though the Oths were held under the authority of the King, they were again interrogated by the same Dominicans, but Bernard would not confess. Pelhisson writes that “After conference and discussion, the inquisitors condemned him as a heretic.” His brother William “confessed, albeit not voluntarily,” suggesting that he was tortured until he confessed, which King Louis sanctioned in 1234.⁴⁷ The seneschal and the Dominicans were preparing to burn Bernard and William, when their fellow French nobles of the region stepped in and “dissuaded him, fearing that war would result.”⁴⁸ The Oths were protected by their connections to their fellow nobles. The other members of the nobility knew that if they allowed the Oths to be burned by the

⁴⁵ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 218

⁴⁶ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol 9, ed Georges Goyau. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910.) s.v. "St. Louis IX."

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 96

⁴⁸ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 217

inquisition, they could be next. The Oths had access to resources that the people of the town, like John Texor, did not: they could retreat into their castles, call their armies, write letters to other military powers in the region. The Oths' free brother, Gerald Oth of Niort, did just that. Even though the senechal backed down and did not burn his brothers, they remained imprisoned. So Gerald began preparing for war, instructing all of his territories to prepare to defend themselves, and hiding in his castle. The inquisitors cited Gerald and his mother for this offence, but were unable to compel him to action. They remained in this stalemate, with William and Bernard imprisoned but alive, and Gerald and his mother defiant inside their castle. This is where Pelhisson's account leaves them. This standoff continued for 3 years, until the men's mother wrote to King Louis IX personally, and requested a truce. The King agreed, charged the family a fine, and the Oths of Niort were allowed to continue ruling.⁴⁹ But for the Dominican inquisitors, this represented a time they faced down the nobles of the region, and held their own against them. There was a precedent set for the inquisition presenting a threat not only to common people, but to the nobility.

Another complicating factor in the progress of the inquisition in Toulouse was the influence of the "peace of god" movement. This movement began in the early eleventh century, and was an attempt by the church to regulate and ultimately limit private warfare between feudal lords. It was proposed by Pope John XV in 1027, and worked by prohibiting fighting from Saturday to Monday, on religious days, or against members of the clergy. The enforcement mechanism was the threat of excommunication. The goal of the movement, as stated by Pope Urban II, was to divert knightly violence away from other Catholics and instead to "Start upon

⁴⁹ Walter Wakefield, "The Family of Niort in the Albigensian Crusade and before the Inquisition" (Potsdam, NY: Lexington Publishing, 1970): 97-117

the road to the Holy Sepulchre to wrest that land from the wicked race and subject it to yourselves.”⁵⁰ In other words, to use their energy on the Crusades. So rhetorically, the “peace of God” was intended to subvert violence by directing it towards those who actually deserved it. In the eleventh century, this was mostly the infidels in Jerusalem, but as the church began to work at rooting out heretics in its own lands, they began to encourage the nobility to direct their violence against heretics. The actual success of the movement in terms of stopping violence between nobles was minimal, but it had the practical effect of making the church the arbiters of violence, especially violence against heretics. This can be seen early in Pelhisson's account, when he writes that the events he is crhinaling “ were done after the peace made at Paris in Holy Week in the year of our Lord 1229 between the lord king of France on one hand and the noble Count Raymond and his counselors on the other. For, just at the moment when the church thought to have peace in that land, heretics and their believers girded themselves more and more for numerous ventures.”⁵¹ So the Langduloc had recently been pacified, with the church’s help, from fighting between King Louis IX and Count Raymond. Now, the only people in the area who are perpetuating violence are the heretics, so the efforts of all the Christian powers in the region should be applied towards rooting them out. These terms were explicitly built into the peace treaty, as Pellihoson records that “Lord Raymond, the count, had promised in the treaty of peace that over a period of five years, for every heretics, male of female, he would give two silver marks to the one who seized them and after five years one mark.”⁵² The church officials in Paris had built in structures and incentives for rooting out heresy into the peace accords, so the

⁵⁰ Roland H Bainton, “Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation,” (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960):111

⁵¹ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 209

⁵² *Ibid*, 212

peace itself was contingent on promises to persecute heretics. There were clear enemies of the church in the region, as “chief men of the region, together with the greater nobles and the burghers and others, protected and hid the heretics. They beat, wounded, and killed those who persecuted them,”⁵³ so Lord Raymond had a clear target to work against. Applying the rhetoric that had been used to motivate the Crusades to heretics helped the Dominicans find support for the inquisition from the rulers of the region, who had been primed by centuries of the “peace of God” to think of the religious orders as the proper arbiters of violence.

While the history of the Langdoloc, and the larger trends in papal expansion, helped create a perfect environment for the Inquisition, the unique origins and mindset of the Dominican monks made them the perfect architects of inquisition. When Pelhison entered the Dominicans in 1230, they were still a young movement: the order itself had been founded in 1216, and Dominic Guzman, the founder, had just died in 1221. So by the first generation of Dominicans, they were already becoming the instruments of inquisition. Pelhison writes about the lingering influence of Dominic himself, and many of Dominic’s own traits directly shape the progress of the inquisition. According to one of Dominic’s contemporaries, Jordan of Saxony, Dominic first decided to found his order after seeing Cathar sympathizers during the Albigensian Crusade. In his book *On the Beginning of the Order of Preachers*, Jordan of Saxony writes that Dominic saw that the Cathars were “enticing people to their faithless party by arguing and preaching and by a feigned example of holiness,”⁵⁴ and he decided that he needed to “use a nail to drive out a nail.”⁵⁵ So Dominic founded an order that would be dedicated to preaching, not tied to a convent like

⁵³ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 212

⁵⁴ Jordan of Saxony, *Ed.* Simon Tugwell. *On the Beginnings of the Order of Preachers*. (Springfield, Illinois: Templegate, 1982): 6

⁵⁵ *Ibid* 6

past orders, like the Benedictines or the Cistercians, had been. Dominic wanted this order to be highly educated in theology, reading, and writing, so they would be able to make the best arguments against heretics, and record all of their efforts. He also wanted to counter the “feigned” example of holiness that the heretics were displaying, namely, the appearance of poverty and an ascetic lifestyle. Dominic saw that to common people, it looked like the Cathars were more holy than the monks, because they were visibly poor and made a show of rejecting earthly pleasures. So Dominic’s order was to copy this technique, and make sure that people knew they were depriving themselves of any sinful pleasures. All of these foundational tenets show up in William Pelhisson's account. He begins his account by writing that the inquisition was influenced “by the merits and prayers of the Blessed Dominic, who by his will inaugurated and ordained that order against heretics and their believers.”⁵⁶ Even the first generation of Dominicans had the sense that their order was founded specifically to combat heretics. Preaching against heretics was the founding principle of the Dominicans. Pelhisson also writes about the extensive education that he and his brothers received, and brags about their connections to the top intellectuals of the day. He also notes how even within the confines of the monastery, “our friars, in the name of Christ and for planting the faith, led a very mean and poor life in respect of food as well as clothing.”⁵⁷ Dominic’s plan for beating the Cathars at their own game by establishing the poverty of the friars was successfully continued after his death. This had the effect of emphasizing the holiness of the Order prior to the inquisition beginning. The Dominican order was founded for the explicit purpose of combating heresy, making the jump from preaching against heretics to prosecuting them a natural step.

⁵⁶ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 208

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 208

The other legacy that Dominic left to the Dominican order was a preoccupation with martyrdom. During his life, according to Jordan of Saxony, only thing that Dominic wanted more than to convert people was to die a martyr, as painfully and gloriously as possible. To understand this seemingly strange impulse, one must understand the unique place that martyrdom held in the Catholic imagination. For centuries, martyrs had been presented as the best of the Christians, holy people who were guaranteed a place by Christ's side in heaven. Stories of early Christian martyrs who suffered at the hands of the Romans, but were favored by God and became saints, were plentiful. These stories often followed a pattern: a devout christian was persecuted for their faith, urged to denounce Christ and become pagan, tortured by their oppressors, and died gloriously without ever breaking their faith. Many of the saints that people prayed to daily had been martyrs, and they were understood to have a special place in heaven, which allowed them to intercede directly with Jesus on the behalf of others. They were the closest thing that the papacy had to "proof" of divinity: they were willing to give their lives because of how strong their belief was, and even their mortal remains were considered to have the ability to perform miracles. Dominic grew up in this tradition, and longed to prove his faith through martyrdom. Jordan of Saxony recounts a time when Dominic was waylaid by a group of heretics who threatened him with death, and responded to their threats by saying "I should have asked you not to strike me down quickly, but to prolong my martyrdom by mutilating my limbs one by one, and then to display the mangled bits of my body before my eyes...a slow martyrdom like that would win me a much finer crown."⁵⁸ This had the effect of scaring the heretics out of killing Dominic, as they realized that "if they killed him they would be doing him a favor rather

⁵⁸ Jordan of Saxony, *Ed. Simon Tugwell. On the Beginnings of the Order of Preachers.* (Springfield, Illinois: Templegate, 1982): 9

than harming him.”⁵⁹ Clearly, Dominic and his fellow Dominicans still placed stock in the glory of martyrdom, and saw dying for the cause as the highest honor one could achieve. However, this presented a problem for the Dominicans who carried out the inquisition.

The problem that the continued obsession with martyrdom presented to the Dominican inquisitors was that when they were the ones prosecuting the heretics, they became the oppressors, not the oppressed. In Pelhisson's account, there is considerable unease surrounding the rhetoric used by the accused heretics, who were familiar with the same tropes of martyrdom as the Dominicans were. For example, when an artisan named Arnold Sans was arrested, tried, and about to be burned, he called to mind the final words of many of the old Christian martyrs, yelling, ““Look, all of you, at the injustice they to do me and the town, because I am a good Christian and believe in the Roman faith.”⁶⁰ Pelhisson notes that this had an effect on the listening townspeople, who “were both apprehensive and terrified; the whole town complained.”

⁶¹ This apprehension must have been shared by the Dominicans, who were being seen as the evil persecutors, like the Romans were in the first years following Christ's death.

In order to counter the problems faced by being the implementers of the papal inquisition, the Dominicans adopted the rhetorical strategy of flipping this narrative so that *they* were the ones suffering at the hands of the heretics and their sympathizers. Pelhisson continually emphasized the suffering that the Dominicans faced as they carried out the inquisition, turning them into the victims even as they instigated the entire process. Pelhisson even frames his entire chronicle as an account of suffering, claiming that he “writes so that successors in our order and whatsoever other faithful persons who examine these matters may know how many and what

⁵⁹ Ibid, 9

⁶⁰ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 215

⁶¹ Ibid, 215

sufferings came to their predecessors for the faith and name of Christ.”⁶² Pellishon continues to invoke the familiar tropes of oppression and martyrdom, writing that when Arnold Catalan, a Dominican inquisitor, entered Albi, “the people of Albi sought to throw him into the River Tarn, but at the insistence of some among them released him, beaten, his face bloody, yet even while being dragged along he cried out, “Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ!” Catalan was consciously mimicking the early Christian martyrs, who were known to proclaim the glory of Jesus even as they were beaten. But Catalan was suffering this indignity at the hands of other Christians, not pagans. Pelhisson also skirts over the fact that Catalan was not simply trying to practice his faith or convert others, but was actually trying to question and potentially burn the same people who attacked him. But the emphasis on martyrdom, and on the Dominicans as the true victims, was also explicitly referenced by the friars themselves. When the Dominicans were trying to issue summons within Toulouse, and faced threats and resistance from the town consuls, the head friar, Friar Pons, was instructed not to back down. He needed to send four friars to reissue the summons, even though the town counsuls had promised to kill anyone who tried to issue them. So Friar Pons summoned all of the friars together, and said “Now brethren, rejoice and be exceeding glad, for I am now to send four of you by martyrdom to the court of the Highest King...there is every reason to believe that whoever cites them [the summons] this time will be slain on the spot...Therefore, let me hear from you whether you are prepared to die for the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁶³ All of the language of martyrdom here is meant to present this opportunity as the highest honor a Dominican could hope for, and make it clear that the Dominicans are the true believers, because they are willing to die for their cause. After this

⁶² Wakefield, *Heresy*, 208

⁶³ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 220

speech, the Dominicans, “all, acting as one, prostrated themselves in the chapter.”⁶⁴ All of the Dominicans clamored for the honor to be the ones who died for their faith, because they believed that this would win them the most glory in heaven. Pellishon tells us that the four chosen were “joyful” at the opportunity to join the ranks of past martyrs. But just like the heretics who had threatened Dominic, the town consuls backed down from their threats when they saw how willing the Dominicans did not “seem to fear death.”⁶⁵ It is possible that the town consuls were also aware that by killing the friars who issued the summons, they would be playing into the narrative that the Dominicans were determined to perpetuate, where the friars were the holy martyrs, and the consuls the persecutors. The potency of the tropes of martyrdom are clearly understood by both sides of the inquisition, as each party tries to make themselves into the victims of the other.

The Dominicans were able to successfully bait the consuls into harming them, when they refused to vacate the convent inside the city, and instead “entered the chapel [in the town], singing *Miserere mei Deus* as is the custom, gave thanks to God, and remained there.”⁶⁶ The song *Miserere* was a famous psalm that had been sung by past martyrs before they were torn apart by lions in ancient Rome.⁶⁷ The consuls avoided killing the Dominicans, but did forcefully remove them from the chapel. Pellishon lingers on the violence of this removal, writing that the officials “took the prior by the arms and dragged him roughly out of the cloister.”⁶⁸ But he also notes that the consuls “left certain sick friars, seven in number, remain in the house,” showing that the consuls had at least some awareness of the bad publicity they would incur if any of the

⁶⁴ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 220

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 221

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 222

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 222

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 222

Dominicans were killed during this expulsion. This was the incident that the Dominicans used to persuade Pope Gregory to intercede with Count Raymond on their behalf, proving that they were correct about the narrative strength that came with casting themselves as the oppressed, and the consuls as the violent oppressors. By cultivating a mindset where they were the victims, the Dominicans were able to tap into the veneration of martyrs in the Medieval Christian world, and avoid allowing anyone to think of them as the persecutors.

The inquisition in Toulouse was one of the earliest papal inquisitions, and the process set out by the Dominicans became the official model for the procedural elements of the inquisition. When the Dominicans began their inquisition in 1230, no one had written any of the *Processus inquisitionis*, or “A Manual for Inquisitors,” that would become de rigueur in the following decades. This means that this group of Dominicans were setting a precedent for all the inquisitions that would follow them, especially since many of the elements, and the order in which they are carried out, were copied by future inquisitors. The influence of the Toulouse inquisition of 1230 can be seen in one *Processus* that was written and disseminated by Bernard of Caux in 1248. Bernard of Caux’s manual was commissioned by Pope Innocent IV to serve as a guide to inquisitors in Narbonne, a province about 150 kilometers from Toulouse. The Dominicans in Narbonne wanted to imitate the inquisition in Toulouse, as they suspected that their town was similarly infected with heretics.⁶⁹ Bernard of Caux was one of William Pelihson’s fellow inquisitors in Toulouse, and there are numerous parallels between the way the inquisition was conducted in Toulouse and the way Bernard instructs future Dominicans to carry out their

⁶⁹ Bernard of Caux and John of St. Pierre, “A Manual for Inquisitors” in: Walter L. Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition in Southern France, 1100-1250*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974): 250-258.

own inquisitions. Bernard of Caux writes that inquisitors should begin by calling all of the people in the town together, and delivering a sermon on the dangers of heresy and the importance of Inquisition. During this sermon, they should read letters from both “the lord pope and the prior of the providence concerning the form and authorization of the Inquisition.”⁷⁰ This follows the same pattern for kicking off the inquisitorial process as the Toulouse inquisition, with a Friar making a case for the necessity of the inquisition directly to the people by instructing them about the the dangers of heresy, and the presence of heretics among their town. But in Toulouse, this sermon was followed by chaos, when the town consuls summoned the prior and told him to back down, and “not to dare to preach such things in the future.”⁷¹ So Bernard of Caux gave instructions to avoid this by making it clear that the inquisition had been authorized by the pope and the local authority. This shows a refinement of the inquisitorial process, as the members of the order attempted to tweak their method in order to be as effective in their inquisition as possible. Directly following this sermon, the inquisitor should “issue a general summons,” which instructs all parishioners of the province that they should come forward and confess any heresies they have committed or seen. In Toulouse, the issuing of these summons was a lightning rod for the conflict between the consuls and the Dominicans, so it makes sense that Bernard of Caux would want to issue the summons directly after the sermon establishing the Dominicans authority, in order to stifle any dissent. This evolution in the way that the Dominican order began its inquisitions shows that they were learning what did and did not work in the past. Furthermore, by writing it down in manuals like the *Processus*, they were ensuring that future generations of the Order would be able to copy and modify the process as needed. In Toulouse in

⁷⁰ Caux, *Manuel*, 252

⁷¹ Wakefield, *Heresy*, 210

1230, William Pelhisson and his compatriots did not have a formula to follow, and were largely reacting to obstacles, like the town consuls, as they came along. But that group of Dominicans worked to learn from the trouble they encountered in Toulouse, and create an ordered process, with institutional support from the local region and the papacy, that smoothed away dissent and pushback.

One of the key steps in the institutionalization of the Dominican inquisition is the use of writing within the Order. In the *Processus*, the importance of the written word is made clear, as it instructs the inquisitor's to make sure that all confessions of the accused are “written down, with at least two other persons qualified for careful discharge of this task...in this way we authenticate the records of the Inquisition.”⁷² This attention to detail and insistence on proper authentication show that the Dominican valued having a written record of all of their proceedings. These records made it easy for different inquisitors to use each other's work, and for future generations to go back and look at old records for techniques. The *Processus* also instructed inquisitors to have every individual sign their confession, in order to reduce confusion and allow records to be sent to other authorities. This was especially important in the sentencing part of the inquisition, as the *Processus* promises that “we do not proceed to the condemnation anyone without of clear and evident proof or without his own confession.”⁷³ This promise gives the written confession of the accused equal weight as “proof” from other witnesses. Pellishon does not mention making official records of the confessions of any of the accused or convicted heretics. His own account is the closest thing to an formal report, but it was never signed by any of the accused or used in any of the proceedings. The trial of John Texor used word of the inquisitors who conducted the

⁷² Caux, *Manuel*, 253

⁷³ *Ibid*, 257

investigation against him, not a signed confession from Texor himself. The shift to using official, signed, authenticated reports in the legal proceedings is evidence that the Inquisitorial process was quickly becoming institutionalized, even in the 12 year gap between the end of Pelhisson's account in 1236 to the writing of the *Processus* in 1248. Pelhisson's account itself was likely used to help shape later inquisitions. The *Chronicle* was copied and saved by Bernard Gui, the infamous Dominican inquisitor and author of *Practica Inquisitionis Heretice Pravitatis* or "Conduct of the inquisition into Heretical Wickedness."⁷⁴ Gui was the chief inquisitor in Toulouse from 1307 to 1323, so his interest in Pelhisson's account shows that this inquisition was still being studied and valued by later generations of Dominican Inquisitors.⁷⁵ While Gui never directly mentioned Pelhisson by name in the *Practica*, he found his account valuable enough to keep in his personal notes. Even personal accounts like the *Chronicle* had a significant impact on the evolution of the Dominican order.

The inquisition of Toulouse in 1230 was a turning point in the history of the Dominican order, and their role in the larger papal inquisition. It was one of the first inquisitions conducted, before there was an official process and system in place. In fact, it helped shape the eventual structure of that system, as Dominicans like Bernard of Caux went on to use their experience in the first Toulouse inquisition to write manuals for future inquiries. But when the Toulouse inquisition began, no one knew exactly how it would end. When the town consuls decided to push back against the friars, they believed they had a chance at success. During the first year, they successfully drove the friars out of town, and had every reason to believe that Count

⁷⁴ Bernard Gui, ed Walter Wakefield and Austin Evans, "The Conduct of the Inquisition of Heretical Depravity Part V: On the Method, Practice, and Procedure Used in Seeking Out and Interrogating Heretics, Their Believers, and Accomplices" in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969): 373-445.

⁷⁵ Karen Sullivan, *The Inner Lives of Medieval Inquisitors* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011): 124

Raymond was on their side. As the story of John Texor shows, there was a great deal of confusion among the population about who was a heretics, and who was in charge of determining who was a heretic. It is possible to imagine an alternative history, where the outcome of the Toulouse inquisition was very different. If Pope Gregory had decided not to expend his power in the Languedoc region, if Count Raymond had decided to side with the town consuls, or if the Dominicans had failed to successfully paint themselves as the victims of the town's violence, the inquisition may have ended not with the burning of heretics, but with the permanent expulsion of the Dominicans. Pellishon witnessed a unique historical moment, where many of the larger historical trends and forces of the European world had a direct influence on a six year effort to root out heretics in Toulouse, and the results of this effort would go on to shape the rest of the inquisition, one of the most powerful and notorious institutions of the medieval world.

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