

Abstract

Innocent III and the *negotium pacis et fidei* in Languedoc between 1198 and 1215

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This work proposes a complete revision of the pontificate of Innocent III in regard to his relations with heresy and heretics (above all in Languedoc), the *negotium pacis et fidei* between 1198 and 1215, and the first phase of the so-called “Crusade against the Albigensians”.

The introduction first of all raises a problem of language: the definition of the concepts of “heresy” and of “heretic” in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the modern era, particularly from the canonistic and historiographical viewpoint. Recognition of the notable diversity between the two periods with regard to this terminology is of great importance for the study of the *negotium pacis et fidei*.

Furthermore the author clarifies his position concerning the international debate about the nature of medieval heresy. The nature of heresy – and afterwards heresies and heretics – came to be a significant and wide-ranging religious and political problem for the papacy, the Church and the society of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, not only in Languedoc but also in other parts of Europe.

Chapter 1: Innocent III and heresy

The first chapter is subdivided into three parts. The first reconstructs in entirety the attitude of Innocent III before the cases of heresy which came before him. And this attitude is studied from the idealistic or cultural viewpoints, but equally from the pragmatic one, that is to say we look at both the pre-existing theories and their practical application before the individual heretic or groups of heretics.

The second part of this chapter concentrates on the Church’s antiheretical legislation between the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth century. Here we have produced an innovative analysis with regard to *Sicut ait beatus Leo* (Canon 27 of the Third Lateran Council), together with a new reading of the Innocentian decretal *Vergentis in senium* (1199). Various legislative plans broadened the heretical ambit from the heretic *stricto sensu* to responsible

temporal and spiritual powers, passing through the various levels of *credentes et fautores*. Moreover, rather than, as the historiography universally accepts, a *Vergentis* which is modified by the pope shortly after its issue, we analyse the copies of the decretal and conclude that the pope did not modify the text until the Fourth Lateran Council, an hypothesis which has major consequences for our understanding of the pope's actions within the Albigensian Crusade and of the Crusade itself, that is here understood as more than an implemental moment of *Vergentis* itself. We then analyse various Innocent letters concerning heresy which have been ignored in the historiography, in order to demonstrate the evolution of the thought of the pope with regard to antiheretical legislation prior to 1215.

The third part of the first chapter is dedicated to a detailed study of the relations between the papacy and Languedoc. Here we demonstrate how, in order to fully understand the questions involved, the politico-military events of the "Crusade against the Albigensians" must be understood within the more ample context of the *negotium pacis et fidei*. We analyse the constituent parts of the *negotium* (the *pax* and the *fides*), the ecclesiastical and missionary activities of the pope and of other components of the Church, and the relationship with the temporal powers of the region.

Chapter 2: The negotium pacis et fidei and the Albigensian crusades

The second chapter shows how the expression "Crusade against the Albigensian heretics" is acceptable only when one takes into account the evolution of the meaning of the terms "heresy" and "heretic" as analysed in the *Introduction* and the first chapter. In other words the Crusade was directed against the protectors of heretics, who were by then considered as heretics also.

There follows a *resumé* of the case of Count Raymond VI of Toulouse, the target of the crusade notwithstanding the diversionary (not strategic) tactics that the crusade underwent through the stance of the king of France, the internal divisions of the crusade itself, the intervention of Peter II of Aragon and the divisions between the pope and his legates. Through this structure, we develop a new interpretation of the attack on the Viscount Trencavel that followed the "submission" of the count of Toulouse in June 1209: an attack that derives tactically, far more so than chronologically, from the submission of the count of Toulouse, that is to say, consequent on the internal difficulties of the crusade and not on the sham and fleeting deference of Raymond VI.

The fall of Béziers and Carcassonne in the summer of 1209 are reread not in function of the election of Simon de Montfort as the new viscount, but *viceversa*, as the rise of a baron and his *entourage* (well-known in the ecclesiastic and political worlds) for the prosecution of the battle

and as champions of Catholic Christendom, with the decisive support of a large part of the ecclesiastical world. On this basis, we form new interpretations concerning the forty days' service, the assault on the county of Toulouse, and the tensions between the legates and the pontiff.

This chapter also studies the evolution of the crusading "instrument" in the antiheretical battle, from Gratian until Innocent III. We re-examine one of the most notable events in the entire *negotium*, the murder of Peter of Castelnau (January 1208): an incident that was not the motivating factor for the crusade, but rather a catalyst to activate a plan which had already been developed. In effect, Innocent had already desired an antiheretical crusade in 1207, as is here proved by a detailed analysis of the language of the papal letters. Likewise by the same method we demonstrate that, in the mind of the pope, the transmarine and cismarine crusades were of comparable worth. Our analysis then concentrates on the economic and fiscal aspects of the financing of the expedition, showing the programmatic plan of the enterprise.

The crucial junction of the beginning of 1213, including the encounter between the pope and his legates, is read in a new manner. The intervention of the Aragonese King Peter II, with all its political importance – as the king attempted to enjoy for himself the full fruits of Frankish reticence and papal reluctance – is also examined.

The chapter closes with the political decisions and antiheretical legislation of the Fourth Lateran council, hence tying in with the first chapter. The council is judged in the context of the entire thought of the pope and in the light of the politico-military events of the crusade. That is, a practical and theoretical compromise that, as well as safeguarding the programme of canonical *aequitas* pursued by the pontiff, nevertheless laid the bases for a substantial outflanking on the part of the defeated party. Innocent did not know how to find the point of equilibrium in this intricate situation, which if it had not been generated by him was nevertheless aggravated by him.

Chapter 3: War and Propaganda in the first Albigensian Crusade

The last chapter is dedicated primarily to the narrative sources of the *negotium* and of the Crusade, together with other sources, as for example, the stained glass windows of the cathedral church of Chartres.

The hypothesis of this part of the study concerns the possible ties existing between the authors of various sources, whose perspective was more a "war of propaganda" than "propaganda of war".

Synthesis

The objective of the pope in the Crusade in the period 1207-1215 was not to remove the heretical problem per se – that is to eliminate the heretics, converting them by force or suppressing them physically (although these two things were able to occur) – but rather to construct the political premises for an effective and lasting collaboration with a new temporal power (the crusaders who decided to remain in Languedoc) and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The charge of the traditional historiography concerning a possible “deviation” from the pope’s original plan by the crusaders and their leaders is here fundamentally undermined: the crusaders were able to place their hands on the lands of the protectors of heresy because that was the task assigned to them.

The Crusade, by the end of 1215, had succeeded in the greater part of its objectives, even if the oscillating political and theoretical stance of the pope prejudiced the outcome when it came to the moment of victory. Furthermore the Crusade, entrusted to a barony of no little worth but not on the level of a royal power, was accompanied by a practical inefficacy of a structural type, deriving above all from an adequate administrative apparatus.

The first Crusade against the Albigensians must be understood inside the wider problem, that is the *negotium pacis et fidei*. And it came comprising a structure and a strategy that dialogued with tactics and improvisations, sweeping away the field of incomprehension in language and meaning that for so much time had raged around these problems.

Innocent sought to balance clemency and justice for the sake of *aequitas*, many times seeking a reconciliation between the Church and the heretics. In the case of Languedoc, however, the pope exercised justice with unforeseen consequences, which he perhaps could not anticipate given the information at his disposal. His miscalculations were paid for at a high price: the prolongation of the crusade and the consequent loss of face for the Church opened a new phase in the relationship between Christendom and the Roman-Catholic Church, which many Languedocian troubadours sung about. And in one sense the rupture created by the Albigensian crusade may never have entirely been mended. In short, the *negotium pacis et fidei* of Innocent III was ambivalent – but not consequently inefficacious – in all possible senses.