

## DECODING ANCIENT WALDENSIAN NAMES: NEW DISCOVERIES

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The ancient Waldenses were members of a reformation movement, which existed in various parts of Europe, especially in the Alpine regions of Italy, France, and Spain during the high Middle Ages. Considered forerunners of the Protestant Reformation by various historians,<sup>1</sup> the Waldenses stressed the importance of strict adherence to the teachings of the Bible. Observing that many teachings and practices of the Roman Church were more based on tradition than on the Bible, they rejected several Catholic doctrines and traditions.

After investigating their teachings at the Third Lateran Council (1179), the Church denied Waldenses permission to preach. In addition, the Council of Verona (1184) included the Waldenses among the heretical movements of that time.<sup>2</sup> This condemnation was repeated in subsequent councils and brought severe persecution, which caused them to flee to more hospitable regions, resulting in a further dissemination of their teachings to other parts of Europe, such as England, Germany, Austria, Poland, and Bohemia. Waldenses, referred to by many as the “Poor of Lyon,”<sup>3</sup> differed from other reform-minded groups arising during the Middle Ages, in that they did not disappear or become absorbed into other movements, but continued their unique presence until today.

### *Statement of Problem*

From the end of the twelfth century, opponents of the Waldenses called them *insabbatati*, *insabbatatis*, *xabatati*, *xabatenses*, *sabbatati*, *sabatatos*, *inzabattati*, *insabbatatorum*, and *insabbatatos*.<sup>4</sup> These words can be traced back to the basic

<sup>1</sup>Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 221; Prescott Stephens, *The Waldensian Story: A Study in Faith, Intolerance and Survival* (Lewes, Sussex: The Book Guild, 1998), xvii–xviii; Gabriel Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent: Persecution and Survival, c. 1170–c. 1570* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2; Peter Biller, *The Waldenses, 1170–1530: Between a Religious Order and a Church* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 191.

<sup>2</sup>Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent*, 15–17.

<sup>3</sup>The 1220 edict of Emperor Frederick II against heretics listed the Waldenses and Poor of Lyon as two separate groups (Frederici II. *Imperatoris Augusti Constitutio III. Contra Haereticos*, in Melchior Goldastus, *Collectio Constitutionum Imperialium*, 4 vols. [Frankfurt am Main: Junius, 1713; repr., Amsterdam: Sciential Verlag, 1974], 4:78). Other primary sources used “Poor of Lyon” and “Waldenses” interchangeably.

<sup>4</sup>*Insabbatati*, *insabbatatis* in Jacob Gretser, “Prolegomena,” in *Lucae Tudensis Episcopi Scriptorum aliquot succedanei contra sectam Waldensium*, ed. Jacob Gretser

forms of *insabbatati* and *sabbatati*, because of Latin declensions.<sup>5</sup> During subsequent centuries, historians have used these names to characterize features of the Waldensian lifestyle.

The first time the word *insabbatati* appeared in the existing Latin literature is in an edict issued in 1192 against heretics by Alfonso II, King of Aragon, (1152–1196), Count of Barcelona, and Count of Provence. This edict warned against the *Valdenses* (Waldenses) and identified them as *Insabbatatos* and *Pauperes de Lugduno* (Poor of Lyon).<sup>6</sup> The edict, however, did not explain why Waldenses were called *Insabbatatos*. The next use of this term was in an 1197 edict issued by the son of Alfonso II, Peter II, King of Aragon, (1174–1213) and Count of Provence. This document called them *Sabatati* and *Pauperes de Lugduno*.<sup>7</sup> The edict also gave no explanation of *Sabatati* or why the prefix *in-* was omitted.

Throughout the centuries, two major views have been advocated as to the meaning of these names. One view interpreted these names as a characterization of the Waldensian attire, describing them as a people wearing

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(Ingolstadt: Andreas Angermarius, 1613), 14; *Insabbatati, insabbatatis, sabbatati, and insabbatatorum* in idem, “Praeloquia,” in *Trias scriptorum adversus Waldensium sectam, Ebrardus Bethuniensis, Bernardus Abbas Fontis Calidi, Ermengardus*, ed. Gretser (Ingolstadt: Elisabeth Angermarius 1614), 7–9; *sabatati* and *sabatenses* in Ebrardus Bethuniensis, *Antihaeresis liber*, 178, in Giovanni Gonnet, *Enchiridion fontium Valdensium: Recueil critique de sources concernant les Vaudois au moyen âge du IIIe concile de Lateran au synode de Chanforan (1179–1532)* (Torre Pellice, Italy: Claudiana, 1958), 144; *sabatati* in King Peter II of Aragon, “Edictum contra haereticos,” (1197), and in Gonnet, *Enchiridion fontium Valdensium*, 92; *sabatatos* in *Constitutionibus Catalanae MSS* (thirteenth century), and in Charles du Fresne du Cange, *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae Latinitatis*, 6 vols. (Paris: Oliva Caroli Osmont, 1735; 1st ed., Paris: Ludovicum Billaine, 1678), 4:718; *sabatatos* in *Concilio Tarraconensi* (1242), and in Du Cange, *Glossarium*, 4:718; *insabbatatorum* in Bernard Gui, *Manuel de l’Inquisiteur* (Paris: Société d’édition les belles lettres, 1964), 36, 38; *insabbatatos* in King Alphonse II of Aragon, “Edictum contra haereticos,” (1192), and in Gonnet, *Enchiridion fontium Valdensium*, 92. Jean C. Zukowski and Dojcin Zivadinovic have been very helpful in locating rare primary sources.

<sup>5</sup>All these words are in the plural and have the same root. In the earliest Latin sources these words were spelled *insabbatati* and *sabbatati*. In later sources these words often appear as *insabatati* and *sabatati*. These differences could mean an accepted difference in spelling, but the meaning of the word remains the same.

<sup>6</sup>Alfonso II of Aragon, “Edictum contra haereticos,” in Gonnet, *Enchiridion fontium Valdensium*, 92. Gonnet dated this edict in 1192 and its confirmation by the Council of Lerida under Pope Celestine III in 1194 (*ibid.*, 91, 93). This Latin edict seems to pertain to the areas of Aragon as well as Provence. A 1194 version of the edict has *sabatatos* (Cebrià Beraut, “Els inicis de la inquisició a Catalunya. . .” in Adam L. Hoose, “The *Sabatati*: The Significance of Early Waldensian Shoes, c. 1184–c. 1300,” *Speculum*, 91.2 [April 2016]: 356).

<sup>7</sup>Peter II of Aragon, “Edictum contra haereticos,” in Gonnet, *Enchiridion fontium Valdensium*, 94. This edict was a republication of the 1192 edict with some modifications and additions. Gonnet placed its confirmation by the Council of Gerona in the same year.

a peculiar type of shoes. The other view held that these names characterized the Waldensian faith, pointing out that they rejected all festivals and holy days, called sabbaths, instituted by the Catholic Church.<sup>8</sup>

These two conflicting views have led to confusion about the original meaning of these words, and, consequently, misconceptions about the role of the Waldenses in the history of Christianity. Until now, there has been no in-depth analysis of the use of these Latin words referring to the Waldenses in medieval literature. This paper attempts to fill this void and intends to decipher the original Latin meaning of these words and evaluate the historical evidence of these two major interpretations. First, the paper investigates the belief that *insabbatati* and *sabatati* signify the unique shoes of the Waldenses, next it looks into the view that these words express the Waldensian rejection of Roman Catholic holy days or festivals, popularly called sabbaths, and finally it evaluates the arguments for both views.

### *The Shoe Theory*

This section will discuss the earliest footwear of the Waldenses, the origin of the introduction of unique footwear among the Poor of Lyon, and the confusion that resulted when the clergy failed to see any difference between the Roman Catholic orders of the Poor Catholics and the Reconciled Poor. It was this confusion that led to the view that the Waldenses were the ones that were wearing the unique footwear.

<sup>8</sup>A lesser-known view was mentioned by Jean Léger, who reported that some had contrived the meaning of *insabbatati* so as to accuse Waldenses of sorcery because of gathering on “witch-Sabbaths” with witches (see Léger, *Histoire generale des eglises evangeliques des vallees de Piemont ou Vaudoises*, 2 vols. [Leiden: Jean Le Carpentier, 1669], 2:329). Some Waldenses cited sources about priests, monks, and even certain popes who were involved in the practice of sorcery (Jean Perrin, *History of the Ancient Christians Inhabiting the Valleys of the Alps: History of the Old Waldenses Anterior to the Reformation* [Philadelphia, PA: Griffith & Simon, 1847], 26, 31–34). Pierre-François Fournier linked the word Sabbath, the Jewish day of rest, with the word *ensabates* (French for *insabbatati*), speculating that there could have existed a connection between the Waldensian heresy and sorcery meetings in the thirteenth century related to the word *insabbatati* with a root meaning connected with the seventh day of the week, the Jewish Sabbath (Pierre-François Fournier, “Etymologie de Sabbat ‘reunion rituelle de sorciers,’” in *Bibliothèque de l’école des chartes* [Paris: Librairie Droz, 1981], CXXXIX, 247–249). However, presently there are no thirteenth century primary sources to support this hypothesis. In fact, the earliest mentions of the witches’ “Sabbath” appears in the middle of the fifteenth century, which is centuries later than the documents of Spanish kings identifying the Poor of Lyon as *Insabbatati*. Ginzburg extensively investigated the folkloric meaning of the witches’ Sabbath from the analysis of inquisitorial witchcraft trials. He asserts that the term “witches’ Sabbath” does not occur before the fifteenth century (Carlos Ginzburg, *Ecstasies Deciphering the Witches’ Sabbath*, trans. by Raymond Rosenthal [New York: Pantheon, 1991], 257). Jeffrey Russell’s research showed that the term *sabbat* in connection to witchcraft appears “only twice in the fifteenth century literature” (*Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972], 237–238).

### Earliest Waldensian Footwear

One of the first eyewitness accounts about Waldensian footwear came from Walter Map during the second half of the twelfth century.<sup>9</sup> Map was an English clergyman who, while attending the Third Lateran Council under Pope Alexander III in 1179 in Rome, was requested to investigate two Waldensian leaders.<sup>10</sup> He wrote in his *De Nugis Curialium* that they were dressed very plainly and did not wear shoes. He said, “They go about two and two, barefoot (*nudi pedes*, with naked feet), clad in woollen, owning nothing, but having everything in common.” Map interpreted this lifestyle to indicate that the Waldenses wanted to imitate Christ and his apostles, stating, “like the apostles, nakedly following the naked Christ.”<sup>11</sup>

### Poor Catholics and Perforated Shoes

Three decades later, a unique shoe style was introduced. In Pamiers, France, in 1207, there was a discussion between the bishops Diego of Osma and Dominic of Guzmán and some of the Poor of Lyon.<sup>12</sup> As a result of this encounter, a group of the Poor of Lyon, under leadership of Durand of Huesca, reconciled with the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>13</sup> At the encouragement of some clergy, including Pope Innocent III, the followers of Durand adopted as their mission to persuade the Poor of Lyon to return to the Roman Catholic faith. In the same year, Innocent III addressed these missionaries as *pauperes catholici* (Poor Catholics).<sup>14</sup> This designation seemed to be an appropriate name because they preserved much of the simple lifestyle of the Poor of Lyon. The following year, this group became an official religious order of the Roman Catholic Church.

Primary sources indicate that Durand introduced the wearing of a unique type of shoes among the Poor Catholics. In 1208, in a letter to the Archbishop of Tarragon (Kingdom of Aragon), Innocent III quoted Durand, who explained the unique dress of the Poor Catholics as follows: “We have elected to wear the modest religious garb to which we are accustomed, the shoes being cut away at the top and are shaped in a special and distinct style, so that we will openly and clearly be recognized as separated in body as in

<sup>9</sup>See Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium: Courtiers' Trifles*, ed. and trans. M. R. James, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983; repr., 2002), xxxviii, 127. The majority of Map's writings can be dated to 1181–1182.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 126–127.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid. See also Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 204.

<sup>12</sup>Guillaume De Puy-Laurens, “Chronique De Guillaume De Puy-Laurens,” (1276) in *Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, depuis la fondation de la monarchie Française jusqu'au 13e siècle; avec une introduction, des suppléments, des notices et des notes*, ed. M. Guizot (Paris: J. L. Brière, 1824), 222–226; J. B. Pierron, “Poor Catholics,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 12:249.

<sup>13</sup>Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 715.

<sup>14</sup>Innocent III, *PP. Regestorum Lib.* 11.197 (PL 215:1514). This letter was sent to Durand of Huesca and his brethren who are called Poor Catholics in 1208.

heart from the Poor of Lyon, from now and forever more, unless they become reconciled to Catholic unity.”<sup>15</sup>

In spite of Durand’s efforts, the local authorities struggled in differentiating between the Poor Catholics and the Poor of Lyon. The Archbishop of Narbonne and the bishops of Béziers, Uzès, Nîmes, and Carcassonne, complained to Innocent, reporting that the Poor Catholics “have in no way at all changed the garb denoting that superstition [the Poor of Lyon] which formerly caused scandal among Catholics.”<sup>16</sup>

It seems that, for the purposes of assimilations with the Poor of Lyon, the disciples of Durand clothed themselves with garments that closely resembled the travelling preachers of Waldo, with the only exception of perforated shoes. For Durand and his followers, the shoes cut in the upper part were supposed to serve as a sign that would hint to the clergy the true identity of the Poor Catholic preachers. However, at that time the concern among the Roman Catholic clergy about these shoes was also due to the fact that the shape of the clergy’s shoes had symbolic significance and was directly related to the religious status among the various orders. For this reason, the type of footwear of the Poor Catholics brought an additional concern for the clergy.<sup>17</sup>

In his response to the criticism of the bishops, Innocent III wrote Durand, “And because the kingdom of God is not in outer garb but within, take care to still the scandal which grows more serious because of the former garb which you still keep. Alter this habit as you promised us to do, changing it in such a way that you show yourselves also set apart from heretics in outer raiment as you are within.”<sup>18</sup>

Besides asking Durand to change his garments, Innocent III further admonished Durand and his followers by saying the following:

Being unwilling to destroy the work of God for the sake of footwear. . . .  
Because woe to that man, through which the scandal comes. And therefore,

<sup>15</sup>“Religiosum et modestum habitum ferre decrevimus, qualem consuevimus deportare, calceamentis desuper apertis ita speciali signocompositis et variatis ut aperte et lucido cognoseamur nos esse, sicut corde, sic et corpore, a Lugdunensis et nunc et in perpetuum segregatos, nisi reconcilientur catholicae unitati” (ibid., 11.196 [PL 215:1513]). This letter was sent to the Archbishop and suffragans of the church of Tarragona in 1208. Here I quoted the translation of Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 226. The Latin original, however, reads “Lyonists,” not Poor of Lyon.

<sup>16</sup>Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 227; “habitum etiam pristinae superstitionis scandalum apud Catholicos generantem in nullo vos penitus immutasse testantur” (Innocent III, *PP. Regestorum Lib.* 12.69 [PL 216:75]). This letter was sent to Durand of Huesca and his brethren, who were reconciled to ecclesiastical unity in 1209.

<sup>17</sup>Hoose, “The *Sabatati*,” 357.

<sup>18</sup>Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 227; “Cumque non sit in exteriori habitu sed in interiori potius regnum Dei, scandalum quod de pristino habitu adhuc a vobis retento fortius ingravescit, sedare curatis, ipsum habitum, prout nobis estis polliciti taliter variando ut sicut interiori habitu, sic etiam exteriori vos ab haereticis ostendatis esse divisos.” (Innocent III, *PP. Regestorum Lib.* 12.69 [PL 216:76]). This letter was sent to Durand of Huesca and his brethren in 1209.

we admonish, we advise, we exhort those of you who have not yet adopted this fashion or those who shall be associated with you in the future not to bind themselves to the custom of wearing sandals open at the top nor to wear such footgear, so that this scandal may entirely disappear.<sup>19</sup>

At the same time in northern Italy, Bernard Prim, one of Durand's disciples, led a group of Poor Lombards, who had broken away from the Poor of Lyon, back into the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>20</sup> This group, who became known as the *Pauperes reconciliati* (Reconciled Poor),<sup>21</sup> followed the example of Durand and the Poor Catholics, and adopted the practice of cutting the upper parts of their shoes.<sup>22</sup> However, it seems that Prim's followers soon gave up this practice. In a letter to Pope Innocent III, written in 1213, Prim attests, "We have elected by vote to wear the religious and modest garb to which we are accustomed to wear, using common shoes from now on, at the advice and mandate of Pontifical authority, removing the scandal which was brought against us concerning the shoes with the open tops, which we were in the habit of wearing until now."<sup>23</sup>

From these primary sources we can conclude the following: (1) Durand prescribed for his order a modest religious garment with perforated shoes;

<sup>19</sup>Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 227–28; "nolentes propter calceamenta destruere opus Dei. . . . Nam vae homini illi per quem scandalum venit. Ideoque monemus, consulimus et hortamur ut ii qui de vobis nondum signum huiusmodi acceperunt, vei qui vobis fuerint associandi de caetero, non se astringant proposito utendi scandalis desuper perforates, neque talibus calceamentis utantur, ut sic scandalum penitus evanescat" (Innocent III, *PP. Regestorum Lib.* 12.69 [PL 216:76]).

<sup>20</sup>Idem, *PP. Regestorum Lib.* 13.94 (PL 216:289–292). This letter was sent to all Archbishops and Bishops in 1210 bearing the title, "De negotio Valdensium conversorum." Idem, *PP. Regestorum Lib.* 14.146 (PL 216:668). This letter was sent to the Bishop of Cremona bearing the title, "De Negotio Bernardi Primi et Sociorum." See also Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies*, 221.

<sup>21</sup>The name *Pauperes reconciliati* ("Reconciled Poor") appears in the writings of Peter Martyr, c. 1250. See Thomas Kaeppli, "Une somme contre les hérétiques de Saint-Pierre Martyr?" in *Archivum Fratrum Predicatorum* 17 (1947): 334.

<sup>22</sup>Burchard, an abbot from Ursberg in Germany, writing around the year 1215, also confirms that a group of Poor of Lyon under the leadership of a "certain Behrnard" returned to the Catholic Church and was engaged in the practice of cutting away the top of their shoes (calceos). Burchard also attested that the Pope requested from Bernard the change of complete attire, including perforated shoes. Burchard of Ursberg, "Chronicon," in *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum* (Hannover: Hahn, 1916), 107–108; see also Matthias Becher, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Welfen und die Chronik Burchards von Ursberg*, vol. 18b of *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), 282.

<sup>23</sup>"Religiosum et modestum habitum ferre decrevimus, qualem ex voto consuevimus deportate, utendo de caetero calceamentis communibus, ad consilium et mandatum summi pontificis, pro tollendo scandalo quod contra nos movebatur de calceamentis de super apertis, quibus uti hactenus solebamus" (Innocent III, *PP. Regestorum Lib.* 15.137 [PL 216:649]). This letter was sent to Bernard Prim and his brethren in 1212.

(2) the Pope urged Durand and his followers to change their clothes altogether, as to cease resembling so much the Poor of Lyon; (3) the Pope finally ordered Durand to quit binding himself to the “scandal of wearing perforated shoes” and to assume a catholic look, and (4) Durand, and more particularly his convert Bernard Prim, yielded to the papal request, terminating the practice of wearing perforated shoes altogether. Although the leaders of these orders stopped wearing these unique shoes, their followers may have continued this practice for some time.

The efforts by Durand and his followers to create different footwear from those worn by the Poor of Lyon imply that not all Waldenses went barefoot, as were the two disciples that appeared in Rome in 1179.<sup>24</sup> In fact, other primary sources confirm that Waldenses wore normal shoes or sandals. Peter, a monk of the Cistercian abbey of Vaux-de-Cernay in northern France, writing between 1213–1218, mentioned that one of the errors of the “Waldenses” was that, in his opinion, they wanted to look like the apostles, stating that they were in the habit of “wearing sandals in the manner of the apostles.”<sup>25</sup>

Finally, an important observation is that the issue of perforated shoes originated with the conversion of Durand to Catholicism in Pamiers in 1207/1208, while the labels *Insabbatati* and *sabatati* appeared in the Kingdom of Aragon many years earlier before the appearance of Durand and his group.

#### Confusing the Poor of Lyon with the Poor Catholics and Reconciled Poor

A close reading of the primary sources demonstrates that there is no evidence that the Poor of Lyon wore perforated shoes at the beginning of the twelfth century. Instead, this practice was introduced by the Poor Catholics and followed by the Reconciled Poor; both of them became reconciled to the Catholic faith. Due to their similarity to the Poor of Lyon, the clergy often placed Poor Catholics and Poor of Lyon in the same category. As a result, the wearing of perforated shoes became associated with the Poor of Lyon and the entire body of the Waldenses.<sup>26</sup> At the same time that the Poor Catholics and

<sup>24</sup>If Walter Map’s description of the Waldensian leaders going around barefoot is representative of all Waldenses, then the wearing of shoes would distinguish the Poor Catholics from the Poor of Lyon, and there would be no need for “cutting the top” of the shoes.

<sup>25</sup>“in portandis sandaliis more apostolorum,” Petrus Sarnesis, *Petri Vallium Sarnaii monarchi hystoria Albigensis*, in *The history of the Albigensian Crusade: Peter of Les-Vaux-de-Cernay’s historia Albigensis*, trans. W. A. Sibly and Michael D. Sibly (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2002), 14.

<sup>26</sup>Even in his book *Against the Manicheans* (1210), written after his conversion to the Catholic faith, Durand of Huesca continued praising Waldo and his efforts of apostolic life. This might explain why several contemporary observers, including the Roman clergy, were unable to clearly distinguish between the movement of Poor Catholics and the Poor of Lyon. See Durand de Huesca, *Prologue of Liber Anti Hereses and Contra Manicheos* in Kurt-Victor Selge, “L’aile droite du mouvement Vaudois et naissance des Pauvres Catholiques et des pauvres réconciliés,” *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 2

Reconciled Poor were wearing perforated shoes, an anonymous document (c. 1209), attributed by some to Ermengaud of Béziers, described the Poor of Lyon and Waldenses in the same way as these new Catholic orders: “There are also other heretics who are called Lyonists from Lyon, Waldenses [Waldenses] from Valdes [Waldo], namely *Pauperes*, who say, ‘we should not think about tomorrow’; *Dessotulati* [shoeless], because they wear perforated shoes.”<sup>27</sup> This is an example of confusing the Poor Catholics with the Poor of Lyon because it clearly contradicts the letters about the shoes from Durand, Bernard Prim, and Innocent III, which affirm that the Poor Catholics wore perforated shoes in order to be different from the Poor of Lyon.

This document, combined with the injunctions of Innocent III, demonstrates that the Poor Catholics and the Poor of Lyon were regarded as one and the same by the local clergy. The Poor Catholics and its sub-group, the Reconciled Poor, retained too many of the characteristics of their past connection with the Poor of Lyon. Eventually the shoe controversy ended when Pope Innocent IV dissolved both groups and incorporated them into the Augustinian Hermit order in 1256.<sup>28</sup>

#### *The Historical Development of the Shoe Theory*

This section analyses the major sources that form the basis of the view that the words *sabbatati* and *insabbatati* are interpreted as evidence that the Waldenses are known for their unique footwear. It is important to keep in mind that these views only originated after the introduction of the particular shoes by Durand as a special characteristic of the Poor Catholics he founded in 1208.

#### Ebrardus and *Xabatati*

The first person to establish connection between shoes and the variant of the name *Sabbatati*, was Ebrardus Bethuniensis, a Flemish grammarian from Béthune, northern France. The description he gives of the Waldenses seems to be based on his encounter with members of Durand’s order of the Poor Catholics whose dress was close to that of the Waldenses, which made it easy to confuse both groups. In his work, *Antihæresis liber*, (written between 1210 and 1212), he described what he thought were Waldenses as follows:

About those who are called *Vallenses*. They are called like this because they dwell in the Valley of tears. They try to make themselves look like the Apostles of Christ so much that they place the Apostles of Christ in derision.

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(1967): 231. Here Selge went as far as to call the Poor Catholics a “right wing” of the Waldensian movement. However, this assumption that the Poor Catholics and the Waldenses are part of the same movement is not supported by primary sources.

<sup>27</sup>Translation mine; “Sunt autem alii heretici qui vocantur lugdunenses a Lugduno, valdesii a Valdesio, scilicet pauperes, quia dicunt ‘Se non cogitare in crastinum’; Dessotulati, quia pertusos sotulares ferunt” (Anonymous, “Manifestatio Haeresis Albigenisium et Lugdunensium,” in A. Dondaine, “Duran Huesca et la polemique anti-cathare,” *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum* 29 [1959]: 271).

<sup>28</sup>Pierron, “Poor Catholics,” 12:249–251; Kaeppli, “contre les hérétiques,” 334.

They even want to be called *Xabatenses* from *Xabata* [shoes], rather than Christians from Christ. They rather crucify their shoes than their members, as they should. They crown their shoes rather than their head as Isaiah said: “*Rend your hearts and not your clothes.*”<sup>29</sup>

Ebrardus’s interpretation would fit the followers of Durand very well. However, in applying this description to the Waldenses, it has several problems. First, there is no evidence that Waldenses were called *Xabatenses*. The primary sources describing Waldenses list names such as *Insabbatati*, *Insabbatos* or *Sabbatati*, not *Xabatenses*. Second, no primary source used the word *xabatas* for the shoes of the Waldenses but always used the traditional Latin names *calcaementas*, *sotularis*, or *sandalis*. Third, the habit of wearing special or perforated shoes was not characteristic of the Waldenses, but of the Poor Catholics and the Reconciled Poor. Finally, the custom of wearing special shoes by Poor Catholics did not emerge until 1208 (the year when Durand abandoned the Poor of Lyon), while the word *Insabbatati* appeared already in 1192 and *Sabatati* in 1197. Thus, being unfamiliar with the unique mission of the Poor Catholics, Ebrardus’s description seemed to be based on his encounter with Poor Catholics, not Waldenses.

Not everyone at that time defined *Insabbatati* as referring to shoes. Several decades later, the council of Tarragon (1242) defined the Waldenses as *Insabbatti*, who were described as opponents of Catholic practices, teachings, and religious and civil powers. *Insabbatati* were those “who refused to swear an oath, or to obey ecclesiastical or secular powers, or denied that a corporal punishment could be inflicted in any case.”<sup>30</sup> This anti-Catholic attitude remained with the Waldenses throughout the centuries until they abandoned the historicist view of prophecy long after the Protestant Reformation.

#### Later Writers Followed Ebrardus

Due to the fact that Ebrardus lived during the time period of the shoe controversy (although not in the same region), later writers would seldom question his report.<sup>31</sup> Instead, his interpretation of the Waldenses as *Xabatenses*

<sup>29</sup>“Quidam autem qui *Vallenses* se appellant eo quod in Valle lacrymarum manent, Apostolos Christi se faciunt tanquam Christi Apostolos habentes in derisum; et etiam *Xabatenses* a *Xabata* potius quam Christiani a Christo se volunt appellari. *Sotulares* cruciant, cum membra potius debeant cruciari. Calceamenta coronant caput autem non coronant cum Isaias dicat: *Scindite corda vestra, et non vistementa vestra*” (Ebrardus Bethuniensis, *Antihaeresis liber*, ch. 25, “Contre eos, qui dicuntur Xabatati,” in Gonnnet, *Enchiridion fontium Valdensium*, 144). Here the writer used the words *sotulares* and *calceamenta* as synonyms.

<sup>30</sup>“Insabbatati, qui dicunt in aliquo casu non esse iurandum, et potestatibus ecclesiasticis vel secularibus non esse obediendum, et poenam corporalem non esse infligendam in aliquo casu, et similia.” C. Baraut, ‘Els inicis de la inquisició,’ in Damien J. Smith, *Crusade, Heresy, and Inquisition in the Lands of the Crown of Aragon: c. 1167–1276* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 197.

<sup>31</sup>Several historians observed that Ebrardus was not a very reliable writer. In his writings against the Waldenses, he cited Isaiah for Joel, the book of Acts for

and the subsequent interpretation of *Insabbatati* as “shoe-wearers” would become a standard interpretation of the shoe-issue for many writers.

Bernard Gui (1261–1331), a Dominican priest and inquisitor in the province of Toulouse, central France, from 1307 to 1324, was the first person on record to have discussed the word *Insabbatati*, relating it to shoes. Gui reasoned as follows: “Furthermore, they are called *Insabbatati* because in the beginning the perfect Waldenses had a special mark in the form of a shield on their shoes (*sotularium*) to distinguish themselves from their accomplices and believers.”<sup>32</sup> According to Gui, only the Waldensian leaders, called “perfect Valdenses,” had been wearing a special type of shoes. He dates the origin of this type of shoes, saying that “in the beginning” the perfect Waldenses had a *sotularium* (a special mark on their shoes). This shows that Gui himself was not an eyewitness of the footwear of the Poor Catholics or the Poor of Lyon because his comment “in the beginning” indicates that at the time of Gui’s writing—in the early part of the 1300s—the custom of wearing special shoes had disappeared.<sup>33</sup>

From Gui’s time onward, historians writing about the Waldenses quoted Ebrardus and/or Gui as their primary sources for identifying the Waldenses as *insabbatati* or *sabbatati*. The reliance on these authors is clearly seen about 300 years later in the early 1600s, when Jacob Gretser (1565–1625), a Jesuit priest and apologist, published *Trias scriptorum adversus Waldensium sectam*.<sup>34</sup> In the “Praeloquia” of this book Gretser refuted the contention of some Protestants that the Waldenses formed the historic link between the apostolic church and the Reformation. In his refutation Gretser viewed the Waldenses simply as a

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2 Thessalonians, and Nebuchadnezzar for Darius (*ibid.*, 144–145, 148); Jacobus Gretser considered Ebrardus a grammarian who authored a Greek grammar. However, F. Vernet questioned this and described Ebrardus as a controversial person and pointed out some of his glaring mistakes in F. Vernet, “Ébrard ou Eberhard ou Evrard, de Béthune,” *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, 4:1995–1998. Wakefield and Evans called Ebrardus’s book “a work of little value; against dualists, with whom the author confuses the Waldenses, he also attacks Jews” (*Heresies*, 635).

<sup>32</sup>“*Insabbatati autem dicti sunt quia olim a principio sui Valdenses perfecti speciale signum in modum quasi scuti in parte superiori sotularium deferebant, in quo signo ab aliis suis complicitibus et credentibus differebant,*” Bernhard Gui, *Manuel De L’Inquisiteur* (Paris: Société d’édition les belles lettres, 1964), 36–38.

<sup>33</sup>Wakefield and Evans translate *olim a principio* as “from the beginning” (*Heresies*, 388). This translation suggests that the Waldenses were still wearing this unique footwear in the time of Gui. The Latin, however, does not support such translation. The correct translation is “formerly” or “in the beginning,” which means that in Gui’s time the Waldenses were no longer using this footwear. Janet Shirley renders this phrase in a similar way, stating, “early in their history” in Bernard Gui, *The Inquisitor’s Guide: A Medieval Manual on Heretics* (Welwyn Garden City, UK: Ravenhall Books, 2006), 51. It seems that these Waldenses described by Gui are more related to the Cathars than to the simple Waldenses of the north of Italy who do not recognize such differences between “perfect” leaders and laity and don’t refrain from being involved in manual labor.

<sup>34</sup>Gretser, “Praeloquia,” 7–9.

recent heretical departure or offshoot from the Catholic Church instead of a remnant faithful to the doctrines of the apostles. Gretser partly borrowed his arguments from Ebrardus and introduced new arguments to prove that the word *Insabatatis* is the same as Ebrardus's *Xabatatos*. Gretser settled the etymological arguments, stating, "Many things have been said about the etymology of the words *Xabatensium*, *Insabbatatorum*, *Sabbatatorum*, *Chabatatorum*, however, *Xabatatos* comes from *Xabata*, *Chabata*, or *Chapata*, which means shoes."<sup>35</sup> However, he admitted that his reasoning on this etymology did not have the support of the literature of his day because these sources, he said, contained many errors.

In spite of the lack of support from contemporary sources seventeenth-century Huguenot historian Pierre Allix (1641–1717) uncritically followed Gretser in his interpretation on the Waldenses and Albigenses. Allix considered both groups as having basically the same beliefs, and they were called *insabbatati* because of the shoes they wore.<sup>36</sup> Allix, however, did not explain how this word related to shoes. The first Waldensian historian who accepted the traditional arguments regarding the shoe interpretation was Emilio Comba (1839–1904).<sup>37</sup> Comba, who traced the origin of the Waldenses from Waldo, affirmed that the Waldenses were called "Ensatatas or Insabatati" because they used to "cut the upper part" of their shoes. He said, "Catholics sometimes call them . . . Insabates, because of the sabates they were in the habit of wearing."<sup>38</sup> Today, most Waldenses have accepted the shoe interpretation originating with Waldo as the explanation of the names given them during the thirteenth century.<sup>39</sup>

A recent study on *Sabatati* explored the reason why there was such a controversy about the early Waldenses and their shoes. This study does not analyze in depth the origins of *sabatati* but sees this word and all its alternatives as referring to peculiar sandal-like shoes. Instead, the study shows that many clergy assumed that these unique shoes were related to the Waldensian

<sup>35</sup>"Multa dicuntur de Etymologia *Xabatensium*, *Insabbatatorum*, *Sabbatatorum*, *Chabatatorum*, videl, *Xabatatos* à *Xabata* seu *Chabata* vel *Chapata*, quod calceum significat" (ibid., 9. Italics by Gretser). See also Gretser, "Prolegomena," in *Lucae Tudensis episcopi*, 14.

<sup>36</sup>Pierre Allix, *Remarks upon the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of the Albigenses* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1821; 1st ed., London: Richard Chiswell, 1690), 195.

<sup>37</sup>Prior to Comba, Léger discussed the word *inzabatati*. He referred to the Spanish Jesuit Inquisitor Pegne (1542–1615), who reported that this term is related to *Zabate* which signified shoes (*Histoire générale des églises évangéliques*, 2:329) Léger did not indicate that he accepted Pegne's view as the correct meaning of that term.

<sup>38</sup>Emilio Comba, *History of the Waldenses of Italy, from Their Origin to the Reformation*, trans. Teofilo E. Comba (London: Truslove & Shirley, 1889), 250, 277, 309n167. His son, Teofilo Comba disagreed with his father about the origin of the Waldenses. He argued in favor of the older Waldensian view that this name was derived from the name valley and that they already existed before the time of Peter Waldo.

<sup>39</sup>See Amedeo Molnár, *Storia dei Valdesi*, 2 vols. (Torino: Claudiana, 1974), 1:45.

preachers' assertion to apostolic holiness and authority that conflict with the power of the Catholic clergy. This was seen as a threat to the influence of the clergy and their authority on the believers. At that time of the Middle Ages shoes of the clergy had also a mystical and symbolic significance and revealed a person's status among the religious hierarchy.<sup>40</sup> Here one can observe the growing concern of the clergy about the type of shoes what were introduced by Durand and his new order of the Poor Catholics. Because the author considers the Poor Catholics a part of the Waldensian movement, one can see why he applies the wearing of unique shoes to the Waldenses as a whole. Unfortunately, to consider the Poor Catholics as part of the Waldenses is not in harmony with the primary sources. Therefore, he has not demonstrated that this unique type of shoes or sandals was used by the early Waldenses. However, he clearly shows the anxiety of the Catholic clergy because they had difficulty seeing any difference between the Poor Catholics and the Waldenses.

#### *The Holy Days Theory*

This section analyzes the evidence historians have presented in support of the second major interpretation that the labels *insabbatati* and *sabbatati* were used to refer to the Waldenses' persistent refusal to observe Catholic holy days, festivals, or any teachings that were not explicitly taught in the Bible.

If we look at the primary sources, we can notice that the title *Insabbatati* continues to be used many years after the shoe controversy. The reason for its continued use goes back to the Council of Tarragon (1242), where the name *Insabbatati* was mentioned in connection with the "Waldensian sect" in Spain. The constitutions of this council shed additional light on its meaning by explaining that the "*Insabbatati*" were those "who refused to swear an oath, or to obey ecclesiastical or secular powers, or denied that a corporal punishment could be inflicted in any case."<sup>41</sup> Here it shows that the *Insabbatati* are those who oppose certain Catholic practices and teachings. The document "Sacramentum Vicariurum" in the *Constitutionibus Cataloniae Manuscripts* from the second half of the thirteenth century (c. 1270) calls the Waldenses "Sabatatos."<sup>42</sup> No explanation was provided for the meaning of this name. The fact that the terms in question first appear in the Kingdom of Aragon a decade and half before the shoe controversy and continue to be used for almost half a century after it suggests that the appellations seem to bear no

<sup>40</sup>Hoose, "The *Sabatati*," 357.

<sup>41</sup>"*Insabbatati, qui dicunt in aliquo casu non esse iurandum, et potestatibus ecclesiasticis vel secularibus non esse obediendum, et poenam corporalem non esse infligendam in aliquo casu, et similia*" C. Baraut, "Els inicis de la inquisició," in Damien J. Smith, *Crusade, Heresy, and Inquisition in the Lands of the Crown of Aragon: c. 1167–1276* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 197.

<sup>42</sup>Du Cange, *Glossarium*, 4:718. "Sacramentum Vicariurum" was issued during the time of James I of Aragon (1213–1278), but probably after the Council of Tarragon in 1242.

specific relation to shoes but to an anti-Catholic posture of the Waldenses.<sup>43</sup> The following arguments have been used in support of this view.

#### The Waldensian Self-image

Since the earliest Waldensian records were destroyed by fire during times of persecution,<sup>44</sup> the first Waldensian testimony about the designation *insabbatati* comes from the Vaudois pastor and historian, Jean Perrin (1580–1648). Describing the situation in 1618, Perrin wrote, “The Waldenses rejected the Romish festivals and observed no other day of rest than Sunday; whence they were named ‘Insabbathas,’ regards not of the Sabbaths.”<sup>45</sup>

Perrin’s explanation showed that the use of the prefix *in-* of the word *insabbatati* expresses a negation of the root word *sabbat*, indicating that the Waldenses rejected Catholic holy or rest days, called sabbaths.<sup>46</sup> In his explanation, Perrin reflected the Waldensian historic self-image of being

<sup>43</sup>Robert Robinson (1735–1790) linked the origin of *sabbatati* to the Sabbaths of the Jews. He argued that it was “most probable” that this name was given to the people who inhabited the area of the town of Sabadell, near Barcelona, Spain, which was residence of many rich Jews (*Ecclesiastical Researches* [Cambridge: Francis Hodson, 1792], 310).

<sup>44</sup>Being viewed as a heretical movement, all Waldensian documents were destroyed during the repeated persecutions, which is the reason for a lack of their primary sources during the Middle Ages. See Samuel Morland, *The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of the Piedmont* (London, Henry Hills, 1658), 8; James Hastings, “Karaites,” *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 7:665. In 1248, for instance, well before the invention of modern printing, fourteen wagon-loads of “heretical” literature were burned at one time in Paris. (Henry Charles Lea, *The Inquisition of the Middle Ages* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1993), 250–251. As the Bible was the main source against the Roman Catholic Church, the Council of Tarragon in 1234 decreed the following: “Nobody was to have books of the Old or New Testament in the vernacular. If they did so, within eight days of their knowing of the publication of the constitution, they were to hand the books over to their bishop for them to be burnt. If they did not do so, whether they were a cleric or a layperson, they were to be held suspect of heresy until they purged themselves” (Smith, *Crusade, Heresy, and Inquisition*, 185).

<sup>45</sup>Perrin, *History of the Ancient Christians Inhabiting the Valleys of the Alps*, 25. His original work was published in 1618. The 1618 and 1619 French editions read, “Et d’autant qu’ils n’obseruoient autre iour de repos que le Dimanche, ils les appellent Insabbathas, comme qui diroit n’obseruans aucun Sabath” (idem, *Histoire des Vaudois* [Geneva, 1618], 9). Literal translation reads, “Since they [Waldenses] did not observe any other day of rest than Sunday, they called them ‘Insabbathas,’ as to say that they would not observe any Sabbath.”

<sup>46</sup>In this case, the word “Sabbath” meant a festival instituted by the Catholic Church, which the Waldenses rejected because the Bible did not mandate them. In the medieval literature, *sabbatum*, in the sense of rest, was sometimes used for Sunday and at other times for Catholic holy days such as Passover Sabbath (*Sabbatum Magnum*) and Palm Sunday (*Sabbatum Vacat*). See Du Cange, *Glossarium*, 4:718.

followers of the simple apostolic teachings.<sup>47</sup> This view continued to be advocated by the Waldenses until the end of the nineteenth century.

#### Non-Waldensian Historians Support the Holy Days Theory

Prior to Perrin, the Huguenot historian, Nicolas Vignier, wrote in his *La Bibliothèque Historiale* (1588) that Waldenses “were called Insabathaires, because they despised the [Catholic] feasts.”<sup>48</sup> Dutch historian Balthasar Lydius (1577–1629) followed Vignier and Perrin arguing that, since the Waldenses “observed no other day of rest or holiday, than Sunday, they were styled *Insabbathi* or *Insabbathas*, that is, *Sabbathless*, or not observing Sabbaths.”<sup>49</sup> In 1701, German Calvinist theologian and historian Friedrich Spanheim the Younger (1632–1701) also concluded that the Waldenses were called “Sabbatati because they rejected Papal feasts, only observing the Lord’s Day.”<sup>50</sup>

Even some Catholic authorities mentioned the “No Sabbath” theory. In the second half of the seventeenth century, a church history series was published, authored by Natalis Alexander (1639–1724), a Dominican theologian and church historian. Natalis opined that the word “Insabbathati” was given to the Waldenses “because they celebrated no Sabbaths or Festal days, nor did they cease from their work on the Catholic sacred days consecrated to the worship of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the Saints.”<sup>51</sup> Here again the word *Sabbath* referred to Catholic feast days.<sup>52</sup> This view was also maintained among several nineteenth century scholars.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>47</sup>Studies such as Peter Biller, “The Oral and the Written: The Case of the Alpine Waldensians,” in *Bulletin of the Society for Renaissance Studies* 4 (1986): 19–28 and Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent*, 143–160, have re-addressed the validity and the importance of Waldensian oral tradition, of which Perrin is one of the earliest representatives.

<sup>48</sup>“Insabathaires, pource qu’ils mesprisoye[n]t les festes,” (Nicolas Vignier, *La Bibliothèque Historiale*, 3 vols. [Paris: L’Angleir, 1588], 3:130).

<sup>49</sup>D. Balthasar Lydius, *History of the Waldenses*, quoted in Thieleman J. van Braght, *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians (1660)*, trans. Joseph F. Sohm (Elkhart, IN: n.p., 1886; repr., Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2002), 277.

<sup>50</sup>“Sabbatati, quod, Festis Papisticis repudiatis, solum diem Dominicum obseverant,” (Friedrich Spanheim, *Geographiam, Chronologiam et Historiam Sacram atque Ecclesiasticam* in vol. 1 of *Opera* [Leiden: Cornelium Boutestein, 1701], 1597). He applied *Sabbatati* to both the Waldenses and Albigenses.

<sup>51</sup>Natalis Alexander, *Selecta historiae ecclesiasticae veteris testamenti capita et in loca ejusdem insignia. Dissertationes historicae, chronologicae, criticae*. 25 vols. (Paris: Dezallier, 1689), 17:367.

<sup>52</sup>Note, for example, that Catholics called Palm Sunday, “Sabbatum Vacat.” See Du Cange, *Glossarium*, 4:719.

<sup>53</sup>See William Jones, *History of the Waldenses; Connected with a Sketch of the Christian Church from the Birth of Christ to the Eighteenth Century* (London: R. W. Pomeroy, 1812), 340; Joseph Milner, *The History of the Church of Christ from the Days of the Apostles, till the Famous Disputation between Luther and Miltitz in 1520* (Edinburgh: Peter Brown & Thomas Nelson, 1835), 536; Antoine Monastier, *Histoire*

## Primary Evidence for the Holy Days Theory

One of the earliest primary sources that describe the Waldensian rejection of Catholic holy days and festivals is a tract ascribed to David of Augsburg, written around 1260. The tract mentioned the Waldensian attitude toward Catholic festivals: “On the festive days, if they can do that with safety, they work, arguing that it is alright to work. [They say] it is good to labor on the days of the feast and not bad.”<sup>54</sup>

Speaking of the Waldenses, Bernard Gui affirmed that they did indeed reject many Catholic holy days. He described “the Poor of Lyon,” which he identified as Waldenses, as teaching that “no days are to be kept holy except the Lord’s Day and the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and, say some, those of the apostles and evangelists.”<sup>55</sup>

A fourteenth century inquisitional tract from Bohemia titled *De Valdensibus Eorumque Doctrina et Moribus*, characterized the Waldenses as follows: “They despise the feast of Easter and all other festivals of Christ and the saints because of their being multiplied to that vast number and say that one day is as good as another and work upon holydays where they can do it.”<sup>56</sup>

Pope Pius II (Aeneas Sylvanus Piccolomini, 1405–1464) enumerates the errors of the Waldenses in his book *Historia Bohemica* and asserts that the Hussite movement was infected by the Waldensian heresy (*Valdensium sectam . . . pestiferae*). Some of the errors of the Waldenses in Bohemia were the following: “They cease from work on no day, except on the Lord’s Day. The celebrations of saints’ days they reject altogether. The fast days instituted by the Church have no merit.”<sup>57</sup>

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*de l’église Vaudoise depuis son origine et des Vaudois du Piémont jusqu’à nos jours*, 2 vols. (Paris: Delay, 1847), 1:72–73; Harvey Newcomb, *History of the Waldenses* (Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1845), 11. In 1842, Thomas Smyth authored “The Antiquity of Presbytery,” in *Complete Works of Rev. Thomas Smyth D. D.*, 10 vols. (Columbia, SC: R. L. Bryan Company, 1908), 2:502n1.

<sup>54</sup>“diebus festivis, ubi caute possunt, operantur, arguentes quod cum operari bonum sit, bona in die festo agere non sit malum,” (David of Augsburg, *Tractatum de Haeresi Pauperum de Lugduno* in Edmond Martène, *Thesaurus Novum Anecdotorum*, 25 vols. [Paris: Florentini Delaulne, 1717], 5:1780. Brackets mine).

<sup>55</sup>“de festis non colendis preter diem dominicum et festa beate Marie Virginis, el aliqui addunt apostolorum et evangelistarum,” (Gui, *Practica Inquisitionis Heretice Pravitatis* [Toulouse: A. Chauvin, 1886], 248; Gui, *Inquisiteur*, 48, trans. Janet Shirley, *Inquisitor’s Guide*, 55–56).

<sup>56</sup>“Festum Paschae et Omnia festa Christi et Santorum spernunt, propter multiplicationem festorum et dicunt que unus dies sit sicut alius et in festo operantur occulte” (Anonymous, *De Valdensibus Eorumque Doctrina et Moribus* in *Rerum Bohemicarum Antiqui Scriptores* [Hannover: C. Marnium et heredes I. Aubrii, 1602], 224; cf. the translation in Peter Allix, *Some Remarks upon the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont* [London: Richard Chiswell, 1690], 217, 229). The last part of the sentence should be translated as “and on holydays they secretly work.”

<sup>57</sup>“Nulla die ab opere cessandum, nisi qua Dominica nunc appellatur. Celebritates Sanctorum prorsus reiiciendas. Ieiuniis quoque ab ecclesia institutis, nihil inesse

The above observation of historians that Waldenses rejected Catholic holy days and festivals from the earliest times onward was also recognized by supporters of the shoe theory.<sup>58</sup>

#### Waldensian Sabbath-keepers

During the early part of the seventeenth century the Swiss historian, Melchior Goldastus (1576–1635), commented on Emperor Frederic II's 1220 constitution against heretics. Goldastus reasoned that the label "Insabbatati" was used to describe some heretics during the thirteenth century "because they judaize on the Sabbath" or kept the Sabbath like the Jews.<sup>59</sup> He mentioned that the "Valdenses" were often called "Insabbatati,"<sup>60</sup> indicating that during that time there were Waldenses who kept the seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) as a holy day of rest.

Evidence of Waldensian Sabbath keepers during the first half of the thirteenth century is brought out in a polemic<sup>61</sup> about c. 1241–1244 by the Inquisitor Father Moneta of Cremona, northern Italy, who defended himself against the criticism of the Cathari and Waldenses that Catholics were transgressors of the Sabbath commandment. In his treatise against these believers, in a chapter entitled "*De Sabbato, & de die Dominico*," he discussed the significance of the seventh-day Sabbath of Exod 20:8, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" in contrast to the value of the Lord's day, the first day.<sup>62</sup>

In defending himself against their criticism that Catholics were transgressors of the Sabbath commandment, Moneta pointed out that the Sabbath was for the Jews a memorial of creation and their liberation from Egypt. He argued that the Jewish sabbath was "a sign and figure of the spiritual sabbath of the Christian people. . . . It must be understood, however,

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meriti" (Aeneas Sylvanus Piccolomini, *Historia Bohemica*, in *Rerum Bohemicorum Antiqui Scriptores* [Hannover: Claudium, 1602], 141; cf. the translation in Peter Allix, *Some Remarks upon the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, 220).

<sup>58</sup>Even Grester affirmed that the Waldenses "completely banished all festivals" (Grester, "Prolegomena" in *Lucae Tudensis episcopi*, 14).

<sup>59</sup>Melchior Goldastus, *Rationale Constitutionum Imperialium* (Frankfurt am Main, 1607), 78. Compare with Grester, "Prolegomena" in *Lucae Tudensis episcopi*, 14.

<sup>60</sup>"sed quod in Sabbato judaizarent," (Goldastus, *Rationale Constitutionum Imperialium*, 78).

<sup>61</sup>For the 1241–1244 date of Moneta's book, see Thomas Kaeppli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi*, 4 vols. (Rome: S. Sabinae, 1980), 3:137–139; Christine Caldwell Ames, *Righteous Persecution: Inquisition, Dominicans, and Christianity in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 195.

<sup>62</sup>Moneta and Tommaso Agostino Ricchini. *Venerabilis Patris Monetae Cremonensis ordinis praedicatorum S. P. Dominico Aequalis adversus Catharos et Valdenses libri quinque: Quos ex manuscriptis codd. Vaticano, Bononiensi, ac Neapolitano*, (Rome: Palarini, 1743; repr., Ridgewood, NJ: Gregg, 1964), 475.

that as the Jews observed the sabbath, so also, we observe the Lord's day."<sup>63</sup> He added, "this day we observe as an ordinance of the Church, and it is in reverence to Christ who was born on that day, who rose on that day, who sent the Holy Spirit on that day."<sup>64</sup>

Moneta defended the observance of the Lord's Day as an ordinance of the Church with the question, "If the Jews declared that we have to keep the sabbath as a memorial of the benefit of their liberation, to honor their liberator, why is the church not allowed to institute a festive day in honor of Christ, in remembrance of the spiritual freedom from the bondage of the devil, accomplished by Christ?"<sup>65</sup>

Moneta concluded his dispute by referring to the apostle Paul's letters to the Galatians and Colossians, stating, "Against these heretics, namely the Cathari and Waldenses, it is that we find what is written in Galatians 4:10 '*Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years*' and it adds in verse 11: '*I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you,*' indeed the result is that you '*labour in vain*'; therefore it is sin to observe days."<sup>66</sup> He continued, "Likewise Colossians 2:16 declares: '*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.*'"<sup>67</sup>

Referring to Gal 5:2–3, Moneta pointed out that "the Apostle argued that those who Judaize, who were following the precepts of the law of the Lord, who also observed circumcision that 'if ye be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you.'"<sup>68</sup> This argument against circumcision he applied to the keeping of the Sabbath.

Moneta added, "Similarly, it is said in Colossians 2. '*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day,*' that is, of the Jews; hence, this is the day of the feast explained by the new moon or the Sabbath.

<sup>63</sup>"signum fuit & figura sabbati spiritualis in populo Christiano. . . . Scindum autem quod sicut Judaei sabbatum observant, ita etiam nos observamus diem Dominicum" (ibid.).

<sup>64</sup>"quem diem nos observamus ex constitutione Ecclesiae: & ob reverentiam Christi, qui illo die natus est; illo die resurrexit; illo die Spiritum Sanctum misit" (ibid.).

<sup>65</sup>"Si enim Judaeis indictum est servare sabbatum in memoriam beneficii liberationis materialis, ad honorem liberatoris; cur non licebit Ecclesiae constituere illum diem esse festivum ad honorem Christi, & in memoriam liberationis spiritualis de servitute diaboli facta per Christum?" (ibid.).

<sup>66</sup>"Contra istud objicit haereticus, scilicet Catharus & Valdensis id quod habetur ad Galatas 4. v. 10 *Dies observatis, menses, & tempora, & annas*; & subdit v. 11. *Timeo, ne forte sine causa, idest fructu, laboraverim in vobis*; Ergo peccatum est observare dies" (ibid.).

<sup>67</sup>"Item ad Colossenses 2. v. 16. *Nema ergo vos judicet in cibo, aut in potu, aut in parte diei festi, aut neomeniae, aut sabbatorum*" (ibid.).

<sup>68</sup>"Apostolus arguebat eos qui Judaizabant, idest more Judaeorum illa observabant, quae; praecepta erant in lege Domini, propter quod etiam observabant circumcisionem; unde eos arguens dicit cap. 5. v. 1. Quoniam si circumcidamini, Christus vobis nihil proderit" (ibid.).

Therefore the days of the Jewish feasts are not to be observed, but the days instituted by the Church, as stated above.”<sup>69</sup>

Moneta’s defence of Sunday as the Lord’s Day in place of the seventh-day Sabbath clearly show that there were Waldenses and Cathars in northern Italy during the thirteenth century whom Catholics persecuted and considered heretics because they worshipped on another day than Sunday, namely the seventh-day Sabbath.

Although there is no record that Waldo and his followers observed the seventh-day Sabbath, we know that several movements related to the Waldenses were reported to observe this custom. The Waldensian historian, Emilio Comba, admits that northern Italy was a stronghold of various dissident groups associated with the Waldenses, some of which kept the Sabbath and often influenced and merged with the various groups of the Poor of Lyon and Poor Lombards.<sup>70</sup>

Sabbath keeping among the Waldenses was most widespread in Bohemia and Moravia. An inquisitor’s manuscript from the fifteenth century reports that Waldenses in Bohemia “do not celebrate the feasts of the blessed virgin Mary and the Apostles, except the Lord’s day. Not a few celebrate the Sabbath with the Jews.”<sup>71</sup> In Picardy, in northern France, there was a Sabbath-keeping Waldensian group of Douai, who were called Tourloupins. Most historians identify Tourloupins with the Picardian branch of Waldenses.<sup>72</sup> A company of them was arrested in 1420. Well-preserved manuscripts mention that they “upheld that the Saturday must be celebrated instead of Sunday.”<sup>73</sup>

From the various accounts of Waldenses rejecting holy days, festivals or

<sup>69</sup>“Similiter quod dicitur ad Collossens. 2. *Nemo ergo vos iudicet in cibo aut in potu, aut in parte diei festi, scilicet Judaici; unde etiam diem festum per partem exponens ait: aut neomenia, aut Sabbatorum. Dies ergo festi Judici non sunt abservandi, sed dies ab Ecclesia instituti, ut dictum est*” (ibid., 476–477).

<sup>70</sup>See Bonacursus, *Vita Haereticorum* 10D (PL 204:784), quoted in Comba, *Waldo and the Waldensians before the Reformation* (New York: R. Carter, 1880), 35. John M’Clintock and James Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, 12 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1874), 1:660, agrees with Comba: “Traces of Sabbath-keepers are found in . . . the twelfth century in Lombardy.” Allix also admits that many confused Waldenses with Patareni, Arnaldisti, and Passagini (Peter Allix, *Some upon the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, new ed. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1821], 185).

<sup>71</sup>“festa divae virginis Mariae et Apostolorum non celebrant, solam diem Dominicam aliqui. Nonnulli vero cum Judaeis sabbatum celebrant” (Johann Döllinger, *Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters*, 2 vols. [Munich: Beck, 1890], 2:662).

<sup>72</sup>George William Kitchin, *A History of France*, 4th ed., 3 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1899), 1:488; Henri Martin, *Histoire de France*, 17 vols. (Paris: Furne, 1864), 5:309; Perrin, *Histoire des Vaudois*, 9.

<sup>73</sup>Jean Baptiste Francois Hennebert, *Histoire de la Province d’Artois*, 3 vols. (St. Omer: F. Boubers, 1789) 3:348–349; Paul Beuzart, *Les hérésies pendant le Moyen-Âge et la Réforme jusqu’à la mort de Philippe II, 1598, dans la région de Douai, d’Arras et au pays de l’Alleu* (Le Puy, France: F. Boubers, 1912), 47.

sabbaths, it is not surprising that, as late as the time of archbishop James Usher (1581–1656), there were many who believed that *insabbatati* referred to those Waldenses who worshiped by judaizing on the Sabbath.<sup>74</sup> Concerning the word *insabbatati*, Jesuit Inquisitor Pegne also admitted that “many used to think it came from Sabbath, and that they [Waldenses] observed the Sabbath according to the custom of the Jews.”<sup>75</sup>

#### Etymological Arguments

This section focuses on the analysis of the roots of *insabbatati* and *sabbatati* in lexicons and the morphology of these words, a study that is absent in the study of these words. The result is that it is a strong possibility that *insabbatati*, as used to describe the Waldenses, is associated with a rejection of Catholic holy days and practices and therefore is an argument in favor of the Holy Days theory.

One notices that classical dictionaries do not mention *sabbatati* or *insabbatati*. These words appear only later in Medieval Latin and Provençal dictionaries, which define them either as referring to heretics or to the type of shoes of the Waldenses.<sup>76</sup> The Latin word *sabbatum* was the common word for Sabbath, and is in its basic form a noun.<sup>77</sup> In classical dictionaries, the root of these Latin words is *sabbat*, which is connected to the Jewish word *sabbat* meaning the seventh-day of the week—Sabbath.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup>James Ussher, *De Christianarum ecclesiarum succession*, in *The Whole Works*, 18 vols. (London: B. Norton, 1613), 2:234.

<sup>75</sup>Francis Pegne, “Commentary XXV,” in Nicolaus Eymericus, *Directorium inquisitorum* (Venice: Zalterius, 1607), 225a. An instance of Sabbath keeping was Valère Gross, a Vaudois pastor of Maneille and St. Martin, Piedmont, one of the two pastors who survived the plague of 1630. In 1615, monks accused him of “being, not a Christian, but a Jew, because he observed no other holydays than the weekly Sabbath” (*Sketches of the Waldenses* [London: The Religious Tract Society, 1846], 113, 129, 133; Sophia Bompiani, *A Short History of the Italian Waldenses* [New York: A. S. Barnes, 1899], 105).

<sup>76</sup>In the Provençal language, Emil Levy quotes François Juste Marie Raynouard’s definition that simply explained the name *ensabat* as being a Waldensian sect (Emil Levy and Raynouard, *Provenzalisches Supplement-Wörterbuch: Berichtigungen und Ergänzungen zu Raynouards Lexique Roman*, 8 vols. [Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1892–1924], 3:28).

<sup>77</sup>Du Cange, *Glossarium*, 4:718; Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary Founded on the Translation of Andrews’ Edition of Freund’s Latin Dictionary*, rev. and enl. ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1879), 1609; F. P. Leverett, *A New and Copious Lexicon of the Latin Language* (Boston: J. H. Wilkins and R. B. Carter, 1840), 787; R. E. Latham, J. H. Baxter, and C. Johnson, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-list from British and Irish Sources* (London: British Academy, 1965), 414; *Lexicon Latinitatis medii aevi: Praesertim ad res ecclesiasticas investigandas pertinens, Corpus Christianorum*, ed. Albert Blaise (Turnholt: Brepols, 1975), 808; J. F. Niermeyer and C. van de Kieft, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, 2 vols. (Boston: Brill, 2002), 2:1207.

<sup>78</sup>“Sabbatum,” *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis*, 4:n.p.; “sabbata,” *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 1673; “sabbatum” in Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, 1609.

Etymological dictionaries dealing with the high Middle Ages do not reveal a direct linguistic connection from *Xabatatos*, *Xabatenses*, *Xabata*, *Chabata*, and *Chapata* to shoes, as Gretser suggested. Medieval dictionaries dealing with etymology, including Du Cange's lexicon, mention that this root was derived from the Hebrew word Sabbath, meaning rest.<sup>79</sup> A later edited reprint edition of Du Cange added the meaning of shoes to the root *sabbat* as a Latinized form of the Spanish, Portuguese, or French words for shoes—*zapato*, *sapato*, and *sabot*, and the meaning of certain Catholic festivals.<sup>80</sup> The common word for shoes in Latin is *calceus*,<sup>81</sup> while the word for sandals is *sandalium*.<sup>82</sup>

From linguistic morphology, the word *insabbatati* is composed of a prefix *in-*, the root *sabbat*, and the suffix *-atus*. The suffix *-atus* is commonly used to form participles and adjectives, and sometimes nouns.<sup>83</sup> The prefix *in-* can be added to verbal participles, adjectives, and nouns as negating the meaning of the word. This is the most common case. From our findings, it became clear that the prefix *in-* of the word *insabbatati* signified a negation of the word *sabbatati*.<sup>84</sup> In the light of the “Holy Days” theory, this understanding

<sup>79</sup>Du Cange, *Glossarium*, 4:718.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid. See also Joan Corominas, *Diccionario critico etimologico de la lengua Castellana*, 4 vols. (Bern: Francke, 1970), 4:834. Du Cange mentioned that in medieval literature the Spanish word *zapato* was Latinized into Latin word *sabatem*. The earliest occurrence of this Latinization, according to Du Cange, is recorded in the documents of the King Peter IV of Aragon from 1340s. J. Corominas, *Diccionario critico etimologico castellano e hispanico*, 7 vols. (Madrid: Gredos, 1987), 4:834, says: “there is a latinized form (of the word *zapato*) *sabbatum* in the statutes of Arles, and also *sabaterius* is frequently found in the same sources since 1252.” The early forms of Latinization could explain where Ebrardus might have gotten the idea of *insabbatati* being connected with the shoes.

<sup>81</sup>Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, 267, 1626. Other words for shoes were *calceolus*, *calciamen*, *calciamentum*, *calciatus*, and *subtalares* (Du Cange, *Glossarium*, 4:718).

<sup>82</sup>Variant words for sandals were *crepidatus*, *obstrigillus*, and *solea* (Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, 480, 1245, 1718).

<sup>83</sup>Peter Stotz, *Handbuch zur lateinischen Sprache des Mittelalters*, 5 vols. (Munich: Beck, 2000), 2:83.

<sup>84</sup>In the case of the word *insabbatati*, the use of the prefix *in-* as a negation would fit the different meanings of the root *sabbat* the best for some of the following reasons: (1) This use is the most common usage of the prefix *in-* (ibid., 2:130.1–9); (2) The negative meaning can be applied to the word independently if it is a participle, adjective, or noun (see ibid.). However, the prefix *in-* can be used in the sense of the preposition “in” only to form nouns (ibid., 2:130.10); (3) According to Fournier, Diderot, and Raynouard, the word *ensabatat* is an adjective used as a noun, which, in this case, indicates a negation or negative meaning of the word and rules out the possibility of its meaning to be linked with the sense of the preposition *in* (Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, eds., *Encyclopédie, ou, dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres*, 28 vols. [Paris: Briasson, 1782], 12:492). See also, Fournier, *Bibliothèque*, 248; Raynouard, *Lexique roman ou dictionnaire de la langue des troubadours*, 5 vols. (Heidelberg: Winter, 1928), 5:121.

makes sense because the label *insabbatati* signifies the Waldensian rejection of Catholic festivals, holy days, or sabbaths.

### Conclusion

Since the Middle Ages, historians have characterized the Waldenses by the uncomplimentary names *insabbatati* and *sabbatati* to indicate their unique attire by the type of shoes they wore, or their unique belief in rejecting Catholic holy days or festivals and practices. The research underlying this article has tried to decode the confusion surrounding these names. This has led to the following insights for historiography, previously unnoticed.

From the analysis of the shoe theory, the research brought out that the wearing of perforated shoes was not introduced by or was not the custom of the Waldenses or the Poor of Lyon, but it was a custom introduced by the Poor Catholics and the Reconciled Poor. This custom was abolished by the command of Innocent III early in the thirteenth century. Bernard Gui attested to that fact, saying that he was not an eyewitness of such shoe-wearing, but that such custom was “in the beginning” followed by the leaders of what he assumed was the Waldensian movement.

Furthermore, the research showed that Ebrardus, who is often considered as a reliable primary source, confused the Waldenses with the Poor Catholics, which were characterized by the wearing of perforated shoes. Ebrardus also did not seem to realize that the label *Sabatati* predated the appearance of the shoe controversy, and could not therefore refer to the perforated shoes of the Poor Catholics. Later authors adopted Ebrardus’s conjecture as a first-hand report and thus a primary authority. This made the shoe-theory the most widely accepted explanation for names *Insabbatati* and *Sabbatati* today.

The analysis of the second major interpretation of the Waldensian names *insabbatati* and *sabbatati* as characteristic of their faith or belief, expressing their rejection of Catholic festivals, holy days, or sabbaths, led to the following observations:

1. This interpretation is in harmony with the longstanding historic self-image of the Waldenses. It was the prevalent view in the earliest Waldensian literature and revealed that the unique practice of the earliest Waldenses was to refuse to observe Catholic holy days and teachings. The Waldenses held to this view for centuries.

2. The primary sources do confirm the Waldensian practice of opposition to Catholic holy days, Sabbaths, and teachings for centuries, while the wearing of unique shoes was only of very short duration during the first half of the thirteenth century. Furthermore, the wearing of unique shoes would have made them an easy target of the inquisition, which could be easily avoided by changing their shoes.

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Hugh James’s analysis of this word also concludes that the prefix *in-* would be either a negation (in privative) or a misspelled form of *ex-* with the idea of exclusion (*ex-sabatati*) (Hugh James, “The Waldenses,” *The British Magazine and Monthly Register of Religious and Ecclesiastical Information, Parochial History, and Documents Respecting the State of the Poor, Progress of Education, Etc.*, [London: J. Petheram, 1839], 15:185).

3. Etymological arguments support the Waldensian opposition to the Catholic holy days and teachings not advocated by the Bible. From a linguistic viewpoint, it is the best explanation for the meaning of the prefix *in-* in *insabbatati* describing their mission of reform to call people back from the traditions of the Catholic Church to the simple apostolic practices of the early Christians. It also gives support to their claim that they were not a new religious movement of the twelfth century as Catholics had argued, but that the beliefs of the Waldenses had their spiritual roots in the apostolic faith as set forth in the Bible.

4. The term *sabbatati* also could have been used to describe some groups of Waldenses who followed the Jewish practice of resting on the Sabbath. This fits the meaning of both *Insabbatati* as depicting the rejection of Catholic holy days, Sabbaths, and teachings, and *sabbatati* describing the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. Primary sources show that one inquisitor in the thirteenth century wrote a book against the Waldenses and Cathars in which he refuted their criticism that Roman Catholics observed Sunday instead of the seventh-day Sabbath. This is evidence that there were Waldenses and Cathars who kept the seventh-day Sabbath during the high Middle Ages. Additional evidence shows that several groups closely associated and considered part of the Waldensian movement did indeed keep the seventh-day Sabbath as early as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

In summary, this research demonstrates that the interpretation based on Waldensian wearing of special type of shoes is not as strong as historians have assumed. Also, there is no evidence that historians expounding the shoe interpretation have done a linguistic analysis of these words in the context of the primary sources. It is important to note that none of the historians of this view offered any explanation for the use of the two distinct words, *insabbatati* and *sabbatati*, although linguistically these terms are opposite in meaning. In the light of the morphology of these names, evidence points to the second interpretation because it better explains the prominent characteristic of the belief of the Waldenses as a reform movement.