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AUTHENTICITY OF THE *INTERROGATIO IOHANNIS* IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY DECONSTRUCTIONIST SOURCE CRITICISM

Abstract. Scholars of Catharism representing the deconstructionist current in the recent years continue their struggle with the traditional interpretation of this heresy which underlines its dualistic character and strong connections with Eastern dualisms – especially with Bogomilism. Their tactics is focused primarily on questioning the authenticity of the sources confirming Cathar dualism and its Eastern roots. Such sources are presented as forgeries invented by the Catholics trying to discredit the “dissidents”. This tactic is directed primarily against the sources of heretical provenience, which are the strongest arguments against the deconstructionist interpretation. Previously, the deconstructionist scholars questioned the acts of the Cathar council in Saint-Felix-De-Caraman, and the so-called “Manichaean treatise” – a Cathar theological work aimed at proving ontological dualism based on the specific interpretation of numerous biblical passages. Currently the deconstructionists speak about the need for verification of another Cathar dualistic treatise – *Liber De Duobus pricipiis*. Considering this we may expect that soon also the *Interrogatio Iohannis* will be questioned, as it is a crucial source confirming both the dualism of the Cathars and their dependence on the Bogomils. Before it happens I decided to take a closer look at this apocryphal text. Through the analysis of its doctrine in the light of the Eastern sources concerning the Bogomils I am going to answer the question of whether this work, known only from the Latin manuscripts, indeed could have been created by the Bogomils and if it is possible to question its authenticity using the patterns used by the deconstructionist scholars.

Keywords: *Interrogatio Iohannis*, Bogomilism, Catharism, dualist doctrine

If we take a look at the recent publications concerning Catharism we will see that the deconstructionist scholars promote their hypothesis assuming that Catharism as a dualistic heresy never existed. The most radical advocates of the “new paradigm” – Middle Ages without Catharism, such as M.G. Pegg or J. Biget – try to impose it on other scholars, presenting it almost as a dogma beyond any discussion, and discrediting their adversaries, who in their opinion ignore new research or reject in because of the “ideological blockade”¹.

¹ M.G. PEGG, *The Paradigm of Catharism; or, the Historians’ Illusions*, [in:] *Cathars in Question*, ed. A. SENNIS, York 2016 [= HIMA], p. 21–52. On negative opinions about the adherents of the

But is this confidence of the deconstructionists a consequence of the fact, that their revolutionary hypothesis has ultimately been proven? Certainly not. Traditional interpretation has been constructed over the years, based on the analysis of the vast source material and on the discoveries of the new sources (as it was in the case of A. Dondaine), whereas the deconstructionist revolution is not founded on new ground-breaking discoveries, but on the radical change in the approach to the sources, started in 1998 by Monique Zerner and her collaborators, such as Michel Lauwers, Jean-Louis Biget or Guy Lobrechon². In this new methodology deconstruction of the sources is an imperative (as Julien Thery put it), because of the assumption that Catharism was constructed by the Catholic clergymen who tried to present dissidence in the worst possible light to justify its persecution and to eliminate its adherents³. What needs to be emphasised, such a claim is nothing more than a mere hypothesis, and not a particularly likely one at that, as it in fact implies that the Catholic clergymen intentionally misguided other Catholic clergymen in their anti-heretical treatises. Because this hypothesis is treated by the deconstructionists as a dogma, it has serious consequences for their research. It allows them to ignore the sources which do not fit their theory as unreliable and not even deserving discussion.

Deconstructionist scholars try to impose their approach to the uncomfortable sources on their adversaries (exactly as in the case of the “new paradigm”), claiming that their reliability was indisputably challenged. Pegg, criticising Hamilton, who had proposed to rely on the sources of Cathar provenience as the most reliable, claimed peremptorily that no source written by the Cathars survived until the present day, apart from those saved in the Dominican polemics or unclear texts from the end of the 13th century, although he did not specify which sources he had in mind, and what exactly led him to such a radical opinion, which is in opposition to our knowledge about the Cathar sources⁴. A similar opinion was also expressed by J.L. Biget, who claimed that the only sources written by the “good men” are the Provençal New Testament and the Gloss on the Lord’s Prayer. He also rejected *Sermones contra catharos* of Eckbert of Schönau – the first account confirming Cathar dualism, and the acts of Saint-Felix-De-Caraman council, claiming that they could not be treated as reliable⁵.

traditional understanding of Catharism see especially p. 21; IDEM, *Le catharisme en questions: falsifiabilité, vérité historique et une nouvelle histoire du christianisme medieval*, [in:] *Le « catharisme » en questions*, ed. J.L. BIGET, S. CAUCANAS, M. FOURNIÉ, D. LE BLÉVEC, Fanjeaux 2020, p. 331–372; J.L. BIGET, *L’histoire du « catharisme » occitan: un nœud de questions*, [in:] *Le « catharisme »...*, p. 13–34. On Biget’s criticism of the opponents see esp. p. 15.

² Crucial for the new methodology was the work edited by Zerner: *Inventer l’hérésie? Discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l’Inquisition*, ed. M. ZERNER, Nice 1998.

³ J. THÉRY, *L’hérésie des bons hommes. Comment nommer la dissidence religieuse non vaudoise ni béguine en Languedoc (XII^e – début XIV^e siècle)?*, *Heresis* 36–37, 2002, p. 107.

⁴ M.G. PEGG, *Le catharisme en questions...*, p. 350.

⁵ J.L. BIGET, *L’histoire...*, p. 16–17; IDEM, *Retour sur le « concile de Saint-Félix »*, [in:] *Le « catharisme »...*, p. 83.

As we can see neither Pegg nor Biget mention *Interrogatio Iohannis* among the Cathar sources. Does it mean that its credibility, and the credibility of all the above-mentioned sources have indeed been so unambiguously undermined that one can ignore them without any discussion and formulate hypotheses as if they never existed? At this point it seems reasonable to take a look at the most notable examples of questioning of the sources by the deconstructionist scholars to explore their methods and check if they convincingly managed to question the reliability of these sources. The next step will be the analysis of the criticism of *Interrogatio Iohannis* in this context.

The object of especially fierce criticism of the deconstructionist scholars were, in the first place, the sources denying their vision of Catharism as an unorganised movement without any connections to dualism or Eastern heresies. Therefore for the first target they chose the acts of the Cathar council of Saint-Felix-De-Caraman from 1167, which attested the visit of the Bogomil bishop of Constantinople – Nicetas, who ordained Cathar bishops there. The basis of criticism was the fact that this source did not survive in the original manuscript but only in the 17th century copy made by the French historian Guillaume Besse, who published it in his work: *Histoire de ducs, marquis et comtes de Narbonne*⁶. The lack of the original was not the ultimate argument however, because the content of this source, especially the people mentioned in it, such as Nicetas or the Cathar bishops from France and Italy were corroborated by the Italian anti-heretical polemics and the inquisitorial French sources, which also corroborated the borders of the Cathar dioceses, precisely described in the acts⁷. This fact did not discourage the deconstructionist scholars from questioning the reliability of this source. According to the hypothesis proposed by Zerner, the acts of Saint-Felix were modern forgery made by Besse, who in his work dedicated to the archbishop of Narbonne tried to prove that the title of the count of Narbonne shared by the counts of Toulouse and archbishops of Narbonne belongs only to the archbishops⁸. This hypothesis was questioned by the formal analysis of the source prepared by the experts from the *Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes* – Jacques Dalarun and Denis Muzerelle, who argued that the source was written at the turn of the 12th and the 13th century⁹. Zerner's hypothesis was soon criticised by other scholars as well, such as

⁶ G. BESSE, *Histoire de ducs, marquis et comtes de Narbonne*, Paris 1660, p. 483–486.

⁷ On the Italian sources confirming the figure of Nicetas, see: *De heresi catharorum in Lombardia*, ed. A. DONDAINE, AFP 19, 1949 (cetera: *De heresi catharorum in Lombardia*), p. 309.

⁸ M. ZERNER, *La charte de Niquinta, l'hérésie et l'érudition des années 1650–1660*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion. Le « concile » de Saint-Félix 1167*, ed. IDEM, Nice 2001 [= CEMN, 3], p. 203–248; *Compte rendu des interventions de M. Zerner, J.-L. Biget et J. Chiffolleau*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion...*, p. 39–40. The hypothesis assuming that the acts of St-Felix council were forged by Besse was proposed earlier by L. de Lacger, and then by Y. Dossat, see: L. DE LACGER, *L'albigeois pendant la crise de l'albigéisme*, RHE 29, 1933, p. 314–315; Y. DOSSAT, *A propos du concile de Saint-Félix: Les Milingues*, CFan 3, 1968, p. 207–208.

⁹ J. DALARUN, A. DUFOUR, A. GRONDEUX, D. MUZERELLE, F. ZINELLI, *La 'charte de Niquinta', analyse formelle*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion...*, p. 135–199.

J. Roche, D. Zbiral or T. Drakopoulos, who highlighted (as earlier did B. Hamilton) that Besse, who confused Cathars and Waldensians, simply couldn't have had such a deep knowledge of Catharism to forge a document containing names of the real Cathar bishops and the exact course of the borders of their dioceses¹⁰. An alternative hypothesis was proposed by Biget, who tried to prove that the source was forged in the Middle Ages by the Catholics who tried to present the dissidence as centralised, international movement, and a serious threat to the Catholic church. In his opinion this document was intended as an incentive (*excitatorium*) to the crusade¹¹. Biget's hypothesis was also promptly criticised by the scholars, who pointed out that the acts of Saint-Felix council could not have played the role of the *excitatorium* to the crusade because they were not mentioned by any other source, and were completely unknown at that time. David Zbiral also underlined the fact that the image of Catharism contained in this source cannot be described as an image of a centralised heretical counter-church¹².

Biget, apparently not discouraged by this criticism, returned to the issue of the acts of Saint-Felix almost two decades later and proposed a new hypothesis, assuming a modern forgery. This time the forgers were to have been Pierre de Caseneuve (the canon of the Cathedral in Toulouse who gave the document to Besse), and Besse himself. The two are presented by Biget as eminent erudites able to construct such a complicated document, full of names and geographical data. The motives of the forgers were different than in case of Zerner's hypothesis. Following the rule of context above content, Biget focuses on the context of the 17th century, arguing that Caseneuve forged the acts of Saint-Felix to justify the then French claims to Catalonia (Cathar dioceses described in the acts of Saint-Felix reached beyond the

¹⁰ J. ROCHE, *Enjeux et embûches de la recherche actuelle sur le catharisme: l'exemple de la charte de Nicetas*, [in:] *Autour de Montailou, un village occitan. Histoire et religiosité d'une communauté villageoise au Moyen Age. Actes du colloque de Montailou, 25–26–27 août 2000*, ed. A. BRENON, Ch. DIEULAFAIT, E. LE ROY LADURIE, Castelnau-la-Chapelle 2001, p. 261–262; D. ZBIRAL, *La Charte de Niquinta et le rassemblement de Saint-Félix: État de la question*, [in:] *1209–2009 Cathares. Une histoire à pacifier?*, ed. A. BRENON, Loubatieres 2010, p. 33–35; T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité de Bogomilo-Catharisme d'après quatre textes latins analysés à la lumière des sources byzantines*, Geneve 2010, p. 123, 139, 144, 156; B. HAMILTON, *The Cathar Council of Saint-Felix Reconsidered*, AFP 48, 1978, p. 25; Hamilton's opinion is shared also by P. Jiménez, see: P. JIMÉNEZ, *Relire la charte de Niquinta I: Etude et portée de la charte*, Here 22, 1994, p. 10–12.

¹¹ J.L. BIGET, *Un faux du XIII^e siècle? Examen d'une hypothèse*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion...*, p. 124–133. M.G. Pegg also believes that the acts of Saint-Felix council were forged, but in his opinion the forgers were the Cathars themselves, see: M.G. PEGG, *The Paradigm...*, p. 46.

¹² J. ROCHE, *Une Église cathare. L'évêché du Carcassès, Carcassonne-Béziers-Narbonne*, Cahors 2005, p. 87; T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité...*, p. 126, 143–144; D. ZBIRAL, *La Charte...*, p. 31–36. The image of the Cathar heresy contained in the acts of Saint-Felix council surely does not resemble a well organised counter-church, especially considering the fact that Nicetas in his sermon encouraged Cathars to establish independent bishoprics with strictly defined borders, see: *Charte de Niquinta, antipape des hérétiques surnommés d'Albigéois*, ed. D. ZBIRAL, [in:] *1209–2009 Cathares. Une histoire à pacifier?*, ed. A. BRENON, Loubatieres 2010, p. 47.

Pyrenees), while Besse, who published this forged document, tried to discredit the lobby of the protestants (who a century earlier perceived the Cathars as their forerunners) headed by a certain Galland – a royal official whose aim was to introduce in Occitania the king's ordinance from 1629, ordering the confiscation of the allodia of the owners who were unable to prove their ownership¹³. Constructing this hypothesis (which assumed the existence of an elaborate intrigue of the 17th century French erudites), Biget did not refer to the sources in which the figures mentioned in the acts of Saint-Felix (such as Nicetas for example) appear, nor to the Eastern sources.

As we can see, the reliability of the acts of Saint-Felix council was not refuted and therefore there is no reason to ignore this source in the research on Catharism.

The situation looks similar in case of the *Sermones contra catharos* written by Eckbert of Schönau in 1163 – the first source confirming the dualist doctrine of the Cathars, which was questioned by Uwe Brunn in his work *Des contestataires aux "Cathares"* in 2006. Brunn concluded that the German Benedictine monk arbitrarily constructed the image of the dualist Cathar heresy on the basis of the anti-Manichaean writings of St. Augustine and imposed it on the evangelical dissidents who advocated the return to the early Christianity. He did it to justify their persecution, because in the centralising Church of the Gregorian reform there was no place for them anymore. This idea of a well-organized dualist heresy was later accepted by other Church authors, who used it as a tool to eliminate the enemies of the Church. The foundation of Brunn's criticism was the fact that Eckbert, at the end of his work, added passages of St. Augustine's *De haeresibus* directed against the Manichaeans, and as the first author used the name *cathari*, which also appeared in the work of the bishop of Hippo¹⁴. Brunn did not consider the possibility that Eckbert could have simply believed that the heretics he knew were the descendants of the Manichaeans, which would not be surprising considering their dualistic doctrine. Brunn also omitted the fact that Eckbert in his description of the Cathar doctrines says clearly that some of them cannot be found among the errors of the Manichaeans. In consequence, he did not explain the differences between the Cathar doctrine and the Manichaean one, on which it was allegedly based¹⁵. He also did not explain convincingly why the German Benedictine

¹³ J.L. BIGET, *Retour sur le « concile de Saint-Félix »...*, p. 81–110.

¹⁴ U. BRUNN, *Des contestataires aux "Cathares": discours de réforme et propagande antihérétique dans les pays du Rhin et de la Meuse avant l'Inquisition*, Paris 2006, p. 160, 238–274, 316–348; IDEM, *Cathari, catharistae et cataphrygae. Ancêtres des cathares du XII siècle*, Here 36–37, 2002, p. 184–185.

¹⁵ On the differences between the Cathar and the Manichaean doctrine see: ECKBERTUS ABBAS SCHONAUGENSIS, *Sermones contra catharos*, [in:] *PL*, vol. CXCIV, ed. J.-P. MIGNÉ, Paris 1855, col. 16: *Sciendum vero est, et non celandum ab auribus vulgi, quoniam indubitanter secta eorum, de quibus agimus, originem accepit a Manichaeo haeresiarcha, cujus doctrina maledicta erat et tota venenosa, et radicata est in populo isto perverso. Multa tamen permista habent doctrinae magistri sui, quae inter haereses illius non inveniuntur.*

monk, who allegedly tried to identify the Cathars with the ancient Manichaeans, used the name Cathars (*cathari*), which in St. Augustine's work was reserved for the Novatians instead of *catharistae*, which was the name of one of the branches of the Manichaeans¹⁶. In the light of such doubts it would be difficult to accept that the construction of the Cathar doctrine by Eckbert has been proven, although the deconstructionist scholars seem to believe that it was, and consequently ignore this source in their research.

As we can see, the deconstructionist method of questioning of the sources is built on the formulation of hypotheses (no matter how likely) which assume that the problematic source was forged because the alleged forger may have potentially had motives to do so. Such a hypothesis is treated as the ultimate proof which entitles them to ignore such source in their future research. And it is not only the case with the sources which became the subject of a serious academic debate (as it was in the case of the acts of Saint-Felix council), but with all the sources that do not fit the new paradigm. Pegg and Biget, writing about the sources of Cathar provenience, do not mention the Anonymous Treatise from the 1220s, not because its reliability was successfully challenged, but because it confirms the Cathar dualism, and thus completely destroys their interpretation¹⁷. The only argument questioning this source was formulated by Biget, who claimed that because it survived only in the polemical work of Durand of Huesca – the *Contra Manicheos* – it was forged by him. Durand – the Waldensian converted to Catholicism – in Biget's opinion forged this work and made it look heretical to legitimise the image of Catharism as a dualistic heresy, a view promoted by the Church¹⁸. That is the entirety of the proof. The arguments of David Zbiral, who pointed out that the Cathar treatise differs significantly from the rest of Durand's work, and besides it does not contain a systematic presentation of the Cathar doctrine, went unnoticed¹⁹. Similar "proofs" questioning the second Cathar theological treatise – the *Liber de Duobus Principiis* we should expect soon, because Alessia Trivellone in her article from 2020 openly claimed that this enigmatic work, considered written by the Cathars, will have to be analysed anew²⁰.

¹⁶ Brunn claims that Eckbert used the name *cathari* to describe German heretics because of their strict moral rules, especially concerning marriage, similar to those of Novatians. See: U. BRUNN, *Des contestataires...*, p. 187–190.

¹⁷ M.G. PEGG, *Le catharisme en questions...*, p. 350; J.L. BIGET, *L'histoire...*, p. 17.

¹⁸ J.L. BIGET, *Réflexions sur « l'hérésie » dans le Midi de la France au Moyen Âge*, Here 36–37, 2001, p. 40; Biget's opinion is shared also by J. Chiffolleau, see: *Compte rendu des interventions...*, p. 51.

¹⁹ D. ZBIRAL, *Největší hereze. Dualismus, učenecká vyprávění o katarství a budování křesťanské Evropy*, Brno 2007, p. 67–68.

²⁰ A. TRIVELLONE, *Des Églises cathares en Italie? Pour une étude critique des sources italiennes*, [in:] *Le « catharisme »...*, p. 58.

Before that happens, Trivellone decided to start the work of deconstruction of another source crucial for the traditional interpretation – the *Interrogatio Iohannis*, which confirms both the dualist doctrine and the Eastern origins of Catharism.

Before the analysis of Trivellone’s arguments, it may be worth reminding a few facts about this source. According to Edina Bozóky (the author of the newest edition of *Interrogatio Iohannis*), the source survived in three manuscripts and one printed text. The first is the Vienna manuscript, which contains the New Testament and the fragments of the Old Testament. It was written in Italy in the middle of the 12th century. The *Interrogatio Iohannis* is placed at its end, and it is the second layer of the text from the beginning of the 13th century. The second manuscript, from the 15th century, survived in the city library of Dôle, and according to Bozóky it was probably copied from the original, which was kept in the archives of the Carcassonne inquisition because it also contains other inquisitorial documents. According to Bozóky, the Carcassonne manuscript was also the basis for the copy made in the 17th century by the Doat’s commission, and for the first printed edition of this source made by Jean Benoist in 1691. In other words we have two redactions of this text – that of Vienna and that of Carcassonne²¹. The crucial information concerning the provenance of this source is contained in the explicit of the Dôle manuscript, which tells us that we are dealing with the secret book of the Cathars from the Italian church of Concorezzo, brought from Bulgaria by their bishop – Nazarius. It says: *Explicit secretum hereticorum de Concorresio portatum de Bulgaria Nazario suo episcopo*²². This information however is not the only argument for the Eastern provenance of this work. It is also confirmed by the independent Italian polemical sources. The inquisitor Rainer Sacchoni, in his summa from 1250, after the description of the heretical doctrine of Nazarius (identical with the one presented in the *Interrogatio*) states that he received these errors from the bishop and *filius maior* of the church of Bulgaria around 60 years earlier²³. Based on this information we can assume that *Interrogatio Iohannis* was given to Nazarius by the Bogomils from the church of Bulgaria around 1190. *Tractatus de Hereticis*, probably written in the 1270s by another inquisitor – Anselm of Alesandria²⁴, states that Nazarius had a certain scripture called *secretum* that was not

²¹ *Le livre secret des cathares. Interrogatio Iohannis. Edition critique, traduction commentaire*, ed. et trans. E. BOZÓKY, Paris 2009, p. 18–22; E. BOZÓKY, *Circulation et portée de l’apocryphe Interrogatio Iohannis*, [in:] *Le « catharisme »...*, p. 65–67.

²² *Le livre secret des cathares...*, p. 26; *Interrogatio Iohannis*, [in:] *Le livre secret des cathares...* (cetera: *Interrogatio Iohannis*), p. 86.

²³ *Summa Fratris Raineri de ordine fratrum praedicatorum, de Catharis et Pauperibus de Lugduno*, [in:] *Un Traité Neo-Manicheen du 13 siècle, Le Liber de duobus principiis suivi d’un fragment de Rituel Cathare*, ed. A. DONDAINE, Roma 1939, p. 76: *et dixit quod habuit hunc errorem ab episcopo et filio maiore ecclesie Bulgariae iam fere elapsis annis LX*.

²⁴ More on this source, see: A. DONDAINE, *La hiérarchie cathare en Italie II*, AFP 20, 1950, p. 235–239.

accepted by his rival, Desiderius, and his followers²⁵. If the author of the *Tractatus de hereticis* knew Rainer's summa and could have made use of it (although what must be noted the term *secretum*, which appears in the manuscript of the *Interrogatio Iohannis*, is not mentioned by Rainer), the reliability of Rainer's summa itself cannot be questioned. Rainer was probably the best informed clergyman on the subject, as before his conversion he had been a Cathar perfect in the church of Concorezzo for 17 years²⁶. His summa contains the knowledge of an insider, who as a Cathar perfect had access to the secrets of his church and surely knew Nazarius personally.

The figure of Nazarius is also mentioned in the *De heresi catharorum in Lombardia* – an anonymous work, which according to its editor A. Dondaine was written at the beginning of the 13th century²⁷. At the end the source mentions bishops of the Italian Cathar churches, and among them Nazarius, who at that time was the elder son (*filius maior*) of the bishop of Concorezzo – Garattus²⁸. Nazarius is mentioned also by the bull of Innocent IV from 1254 in which the pope orders the destruction of the castle Gattedo, near Milan, belonging to Roberto da Guissano, where Nazarius was buried next to the other heresiarchs²⁹.

The next argument for the Eastern, specifically Bulgarian origins of the *Interrogatio Iohannis* can be found in the sources which attest to intense contacts of the Italian Cathars (especially from the church of Concorezzo) with the Bogomil church of Bulgaria. *De heresi catharorum in Lombardia* states that Mark – the first bishop of the Italian Cathars – professed *ordo Bulgariae*, and the first bishop of Concorezzo (after the schism) John the Jew was sent to Bulgaria for ordination³⁰. Not only the Italian Cathars had relations with Bulgaria; also many French sources use the word Bulgari to name the Cathars³¹. Another argument for the east-

²⁵ *Tractatus de Hereticis*, ed. A. DONDAINE, AFP 20, 1950, p. 311: *Item Nazarius tenet quoddam scriptum, quod secretum vocat.*

²⁶ On Rainer Sacchoni see: A. DONDAINE, *La hiérarchie cathare en Italie II...*, p. 262.

²⁷ A. DONDAINE, *La hiérarchie cathare en Italie I*, AFP 19, 1949, p. 298–304.

²⁸ *De Heresi Catharorum in Lombardia*, p. 312: *Garattus episcopus ordinatus de bulgaria manet concorentii; filius eius maior Nazarius et filius eius minor Gioldus de brixia.*

²⁹ INNOCENTIUS IV, *Inquisitoribus Lombardiae, ut Roberto haeretico debitam poenam imponant, effodiant e terra haeticorum ossa, eaque, necnon quoddam castrum ac domos exurant*, vol. I, ed. T. RIPPOL, *Bullarium Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum*, Roma 1729, p. 254: *in Castro suo, quod Gatte vulgariter apellantur [...] per ipsos haeticos construi, eosque habitare permittens, necnon et quamplura haeticorum corpora et specialiter Nazarii eorum episcopi fuissent inibi tumulata [...].* On Nazarius see also: E. BOZOKY, *Circulation et portée...*, p. 71.

³⁰ *De Heresi Catharorum in Lombardia*, p. 306: *Et iste marcus habebat ordinem suum de bulgaria. Adveniens quidem papas nicheta nomine, de constantinopolitanis patibus in lombardiam, cepit causari ordinem bulgarie, quem marcus habebat. Ibidem*, p. 308: *Ipse episcopus [...] misit Johanni iudeo ut iret in bulgariam et completeret que continebantur in sententia, ut esset prelatu in lombardia, omnibus subesse volentibus.*

³¹ See for ex.: *Accipite nobis vulpes parvulas, que demoliuntur vineas Domini*, ed. B. DELMAIRE, *Here* 17, 1991, p. 11; *Roberti Autissiodorensis Chronicon*, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, Hannoverae 1882

ern provenance of *Interrogatio*, as it was noted by E. Bozóky, are the miniatures in the Vienna manuscript, which reveal Byzantine features³². All these arguments were convincing for many scholars, who beginning with J. Ivanov, through D. Obolensky to E. Bozóky and Y. Stoyanov, did not question Bogomil provenance of the *Interrogatio Iohannis*, treating it as a crucial evidence for the Eastern origins of Catharism³³.

For the deconstructionist scholars this apocryphal book is especially problematic because it contradicts the new paradigm, therefore they prefer not to mention it among the Cathar sources. The first attempt of questioning the authenticity of the *Interrogatio Iohannis* was made in 2020 by Alessia Trivelone, in the article aimed at discrediting the polemical Italian sources which attest to the dualistic character and the Eastern origins of the Italian Catharism³⁴. In this work Trivelone tries to deconstruct our whole knowledge about this source. She begins with the person of Nazarius, trying to prove that his existence is not confirmed unambiguously because he is mentioned only by Rainer Sacchoni. *Tractatus de hereticis* is based on Rainer's work, in the same way as the bull of Innocent IV issued at the request of the Lombard inquisitor³⁵. Apparently trying to prove that Nazarius was invented by Rainer Sacchoni, Trivelone also brought into question the mention of this Cathar bishop contained in the oldest source – the *De heresi*

[= MGH.SS, 26], p. 260, 271; *La chanson de la croisade albigeoise*, vol. I, ed. E. MARTIN-CHABOT, Paris 1931, p. 10; *Alberici Monachii Trium Fontium Chronicon*, ed. P. SCHEFFER-BOICHORST, Hannoverae 1874 [= MGH.SS, 23], p. 944; MATTHAEUS PARIENSIS, *Chronica Maiora*, ed. F. LIEBERMANN, Hannoverae 1888 [= MGH.SS, 28] (cetera: MATTHAEUS PARIENSIS), p. 133; ÉTIENNE DE BOURBON, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues*, ed. A. LECOY DE LA MARCHE, SIOc 16, 2003, p. 300.

³² E. BOZOKY, *Le livre secret des cathares. Un lien entre l'orient et l'Occident*, SIOc 16, 2003, p. 200.

³³ See for ex.: J. IVANOV, *Livres et legendes bogomiles. Aux Sources du Catharisme*, Paris 1976, p. 87–90; D. OBOLENSKY, *The Bogomils*, Cambridge 1948, p. 226; E. TURDEANU, *Apocryphes slaves et roumains de l'Ancien Testament*, Leiden 1981 [= SVTP, 5], p. 68; A. BORST, *Die Katharer*, Stuttgart 1953, p. 8, 161; J. DUVERNOY, *Catharisme. La religion des cathares*, Toulouse 1979, p. 334, 346; W.L. WAKEFIELD, A.P. EVANS, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, New York–London 1969, p. 448; W. MYZOR, *Średnio-wieczna religijność ludowa. Dualizm w świetle Interrogatio Iohannis*, SRel 41, 2008, p. 12; T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité...*, p. 195; *Le livre secret des cathares...*, p. 22–32, 97–174; E. BOZOKY, *Le livre secret des cathares. Un lien...*, p. 202–203; Y. STOYANOV, *The Debate on Medieval Western Christian Dualism through the Prism of Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, Scri 14, 2018, p. 336; H. SALDZHIEV, *On the Prehistory of Bogomilism – The Historical and Religious Continuum of the Dualistic Groups in Early Medieval Bulgaria (8th–10th Century)*, SCer 11, 2021, p. 744. All these scholars (and many more) agree on the Bogomil origins of the *Interrogatio*. The differences are on the issue of the language of the original – Bulgarian or Greek.

³⁴ Previously even the scholars who rejected the Bogomil origins of Catharism did not question the authenticity of *Interrogatio Iohannis*. Pilar Jimenez-Sanchez for example explained the fact that the Cathars used Bogomil apocrypha by claiming that although Catharism emerged independently in the West, the Cathars made contacts with the Bogomils in the 13th century, see P. JIMÉNEZ-SANCHEZ, *Les catharismes. Modèles dissidents du christianisme médiéval (XII^e–XIII^e siècles)*, Rennes 2008, p. 345.

³⁵ A. TRIVELLONE, *Des Églises...*, p. 49–50.

catharorum in Lombardia. To discredit this source she questions the dating proposed by its editor, A. Dondaine, who claimed that it was written at the beginning of the 13th century, although it survived in the manuscript from the second half of the 13th century. Dondaine based his conclusion on the careful analysis of the content of this source. He noted that it mentions Petrus Gallus as a major son (*filius maior*) of the bishop Nicola of Vicenza, while in the letter of Ivo of Narbonne from 1214–1215 (quoted by Matthew of Paris in his chronicle) the same Petrus Gallus was already a bishop³⁶. To question Dondaine's dating Trivellone relied on the opinions of W.L. Wakefield and J. Duvernoy, who doubted the authenticity of Ivo's letter, and although she does not discuss the arguments proposed by them, she eventually concludes that Dondaine's dating of the *De heresi* cannot be accepted anymore³⁷. According to Trivellone, however, not only *De heresi* is unreliable, but all the Italian polemical sources confirming the connections of the Cathars with the Bogomil East as well. The foundation of her criticism lies in the work of Brunn, who in her opinion has shown that Eckbert of Schönau constructed Cathar dualist doctrine based on the patristic works. Because Eckbert gave his summa to Rainald of Dassel – the archbishop of Cologne, who was the Emperor's chancellor in Italy, the latter could have given this writing to the papal curia, and so it could have become the pattern for the Italian authors of the polemics³⁸. The increase in the number of anti-heretical works in Italy, according to Trivellone, does not reflect the real growth of Catharism, but rather is the result of the spread of the discourse from Rhineland³⁹. What must be emphasised is that the translation of Eckbert's work to Italy by Rainald of Dassel is nothing more than a hypothesis formulated by Brunn, and not confirmed by the sources, nevertheless for Trivellone it is the crucial proof supporting her interpretation. Although Trivellone's interpretation itself is also a hypothesis based on other hypotheses, we can expect that soon the deconstructionist scholars will claim with confidence that reliability of the Italian sources has been indisputably questioned; therefore it will not be possible to use them as arguments in support of the "old paradigm".

Trivellone questioned the Eastern origins of the *Interrogatio Iohannis* in her article directly, arguing that the above-mentioned explicit of this work, stating that it was brought from Bulgaria by Nazarius, was in fact added by the inquisitors from Languedoc, who relied on the information taken from the manual of Bernard Gui, who in turn relied on the *Tractatus de hereticis*⁴⁰. It seems that this argumentation

³⁶ A. DONDAINE, *La hiérarchie cathare en Italie I...*, p. 290; *De Heresi Catharorum in Lombardia*, p. 312; *Nicola de vicencia, episcopus de slavia; filius eius maior petrus gallus; minor vocatus prandus*. MATTHAEUS PARIENSIS, p. 231.

³⁷ A. TRIVELLONE, *Des Églises...*, p. 44–46. See also: W.L. WAKEFIELD, A.P. EVANS, *Heresies...*, p. 185; J. DUVERNOY, *Le catharisme. L'histoire des cathares*, Toulouse 1979, p. 184–185.

³⁸ U. BRUNN, *Des contestataires...*, p. 339–342.

³⁹ A. TRIVELLONE, *Des Églises...*, p. 40.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 50.

should lead to a conclusion that in case of *Interrogatio Iohannis* we are dealing with yet another forgery of the Catholics and the person responsible for it was Rainer Sacchoni, on whose account other authors relied. In this revolutionary theory Trivellone does not discuss the Eastern sources, which offer strong arguments for the Eastern provenance of *Interrogatio Iohannis*. Since the time of I. Ivanov, scholars emphasised that many doctrinal concepts contained in it were borrowed by the Bogomils from various Bulgarian apocrypha⁴¹. Because Trivellone does not refer to the apocryphal works or any Eastern sources at all, her hypothesis cannot be the subject of a serious academic debate. As Y. Stoyanov has put it – the analysis of extant doctrinal evidence should precede the formulation of the conceptions concerning the origins of Catharism⁴².

Following this advice I will now take a closer look at the doctrinal content of the *Interrogatio Iohannis* and analyse it in the light of the Eastern sources, which present the Bogomil teachings, to verify the revolutionary hypothesis proposed by Alessia Trivellone. I will focus both on the polemical anti-Bogomil sources and on the Slavonic apocryphal writings, which contain themes characteristic for Bogomils.

The doctrine of *Interrogatio Iohannis* has been the subject of research of many scholars. Edina Bozóky analysed it carefully in comparison with the apocryphal themes and the most detailed account of the Bogomil doctrine contained in the *Panoplia Dogmatica* written by the Byzantine theologian Euthymius Zigabenus in the 12th century⁴³. T. Drakopoulos, too, based his comparative analysis primarily on this source, which seems to be the most reliable, because its author received information directly from the leader of the Constantinopolitan Bogomils – Basil⁴⁴. As the anti-Bogomil sources became more and more accessible in the recent years it would be reasonable to also include other sources in the comparative material⁴⁵. Such an analysis can also verify the claims of J.L. Biget, who in his article from 2003 wrote that the *Interrogatio Iohannis* cannot be considered a Bogomil text, because the original of this book did not survive to the present day, and its doctrine is more similar to the Cathar teachings than to that of the Bogomils⁴⁶.

⁴¹ J. IVANOV, *Livres...*, p. 76–92; Y. STOYANOV, *Medieval Christian Dualist Perceptions and Conceptions of Biblical Paradise*, SCer 3, 2013, p. 155–165; IDEM, *The Debate...*, p. 336–341; *Le livre secret des cathares...*, p. 97–174.

⁴² Y. STOYANOV, *Medieval...*, p. 165–166.

⁴³ *Le livre secret des cathares...*, p. 97–174; E. BOZOKY, *Circulation et portée...*, p. 74.

⁴⁴ T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité...*, p. 199–251.

⁴⁵ In 2015 scholars from Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe of the University of Lodz published a volume with editions and translations of the Slavonic sources concerning dualist heresies in the Balkans, see: *Średnio-wieczne herezje dualistyczne na Bałkanach. Źródła słowiańskie*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, J.M. WOLSKI, Łódź 2015 [= SeCer, 1].

⁴⁶ J.L. BIGET, *Les bons hommes sont-ils les fils des bogomiles? Examen critique d'une idée reçue*, SIOc 16, 2003, p. 149–150.

Comparative doctrinal analysis is especially condemned by M.G. Pegg, who says that this method, introduced by the German Religionsgeschichte Schule in the 19th century, seriously contributed to the false image of Catharism as a dualist heresy rooted in the East. Trying to depreciate it, Pegg claims that it was built on the assumption that *if two ideas look alike to the historian, there must be a link between them*, completely ignoring the fact that such comparisons were made based on the testimonies of the sources that confirmed connections between the religious groups⁴⁷. In the historiography of Catharism such analyses are justified by the sources, which attest to the direct contacts of the Cathars with Bulgaria and Byzantium. In case of the *Interrogatio Iohannis* it is the previously mentioned explicit of this work, corroborated by the summa of Rainer Sacchoni.

The first argument for the Eastern origins of the doctrine contained in the *Interrogatio* is the form of its dualistic theology. It is the moderate dualism, assuming the existence of only one God-Creator that was characteristic for Bogomilism. What should be emphasised, this doctrine, characteristic for the church of Bulgaria, or broadly speaking for the *ordo Bulgariae*, is the only form of dualism directly attested by the Eastern sources. The existence of the radical dualism in Bogomilism can be evidenced (as it was showed by Bernard Hamilton) based on the Western sources describing the doctrines of the Cathars belonging to the Drugunthian order (*ordo Drugunthiae*), however it is not directly attested by the Eastern sources⁴⁸. Moreover, the moderate dualism was very rare in Languedoc; its existence is confirmed in this area only by three polemical sources from the first decades of the 13th century. Other sources, including the Cathar anonymous treatise, describe the radically dualistic doctrine of two principles⁴⁹. Considering this, the hypothesis assuming that *Interrogatio* was fabricated by the Languedocian inquisitors on the basis of other polemical sources seems to be highly improbable.

As was noted by Wincenty Myszor, in case of the *Interrogatio Iohannis* we are dealing with two theological ideas that differ as to the role of Satan⁵⁰. The Vienna manuscript states, that at the beginning Satan was sitting on the throne next to the invisible father and was the ruler of all, while in the Dôle manuscript he was only the steward of the heavenly hosts and it was Christ who was sitting next to

⁴⁷ M.G. PEGG, *Le catharisme en questions...*, p. 355.

⁴⁸ B. HAMILTON, *The Origins of the Dualist Church of Drugunthia*, ECR 6, 1974, p. 115–124.

⁴⁹ *Manifestatio haeresis albigenensium et lugdunensium*, ed. A. CAZENAVE, [in:] *Die Mächte des Guten und Bösen. Vorstellungen im XII. u. XIII. Jahrhundert über ihr Wirken in der Heilsgeschichte*, ed. A. ZIMMERMANN, Berlin 1977 [= MMed, 11], p. 386; PETRUS VALLIUM SARNAII MONACHUS, *Hystoria Albigenensis*, vol. I, ed. P. GUEBIN, E. LYON, Paris 1926, p. 11–12; *Summula contra hereticos. Un traite contre les cathares du XIII^{eme} siecle*, ed. J. DUVERNOY, <http://jean.duvernoy.free.fr/text/pdf/summula.pdf> [3 V 2023], p. 32.

⁵⁰ W. MYSZOR, *Średniowieczna religijność...*, p. 14.

the Father⁵¹. It seems that the two copies of the *Interrogatio* contain two theological concepts typical for the Bogomils. The first, in which Satan is more powerful, is similar to the one described by Euthymius Zigabenus, in *De operationae daemonum* ascribed to Michael Psellos (11th–13th century), and earlier by the Bulgarian author – John the Exarch, writing in the 9th–10th century, where Satan is the first born son of God, elder than Christ⁵². *Interrogatio* never states that Satan was the son of God, but in the first version of theology he was the ruler of God's creation, exactly as in the account of Zigabenus. The version contained in the Dôle manuscript, in which Christ was second to the Father, is similar to the doctrine affirmed by the Bulgarian author – Cosmas the Priest, writing in the 10th century, who wrote that some heretics considered Satan the younger son of God, identified with the younger son from the parable of the prodigal son, while others believed that he had been a fallen angel. In this doctrine Christ was the elder or the only son of God, and was second to Him⁵³.

The motives of Satan's rebellion described in the *Interrogatio* have analogies in other Bogomil sources, as well as in the orthodox doctrine. The source states that Satan rebelled against God driven by pride – he wanted to place his throne above the clouds and become similar to the Almighty⁵⁴. Ascending the subsequent levels of heaven (up to the 5th heaven) he tempted the angels to follow him with the words of the unjust steward from the Gospel of St. Luke (Lc 16: 1–8) reducing their debts⁵⁵. This identification of Satan with the unjust steward was characteristic for the Bogomil doctrine, and is attested by Kosmas the Priest and Zigabenus⁵⁶.

⁵¹ Vienna manuscript (VM): *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 44: *Et dixit: In virtutibus celorum et in trono patris invisibilis et ordinator erat omnium. Et sedebam ego apud patrem meum. Ille erat ordinans virtutes celorum et illos qui secuti sunt patrem.* Dôle manuscript (DM): *Et dixit mihi: In talia gloria erat quod ordinabat virtutes celorum. Ego autem sedebam apud patrem meum. Ipse erat ordinans omnium imitatorum patris.*

⁵² JAN EGZARCHA, *Heksameron*, [in:] *Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne...* (cetera: JAN EGZARCHA), p. 63; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, *Panoplia dogmatica*, [in:] PG, vol. CXXX, ed. J.P. MIGNE, Paris 1886 (cetera: EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS), col. 1294; MICHAEL PSELLOS, *De daemonum energia seu operatione*, [in:] PG, vol. CXXII, ed. J.P. MIGNE, Paris 1889 (cetera: MICHAEL PSELLOS), col. 823.

⁵³ COSMAS THE PRIEST, *The Discours against Bogomils*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World c.650–c.1450*, trans. J. HAMILTON, B. HAMILTON, Manchester–New York 2013 [= MMS] (cetera: COSMAS THE PRIEST), p. 128.

⁵⁴ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 44 (VM): *Et cogitavit sedem suam ponere super nubes celorum et volebat altissimo similis esse.*

⁵⁵ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 48–49 (VM): *Et hoc dixit angelis et ascendebat ad illos celos usque ad tertium celum, subvertens angelos invisibilis patris et dicens singulis eorum: Quantum debe domino tuo? Et primus respondit: C chados olei. Et dixit ei: Accipe cautionem et sede et scribe L. Et alii dicit: Tu vero quantum debes domino tuo? Qui ait: C choros tritici. Et ait illi: Tolle cautionem tuam et sede et scribe cito octuaginta. Et ascendebat ad alios celos ita dicens adscenditque usque ad quintum celum seducens angelos invisibilis patris.*

⁵⁶ COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 126; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1295.

Satan as the unjust steward of the heavenly hosts and first among the angels also appears in the Slavonic apocryphal writings which circulated in Bulgaria and were used by the Bogomils. In *The Sea of Tiberias* – a cosmological legend, which probably appeared between the 11th and the 12th century, Satan (who in this text is not a creature of God) was made the steward of the good angels by the creator⁵⁷. The theme of Satan-unjust steward from the Gospel of Saint Luke later also became very popular among the Cathars, where it appears in the communities professing both the moderate and radical dualism, although it did not completely fit with the theology of the two principles⁵⁸. The popularity of this theme in Catharism shows how important a role *Interrogatio Iohannis* played in Cathar communities of various kinds.

According to the *Interrogatio*, when God had learned about the rebellion of Satan and his followers, he ordered their robes, crowns and thrones to be taken from them. Satan was also deprived of his angelic shine, and his face became similar to that of man. Falling down from heaven as an apocalyptic dragon he cast down one third of the angels of God⁵⁹. It is important to take a closer look at this fragment, because it contains many of the themes known from the Eastern sources. The various levels of heaven (Satan tempts the angels up to the 5th heaven), heavenly robes, crowns and thrones are the themes borrowed directly from another apocryphal book used by the Bogomils (and later also Cathars), the *Vision of Isaiah*⁶⁰. In this source we can find the idea of seven heavens, and also of crowns and thrones that wait for the just. The only difference is that in the *Interrogatio Iohannis* crowns and thrones belong to the angels⁶¹. The idea of seven heavens also appears in other apocryphal texts which were known to the Bogomils. In the Slavonic version of the Book of Enoch, which emerged probably around 1000,

⁵⁷ O Morzu Tyberiadzkim, ed., trans. A. KAWECKA, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe Słowian południowych*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, Kraków 2006, p. 5. More on this source see: *ibidem*, p. 3; F. BADALANOVA GELLER, *The Sea of Tiberias: Between Apocryphal Literature and Oral Tradition*, [in:] *The Old Testament Apocrypha in the Slavonic Tradition. Continuity and Diversity*, ed. L. DI TOMMASO, Ch. BÖTTRICH, Tübingen 2011, p. 13–23.

⁵⁸ This problematic issue of Satan-the unjust steward in the radically dualistic doctrines was noted by Moneta of Cremona in his anti-Cathar work from ca. 1240, see: MONETA DE CREMONA, *Adversus Catharos et Valdenses libri quinque*, ed. T.A. RICCHINI, Roma 1743, p. 39–44.

⁵⁹ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 52 (DM): *Tunc precepit pater angelis suis dicens: Tollite vestimenta eorum. Et tulerunt vestimenta eorum angeli et thronos eorum et coronas eorum omnibus angelis qui eum audierunt. Et interrogavi dominum: Quando Sathanas cecidit, in quo loco habitavit? Et respondit mihi: Pater meus transfiguravit eum propter superbiam suam et ablatum est lumen ab eo et facta est facies < eius > sicut ferrum calefactum fuitque facies < eius > tota sicut hominis, et traxit cum cauda tertiam partem angelorum dei.*

⁶⁰ On the Vision of Isaiah and its use by the Cathars, see: A. ACERBI, *La Visione di Isaia nelle vicende dottrinali del catarismo lombardo e provenzale*, CS 1, 1980, p. 75–122.

⁶¹ *The Vision of Isaiah*, [in:] *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, trans. W.L. WAKEFIELD, A.P. EVANS, New York–London 1969, p. 449–458.

the prophet was taken by the angels before the throne of God, passing through the seven heavens⁶². The various levels of heaven also appear in another apocryphal work – *The Apocalypse of Baruch*, Slavonic version of which appeared at the turn of the 10th and 11th century⁶³. The theme of Satan's punishment – the loss of the shine of glory, which was a kind of disfiguration, is also attested in the account of Zigabenus, although in this source it was not the consequence of a rebellion⁶⁴.

Interrogatio's account on creation of the visible world is typical for the dualistic doctrines. It states that after Satan had fallen onto the yet unformed Earth, he started to ask God for mercy. God gave him 7 days, during which Satan formed the visible world with the help of other fallen angels, as it is described in the book of Genesis⁶⁵. This cosmological idea, assuming that Satan formed the visible world and is its ruler, was probably the most commonly known element of the Bogomil doctrine, because it is confirmed by majority of the sources. We can find it in the works of John the Exarch, Cosmas the Priest, in the letter of patriarch Theophylact Lecapenos to Bulgarian tsar Peter from the 10th century, in *Panoplia dogmatica* of Zigabenus, in the account of pseudo-Psellos, in the 13th century Bulgarian Synodikon of Tsar Boril and in others⁶⁶. These accounts differ only in details; for example in the 11th century account of Euthymius of the Periblepton Satan formed the Earth and the visible heaven, on which he placed the sun, previously stolen from God, while in the *Interrogatio* the light of the sun was made by Satan from the crown of the angel of the air⁶⁷. The Bogomil idea that Satan is the only ruler of the visible world can be found also in the Slavonic apocryphal writings. In *The Life of Adam and Eve*, which appeared around the 11th century, Satan

⁶² *Księga Henocha słowiańska*, [in:] *Apokryfy Starego Testamentu*, ed. R. RUBINKIEWICZ, Warszawa 1999 (cetera: *Księga Henocha słowiańska*), p. 200–203. More on the source, see: *ibidem*, p. 197–198; *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch*, ed. A.A. ORLOV, G. BOCCACCINI, Leiden–Boston 2012, p. 37–126.

⁶³ *Słowo o widzeniu Barucha, kiedy to anioł, posłany na świętą górę zwaną Syjonem, płakał nad zniewoleniem Jeruzolimy*, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe...* (cetera: *Słowo o widzeniu Barucha*), p. 46–48, see also F. BADALANOVA GELLER, *The Sea of Tiberias...*, p. 90–91. More on this source and the theme of the tree see S.C. 45, A.A. ORLOV, *From Apocalypticism to Merkabah Mysticism. Studies in the Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, Leiden 2007 [= JSJS, 114], p. 63–64, 289–293, 297–302.

⁶⁴ EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1298.

⁶⁵ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 54 (VM): *Et descendens de celo Sathanas in firmamentum hic nullam requiem poterat facere neque hii qui cum eo erant. Rogavitque patrem dicens: Peccavi, patientiam habe in me; omnia reddam tibi. Pater misertus est eius et dedit ei requiem facere quod vult usque ad diem septimum.*

⁶⁶ JAN EGZARCHA, p. 63; COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 126, 130; THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS, *To Peter, King of Bulgaria about The Bogomils*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies...* (cetera: THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS), p. 100; *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril Against The Bogomils*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies...* (cetera: *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril*), p. 261; MICHAEL PSELLOS, p. 823.

⁶⁷ EUTHYMIUS OF THE PERIBLEPTON, *A letter*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies...* (cetera: EUTHYMIUS OF THE PERIBLEPTON), p. 151–152; *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 56 (VM): *Et fuit quando accepit coronam ab angelo qui erat super aerem media fecit tronum suum et medium lumen solis.*

says to Adam openly that the Earth belongs to him, while the God rules in heaven⁶⁸. What is also noteworthy, the characteristic theme of the fish, which in the *Interrogatio* support the yet-unformed Earth (before the rebellion of Satan), has its direct analogies in the Slavonic apocryphal texts, as for example in the above-mentioned Sea of Tiberias, where the Earth is supported by the whales⁶⁹.

Unanimity of the anti-Bogomil sources can be observed in case of the creation of man. All of them attest that according to the heretics Satan formed the body of Adam, but only two of them precisely describe how it happened, and what needs to be emphasised, their accounts differ from *Interrogatio* on the crucial issue of the animation of Adam's body⁷⁰. In *Interrogatio* Satan formed the body of Adam in his own image from clay (*de limo terrae*), and then from Adam's body he made the body of Eve, as it is described in the book of Genesis. After that he animated these bodies, imprisoning in them the angels from the 3rd and 2nd heaven respectively (or from the 2nd and the 1st heaven in the alternative version)⁷¹. What needs to be emphasised, this idea of animation of the first people by imprisoning the angels in their bodies, which became very popular in the Cathar doctrines (especially in radically dualistic versions), is not attested by the anti-Bogomil Eastern sources. In Zigabenus' account Satan received the soul to animate Adam as a consequence of the deal he had made with God (he promised that people will belong to God), and according to Euthymius of the Periblepton Satan animated Adam with the soul he had previously stolen from God⁷². The identification of the spirits of the first people with the angels contained in the *Interrogatio*, according to the hypothesis proposed by T. Drakopoulos, is rooted in the Origen's conception of the pre-existence of souls, and emerged already in the 2nd decade of the 12th century, and therefore after Zigabenus had written his *Panoplia dogmatica*⁷³.

As to the fall of the first people, *Interrogatio* states that Satan placed Adam and Eve in paradise, and first forbade them to eat the fruit from the tree, which he had previously planted in its middle, and then in the form of a serpent tempted them

⁶⁸ *Słowo o Adamie i Ewie*, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe...*, p. 41. More on this source, see *ibidem*, p. 30; M. DE JONGE, J. TROMP, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature*, Sheffield 1997, p. 65–79.

⁶⁹ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 47: *Et transcendens invenit universam faciem terre coopertam aquis et transcendens subtus terram invenit duos pisces iacentes super aquas et erant sicut boves iuncti ad arandum tenentes totam terram invisibilis patris precepto ab occasu usque ad solis ortum*. The theme of fish supporting Earth in the Slavonic apocryphal writings is analysed in detail in: F. BADALANOVA GELLER, *The Sea of Tiberias...*, p. 33–42.

⁷⁰ See for ex.: COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 126; *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, p. 261; THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS, p. 100.

⁷¹ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 58 (VM): *Et cogitavit facere hominem in servitio sibi et tulit limum de terra et fecit hominem similem sibi. Et precepit angelo secundi celi introire in corpus luti et tulit de eo et fecit alium corpus in forma mulieris precepitque angelo primi celi introire in ilium*.

⁷² EUTHYMIUS OF THE PERIBLEPTON, p. 152; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1298.

⁷³ T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité...*, p. 250–251.

to do it. The forbidden fruit was in this case carnal desire; first Satan had sexual intercourse with Eve, than Eve with Adam, and so people started to reproduce, thus imprisoning the spiritual angelic element in material bodies for good⁷⁴.

Unfortunately in case of the fall of humans we do not find many analogies in the anti-Bogomil sources. The only detailed account on this issue is the one contained in the work of Zigabenus, which in the crucial aspects overlaps with the one from *Interrogatio Iohannis*. Here, too, the reason for the fall was carnal sin, initiated by Satanael, who after the creation of Eve from Adam's rib started to lust after her and had sex with her in the form of a serpent. In consequence Eve gave birth to Satanael's children – Cain and Calomena. After that she committed carnal sin with Adam, and so Abel and Set were born⁷⁵. The second source, which confirms this characteristic theme contained in the *Interrogatio*, is the Slavonic translation of *Palea Historica* (according to various opinions of the scholars it was written between the 10th and 13th century). One of the anathemas contained within condemns those who claim that the "enemy" joined Eve, in consequence of which she gave birth to Cain⁷⁶. The idea that Satan planted in paradise the tree of sinful lust because of which the humans fell can be found in the above-mentioned apocryphal *Apocalypse of Baruch*⁷⁷.

In the doctrine of the *Interrogatio* the Old Testament was perceived negatively. It was brought about by Satan, who tried to convince people that he is the only God and there is none above him. Therefore he took Enoch to his abode in the visible heaven and ordered him to write down everything he saw there⁷⁸. Anti-Bogomil sources confirm the negative attitude of the heretics to the Old Testament, and considering the number of these sources it seems that this element of the Bogomil teachings was known as commonly as their cosmology. We can find it in the works of Cosmas the Priest, Zigabenus, in the letter of Theophylact and in the Synodikon

⁷⁴ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 60 (VM): *Diabolus intravit in paradisum et plantavit arundinem in medio paradisi et de sputo suo fecit serpentem et precepit ei in arundine manere et sic diabolus ascondebatur sapientiam sue fraudis ut non viderent deceptionem suam. Et introibat ad eos dicens: De omni fructu comedite qui est in paradiso, de fructu iniquitatis ne comedatis*. Postea malignus diabolus intravit in serpentem malum et decepit angelum qui erat in forma mulieris et effudit super caput eius concupiscentiam peccati; et fuit concupiscentia Eve sicut fornax ardens. Statimque diabolus exiens de arundine in forma serpentis fecit concupiscentiam suam cum Eva cum cauda serpentis. *Ibidem*, p. 62: *Postea diabolus effudit suam concupiscentiam super caput angeli qui erat in Adam, et ambo inventi sunt in concupiscentia luxurie...*

⁷⁵ EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1298.

⁷⁶ *Anatemy z Palei historycznej*, [in:] *Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne...*, p. 131. For more on the source, see *ibidem*, p. 127.

⁷⁷ *Słowo o widzeniu Barucha*, p. 48. More on the theme of the forbidden tree in paradise, see F. BADALANOVA GELLER, *The Sea of Tiberias...*, p. 92–95.

⁷⁸ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 60: (VM): *Et < Sathanas > misit ministrum suum et assumpsit eum supra firmamentum et ostendit illi deitatem suam et precepit illi dari calamum et atramentum; et sedens scripsit septuaginta VI libros. Et precepit ei eos deferri in terram. Detulit autem Enoc libros et tradidit filiis et docuit eos facere formam sacrificiorum et locum sacrificiorum.*

of Tsar Boril⁷⁹. Although the account about Enoch is absent in anti-Bogomil sources, its prototype can be found in the Slavonic version of the apocryphal *Book of Enoch*. It states that the prophet was taken to Heaven and there met God, who revealed to him the mysteries of creation, and then ordered him to write down everything he had learned in heaven. In consequence Enoch wrote 360 books, the aim of which was – according to the words of God – to convince people that there is no other creator but him⁸⁰. As we can see, this characteristic motive, which does not have analogies neither in the western Cathar doctrines nor in the eastern anti-heretical works, was borrowed directly from the Slavonic version of the apocryphal Book of Enoch, which circulated in Bulgaria, and in my opinion this fact is an indisputable argument for the Bulgarian origins of the *Interrogatio Iohannis*.

The docetic Christology of *Interrogatio Iohannis* is typical for the dualists. According to it Christ did not have a material body and was not born of a woman, because Mary was an angel sent to Earth by God. Christ entered her through the ear and left the same way. The main aim of his mission in this world was not the redemption of sins through the death on the cross, but the revelation of truth about the existence of the Invisible Father⁸¹. The denial of incarnation, which surely especially offended the clergymen, is attested by many sources, such as the letter of Theophylact, the Synodikon of Tsar Boril, the Bulgarian life of St. Hilarion of Moglena (14th century), or Zigabenus⁸². The majority of these sources usually only mention that the Bogomils deny Incarnation, and only Zigabenus has more to say on this issue. In his account Christ also had an apparent body and was born through the ear, Mary however was not an angel, but an ordinary woman⁸³. As we can see, the docetic Christology of *Interrogatio* is confirmed by the anti-Bogomil sources well enough.

Another characteristic theme of the doctrine contained in the *Interrogatio Iohannis* is its extremely negative attitude to John the Baptist, who is presented as the Messenger of Satan (identified with the prophet Elijah), who tries to distract people from the baptism with the Holy Spirit (the only true sacrament established by Christ) through his false baptism with water⁸⁴. Although John the Baptist is

⁷⁹ COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 123, 125; THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS, p. 100; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1291; *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, p. 261.

⁸⁰ *Księga Henocha słowiańska*, p. 203–205.

⁸¹ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 68 (VM): *Ideo misit me pater meus in mundum istum ut manifestem nomen suum hominibus et ut cognoscant eum et malitiosum diabolum. [...] Quando cogitavit pater meus mittere me in mundum istum, misit ante me angelum suum per spiritum sanctum ut reciperet me qui vocabatur Maria mater mea. Et ego descendens per auditum introivi et exivi.*

⁸² THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS, p. 100; *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, p. 261; EUTYMIUSZ TYRNOWSKI, *Żywot Świętego Hilariona Megleńskiego*, [in:] *Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne...*, p. 201.

⁸³ EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1302.

⁸⁴ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 70 (VM): *Et scivit Sathanas princeps huius mundi quod ego veni querere et salvare quod perierat et misit angelum suum Elyam prophetam baptizantem in aqua qui vocatur Iohannes Baptista.*

not mentioned in the anti-Bogomil sources particularly often, this negative attitude towards him is attested by Cosmas the Priest, who stated that the Bogomils call him the herald of the Antichrist, and in the Synodikon of Tsar Boril, which mentions briefly that he comes from Satan⁸⁵. In the case of Zigabenus the situation looks a bit different, and John the Baptist in his account is a kind of intermediary between the Old and the New Testament⁸⁶.

The Eastern sources say much more about the rejection of the sacraments by the Bogomils, and confirm that they accepted only the baptism with the Holy Spirit, established by Christ. As usual the most detailed account is given by Zigabenus, who even describes the ritual of this baptism, which included two ceremonies preceded by two long periods of preparation. The crucial element of this baptism was the placing of St. John's Gospel and the hands of the initiated Bogomils on the head of the adept⁸⁷. The key elements were thus exactly the same as in the case of Cathar *consolamentum*⁸⁸. As we can see, also the sacramentology of *Interrogatio* is confirmed by the independent Eastern sources.

The situation looks similar in case of the prayer used by the Bogomils. *Interrogatio* does not say much about it; it only mentions that the angels before the fall praised the God with the words of Lord's Prayer. Considering this we can suspect that this prayer was particularly appreciated by the Bogomils⁸⁹. And indeed – sources such as Cosmas the Priest, Euthymius of the Periblepton or Euthymius Zigabenus confirm that the Lord's Prayer was the only prayer accepted by the Bogomils, and all the others were rejected⁹⁰.

The ethics contained in the *Interrogatio*, in which chastity was the most appreciated virtue, is also well confirmed in the sources. In the *Interrogatio*, Christ says that the disciples of John (The Baptist) marry and are given in marriage, but his disciples do not marry, and they are like the angels in heaven⁹¹. This Bogomil aversion to carnality (later shared by the Cathars) is mentioned by Cosmas the Priest, who says that according to the heretics marriage was established by the devil, and in consequence they abhorred children – the fruit of marriage, and even considered

⁸⁵ COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 123; *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, p. 262.

⁸⁶ EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1324.

⁸⁷ EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1311.

⁸⁸ Two Cathar texts of ritual of *consolamentum* survived until nowadays, the Latin Ritual, see: *Rituel*, ed. Ch. THOUZELLIER, [in:] IDEM, *Rituel cathare*, Paris 1977 [= SC, 236], p. 194–261; and the Provençal ritual, see: *Rituel Provençal*, ed. L. CLEDAT, [in:] IDEM, *Le nouveau testament. Traduit au XIII^e siècle en langue provençale suivi d'un rituel cathare*, Geneve 1968, p. IX–XXVI.

⁸⁹ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 72: *Et dixit mihi dominus: Antequam cecidisset diabolus cum tota militia angelica patris, angeli patris orantes glorificabantur Patrem meum hanc orationem dicentes: 'Pater noster qui es in celis.'*

⁹⁰ COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 130–131; EUTHYMIUS OF THE PERIBLEPTON, p. 151–152; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1314, 1330.

⁹¹ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 74 (VM): *Discipuli Iohanni nubunt et nubentur, discipuli autem mei non nubunt neque nubentur, sed sunt sicut angeli dei in celo in regno celorum.*

it a sin to look at women's faces⁹². The Bogomil rejection of marriage is confirmed also in the letter of Theophylact Lecapenos, Euthymius of the Periblepton, the Synodikon of tsar Boril, and Zigabenus. The latter stated that in their rejection of marriage the Bogomils relied on the words of Christ from the gospel of St. Matthew (Matt 22: 30), which are also the basis of the words of Christ from the *Interrogatio Iohannis*. Zigabenus also shows how grave the carnal sin was according to the heretics: he states that Satanael was punished with the loss of angelic shine and with ugliness not for the rebellion against God, but for the carnal sin that he committed with Eve⁹³.

In the anti-Bogomil sources we will not find confirmation of the eschatology contained in the *Interrogatio Iohannis*, which does not particularly differ much from the orthodox version. According to this source, after the end of the seven days (seven ages of the rule over the Earth that were given to Satan) and the number of the righteous will be fulfilled, Christ will come to judge the people. The righteous will be taken to heaven, and the unjust will be eternally punished in the lake of fire with Satan⁹⁴. None of the anti-Bogomil sources make a mention of this doctrinal idea.

The analysis shows clearly that there is no reason to question the authenticity and the Bogomil origins of *Interrogatio Iohannis*. Bulgarian provenance of this work, mentioned in the explicit of the Dôle manuscript is confirmed by the summa of Rainer Sacchoni – a particularly reliable source because written by an insider, a former Cathar perfect of the church of Concorezzo, who had great knowledge about the dualistic communities both in the West and in the East. There is also no reason to question the existence of the Cathar bishop Nazarius, who is attested by the *De heresi catharorum in Lombardia* and the bull of Innocent IV. Another important argument for the Eastern origins of the *Interrogatio* is the fact that this work was brought to Italy by the leader of the Cathar community, which since its beginning had close relations with the Bogomil church of Bulgaria and professed *ordo Bulgariae*.

Comparative doctrinal analysis also confirms the Bogomil origins of *Interrogatio Iohannis*, because it shows that majority of its doctrinal ideas are confirmed by the anti-Bogomil Eastern sources and also have direct analogies in the Slavonic apocryphal writings that were clearly not known to the western inquisitors – who according to Trivellone allegedly forged the document. The deconstructionist interpretation proposed by A. Trivellone is in fact a hypothesis based on weak arguments, which assumes that both the Bulgarian origins of the *Interrogatio*, and the figure of Cathar bishop Nazarius (who brought it to Italy), were invented by

⁹² COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 128–129.

⁹³ THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS, p. 100; EUTHYMIUS OF THE PERIBLEPTON, p. 159; *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, p. 261–262; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1298, 1326.

⁹⁴ *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 76–84.

Rainer Sacchoni. The author of the *Tractatus de hereticis*, using Rainer's information became the source of inspiration for Bernard Gui. The latter in turn inspired the Languedocian inquisitors, who added the explicit about Nazarius and Bulgaria. The author of this hypothesis did not explain however from where have these inquisitors taken the mention about Bulgaria, as it was absent from both the *Tractatus de hereticis* and from the manual of Bernard Gui. She also did not compare the doctrine of the *Interrogatio* with the Eastern anti-Bogomil sources to verify her claims and entirely ignored the fact that the relations between *Interrogatio* and eastern apocryphal works had been emphasised by scholars for a very long time⁹⁵. Florentina Badalanova Geller, who analysed these relations in detail, does not agree with the opinion of the scholars claiming that *Interrogatio Iohannis* did not have an eastern protograph, and was written in the West, highlighting the fact that such an assertion does not rest on any corroborating evidence⁹⁶.

As we can see in case of the deconstructionist interpretation of the *Interrogatio Iohannis*, we are dealing with a hypothesis based on other hypotheses, formulated without any reference to the Eastern sources, which in this case absolutely cannot be ignored. Considering the deconstructionist practice of source criticism, in which formulation of a hypothesis which questions a source is treated as a final proof for its unreliability, we may expect, that the adherents of the "new paradigm" will soon announce that *Interrogatio Iohannis* should not be considered in the research in Catharism, because it was proven to have been another forgery of the Catholics.

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⁹⁵ The issue of the correlation between the *Interrogatio*, the Slavonic apocryphal books and the folklore legends was analysed in probably the most well-known work of I. Ivanov, see: J. IVANOV, *Livres...*, p. 175–182, 191, 208, 229–232, 255, 268–271, 281–286.

⁹⁶ F. BADALANOVA GELLER, *The Sea of Tiberias...*, p. 37.

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