A peripheral heretic? An early fourteenth-century heresy trial from Sweden*

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Abstract
This article examines the inquisition against Botulf, the only person known to have been executed for heresy in medieval Sweden. It analyses the tactics of evasion that Botulf employed to escape detection and apprehension by tapping into common conceptions of the Eucharist to gloss his dissent. Through a close reading of the sentence in its historical, cultural and liturgical context, the article argues that it not only records a unique case in medieval Sweden, but that it performs clerical and elite identities by drawing on biblical and liturgical topoi, as well as antiheretical rhetoric to depict Botulf as a ‘membrum diaboli’.

In the current and growing scholarship on medieval dissent and popular heresy much attention has been given to the movements in continental Europe and the British Isles. Among English-speaking scholars, seminal works such as those by Robert Lerner, Peter Biller and Robert I. Moore have over the past decades made popular heresy a central issue for medieval historians.¹ These discussions have mainly focused on movements such as the ‘Cathars’, Waldensians, and the Lollards in Great Britain.² Scandinavia, however, has been an exception in this growing field of medieval studies. Linguistic hurdles and much more scarce documentation, partly due to the absence

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¹ H. Grundmann, Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter: Untersuchungen über die geschichtlichen Zusammenhänge zwischen der Ketzerei, den Bettelorden und der religiösen Frauenbewegung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert und über die geschichtlichen Grundlagen der deutschen Mystik (2nd edn., Hildesheim, 1961); R. Lerner, The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages (Berkeley, Calif., 1972); P. Biller, The Waldensians, 1170–1330: Between a Religious Order and a Church (Aldershot, 2001), along with several edited volumes, most notably in this context C. Bruschi, Texts and the Repression of Heresy (Woodbridge, 2003); R. I. Moore, The Formation of a Persecuting Society (Oxford, 1987; 2nd edn., 2007).

² I use the term ‘Cathar’ with some caution for lack of a better established word, as the group in question never used it themselves. The question of the nature and organization of this group has been the cause of much debate. For a recent overview of the positions on this matter, see Cathars in Question, ed. A. Sennis (York, 2016). On the problem of naming the Cathars, see C. Taylor ‘Looking for the “good men” in the Languedoc: an alternative to “Cathars”’, at pp. 242–56 in the same volume.
of continuously active papal inquisitors, have left this an understudied area.\(^3\) With the exception of the Beguines, there are no known movements similar to those on the continent that were considered suspicious or heretical. Only one case is recorded in which a lay person was executed after being formally convicted as an obstinate and relapsed heretic – Botulf from Östby, in the parish of Gottträa east of Uppsala. He was in all likelihood executed sometime after Easter 1311 for having publicly and repeatedly denied the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.\(^4\) Although Botulf was not the only person accused of, or disciplined for, religious dissent, his public and repeated dissent on a matter of doctrine in defiance of attempts to correct him, his execution, and the way the case was documented make it an important instance in the history of religious dissent in medieval Sweden.\(^5\)

Accusations of heresy in the area that is now Sweden were far less common than in England and continental Europe, with only a few known cases over a period of some 260 years.\(^6\) The first known accusation of heresy was levelled against Archbishop Jacob Erlandsen (Jacobus Erlandi) of Lund, then under Danish rule, in 1264. Erlandsen was accused of altering the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed and instructing his priests to teach their parishioners accordingly.\(^7\) In 1393, Heyno, the parish priest of St. Olof’s church in Visby, Gotland (under Danish rule but belonging to the Swedish diocese of Linköping), accused the Franciscans and Dominicans of being bad Christians and held that it was a mortal sin to attend mass delivered by a priest who himself was in a state of mortal sin. We know nothing more than that Heyno was suspended from his office and sent to his bishop.\(^8\) In 1442, a man named Hemming, ‘a simple and rustic man’, had argued with the Bridgettine brothers in Vadstena, proposing tenets that went ‘against the faith, canon law, and the Rule of the Saviour [the Bridgettine Rule] and claimed to be a messenger of the Virgin’. He was examined by Bishop Nils König of Linköping and found guilty of heresy (‘convictus est de heresi’). He was then imprisoned and after a period of fasting was made to recant and submit to a penance that consisted of taking part in a procession led by the bishop, clergy and the people, with Hemming half-naked, carrying firewood on his back and a candle in his hand, proclaiming that he was to be burnt if he relapsed.

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\(^3\) H. C. Lea noted in his history of medieval heresy that there were three papally appointed inquisitors in Scandinavia, but that none of them appear to have been active (\textit{A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages} (New York, 1888), p. 355). For a discussion of these, see B. Bandlien and G. Knutsen, ‘Kjetterinkvisitorer I Norge’, \textit{Historisk tidsskrift}, lxxxvi (2008), 433–50.

\(^4\) I distinguish here between the doctrine of the real presence, which refers to Christ’s actual presence in the consecrated host and wine effected by a validly ordained priest, and transubstantiation, which refers to the way in which Christ becomes present. Transubstantiation means that the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the substance of Christ while the appearance of bread and wine remain. For an overview of the theories of how Christ’s real presence was effected, see M. Mccord Adams, \textit{Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist: Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham} (Oxford, 2010). Botulf’s offence referred to the denial of Christ’s presence and while Allesson may have brought up transubstantiation during their exchange, there is no explicit mention of it in the sentence.

\(^5\) In Gratian’s \textit{Decretum}, a heretic is defined as a person who holds an erroneous belief and contumaciously resists attempts at correction (\textit{Decretum magistri Gratiani, in Corpus iuris canonici}, ed. E. Friedberg and E. Ludwig (2nd edn., 2 vols., Leipzig, 1879–81), pars 2, causa 24, quaestio 3, canon 31 (ii. 998)).

\(^6\) For a summary of all known cases in Sweden and Scandinavia, see S. A. Mitchell, ‘Heresy and heterodoxy in medieval Scandinavia’, in \textit{Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Heresy, Magic and Witchcraft}, ed. L. Nyholm Kallestrup and R. M. Toivo (Cham, 2017), pp. 35–36. I exclude from the list of cases in Sweden the victims of the 1520 Stockholm Bloodbath where King Christian II of Denmark executed some 100 members of the Swedish nobility. In this case, it is unlikely that the accusation of heresy was used for any actual concern with the integrity of religious faith.

\(^7\) D.S. 496 (\textit{S.D.H.K.} 828). The papal letter does not specify the nature of the alterations.

\(^8\) \textit{S.D.H.K.} 14195, 14196, 14198.
The ritual was then repeated in the monastery in Vadstena. Finally, in 1506, the Beguine community in Vadstena were expelled from their premises adjacent to the monastery over concerns regarding their orthodoxy.

In addition to these instances, there are a number of cases that fall into the wider category of heterodoxy in the late fifteenth century, where lay people were accused of church theft (sometimes considered a form of heresy), apostasy, witchcraft and worshipping Odin or the Devil. The descriptions of these cases, contained in the Stockholm municipal court records, are very brief and no information is given regarding the ecclesiastical response. Among these, only one case is recorded of a person being executed: Eric Clauesson in 1492, who was burnt at the stake for worshipping Odin and walking in the opposite direction of the sun’s movement around a churchyard nine Thursdays in a row.

These cases are sparsely documented with little or no surviving material that indicates the process the accused were submitted to, and only rarely do they attempt to record the voices of the accused. The surviving documentation on Botulf, which can be found in the Appendix below, gives us access to information about his heresy, as well as echoes of his own reasoning, the ecclesiastical response, and his apprehension and trial. This case is important for scholars of heresy in general in that it shows how allegations of heresy could be dealt with outside of continental Europe and England, and how such situations called for a balance to be struck with secular legislation that did not address heresy directly and where there is no evidence of prior experience of handling heresy. This case can therefore serve as a useful point of comparison for future scholarship on medieval heresy in areas of Latin Christianity not commonly associated with heresy and inquisition.

*Botulf* was first questioned around 1303 by the Archbishop of Uppsala, Nils Allesson (Nicholaus Allonis, r. 1292–1305) after it had come to the archbishop’s attention that he had denied the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He was dismissed with a ‘salutary penance’ (details of which were unspecified but may have involved public rituals of penitence in the parish church). However, on Easter Sunday in 1310, as he was about to receive the Eucharist from his parish priest in Gottröra, Father Andreas, he was asked if he believed the host to be the body of Christ. Botulf denied it, saying that if it were the body of Christ, the priest would have already consumed it. To this he added that if a person ate of someone else’s flesh, that person would exact vengeance if he could, and this would be so much more the case with God when he returned in glory. He was called to appear before Allesson’s successor, Nils Kettilsson (Nicholaus Catilli, r. 1308–14), but refused to appear. On the feast of St. Martin, 11 November 1310, as the archbishop conducted his visitation of the nearby Närtuna church, Botulf was seen and apprehended. When asked whether he had said what he was reported to have said, Botulf answered in the affirmative. A makeshift inquisition was set up and testimonies taken. Botulf was detained and when people approached him with the warning that he would be burned if he did not repent, he responded that the fire of the stake would soon pass away. Kettilsson, convinced that Botulf was a relapsed heretic, released him to the secular arm for punishment on Maundy Thursday, 8 April 1311.

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9 *Vadstenadiariet: Latinsk text med översättning och kommentar*, ed. C. Gejrot (Stockholm, 1996), pp. 232–4.
10 *Vadstenadiariet*, p. 287.
11 For a summary of these cases, see Mitchell, ‘Heresy and heterodoxy’, pp. 44–5. The cases are recorded in *Stockholms stads tänkeböcker. Andra serien*, ed. J. A. Almquist, E. Hildebrand and H. Hildebrand (5 vols., Stockholm, 1927–33), i. 148; ii. 66–7; ii. 418; iii. 18; iii. 333.
The sentence passed by Archbishop Nils Kettilsson condemning Botulf to be handed over to the secular arm is the only surviving documentation on Botulf, available in the Swedish National Archives (Orig. perg. 1311 8.4, S.D.H.K. 2413; see Figure 1) in Stockholm and as a transcription in Svenskt diplomatarium (Diplomatarium Suecanum, hereafter D.S.).\(^{12}\) The depositions taken during the inquisition have been lost, and while Archbishop Allesson probably kept some records of Botulf’s case that his successor could draw on, nothing has survived. In spite of its brevity – only 534 words – this document contains important information not only on the institutional reaction to allegations of heresy in the north, but also of how clerical elites perceived lay expressions of dissent and sought to maintain control over orthodoxy.

\(^{12}\) D.S. 1789 (S.D.H.K. 2413).
The sentence against Botulf is not only a partisan description of the events that transpired, but also a performative text, in which a set of subject positions (in particular clerical-lay, orthodox-heterodox, litteratus-illitteratus) are enacted and reproduced. Reima Välimäki has pointed out that Kettilsson followed established practice and announced publicly his excommunications and encouraged his clergy to make the sentence publicly known in their homilies in nearby churches. It is therefore likely, he argued, that the sentence against Botulf has been made public in a similar fashion as a deterrent against heresy. The sentence would also in all likelihood have been pronounced in the presence of the cathedral chapter when it was passed on Maundy Thursday. This performative context of the sentence leads us to ask how it reflects and reasserts the identities of the archbishop and his audience. This requires a careful examination of the conceptual apparatus and rhetoric by which Botulf’s heresy was described and contained as well as how the clerics involved positioned themselves against Botulf. These positions and power relations were not uncontested, however, and it is therefore necessary to examine the tactics whereby Botulf sought to resist and evade detection and capture.

Although Botulf’s case is well known among Swedish historians, it has received very little attention from international scholars. This is mainly because there are only four academic articles that study his case in any depth – all written in Swedish. Three of these articles, by Bruno Lesch, Oscar Wieselgren and Douglas Edenholm, date from 1926, 1950 and 1951 respectively, and it is only recently that Botulf’s case has been revisited by Reima Välimäki who focused on the text-based and juridical power exercised over Botulf in the sentence in light of the antiheretical conceptual apparatus developed during the thirteenth century on the continent and the 1296 Law of Uppland. Lesch’s article, although published almost a century ago, is by far the most detailed and accurate description of the case in twentieth-century scholarship and contains a fruitful

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13 See P. Biller, ‘Intellectuals and the masses: oxen and she-asses in the medieval church’, in The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity, ed. J. H. Arnold (Oxford, 2014), pp. 323–39, for an overview of (elite) clerical perceptions of the laity. See also Biller, The Wildenses, pp. 169–90. See also L. J. Sackville, Heresy and Heretics in the Thirteenth Century: the Textual Representations (York, 2011), p. 20; Moore, Formation, in particular pp. 128–31. I use the Latin terms litterati-illiterati here for their specific connotations of Latinate vs. non-Latinate. A person able to write in the vernacular would, according to this schema, still count as illiteratus, which adds another layer to the elite nature of the medieval clerical class.

14 R. Välimäki, “‘Hereticum iudicamus’. Kättardomen över Botulf vid rättegången i Uppsala ärkestift 1310–1311”, Historisk tidskrift for Finland, xcvi (2011), 110–30, at pp. 129–30. For an overview of anti-heresy measures as propaganda and their performative contexts, see I. Forrest, The Detection of Heresy in Late Medieval England (Oxford, 2005), ch. 9, and in particular pp. 130–42.

15 As John H. Arnold argued on the challenge of interpreting the material left to us by the Inquisition, ‘we have access to voices and subject-positions, not to whole minds and persons’ (‘The historian as inquisitor: on the ethics of interrogating subaltern voices’, Rethinking History, ii (1998), 379–86, at p. 384).

16 I here follow Michel de Certeau’s conception of ‘tactics’ as the calculated actions taken by subaltern agents as opportunities arise to disrupt or evade the control of hegemonic agents, but always within and against a given discourse (M. de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, trans. S. F. Rendall (Berkeley, Calif., 1984), pp. 29–42, see esp. pp. 35–9. For an analysis of tactical evasions from inquisitorial scrutiny, based on de Certeau’s distinction, see Arnold, Inquisition and Power: Catharism and the Confessing Subject in Medieval Languedoc (Philadelphia, Pa., 2001), ch. 5.

17 A Swedish translation of the sentence was published together with a commentary in Röster från svensk medeltid. Latinska texter i original och översättning, ed. H. Aili and others (Stockholm, 1990), pp. 110–17.

18 B. Lesch, ‘En svensk kätteriprocess i början av 1300-talet’, Historisk tidskrift for Finland, xi (1926), 45–78; O. Wieselgren, ‘Botolf från Östby. En inquisitionsprocess från Sveriges medeltid’, Svensk tidskrift, xxxvii (1950), 109–18; D. Edenholm, ‘Heretikern Botulf från Gottröra. Föregångsman eller icke?’, Religion och kultur, xxii (1951), 191–9; Välimäki, “‘Hereticum iudicamus’”.

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discussion of the relationship between the sentence and secular law that Välimäki picked up. Wieselgren’s brief essay attempted to link Botulf with the Cathars in Europe, whereas Edenholm saw in Botulf a potential precursor to his own liberal theology. Botulf was also discussed more briefly by scholars during the first half of the twentieth century where perceptions have varied and been marked by Lutheran antipathies to the Catholic Church, the desire to see a precursor to Enlightenment scepticism, or liberal theology.19

In both scholarship and fiction, Botulf has been seen as modern man and a heroic martyr to truth and conscience. In Emilia Fogelklou’s scholarly examination she stated: ‘In the midst of the congregation he stands as a sign of things to come, something that is yet only clad in the despised habit of poverty and ignorance’.20 Although some perceptions of Botulf have been fraught with self-flattering teleologies, others have been marked by (equally self-flattering) classism and modern versions of the clerical disdain of Botulf in Kettälsson’s letter. Thus, Tor Andrae (later bishop of Linköping 1935–47) branded Botulf a ‘fanatic’, not unlike the modern positivist thinkers he disliked. Yngve Brilioth (then bishop of Växjö, 1938–50, later archbishop of Uppsala 1950–8), described Botulf in passing in his grand history of the Swedish Church as ‘naively persistent’ in his ‘layman’s reasonings’. Bruno Lesch believed that his identification of Botulf as a man of moderately high social status and of more advanced age explained his brave defiance, as if a younger man of lower status would be less able to take such a stance.21

Since the publication of the first three articles on Botulf, medieval heresy and dissent have increasingly attracted the attention of historians and as a result of their work and methodological advances we are now in a better position to examine Botulf’s case afresh with more nuance. In this regard, Välimäki’s analysis has cleared new ground, although there are several aspects of the case that still remain to be discussed.

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About Botulf we know nothing more than what emerges from the sentence. He was in all likelihood a farmer. Lesch believed he may have been identical to the Botulf Jo(a)nsson who a few decades earlier witnessed a land transaction and found himself among high-ranking members of society.22 Although the sentence does not say so, it seems that Botulf was first questioned by the archbishop regarding his views on the Eucharist in 1303. Archbishop Allesson died in 1305, which provides a terminus ante quem. Lesch argued that Botulf’s encounter with Archbishop Allesson took place on the latter’s visitations in the area during the autumn of 1303.23 The list of the archbishop’s visitations

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19 E. Fogelklou, *Ur fromhetslivets-svensk-historia* (2 vols., Stockholm, 1916–17), ii. 115–16 (my translation). Douglas Edenholm’s article ‘Heretriken Botulf från Gottträsta. Föregångaren eller icke?’ (‘Botulf, the heretic from Gottträsta: precursor or not?’) is indicative of Edenholm’s liberal theology and his rejection of sacramental theology of the high church movement that was gaining ground at the time. The Swedish positivist philosopher and public intellectual Anton Nyström saw Botulf as the first in a succession of Swedish heretics and free thinkers (*fritänkare*), *Kristendomen och den fria tanken. En kritiskt historisk framställning* (Stockholm, 1908), p. 414.

20 Fogelklou, *Ur fromhetslivets-svensk-historia*, ii. 116: ‘Mitt bland de mässfirande står han där som en signal till något som skall komma, något som ännu är klätt i armodets och okunnighetens föraktade dräkt’.

21 T. Andrae, *Psykoanalyse och religion* (Stockholm, 1927), pp. 93–4; Y. Brilioth, *Svenska kyrkans historia band 2: den senare medeltiden, 1274–1521* (Stockholm, 1941), p. 59; Lesch, ‘En svensk kätteriprocess’, pp. 62–3. Edenholm rightly takes Brilioth’s dismissal of Botulf to task, ‘Heretiker, Botulf’, p. 107. For Fogelklou, although Botulf was a brave man of conscience, he could only express himself in his ‘unlearned, barbaric manner’ (Fogelklou, *Ur fromhetslivets-svensk-historia*, ii. 116).

22 Lesch, ‘En svensk kätteriprocess’, pp. 62–3. Cf. D.S. 949 (S.D.H.K. 1387), 1267 (S.D.H.K. 1829). In D.S. 949, a man named Botulf appears together with the priest Nils from Skepptuna, nearby Gottträsta.

23 Lesch, ‘En svensk kätteriprocess’, p. 58.
in that autumn mentions Gottröra towards the end of a long list of places visited. 24 No episcopal registers of this visitation survive that could give us further information on how Botulf’s heresy first came to the archbishop’s notice, but it was probably already known either by the priest or trusted parishioners who reported it. 25 Given the nature of Botulf’s offence and that he was given a ‘salutary penance’, Lesch argued that it was likely that this penance followed established procedures for graver crimes and lasted for seven years. Thus, when Botulf relapsed in 1310, it would have been on the occasion of his return to the community. 26

On his encounter with Archbishop Allesson in 1303, Botulf is said to have been cited for having said that the Eucharist ‘is nothing’ (‘nullum esse’), that is, denying the sacrament. Botulf is described as ‘recognizing the aforementioned heresy and finally revoking and denying it’. 27 The word ‘finally’ (‘tandem’) subtly reflects a drawn out exchange in which the archbishop, drawing from a vastly unequal power dynamic, leads Botulf to first recognize the point on which he erred and then turn from it. The aim of such a conversation, from an ecclesiastical point of view, was to allow the accused to ‘spontaneously’ return to the fold and to conform. 28 In light of Botulf’s later affirmation of his beliefs in 1310, it is unlikely that he was actually convinced by the archbishop and more likely that he sought to evade further trouble by conforming to the archbishop’s demands.

On Easter Sunday, 19 April 1310, in Gottröra church, Botulf went up with his fellow parishioners to receive the Eucharist. This probably marked the end of his penance and his readmission to the sacraments. According to the twenty-first canon of the fourth Lateran council in 1215, this was also the time of the year that each faithful person was expected to receive the Eucharist after first confessing their sins to their priest. 29 As he was about to receive the host, Father Andreas, the local parish priest, asked Botulf whether he believed it to be the true body of Christ. Andreas appears not to have been the parish priest when Botulf first expressed his doubts, but ‘had previously heard that he had denied it [the real presence]’. Botulf then responded:

if it truly were the body of Christ, the priest alone would have consumed it already. He added that he did not want to eat the body of Christ, but that there were other acts of devotion that he could perform before God. He gave, moreover, a reason for what he had said, or rather vomited forth error by applying this unsuitable simile: that if someone were to eat the body of another human, that person would exact revenge on this man if he could, so much more so God, when

24 D.S. 2218 (S.D.H.K. 2908).
25 On the role of the laity and in particular the trustworthy men, the fideligni, in the detection of heresy, see Forrest, Detection, ch. 8. See also the discussion below on the presence of trustworthy men during the inquisition.
26 Lesch, ‘En svensk kätteriprocess’, p. 59.
27 ‘et tandem heresim recognoscente, et tandem suum errorem reuocante et abnegante’.

28 See, e.g., the council of Toulouse 1229, canon 10, ‘suum recognoscente errorem’, in Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collection, ed. G. D. Mansi and others (53 vols., repr. Paris, 1901–27), xxiii. 196. Notice the similarity with Kettilsson’s phrasing in the previous footnote. Philip the Chancellor (1160–1236) held that many heretics returned to the fold of their own volition once their error had become apparent to them (‘cognito errore, plerique revertuntur’) (Philip the Chancellor, Summa de bono, ed. N. Wicki (2 vols., Vienna, 1985), ii. 204). For an analysis of the inquisition’s stated desire to retrieve a ‘spontaneous’ confession, see Arnold, Inquisition and Power, pp. 96–7; see also p. 11 for Arnold’s Foucauldian discussion of inquisitorial power. On the uses of imprisonment, see J. B. Given, Inquisition and Medieval Society: Power, Discipline, and Resistance in Languedoc (Ithaca, N.Y., 1997), ch. 2.
29 Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, ed. N. J. Tanner (2 vols., London, 1990), i. 245.
he comes in his power; [he also said] many other things which were not only blasphemous, but heretical and insane.30

Botulf had reiterated one of the most common objections to the doctrine of the real presence: how could Christ’s historical and finite body be replicated infinitely through the repeated consecration of hosts? The solution to this problem had been articulated in the late eleventh century during the controversy started by Berengar of Tours (d. 1088) and his questioning of the real presence. Responding to the challenge posed by Berengar, theologians such as Guitmond of Aversa (d. c.1097) articulated, among other things, the distinction between substance and accidents (the appearance of bread and wine), the former being changed during consecration whereas the latter remains. This means that however small a fraction of the host is consumed, the entirety of Christ’s presence is received (the doctrine of concomitance). Therefore, as Guitmond emphasized, although the amount of consecrated hosts would be larger than the historical, physical, body of Jesus Christ, his divine substance remained unchanged.31

This position was far from universally accepted among the laity after the fourth Lateran council had enshrined the doctrine of real presence and transubstantiation in 1215. Instead, it was a common topic for popular dissent and heresy.32 The common critique that even if the body of Christ were as big as a mountain (or the Alps, a hill, a castle) it must surely have been consumed by the time of speaking, can be found repeated with many variations. Botulf’s position on the Eucharist was thus far from unique in Western Europe. Its similarities with the Cathar rejection of the sacraments led Wieselgren to believe that Botulf in fact was a Cathar.33 There is no evidence of any presence of European Cathars, nor is it necessary to pose one, as there are countless examples of lay persons without a connection to the group holding the same position as Botulf. The sacramental language of the high middle ages, Miri Rubin pointed out, naturally invited strong forms of criticism. This critique, Rubin continued, developed in areas where the philosophical edifice of the Church was at its weakest. What constituted heresy therefore changed as that edifice developed, leading to new criticisms that Rubin argued were ‘structurally embedded within the symbolic system and its statements’. This makes it possible for us to hear similar points of critique from the illiterate peasant as well as from scholars.34 The consolidation of the Eucharist in the high middle ages as the source and summit of Christian life, the doctrine of the real presence and transubstantiation – which even the guardians of medieval orthodoxy conceded was counterintuitive

30 ‘quod si esset uerum corpus Christi, solus sacerdos diu illud consumpsisset, adiciens quod nollet comedere corpus Christi, sed alia que posset obsequia prestare Deo, et reddens racionem sui dicti immo ererum euomens incongruam similitudinem applicando, quod si quis commeredetur corpus alterius hominis, male sibi redderet si posset, multo forcius Deus, quando uenerit ad suam potestatem, et alia multa non solum blasphema, uerum eciam heretica et insana’.

31 For an overview of the development of the doctrines concerning the Eucharistic, see J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: a History of the Development of Doctrine* (5 vols., Chicago, Ill., 1971–89), iii. 184–204, and in particular pp. 202–3. See also G. Macy, *The Theologies of the Eucharist in the Early Scholastic Period: a Study of the Salvific Function of the Sacrament According to the Theologians, c.1080–c.1220* (Oxford, 1984).

32 For examples of dissenting views on the Eucharist, see M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi: the Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 319–34, and in particular pp. 321–2.

33 Wieselgren, ‘Botolf från Östby’, pp. 113–15. Edenholm developed this idea further, suggesting that Botulf would have acquired Cathar beliefs through tradesmen or preachers in Uppsala. According to Edenholm, the Cathar hypothesis was first proposed in a set of lectures by Emil Lindenholm in Uppsala in the early 1920s (Edenholm, ‘Heretikern Botolf’, p. 195). Lesch, on the other hand ruled out the Cathar hypothesis, and likewise points to the use of the mountain-metaphor in non-Cathar contexts (Lesch, ‘En svensk kätteriprocess’, pp. 67–8).

34 Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 319–20.
– naturally invited these critiques, without there having to be a connection between groups and individuals that issued similar statements.\footnote{In Thomas Aquinas’s hymn for the feast of Corpus Christi, for instance, we find in the \textit{Lauda Sion} the implicit admission that the doctrine of the real presence is beyond the intellect: ‘Dogma datur Christianis/ quod in carnem transit panis/ et uinum in sanguinem:/ quod non capis, quod non uides/ animosa firmat fides/ praeter rerum ordinem’ (‘This teaching is given to Christians, that the bread is turned into flesh, and the wine into blood. Living faith affirms what you cannot grasp, and what you cannot see, beyond the order of things’ (my translation)). \textit{The Oxford Book of Medieval Latin Verse}, ed. F. J. E. Raby (Oxford, 1959), p. 399. Lesch sees Botulf as offering a natural reaction to the relatively late implementation and propagation of the new doctrines under the reforming archbishops Allesson and Kettilsson (Lesch, ‘En svensk kätteriprocess’, p. 66).} The shifting emphasis in doctrinal debates thus created new areas of contestation that cut through all levels of society.

In several \textit{Summae} on heresy, inquisitors’ manuals and heresy depositions, doubt about the Eucharist was often a defining feature of heresy.\footnote{See, e.g., Biller, ‘Intellectuals and the masses’, pp. 330–1.} In this respect, Botulf was not unique. But his continued reasoning merits some comment. Botulf is reported to have said that he did not want to receive the sacrament, yet he was already standing in front of the priest holding the host. In other words, although he had no desire to do so, Botulf was planning to receive a host he did not believe contained the real presence and would have done so had he not been pressed by Father Andreas. In this account, Botulf is willing to participate in the ritual for the sake of being let into the community and leaving behind the time of penance that would have marked him out from the rest of the villagers, but he refuses to lie to the priest and his fellow parishioners when asked. Rejection of the doctrine of the real presence did not necessarily mean that Botulf also rejected the value of being a member of a worshipping community or did not see some spiritual value in the Eucharist. Some English Lollards, for instance, still went to Catholic masses and participated in the Eucharist, even if they rejected much of the official teachings of the Church, and the doctrine of transubstantiation.\footnote{See, e.g., J. A. F. Thomson, \textit{The Later Lollards, 1414–1520} (London, 1965), p. 247.} Botulf appears to have been prepared to do the same, until he was questioned. Gottröra was a small parish where it would have been impossible for Botulf to keep his dissent a secret, given his record. Andreas pushed him into admission when everyone’s eyes were set on him where he could not slip away, which left Botulf with the option of either lying – at the risk of being caught out by his neighbours – or heresy, both being sinful and posing a risk for his standing in his local community. He therefore tried to gloss his statements.

What Botulf may have been attempting to do by alluding to alternative ways of honouring and serving God was to invoke other established ways of communing with God outside of the Eucharistic celebration, as a way of glossing over his reluctance to receive the host. His continued reasoning about cannibalism and revenge, incongruous as it is with his initial denial of the real presence, may be a reflection of the didactic problem facing the proponents of the real presence: why does Christ not appear as flesh and blood on the altar? A common answer to this question, given by, for example, Jacques de Vitry (c.1160–1240) was that no apparent change happens for three reasons: first because faith loses its merit if one can see what one believes in; second, because people would, justly, feel horror at eating human flesh and drinking human blood; third, to avoid being mocked for eating the flesh and drinking the blood of a dead man.\footnote{Jacques de Vitry, \textit{The Historia Occidentalis of Jacques de Vitry: a Critical Edition}, ed. J. F. Hinnebusch (Fribourg, 1972), p. 209. The argument that Christ’s body and blood are hidden to avoid horror derives ultimately from Ambrose’s \textit{De sacramentis}, PL., xvi, col. 443.} The second answer appears to be relevant in this context and had perhaps been communicated through...
various miracle stories and preaching *exempla*, catechesis, homilies, or perhaps even more likely in Botulf’s conversations with Archbishop Allesson in 1303. One very common *exemplum* tells of Pope Gregory the Great’s encounter with a woman who refused to believe that the consecrated host was truly the body of Christ as he offered it to her — a setting very similar to the situation Botulf found himself in. Gregory asked God for a miracle to strengthen her faith, and where the host had been a severed finger suddenly appeared, covered in blood. After the woman was convinced, Gregory prayed once more and the finger returned to its previous appearance, whereupon she received it.39 The *Vitae patrum*, a late antique collection of hagiographical writings, tells of a Scythian whose unbelief was overcome by a vision during mass of a child being cut apart by an angel, who then gathered the blood in the chalice. Horrified as he received actual flesh and blood, the Scythian exclaimed that he believed it was indeed the body and blood of Christ, whereupon the sacrament returned to its appearance as bread and wine.40 As Caroline Walker Bynum noted in connection to both of these cases, ‘[i]t is almost as if the reverse transformation is the important miracle’.41 Rubin argued that the elaboration of miracle stories relating visions of the Christ child in the host or of pieces of flesh getting stuck in the throat of a communicant could make the breaking of the cannibalism taboo acceptable in a limited and symbolic setting.42

From the twelfth century, such stories of *dauerwunder* — miraculous appearances of Christ’s actual flesh and blood — became ever more popular as the Eucharist gained a more central position, and inspired lay visionaries in their fervent belief in Christ’s presence in the sacrament.43 But it could also easily be received in an unintended way having the opposite effect, and Botulf may have been such a case.

The fear of vengeance that Botulf expressed may also have been an attempt to tap into the deep reverence cultivated around the Eucharist which taught that the reception of the consecrated host by someone in a state of mortal sin would not lead to salvation, but to God’s vengeance, in line with Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians XI: 29: ‘For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves’.44

As he appears in this account, Botulf has shifted his position from his first denial of the real presence to implicitly accepting it in his continued reflections on cannibalism. Just as he appears to have done in his encounter with Archbishop Allesson years before, Botulf seems to have understood the danger that he was in and sought by various means to placate the ecclesiastical authority he was facing by adopting a position that would seem to harmonize with what he thought they wanted to hear. In light of his later refusal to recant when faced with the possibility of execution, Botulf appears here as someone who was unwilling to lie, but was prepared to take the necessary steps to avoid landing himself in further trouble. Botulf was attempting to maintain his own position

39 Paschasius Radbertus, *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, ed. B. Paulus, *C.C.C.M.* 16 (Turnhout, 1969), sect. 14 (p. 87). This was later incorporated in Guittmond of Aversa’s *De corporis et sanguinis ueritate libri tres*, *P.L.*, clix, col. 1479c–d.

40 *P.L.*, lxxiii, col. 978d–980a. This story formed part of the *Verba seniorum*, an early medieval appendix to the *Vitae patrum* and was inserted by Paschasius Radbertus in his *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, sect. 14 (pp. 88–9); cf. Guittmond of Aversa, *De corporis et sanguinis ueritate*, *P.L.*, clix, col. 1479d–1480a.

41 C. W. Bynum, *Christian Materiality: an Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York, 2011), p. 143.

42 Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 360.

43 See Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, pp. 139–45.

44 Paschasius Radbertus, for instance, relates the story of a Jew who tried to receive the consecrated host in order to spit it out and as a result God made him unable to speak (*De corpore et sanguine Domini*, sect. 6 (p. 36)).
and evade the ecclesiastical authorities by first trying to blend in with the rest of the congregation during communion and then, when he had made his views public, to gloss over them. These evasions are not unlike the tactics found among deponents in inquisitorial registers from around the same time on the continent, and with Lollards in the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. Inquisitors, too, were well aware of the ways in which suspects might try to evade detection by appearing to conform to the standards of orthodoxy.

Not surprisingly, Botulf’s attempt to explain himself did not convince Father Andreas, who reported him to Archbishop Kettilsson and requested that he bring Botulf in for further interrogation. The archbishop agreed, but although a call went out for Botulf to appear in Uppsala, he refused to meet with the archbishop. According to the archbishop’s account, Botulf was seen and apprehended on the feast of St. Martin (11 November), when Kettilsson conducted a visitation at Närtna (around eight kilometres south of Gottöröra). Among the people gathered on account of the feast and the presence of the archbishop, was Botulf. This account appears contradictory – why would Botulf, who only six months earlier had once more come to the archbishop’s attention and who was avoiding interrogation, suddenly be standing in a crowd around the archbishop? Although it is impossible to know for certain what motivated Botulf to go there, one clue may be the location of Närtna and the importance of the feast of St. Martin. The episcopal visitation, taking place at the saint’s feast, would certainly have attracted a large crowd and provided an opportunity to trade and socialize, in particular as Närtna was located along Långhundaleden, a web of lakes and rivers that connected Uppsala with the archipelago and the Baltic Sea. Five hundred metres south of the Church and overlooking the lake is Öbacken, which later in the century emerged as a trading spot following the suppression of trade around Lunda, near Sigtuna. If Öbacken already functioned as an occasional trading spot, by virtue of its location on the route to Uppsala, it is possible that Botulf was there, rather than in the immediate presence of the archbishop.

In any case, he was not safe, for Father Andreas spotted him in the crowd and informed the archbishop who had Botulf arrested. He was interrogated on the spot as to whether he had truly said the things he was accused of saying at Easter the same year. ‘I said those things’, Botulf replied, ‘And I do not deny that I spoke in that way’.

Archbishop Kettilsson asked Father Andreas to appear before him together with a group of witnesses at Skepptuna church, probably the next stop on his visitation tour, around two kilometres further north-west on the water route to Uppsala. Andreas brought with him thirteen men from the villages of the parish to testify against Botulf.

45 The Fasciculi zizaniorum, attributed to Thomas Netter, e.g., lists the ways in which one may respond when questioned by a priest on the nature of the Eucharist so as to avoid detection (Fasciculi zizaniorum magistri Iohannis Wyclif cum Tritico, ed. W. W. Shirley (London, 1858). Cf. R. Copeland, Pedagogy, Intellectuals, and Dissent in the Later Middle Ages (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 176–7).
46 See Given, Inquisition and Medieval Society, pp. 93–5.
47 For later examples of evasions from episcopal citation, see Forrest, Detection, pp. 127–8.
48 K. Calissendorff, ‘Folklandtingsstad och en gammal färdled’, Formvärnes/Center of Swedish Antiquarian Research, lxi (1966), pp. 244–9.
49 It is possible, however, that water access to this location was to some extent restricted. Fourteen years after Botulf’s apprehension, in 1324, the villagers were ordered to remove the woodworks they had set on the main water route there (Calissendorff, ‘Folklandtingsstad’, p. 240).
50 ‘Ego dixi. Nec difitteor huiusmodi me dixisse’.
The list of witnesses indicates that they were brought in from the parish – most witnesses lived within three kilometres from Gottröra church and at most around six kilometres from Botulf’s village. One of the witnesses, Ingvald, came from the same village as Botulf. They would therefore have encountered Botulf in church, on market days, and at other social events.

The process against Botulf, as Välimäki noted, most likely drew on the model for the episcopal investigation of heresy set by Pope Lucius III’s 1184 bull *Ad abolendam*, which required the testimony of at least three sworn witnesses from the parish and of good reputation.51 *Ad abolendam*, in fact, allows for bringing in the whole neighbourhood, if necessary.52 The naming of the witnesses goes against regular inquisitorial procedure and may, as Välimäki suggested, have been intended to fulfil the requirements of the Law of Uppland (although it is the first known case in Swedish legal history where witnesses are named). This law was one of the several regional laws that preceded the mid fourteenth-century *Landslag* of King Magnus Eriksson that brought the entire realm under one single law. The Law of Uppland sought to bring together and harmonize the often discordant provincial law texts. It received royal assent on 2 January 1296 and united the four provinces immediately north of Stockholm into one and extended further north to the province of Gästrikland. In the fifteenth paragraph of the code pertaining to the Church (Kyrkobalken), it states that in every case of excommunication, the bishop must question trustworthy witnesses before pronouncing his sentence. Otherwise the case would be transferred to a secular court where the accused would be able to clear his name by oath. Naming the witnesses may thus have been an attempt to establish beyond doubt that proper procedure had been followed both regarding *Ad abolendam* and the requirements that secular law put on the archbishop.53

The witnesses were interrogated according to the form established by canon law (‘secundum formam canonum’) by two men deputized by the archbishop: Israel Erlandsson, the prior of the powerful Dominican house at Sigtuna, and Johannes, a canon from Uppsala cathedral. Rather than petitioning the pope to send two inquisitors, Kettilsson opted for an episcopal inquisition, similar to the later inquisitions into Lollardy in England, that often took place in connection with episcopal visitations.54 The first person deputized by the archbishop, Israel Erlandsson (d.1332), is well known by historians. He was by this time bishop-elect of Västerås and would be consecrated sometime between 23 April and 30 June in 1311, that is, shortly after Botulf was sentenced. He was born into an influential family that included an uncle, Folke, who was archbishop of Uppsala, and Birger Persson, a powerful nobleman and a ‘lawspeaker’ (Lat. *legifer*) for the region of Uppland, as well as the father of St. Bridget (1303–73). Israel was trained at the cathedral school of Linköping 1264–7, and became a canon at Uppsala cathedral in 1274, but he then appears to have joined the Dominicans around 1281 and is believed to have pursued theological studies abroad before returning to Sigtuna to serve as its lecturer.55 He was probably picked by Kettilsson by virtue of his status as prior of a prominent convent belonging to the order frequently tasked with conducting inquisitions.

51 Välimäki, “‘Hereticum iudicamus’”, p. 121. *Ad abolendam* can be found in *Texte zur Inkvisition*, ed. K.-V. Selge (Gutersloh, 1967), pp. 26–9.
52 *Texte zur Inkvisition*, p. 28.
53 Välimäki, “‘Hereticum iudicamus’”, pp. 121–3. See also Lesch, ‘En svensk kätrerpiares’, pp. 72–3.
54 See Forrest, *Detection*, ch. 3.
55 B. Hildebrand, ‘Israel Erlandsson (Finstaätten)’, in *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, ed. G. Nilzén and others (Stockholm, 1918—), xvi. 53–5.
The identity of the second person, Johannes, has eluded scholars. There are three occurrences of canons named Johannes in Uppsala cathedral in the *Diplomatarium Suecanum* in the first quarter of the fourteenth century: Johannes de Resbohundere from the area around Rasbo, east of Uppsala; Johannes scholasticus, the head of the cathedral school (who often was a canon); and Johannes Magnusson who probably styled himself *magister de Suecia* in a will issued in Orleans in 1307.56 This latter Johannes states in his will that he was ‘somewhat infirm’ (‘aliquantulum infirmus’) but nevertheless decided to have his will set up, in which he, among other things, donated money to the Dominican convent in Orleans, where he chose to have his burial, and gave to his brother Ingvald his annotated collection of decretales along with the *Liber sextus* (‘parue decretales cum sexto libro apparatatas’). The *Liber sextus*, which in its fifth section brings existing canonical legislation on heresy up to date with recent papal decrees on heresy, had been promulgated by Boniface VIII in 1298 and sent to universities and *studia*, among them Orleans, for comments.57

Nothing conclusive can be said based on this will, but Johannes’s possession of this decretal collection and his presence in Orleans may indicate that he was one of the several Swedish men who travelled to the continent to study since Sweden did not have a university at this time.58 If this Johannes survived his illness in 1307, he may have been the person named here, given that he had apparently some legal training.

Of Kettilsson’s intellectual formation we know little. He is believed to have received training in canon law and may be identical with the Nicolaus de Suezia who matriculated at the faculty of law in Bologna in 1294.59

Following the established procedure for taking depositions, the testimonies were written down, translated, redacted, and then read out and made public in the presence of the archbishop, the witnesses, and ‘many other trustworthy men’ (‘in nostra et predictorum testium ac aliorum plurium fidedignorum presencia’). The term ‘trustworthy men’ (fidedigni) may refer to the group of specially trusted men that the bishop relied on in the exercise of his pastoral office by drawing on their local knowledge. As Ian Forrest’s work on this group of men in English parishes showed, this was a strategy for bishops to maintain an appearance of impartiality and consensus in their exercise of episcopal authority and pastoral care.60 Although no similar study exists on the role of trustworthy men in medieval Sweden, some of Forrest’s conclusions on this system may be applicable in this scenario. The fidedigni tended to come from landholding families which allowed them to establish themselves socially at an early stage and hold offices that later in life would mark them out as worthy of the bishop’s trust.61 This group would also be an important resource not only during trials, but as a source of local knowledge during episcopal visitations.62 Their presence at Botulf’s trial is an indication that they had been

56 D.S. 1557 (S.D.H.K. 2211) (Johannes de Swecia); D.S. 1605, 1667 and 1850 (S.D.H.K. 2271, 2320 and 2499) (Johannes de Resbohundere); D.S. 2008 (S.D.H.K. 2669) (Johannes scholasticus).
57 *Liber sextus*, 5.2: ‘De haereticis’.
58 Many travelled to Paris, which had a college for Swedish students – the *Collegium Upsalense*, founded in 1291 by Andreas And (d. 1317), dean of Uppsala cathedral, for students from the archdiocese. But Orleans, which in 1306 had been granted university privileges by Clement V (himself an alumnus), may with its prominent schools of law have been an attractive destination for a legal scholar. Orleans was particularly strong in Roman law, whereas Paris was known for canon law (J.A. Brundage, *The Medieval Origins of the Legal Profession: Canonists, Civilians, and Courts* (Chicago, Ill., 2008), pp. 230–3).
59 On Kettilsson, see S.-E. Pernler, ‘Nicolaus Catilli’, in *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, xxvi, pp. 598–602.
60 Forrest, *Trustworthy Men: How Faith and Inequality Made the Medieval Church* (Princeton, N.J., 2018).
61 Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*, pp. 155–7.
62 Forrest, *Detection*, ch. 8, esp. pp. 178, 181–2, 201.
present during the visitation in Närtuna. If a system similar to that outlined by Forrest for England existed at this point in the medieval Swedish Church, then this may also have been a factor in bringing Botulf to Archbishop Allesson’s attention in 1303.

The testimonies convinced Kettilsson that Botulf had on several occasions and in the presence of the witnesses and almost all parishioners ‘publicly and with a nefarious and blasphemous mouth said the abovementioned things’. Botulf was therefore jailed. At some point, while in custody, he was told by certain people that he would be burned if he continued to hold his beliefs, to which Botulf replied that the fire ‘would pass by in a brief span of time’. This phrase appears to imply that Botulf had weighed the options of undergoing a brief physical punishment versus suffering eternal punishments in Hell for lying and betraying his convictions.

Kettilsson therefore declared that Botulf was a relapsed heretic and handed him over to the secular authorities for punishment. The phrase used by Kettilsson ‘having already fallen into the aforementioned vile and detestable heresy for the second time’ is crucial in the decision to relinquish Botulf to the authorities. Canon law stipulated that someone who was a suspect in a case of heresy and refused to answer the bishop’s call to explain themselves must be excommunicated. If the suspect remained excommunicate for a year he or she was to be considered a heretic. Botulf had made himself guilty on both accounts. The antiheretical legislation and councils of the thirteenth century had created a taxonomy of the degrees of involvement in heresy, where the label ‘heretic’ was reserved for those who obstinately persisted in and defended their beliefs.

The sentence presents us with some dilemmas in how the archbishop’s priorities were aligned with secular law, since the Law of Uppland does not mention heretics and how to proceed against them. One paragraph authorizes the king to execute a person by the sword who has been excommunicated and remained unrepentant for over a year and required that the accused was to be buried in unconsecrated ground, although the family of the executed was allowed to keep his property. Furthermore, the warning Botulf received that he would be burned is an indication that the ecclesiastical authorities expected that Botulf would be executed according to continental procedures. The stipulation in secular law that the excommunicate were to be executed by sword was one reason that Lesch rejected the idea that Botulf was actually burned (although the consensus is that he was in all likelihood executed by burning).

The requirement that a person must have been excommunicated for a year before he or she could be executed led Lesch to believe that this was the reason why Botulf was sentenced a year, following the liturgical calendar, after his public relapse (and that

63 ‘supradicta omnia ... dixisse publice ore nephario et blasphemo’.
64 ‘paruo tempore transiret ignis ille’.
65 I am grateful to Olle Ferm and Claes Gejrot for this suggestion.
66 ‘iam secunda uice in supradictam damnpamam et detestandam heresim est prolapses’. Cf Liber sextus, 5.2.4: ‘si deprehensi fuerint in abiuratam haeresim recidisse, saeculari decernunt iudicio, sine ulla penitus audientia relinquenti’.
67 Liber sextus, 5.2.7. Cf. Decrees, i. 233.
68 Välimäki, ‘“Hereticum iudicamus”’, p. 125. For an overview of the developing canonical framework and its description of heretics, see Arnold, Inquisition and Power, pp. 37–47.
69 Upplandlagen. Handupplaga, ed. O. F. Hultman (Helsingfors, 1916), p. 18. Cf. Liber sextus, 5.2.19.
70 Lesch, ‘En svensk kätteriprocess’, pp. 76–7. The Law of Uppland only prescribes execution by burning for arsonists and practitioners of black magic, and this punishment was rarely used by this time according to Lesch. In practice, men were usually hanged whereas women were burned.
he had been excommunicated automatically following his relapse). The archbishop thus sought to follow local secular law and the procedures demanded by it.\textsuperscript{71} This goes some way to explain the dating of the sentence, although there may have been other reasons for the precise dating of it to 8 April 1311 that I will discuss in the final section of this article. This sentence, as Välimäki has pointed out, thus represents a combination of canon law, inquisitorial procedure, and adaptation to local legislation that lacks precedent in Sweden. The archbishop does not explicitly refer to the legal requirement of execution of excommunicates, but has sought to establish the canonical basis of his sentence, following due process, and to demonstrate that heresy posed a real danger. The sentence, Välimäki believed, tried to establish heresy as a punishable offence and to ensure that the punishment was meted out explicitly for this crime in order for it to act as a deterrent against future cases of heresy. Merely focusing on the time during which Botulf had been excommunicated would not have fully brought home the danger the archbishop thought Botulf represented.\textsuperscript{72} For this reason, it was necessary not only to outline Botulf’s case from a legal point of view, but to represent him as a heretic who had already separated himself from the faithful.

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In spite of its brevity, Botulf’s death sentence provides modern historians with ample material on the trial. But this short text does not only describe a heresy trial in Sweden; it also reflects and performs a set of elite clerical identities as well as subtly employing biblical and liturgical allusions to reassert and legitimize these identities. In so doing, the sentence also seeks to contain and restrict the potential influence of Botulf’s heresy in a balancing act between the need to accurately describe the heresy and the need to hinder it from spreading further as the sentence was made public.\textsuperscript{73}

In his sentence against Botulf, Archbishop Kettilsson built up a series of antitheses between Botulf and the Eucharist. Kettilsson described Botulf’s attempt to defend his denial of the real presence on Easter Day in Gottröra as him not so much rendering account for his reasoning as vomiting forth error (‘reddens racionem sui dicti immo uerius errorem euomens’). The vomit imagery used here resonates with Proverbs XXVI: 11: ‘As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly’. Botulf had, in the archbishop’s view, repeated his folly in rejecting the real presence once more. This biblical passage was commonplace in describing heretics who relapsed, apostate religious, and converted Jews who returned to their faith. Vomit, furthermore, is often connected to the (voluntary) confession of a sin. In the preaching exempla of Thomas of Cantimpré, a sinner who finally confesses after becoming sick from all his sins begins to vomit forth seven little toad-like animals that soon disappeared.\textsuperscript{74} William of Auvergne, bishop of Paris 1228–49, used vomit to describe the process of confession – as the physical body

\textsuperscript{71} Lesch, ‘En svensk kätteriprocess’, pp. 59, 61, 73–4. It is highly likely that Botulf was excommunicated following his relapse as canon law required this for any lay man or woman who publicly or secretly questioned doctrine (\textit{Liber sextus}, 5.2.2).

\textsuperscript{72} Välimäki, ‘“Hereticum iudicamus”’, pp. 129–30.

\textsuperscript{73} As Ian Forrest noted, ‘Publicizing anti-heresy measures and techniques could, of course have the undesired effect of publicizing, and popularizing, the heresy’ (\textit{Detection}, p. 133).

\textsuperscript{74} Thomas of Cantimpré, \textit{Bonum universale de apibus}, ed. G. Colveneere (Douais, 1627),bk. 2, ch. 50, pt. 2 (p. 459).
undergoes convulsions to rid itself of harmful substances, so the spirit vomits forth its sins in confession.75 In Botulf’s case, we are faced instead with an unrepentant confession as he vomits forth the evils Kettilsson believed were contained in his soul and which threatened to contaminate his fellow parishioners. This description of Botulf as vomiting forth his evil echoes Christ’s words that it is not that which goes into the mouth that makes the soul unclean, but rather what comes out of it, such as evil thoughts and blasphemy (Matthew XV: 11 and 17–20). This scriptural resonance is picked up later in the conclusion of the testimonies that Botulf had indeed spoken with ‘a nefarious and blasphemous mouth’. Botulf’s ‘confession’ is not a sign of delivery from dark forces or the confession of a repentant soul, but rather in this context is an example of a perceived obstinate heretic who proudly parades his error. The refusal to accept the real presence not only made Botulf a heretic, but a demonic presence. Kettilsson presents him later in this text as ‘ille sathan’ and a ‘membrum dyabolii’. Instead of becoming a member of the body of Christ through consuming the consecrated host, Botulf has, through ‘vomiting forth his error’, become a member of the body of the Devil, separated from the body of the faithful and a threat.76 This sense of the ‘enemy within’ is implicit in the description of Botulf as ‘ille sathan’ hiding among the faithful as the archbishop conducted his visitation at Närtuna during the feast of St. Martin. Botulf is presented here in stark contrast to the pious congregants that make him appear as a demonic presence threatening to distort the truth, or in the common topos of antiheretical discourse, spreading the disease of heretical depravity.77

According to Kettilsson’s summary, Botulf expressed even more opinions about the Eucharist that were ‘not only blasphemous, but heretical and insane’.78 Here the official attempt to report accurately on the nature of Botulf’s heresy is trumped by the disgust and incomprehension and the dismissal of his views as not only heretical but insane. This latter expression echoes the second calendar of the fourth Lateran council in 1215 in its condemnation of Amaury of Bene, ‘whose mind was blinded by the father of lies so that he is to be considered not so much as a heretic as insane’.79 Kettilsson has here taken the

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75 William of Auvergne, *Sermones de tempore*, ed. F. Morenzoni, *C.C.C.M.* 230, 230a (2 vols., Turnhout, 2010–11), sermon 171 (ii. 147): ‘Et a simili purgatio per uomitum est confessio, in qua humores spirituales corrupti euomuntur’. See also *Sermones*, sermon 196 (ii. 237), 297 (ii. 599) and 310 (ii. 637). For a study of William of Auvergne’s view of confession, see L. Smith, ‘William of Auvergne on confession’, in *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. Biller and A. Minnis (York, 1998), pp. 95–107.

76 The term *membrum dyabolii* (or, more correctly, *diabolii*) has been applied variously to describe a religious Other, e.g., the Prophet Mohammed (D. Thomas and A. Mallet, ‘*Vita Sancti Isidori*’, in *Christian-Muslim Relations: a Bibliographical History*, iii (1050–1200), ed. D. Thomas and A. Mallet (Leiden, 2011), p. 710). See also Paschasius Radbertus, *De corpore et sanquine Domini*, sect. 7 (p. 38) which discusses the term in relation to a conscious separation from the body of Christ through sin. Kettilsson’s use of the term *membrum dyabolii* may be related to Paschasius’s discussion of it in the context of the 9th-century Eucharistic dispute, given the similarities of the contexts, although it is not clear whether he knew of Paschasius’s work. See also Bede, *In librum beati patris Tobiae*, ed. D. Hurst, *C.C.S.L.*, 119B (Turnhout, 1983), sect. 6 (p. 10); Alan of Lille, *Summa ‘quoniam homines*’, ed. P. Glorieux, in *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et litteraire du Moyen Âge*, xx (1953), 2, tract. 4, p. 325; and Isidore of Seville, *Mysticorum expositiones sacramentorum seu Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum (Sensus moralis totius scripturae)*, P.L., lxxiii, col. 201.

77 See, e.g., *Decretum magistrum Gratiani*, pars 2, causa 24, quaestio 3, canon 31 (ii. 998); Humbert of Romans, *Legenda S. Dominici autore Humberto de Romanis*, ed. A. Walz, in *Monumenta Historica Sancti Patris Nostri Dominici* (2 vols., Rome, 1935), ii. 377, 379. See also the slightly later (c.1323) Bernard Gui, *Manuel de l’inquisiteur*, ed. G. Mollat and G. Droux (2 vols., Paris, 1926–7), i. 6–8.

78 ‘non solum blasphema, uestum eciam hereticas et insana’.

79 *Decrees*, i. 231–3: ‘cuius mement sic pater mendacii excaecavit, ut eius doctrina non tam haeretica cenenda sit, quam insana’.
These interjections not only reflect clerical perceptions of heresy, but carefully gloss Botulf’s words so as to signal and contain their heretical content. This process occurs on a rhetorical level through the subtle use of the chiastic construction ‘reddens racionem ... immo uerius errorem euomens’ that introduces Botulf’s reasoning on cannibalism and vengeance. This construction was common in the description of heretical beliefs and practices in canonical legislation, sentences and antiheretical literature. It was common in descriptions of the rite of consolamentum – the final rite usually performed on the deathbed whereby a person was made a fully-fledged Cathar. This rite was described as ‘the consolation, or rather desolation’ (‘consolamentum immo uerius desolamentum’) or the person who had undergone it as ‘consoled, or rather desolate’ (‘consolatus immo uerius desolatus’).80 This strategy was used, as John H. Arnold noted, as a way to take positive terms and symbols and ‘correct’ them in order to contain them, in an attempt to both accurately describe the phenomenon and condemn it.81 The same process is at work in the glossing of Botulf’s arguments, thus stripping him of intellectual agency by labelling his reason (ratio) for his refusal to participate in the sacrament as blasphemous, heretical and insane – in addition to the disgust and fear of contamination inherent in the use of vomit imagery.

If Botulf is described as a ‘membrum dyaboli’ and ‘ille sathan’, Archbishop Kettilsson casts himself as his opposite. In the final part of the sentence, the archbishop expresses this position with the opening words ‘Exurgentes in uirtute Ihesu Christi’ (‘Rising up in the power of Jesus Christ’). This phrase stands out as somewhat unusual. It not only refers to the judge presumably rising up to pronounce the sentence, but can be seen as echoing the recurring call in the Psalter for God to rise up and defend his people, and to ensure that justice is served.82 In Psalms IX: 17–21 (16–20 in the New King James translation), perhaps the most pertinent in this context, the Psalmist writes:

The LOrd is known by the judgment He executes;
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.

The wicked shall be turned into hell,
And all the nations that forget God.
For the needy shall not always be forgotten;
The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.

Arise, O LOrd,
Do not let man prevail;
Let the nations be judged in Your sight.
Put them in fear, O LOrd,
That the nations may know themselves to be but men. (New King James)83

The archbishop, rising up in God’s stead has, from his perspective, executed justice – the sinner Botulf has been caught in his works and shall be turned into Hell, the realm of

80 See, e.g., Liber sextus, 5.2.3.
81 Arnold, Inquisition and Power, p. 65.
82 See, e.g., Psalms III: 7; VII: 7; IX: 20; 33; XVI: 13; XXXIV: 2, 23; XLIII: 23, 26; LVIII: 6; LXXIII: 22.
83 Cognoscetur Dominus judicia faciens; in operibus manuum suarum comprehensus est peccator. Convertantur peccatores in infernum, omnes gentes quae obliviscuntur Deum. Quoniam non in finem oblivio erit pauperis; patientia pauperum non peribit in finem. Exsurge, Domine; non confortetur homo: judicentur gentes in conspectu tuo. Constitue, Domine, legislatorem super eos, ut scient gentes quoniam homines sunt.
the dead. Given that the Psalms were continuously recited in the cathedral, this scriptural resonance would not have been lost on the clerics who read or heard it pronounced by the archbishop. If any of the canons present were familiar with the Glossa ordinaria, the standard compendium of commentary on the Bible, this allusion would have gained an eschatological dimension. A passage from Cassiodorus (d. c.585) incorporated into the Glossa comments on the word Exsurge: ‘Speaking about the final days, the prophet foresees the advent of the Antichrist. Wherefore he terrified exclaims “Rise up” (“Loquens de fine seculi, propheta prospexit adventum Antichristi. Unde, quasi territus, clamat: exsurge”).84 Seen in the context of Psalms IX and its gloss, Kettilsson’s use of the phrase ‘Exurgentes in uirtute Ihesu Christi’ reaffirms the description of Botulf as ‘ille sathan’ and a ‘membrum diaboli’. Botulf foreshadows the Antichrist in leading the flock astray (compare Matthew XXIV: 24 and Mark XIII: 22), and by denying that Christ has come in the flesh (1 John II: 18) – here in the sense of denying the Eucharist rather than the Incarnation. The statement in the same passage in 1 John that there are many antichrists in the world was understood in the Glossa to refer to the heretics who by word and deed destroy the faith and oppose Christ.85 Thus, rising up in the power of Jesus Christ, Kettilsson declares himself as God’s representative on earth, by virtue of his ordinary authority as bishop, to execute justice, and defend God’s people from its enemies. Kettilsson thereby gestures towards the ultimate struggle between Christ and the Antichrist, represented at this moment by the archbishop and the heretic from Gottröra.

But Kettilsson adds another significant layer through which Botulf the heretic is constructed, and that is through the association with the point during the liturgical year in which the sentence is imposed. The sentence is pronounced a year after the offence, and as we have seen there were legal reasons for this. But Botulf was not condemned ‘a night and a year’ after his public relapse as the law stipulates. His denial of the real presence in Gottröra church took place on Easter Sunday 19 April 1310, and he was condemned on 8 April the following year, that is, eleven days short of a full year. Lesch has argued that the authorities would have followed the liturgical calendar,86 and the dating of the sentence to Maundy Thursday (Cena domini, the Lord’s Supper) may have been intended to approximate the liturgical dating of the initial offence. But if the liturgical calendar was used to measure when ‘a night and a year’ had passed, Botulf should have been sentenced on Easter Monday. There may have been two liturgical reasons for Kettilsson’s choice of Maundy Thursday as the date to pronounce the sentence. Maundy Thursday was the day that concluded the solemn penance imposed on the excommunicate that normally takes place in the cathedral. The penitents were symbolically expelled from the church on Ash Wednesday and welcomed back into the fold on Maundy Thursday. Although the practice of solemn penance was in decline by this time in the western Church, the choice of this date may have served to highlight Botulf’s refusal to repent.87 Most likely, however, this date was chosen for its liturgical

84 Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria: facsimile reprint of the editio princeps by Adolph Rusch of Strasbourg 1480/81, ed. K. Froelich and M. T. Gibson (4 vols., Turnhout, 1992), ii. 467.
85 Glossa ordinaria, iv. 536: ‘Antichristi omnes hegetici, omnes qui fidem quam confitentur verbis destruunt actibus, omnes Christo contrarii, qui venturo suo capiti testimonium reddunt quia mysterium iniquitatis iam operatur.’
86 Lesch, ‘En svensk kätteriprocess’, p. 61 n. 1.
87 On solemn penance, see M. C. Mansfield, The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth-Century France (Ithaca, N.Y., 1995), esp. chs. 4 and 5. This practice began to decline during the 13th century in some areas, but was frequently in use in other places, in particular northern France and the Rhineland, well into the 13th century. I am grateful to Reima Välimäki for drawing my attention to this aspect of the sentence.
significance in relation to Botulf’s offence, since it was the feast of Christ’s institution of the Eucharist and the beginning of Judas’s betrayal. It is at this moment in the life of Christ that evil manifested itself as Satan entered Judas (Luke XXII: 3) and he became the archetypal membrum dyaboli, leaving the Eucharistic communion created by Christ at the Last Supper. Kettilsson, on the other hand, ‘rising up in the power of Jesus Christ’ on the day of the Last Supper becomes associated with Christ sending Judas away (John XIII: 23). This brings home an important point as the sentence was communicated to a wider audience in the parishes of the diocese as well as to the secular arm. Innocent III had with his decree Vergentis in senium (1199) declared heresy to be a form of treason, a lèse majesté, and here Botulf found himself condemned by association with the greatest traitor of them all through his sentencing at this particular point of the liturgical year. Botulf was thus condemned on the day of commemoration of the Eucharist and Judas’s betrayal, and presumably executed during Eastertide, when the Church celebrated the resurrection of Christ from the dead and his victory over sin, death, and evil.

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After Botulf, no new allegation of heresy is recorded until the late fourteenth century although no one is known to have been executed as a relapsed and obstinate heretic. The only person whose case resembles Botulf’s was Hemming in Vadstena who is recorded in 1442 as being found guilty of heresy but repented and avoided further punishment. Unfortunately, we do not know the precise nature of his beliefs. Botulf thus stands out not only by virtue of his intriguing and sometimes contradictory character in the sentence, but also by his tragic end. The reasons why there are not more documented cases may lie with the two archbishops that handled his case. The absence of active papal inquisitors in Scandinavia meant that heresy detection mainly relied on the zeal of individual prelates and the willingness of lower clergy, such as Father Andreas, and the laity to report it. Had more focus been put on detecting heresy we would doubtless have more examples with which to compare Botulf’s case. What the case demonstrates, however, is that although Sweden was on the periphery of medieval Christendom both geographically and regarding the persecution of dissenters, the dissent itself does not vary markedly from cases on the continent. Botulf’s rejection of the real presence had to do with basic theology and some of his reasons for his action may have drawn on common material and exempla. The accusations levelled against Hemming and Heyno are not particularly unique either; promoting neo-Donatism or holding dissenting views while claiming to be the messenger of higher powers could have happened in any other region of Christendom. Where medieval Sweden does differ from the continent is with regard to the absence of heretical movements and the institutional drive to police dissent. Only the Beguines were seen with suspicion, leading to their expulsion from Vadstena.

Botulf’s case thus challenges us to reflect further on the peripheries of western Christendom. Botulf found himself at the margins of orthodoxy, yet in his dissent he had much in common with dissenting men and women on the continent. The outliers here, rather, are the Swedish ecclesiastics and their intermittent and ad hoc attempts to detect and discipline heresy. By expanding the horizons of current scholarship on medieval heresy to include regions outside of the hotbeds of heresy and inquisition, new light can be shed not only on medieval religion and dissent but also on the many ways in which that dissent was disciplined.
Appendix: Botulf’s death sentence: edition and translation

Stockholm, Swedish National Archives, Orig. perg. 1311 8.4, S.D.H.K. 2413.

Transcription available in D.S. 1789.

In nomine Domini, amen. Anno eiusdem millesimo CCCo undecimo, in Cena Domini, in ciuitate Upsaliensi. Nos Nicolaus diuina miseracione archiepiscopus Upsaliensis.

Cum olim Botulphus de Østby, in parochia Gutturror in dampnatam heresim incidisset dicendo sacramentum corporis et sanguinis Christi nullum esse, uenerabilis pater dominus Nicolaus bone memoriae, antecessor noster archiepiscopus Upsaliensis ipso Botulpho coram se vocato, et eandem heresim recognoscente, et tandem suum errorem reuocante et abnegante penitenciam fecit imponi salutarem. Iam uero anno Domini millesimo CCCo decimo, in die Pasche, cum dictus Botulphus inter alios ad communicandum ad altare ex more procederet, et dominus Andreas curatus in Gutturror, ei sacram hostiam ad communicandum porrigeret, inquirerens ab eo si hoc crederet esse uerum corpus Christi, quia prius audierat ipsum hoc negasse, respondit idem Botulphus quod si esset uerum corpus Christi, solus sacerdos diu illud consumpsisset, adiciens quod nollet comedere corpus Christi, sed alia quod posset obsequia prestare Deo, et reddens racionem sui dicti immo uerius errorem euomens incongruam similitudinem applicando, quod si quis commedeter corpus alterius hominis, male sibi redderet si posset, multo forcius Deus, quando uenerit ad suam potestatem, et alia multa non solum blasphema, uerum eciam heretica et insana. Unde memoratus dominus Andreas ad nos ueniens dictum Botulphum coram nobis citari peciit. Et licet auctoritate nostra publice et legittime citatus fuerit, tamen coram nobis, male sibi conscius, noluit comparere.

Tandem agentibus nobis uisitacionis officium apud ecclesiam Nerdtunum, eodem anno Domini quo supra proximo, in die beati Martini confessoris, conuenientibus populis, ut moris est tum propter dicti festi sollempnitatem tum propter nostram presenciam, a cau affuit inter eos eciam ille sathan, Botulphus videlicet memoratus. Cum autem ad insinuacionem memorati domini Andree, tunc ibidem existentis, ad nostram fuisset adductus presenciam, et requisitus a nobis utrum dixisset ea que superius sunt expressa, respondit: Ego dixi. Nec diffiteor huiusmodi me dixisse. Ut autem de his et alii plenius possemus cognoscere ueritatem contra ipsum citari fecimus predictum dominum Andream, et parochianos suos de Gutturror, ut coram nobis apud ecclesiam Skeptuner comparerent, perhibituri super premisis testimonium ueritati contra Botulphum supradients. Quibus ibidem comparantibus coram nobis, uidelicet, Petro de Rikkaby, Hulmuasto de Nyfsta, Thoma de Rikkaby, Olauo de Nessium, Liñzano de Østby, Laurencio de Gutturror, Ingualdo de Nessium, Olauo de Mædhalby, Andrea de Nessium, Neskonungo de Mædhalby, Andrea et alio Andrea de Rikkaby, ac Laurencio de Nyfsta, prestito ab eis de ueritate dicenda iuramento, eos per reuerendum uirum fratrem Israelene priorem Sictunensem et dominum Iohannem canonicum nostrum Upsaliensem, examinari fecimus diligentem secundum formam canonum, et eorum dicta in scriptis redigi, ac postmodum ea in nostra et predictorum ac aliorum plurium fidedignorum presencia legi fecimus et publicari. Per que sufficienter probatum extitit, antedictum Botolphum, menbrum quidem dyaboli, supradata omnia, in ipsorum testium, et fere omnium parochianorum de Gutturror presencia, licet diuersis temporibus, dixisse publice ore nephario et blasphemo. Cumque ipsum in custodia
fecissemus detineri, et a quibusdam sibi diceretur, quod si in hoc errore persisteret comburendus esset, ipse in suo errore pertinaciter obduratus, respondit, quod paruo tempore transiret ignis illae.

Exurgentes in virtute Ihesu Christi, sepedictum Botulphum, qui iam secunda uice in supradictam damnam et detestandam heresim est prolapsus, auctoritate ordinaria hereticum judicamus in his scriptis, relinquentes eum judicio curie secularis legittime puniendum. Actum anno loco et die prenotatis.

Translation

All names and place names have been translated into their modern equivalents.

In the name of the Lord, amen. In the year of the same Lord 1311, on the feast of the Supper of the Lord, in the city of Uppsala. We, Nils [Kettilsson], by divine mercy Archbishop of Uppsala.

Since Botulf from Östby, in the parish of Gottröra, had once fallen into vile heresy by denying the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, the venerable Father Nils [Allesson] of blessed memory, our predecessor as archbishop of Uppsala, imposed a salutary penance after Botulf had been called before him and recognized his heresy and finally retracted and rejected his error. Recently, however, in the year of our Lord 1310, on Easter Day, when the aforementioned Botulf approached the altar together with the others to receive communion, as per the custom, and Lord Andreas, the curate in Gottröra, offered him the sacred host for communion and asked him if he believed it to be the true body of Christ, because he had previously heard that he had denied it; this same Botulf responded that if it truly were the body of Christ, the priest alone would have consumed it already. He added that he did not want to eat the body of Christ, but that there were other acts of devotion that he could perform before God. He gave, moreover, a reason for what he had said, or rather vomited forth error by applying this unsuitable simile: that if someone were to eat the body of another human, that person would exact revenge on this man if he could, so much more so God, when he comes in his power; [he also said] many other things which were not only blasphemous, but heretical and insane. For this reason, the aforementioned Lord Andreas came to us and petitioned that we call the aforementioned Botulf before us. And although he was called by our authority publicly and legitimately he nevertheless did not wish to appear before us, well aware of his guilt.

Later, in the same year as above [1310], as we performed a visitation in the church of Närtuna on the feast of St. Martin, and as the people gathered around, as per the custom, both on account of the solemnity of the feast and on account of our presence, it happened that among them was also this devil, that is, the aforementioned Botulf. When, at the suggestion of the aforementioned Lord Andreas, who was present there, he was brought to our presence, and having been asked by us whether he had said that which has been noted above, he responded: ‘I said those things. And I do not deny that I spoke in that way’. In order that we may come to a fuller understanding of the truth about this and other things we called on the aforementioned Lord Andreas and his parishioners from Gottröra to appear before us by the church at Skepptuna, and to give testimony to the truth against the aforementioned Botulf regarding the above. Those appearing before us were Per from Rickeby, Hulmvast from Nifsta, Thomas from Rickeby, Olof from Nässja, Lifstan from Östby, Lars from Gottröra, Ingvall from Nässja, Olof from Mälby, Andreas from Nässja, Näskonung from Mälby, Andreas and another Andreas from
Rickeby, and Lars from Nifstå. After an oath to tell the truth had been exacted from them, we examined them carefully, according to canon law, through the reverend brother Israel, prior of Sigtuna, and Lord Johannes, our canon from Uppsala, and had their statements written down and we thereafter had them read out and made public in our presence and that of the aforementioned witnesses and many other trustworthy men. Through these testimonies it has been sufficiently proven, that the aforementioned Botulf, assuredly a limb of the Devil’s body, has publicly and with a nefarious and blasphemous mouth said the abovementioned things in the presence of these witnesses and almost all the parishioners of Gottröra, although at different times. When we had taken him into custody and he was told by certain people that he would be burned if he persisted in this error, he, obstinately remaining in his error, responded that the fire would pass by in a brief span of time.

Rising up in the power of Jesus Christ, we determine by virtue of our ordinary authority in these writings the oft-mentioned Botulf to be a heretic, having already fallen into the aforementioned vile and detestable heresy for the second time, and leave him to the judgement of the secular court to be legitimately punished.

Given in the same year, place, and day as above.