

*The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory: the Albigensian Crusade and the Subjugation of  
the Languedoc*

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Bachelor of Arts Degree with Honors  
in Medieval and Renaissance Studies

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## Abbreviations

*HA: Historia Albigensis* or *The History of the Albigensian Crusade*

Sibly, W.A. and M.D. Trans. and Eds. *The History of the Albigensian Crusade: Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay's Historia Albigensis*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000.

*SAC: Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise* or *The Song of the Albigensian Crusade*

Martin-Chabot, Eugène. Ed. *La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise*. Ed. 2. Vol. 1-3. Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres, 1957."

## Notes on Citation

In addition to page numbers (which are in parentheses), I have used chapter numbers to refer to text in the *History of the Albigensian Crusade* and book and chapter numbers to cite text in the *Song of the Albigensian Crusade*. I have used page numbers exclusively, however, (without parentheses) to refer to text outside the main body of the work – for example, an Introduction or Appendix.

All biblical quotations and reference in this paper will be from the *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)* of the Bible, unless otherwise indicated.

## Note on Proper Names

Unless I am directly quoting an author who has decided to use another version of a particular name, I have used anglicized versions of proper names. Between Occitan, Latin, French, and English, proper names often change – the King of Aragon, for example, is variously referred to as Pere, Péire, Pierre and Peter.

**Note on Translation**

All translations from the French have been done by me, unless otherwise indicated. Where appropriate, I have included the French in a footnote. Often, as is the case in *The Song of the Albigensian Crusade*, the French is itself a translation of the original Occitan.

## A Timeline of the Albigensian Crusade

### 1176

- Council of Saint Felix: Nicetas organizes dualist churches

### 1177

- Raymond V appeals to Pope and Cistercians for assistance in combatting heresy

### 1204

- Pope Innocent III appeals to Phillip Augustus (Phillip II of France) to wage war against Raymond VI

### 1207

- Raymond VI excommunicated, threatened with crusade

### 1208

- (Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>) murder of papal legate, Peter Castelnau
- (March 10<sup>th</sup>) Innocent appeals not only to Philip Augustus, but also to the French nobility to wage war against Raymond VI

### 1209

- Albigensian crusade officially begins
- (June 18<sup>th</sup>) Raymond reconciled with the Church at St. Gilles Cathedral, then joins the crusade
- (July 22<sup>nd</sup>) Massacre of Béziers
- (August) Simon de Montfort chosen as military leader of the crusade

### 1209-1211

- crusade targets Tranceval territory

### 1211

- siege of Lavaur
- (Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>) Raymond VI excommunicated
- Council of Arles: Charter of Arles

### 1212

- Council of Pamiers: Statutes of Pamiers (Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>)

### 1213

- Council of Lavaur: Counts of Toulouse, Foix and Comminges under the protection of Peter II of Aragon
- (Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>) Battle of Muret: Peter defeated by the crusaders
- Prince Louis (later Louis VIII) joins the crusade

**1214**

- Battle of Bouvines: Philip Augustus defeats the Count of Flanders, the German Emperor and the King of England

**1215**

- Lateran IV provisionally declares Simon de Montfort Count of Toulouse
- Raymond VI and son travel to Spain

**1217**

- Raymond VI and son return to Toulouse

**1218**

- (Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>) Simon killed by a catapult outside the walls of Toulouse
- Amaury de Montfort becomes the new military leader of the crusade

**1222**

- death of Raymond VI
- Raymond VII becomes new Count of Toulouse
- Philip Augustus personally sends troops to the Languedoc

**1225**

- Amaury de Montfort returns to France
- King Louis VIII takes charge of crusade

**1226**

- Raymond VII excommunicated
- death of Louis VIII

**1229**

- (Aug. 12<sup>th</sup>) Treaty of Paris between Raymond VII and Louis IX

**1244**

- capture of Montségur

**1249**

- death of Raymond VII

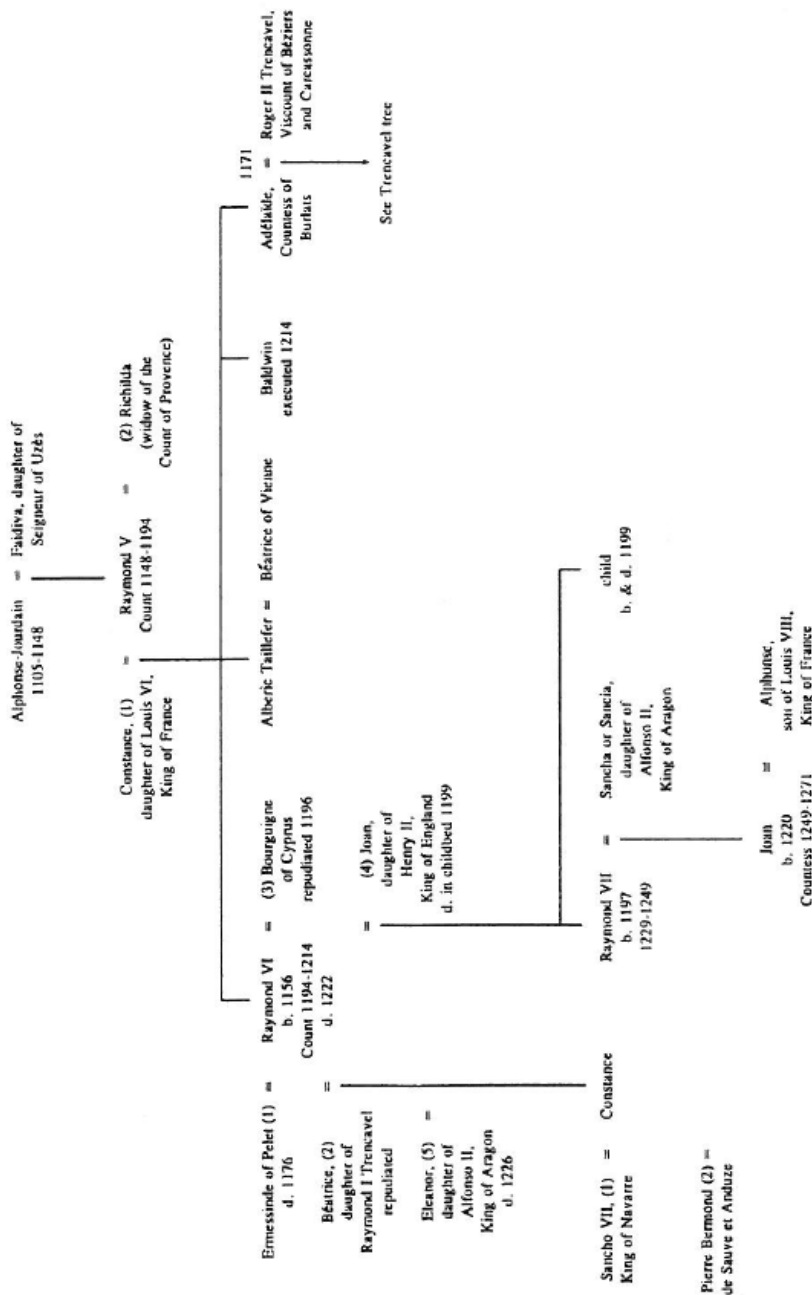




Map 1. The Midi in the early 13th century

Sibly, W.A. and M.D. trans. and eds. *The History of the Albigensian Crusade: Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay's Historia Albigensis* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), xi.

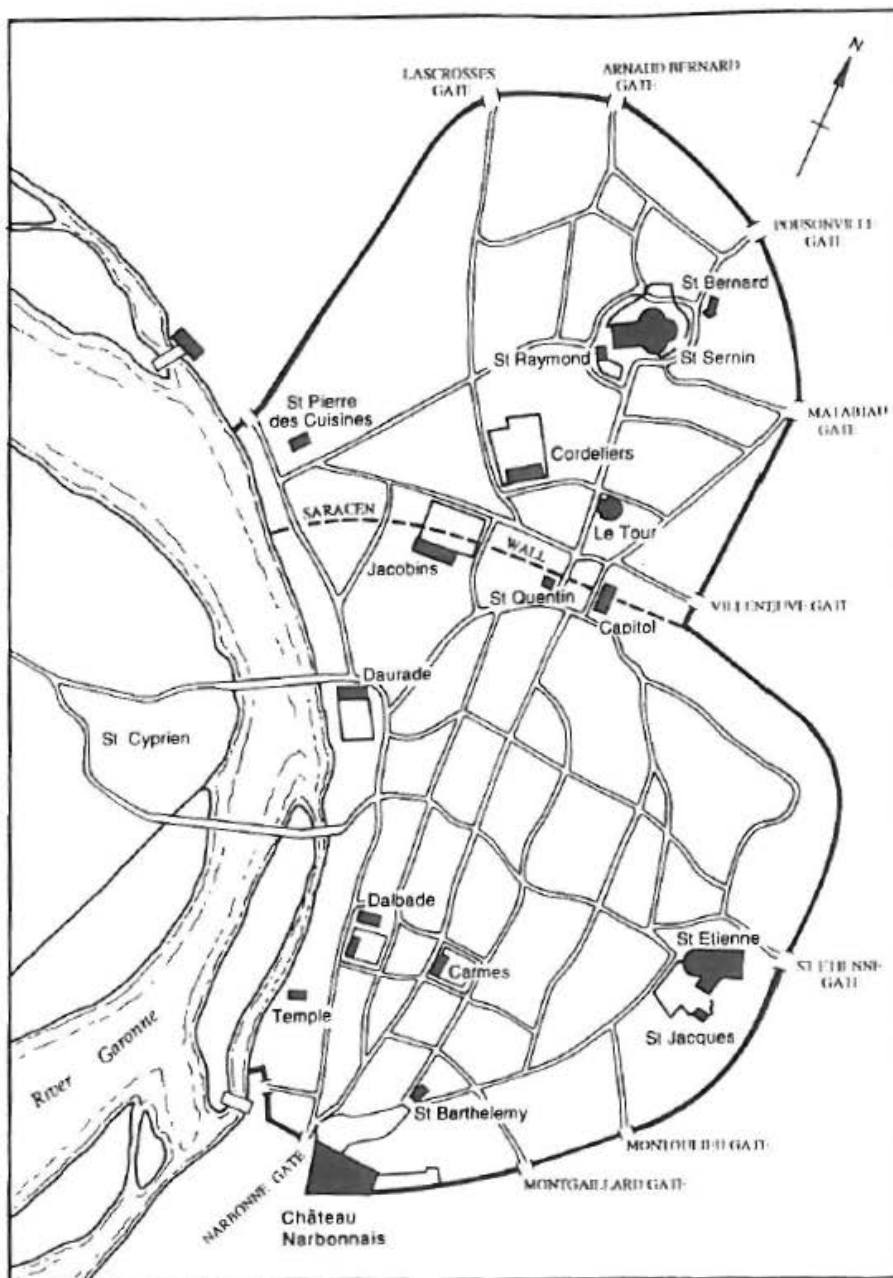
**Outline Family Tree I: The Counts of Toulouse**



Note: for the wives of Raymond VI, see 638 and notes. He had several illegitimate children, including the daughter who married Hugh d'Alfaro (n. 72 to §319).

Sibly, W.A. and M.D. trans. and eds. *The History of the Albigensian Crusade: Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay's Historia Albigensis* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), xvi.

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Map 4. Toulouse in the early 13th century

Sibly, W.A. and M.D. trans. and eds. *The History of the Albigensian Crusade: Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay's Historia Albigensis* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), xiv.

## Introduction

In March of 1208, Pope Innocent III preached the Albigensian Crusade. The crusade, which covered an area from Agen to Avignon and the Pyrenees to Cahors, initiated a new phase in the already strained relationship between the Catholic Church and the Languedoc. The stated aim of the crusade was the rooting out of heresy – specifically, Catharism – from the Languedoc; its main targets were the region’s nobility: first the Trancevals, the family of the viscounts of Foix and Carcassonne, and then the St. Gilles, the family of the counts of Toulouse. Initially, the Pope had attempted to combat heresy through peaceful means, namely, through preaching campaigns. During the decade preceding the crusade, papal emissaries descended upon the region with increasing regularity.<sup>1</sup>

On January 14, 1208, a stableman, “desirous of gaining the favor of the Count [of Toulouse]” stabbed the papal legate Peter Castelnau to death on the banks of the Rhone River.<sup>2</sup> Upon hearing this news, Innocent, who had entertained the possibility of an “armed pilgrimage”<sup>3</sup> in the past, definitively decided to launch a crusade to the Languedoc. According to the troubadour William of Tudela, “then was made the decision which tipped the scales and which caused the death of many men, who died eviscerated, and of many powerful women, and of many pretty young ladies to whom would be left neither coat nor dress.”<sup>4</sup> On March 10, 1208, heading the suggestion of Arnold Amalric, abbot of Citeaux,<sup>5</sup> Innocent sent out letters to the King of France and to the nobility of the region, urging them “in

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<sup>1</sup> “Legate” is another word for “representative.”

<sup>2</sup> SAC, 1.4 (15). “*désireux de gagner la faveur du comte.*”

<sup>3</sup> Mark Pegg, *A Most Holy War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.

<sup>4</sup> “*La fut prise la décision qui fit pencher la balance et qui fut la cause de la mort de beaucoup d’hommes, qui on péri éventrés, et de mainte puissante dame, ... mainte belle jeune fille à qui n’est plu resté ni manteaux ni robe.*”

<sup>5</sup> Citeaux, which played a crucial role throughout the Albigensian Crusade, was a Cistercian abbey south of Dijon. As Cistercians, they engaged in strict observance of the Rule of St. Benedict, a set of guidelines for monastic life developed by the Italian monk Benedict in the sixth century. Arnold Amalric is also referred to as “Arnaud Aimery” in some sources.

the name of Jesus Christ, [to] forgive good Catholics and exhort them to chase the heretics from among the good people.”<sup>6</sup>

Measured against the ostensible goal of rooting out heresy, the crusade, which ran from 1209-1229, appears to have been unsuccessful. Heresy – specifically, Catharism – continued to exist in the Languedoc well after 1229.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, however, the crusade united the Languedoc to France, bringing the medieval kingdom closer to its modern-day configuration; in 1229, Count Raymond VII of Toulouse signed the treaty of Paris, giving up most of his land either to the Catholic Church or the French crown. This end result, by no means guaranteed at the onset of the conflict, stands out as the crusade’s most significant and visible accomplishment.

Stephen O’Shea has stated that “without the Cathars, the nobles beholden to the Capet monarchy and its small woodland territory around the city of Paris – the Ile de France – might have never found a pretext to swoop down on the Mediterranean and force the unlikely annexation of Languedoc to the Crown of France.”<sup>8</sup> Indeed, O’Shea is doubtless correct in theorizing that many crusaders were motivated as much, if not more, by love of wealth and power than by love of God. From the proclamation of the crusade in March 1208 until August 1209, the crusade was led by the same Arnold Amalric. Then, from August 1209 to September 1218, the crusade was led by Simon de Montfort, a French nobleman of English origins. Simon’s full title at the beginning of the crusade was “Simon de Montfort, Lord of Monfort-l’Amaury and Fifth Earl of Leicester.” Though rich in titles, Simon was in reality relatively poor, the earldom of Leicester having been confiscated by King John of England, called “Lackland.” Throughout the course of the crusade, however, Simon would acquire additional territories and titles. Nevertheless, we ought to resist the urge to explain the beginning with the end, or to confuse

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<sup>6</sup> “*au nom de Jésus-Christ pardonne leurs péchés aux bons catholiques et de ma part prêche-les, exhort-les à chaser les hérétiques d’entre les gens de bien.*” In the English, “them” refers to “good Catholics.” Arnaud encourages the Pope to “draw up and write your letters in Latin, as you wish, so that I may be on my way; have them sent to France, in all the of the Limousin, in Poitiers, in Auvergne all the way to Périgord; have indulgences published in this country here as well as in the whole world all the way to Constantinople.” SAC, 1.6 (21).

<sup>7</sup> The Cathar stronghold of Montségur, for example, was not subjugated until 1244.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen O’Shea, *The Perfect Heresy: the Revolutionary Life and Death of the Medieval Cathars* (New York: Walker Publishing, 2000), 9-10.

consequences for causes. There is the temptation, when looking at the sack of Béziers (1209) and the Treaty of Paris (1229), to try to draw a straight line between the two points, filling in the blank space in between with speculation and conjecture. Such an approach invites the conclusion, for example, that the crusade was a “pretext.” The Albigensian Crusade, however, defies such syllogistic simplicity. The motivations of its leaders, its participants, its targets and its victims were complex and often contradictory.

The conditions imposed upon Count Raymond VI of Toulouse by the Council of Arles particularly capture this complexity and contradiction. In February of 1211, crusaders and clergy gathered in the city of Arles to determine the fate of the Count and his supporters. Raymond and other southern lords had been charged with aiding and abetting the enemies of the church.<sup>9</sup> Arles, which lies about 215 miles east of Toulouse near the Mediterranean coast, had long been considered an ally by Pope Innocent III. While Innocent generally distrusted the clergy in the Languedoc, or modern-day southern France, the archbishops of Arles had earned his approval and respect. Unlike their colleagues in Toulouse or Béziers, for example, the Arlian archbishops had energetically combatted heresy in their archdiocese.<sup>10</sup> In the end, the council presented the count with an ultimatum: accept their conditions or suffer exile and excommunication.<sup>11</sup>

Since the mid-1100s, the Languedoc had been considered a hotbed of heresy. Pre-eminent among these heresies was Catharism, a dualist creed which rejected the institutional church, as well as much of its theology and traditions. Throughout the late late-twelfth century, the pope, his legates and other concerned Catholic clergymen had attempted, to little or no avail, to convince the Cathars and their sympathizers to abandon their “insane beliefs.”<sup>12</sup> The pope had also entreated secular powers, such as the kings of France and the counts of Toulouse, to actively pursue heretics in the Languedoc. While both the

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<sup>9</sup> SAC, vol. 1, 6.60 (149).

<sup>10</sup> Einat Segal, “Sculpted Image from the Eastern Gallery of Saint-Trophine Cloister in Arles and the Cathar Heresy,” in *Difference in Identity in Francia and Medieval France*, ed. Meredith Cohen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 57.

<sup>11</sup> SAC, vol. 1, 6.60 (149).

<sup>12</sup> SAC, vol. 1, 0.1 (3). “*la folle croyance.*”

French crown and the St. Gilles family<sup>13</sup> initially responded with indifference, the pope considered the counts of Toulouse and lesser lords, such as the counts of Foix and the viscounts of Béziers and Carcassonne, responsible for the success of Catharism.

The Council of Arles, then, aimed both to punish Raymond for his past misdeeds – i.e. his supposed heretical sympathies – and to encourage him to support the church and the crusade in the future. In his poem, *The Song of the Albigensian Crusade*, the troubadour William of Tudela recorded the conditions imposed upon the count by the council. In essence, the council issued a series of demands.

1. The count and his followers must observe the “Peace of God.”
2. If they employed mercenaries, they must license them the day of or the next.
3. They must reinstate all clerics in their rights and their lands.
4. They must stop sheltering and employing those identified by clerics as Jews and heretics.
5. They must eat no more than two types of meats at a time.
6. They may not dress themselves in expensive cloth.
7. They must demolish all of their castles and fortifications.
8. Knights may not be quartered outside the city gates.
9. The count and his followers may not impose any new taxes or tolls on roads.
10. They must pay 4 *deniers* per year to the keepers of the peace.
11. They must forbid usury and ensure usurers return the interest collected to that point.
12. If Simon de Montfort and his men enter toulousain lands, they must not be prevented from claiming what is theirs.
13. They must conform to the will of the King of France “in all things.”
14. Raymond must go to Palestine and remain there until the pope and his men decide he may return.
15. While in Palestine, the he must join one of the two orders of the Temple or of St. John of Jerusalem.

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<sup>13</sup> “St. Gilles” was the family name of the Counts of Toulouse.

According to William, the council's demands concluded with this ominous condition: "if he [Raymond] conforms to these dictates, we will return to him his castles; and if he does not conform to them, we will chase him from everywhere, so that he is left with nothing."<sup>14</sup>

The council's conditions should caution us against single-cause explanations, such as O'Shea's "pretext" hypothesis. The conditions, which range from the predictable (stop sheltering and employing those identified by clerics as Jews and heretics) to the seemingly arbitrary (no new taxes or tolls on roads) to the bizarre (no eating more than two types of meat at a time), reveal that the motivations for the crusade were many and varied. If one accepts the explanation that the crusade was simply a campaign against Catharism, for example, then the council's conditions seem bewildering and arbitrary. After all, what do taxes and tolls, or mercenaries, or meat or fancy fabrics have to do with heresy? Admittedly, at first glance, there does not appear to be much connection. If, instead, however, one considers the conflict not only within the religious context – particularly the church's concerns about Catharism – but also within the socio-political context of twelfth-century Christendom, then the Council of Arles' conditions seem far less eccentric and far more logical. Seen in this broader framework, a different image of the Albigensian Crusade emerges, an image of the crusade as not just a holy war or a land-grab, but as campaign against the economic, political, social and philosophical structure of the Languedoc.

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<sup>14</sup> SAC, vol. 1, 6.61 (153).



## Chapter 1

### The Little Foxes Spoiling the Vines of the Lord<sup>1</sup>

In his 2001 book *Triumph: The Power and the Glory of the Catholic Church – A 2,000 Year History*, journalist and Catholic apologist H.W. Crocker III derides the Albigensians as vicious nihilists, “a sort of Pro-Death League” that advocated abortion and suicide as means of escaping the inherently evil material world.<sup>2</sup> That same year, fellow journalist and Cathar sympathizer Stephen O’Shea lauded the Cathars for their social tolerance, religious piety and economic liberalism in his book *The Perfect Heresy: the Life and Death of the Cathars*.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, French author René Nelli praises the Cathars as the precursors of liberalism, feminism and pacifism, in his iconic *Les Cathars: Hérésie ou Démocratie?*<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, medievalist Mark Pegg insists that medieval “Catharism” as such was in fact a construct of Catholic historians and theologians, who confused a collection of unorthodox beliefs and practices for a competing “church.”<sup>5</sup> Who, then, were the true Cathars? Were they lovers of death, or lovers of life? Were they a cohesive group or a disorganized collection of unorthodox movements? What did the Cathars themselves – as opposed to their ancient and modern proponents and detractors – actually stand for or against?

As evidenced by the work of Crocker and O’Shea in particular, the Cathars and their alleged beliefs and practices (or existence, in the case of Pegg) continue to illicit intense and emotional reactions nearly seven-hundred years after their demise. While Pegg overstates his case in denying the reality of Catharism, pop-historians like Crocker and O’Shea project an illusion of historical consensus, using the Cathars to validate their particular worldviews.

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<sup>1</sup> In a letter from January 15, 2013 to the legate Arnold Amalric, Innocent refers to the heretics and their supporters as “the little foxes that were spoiling the vines of the Lord of Hosts.”

<sup>2</sup> H. W. Crocker, *Triumph: the Power and the Glory of the Catholic Church – A 2,000 Year History* (Roseville, CA: Prima Publishing, 2001), 170.

<sup>3</sup> O’Shea, 16.

<sup>4</sup> René Nelli, *Les Cathares: Hérésie ou Démocratie* (Paris: Marabout, 1972), 25.

<sup>5</sup> Pegg, 25.

Despite the fact that their existence ignited one of the bloodiest and most brutal conflicts in thirteenth century Europe, we know frustratingly little about the Cathars themselves. Much of what we do know, or claim to know, comes from late-thirteenth and fourteenth century sources. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou: the Promised Land of Error*, for example, relies on the inquisitional material from Jacques Fournier, Bishop of Palmiers, compiled in 1320.<sup>6</sup> While Fournier avoided applying outright torture, the reliability of the information he acquired under the threat duress should be questioned. Furthermore, Le Roy Ladurie's heretics lived nearly a century after the beginning of the crusade, so the usefulness of his records for understanding the nature of the heresy at the beginning of the crusade is limited. Beliefs and practices can and do change over the course of a century. Another popular source for understanding Cathar belief is John de Lugio's *Book of the Two Principles*.<sup>7</sup> Like Fournier's inquisitors, however, de Lugio wrote during the fourteenth century. Furthermore, de Lugio, who lived in the area around Lake Garda,<sup>8</sup> represented a northern Italian strain of Catharism which cannot necessarily be equated with the variety present in southern France a century earlier.

Part of the difficulty in untangling the roots of the crusade thus stems from the limited amount and variety of primary source material. Much of what we know about the crusade itself comes from two sources: *The Song of the Albigensian Crusade*, a poem begun by the Navarrese William of Tudela and completed by an anonymous troubadour, and *The History of the Albigensian Crusade*, a chronicle written by the Cistercian monk Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay. While these sources approach the crusade from different angles – Peter is strongly pro-Catholic and pro-French, William is pro-Catholic yet sympathetic to the nobility of Languedoc, and the anonymous troubadour is strongly pro-Languedoc – all three authors are in relative agreement as to the “facts,” or the main events of the crusade. For this reason, both of

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<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey B. Russell, review of *Montaillou: the Promised Land of Error*, by Emmaneul le Roy LaDurie, *The Catholic Historical Review* 66, no.4 (1980): 679, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25020981>.

<sup>7</sup> Jean de Lugio, “Le Livre de Deux Principes.” In *Les Cathares: Hérésie ou Démocratie*, ed. René Nelli (Paris: Marabout, 1972) 175-192.

<sup>8</sup> Lake Garda is located about halfway between Brescia and Verona, in northern Italy.

these sources are considered biased yet informative and reliable.<sup>9</sup> For all of their detailed description of papal politics and military strategy, however, neither of these texts provides much information on the heretics themselves. Certainly, neither text comes close to offering a Cathar perspective on the crusade, or on the state of Catharism in the Languedoc. Ultimately, then, adopting a balanced perspective on Cathar belief and practice requires an uncomfortable amount of guesswork.

### **Religious Dissent**

The Cathars were certainly not unique in challenging the authority of the church or even elements of Christian belief and practice. As soon as there were Christians, there were divisions and disagreements. Paul's letter to the Galatians, for example, features an argument between the author and the apostle Peter about the importance of following Jewish customs.<sup>10</sup> If disagreements existed during the lifetime of the disciples, they were only amplified by their deaths. In *The Rise of the Persecuting Society*, R. I. Moore writes that "the danger, or at least the fear, of schism had attended the church since its infancy."<sup>11</sup>

In the second century, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, attempted to establish some doctrinal consistency in the Christian community. Irenaeus, who is often credited with establishing the canon, had strong opinions about which texts were sacred and which texts were not.<sup>12</sup> For example, he believed the Gospel of John was holy scripture but that the "gnostic" Gospel of Thomas was not.<sup>13</sup> Irenaeus opposed the gnostic sects, particularly Valentinus and his followers, considering them dangerous heretics.<sup>14</sup>

Broadly speaking, Gnostics considered matter and the material world evil; they maintained that *gnosis*, or special knowledge, was necessary to understand the deeper, hidden truths of Christianity –

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<sup>9</sup> Elaine Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility and the Albigensian Crusade* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 19.

<sup>10</sup> Galatians 2:11-14.

<sup>11</sup> R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe 950-1250* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1987), 11.

<sup>12</sup> Elaine Pagels, *Beyond Belief: the Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Random House, 2003), 147.

<sup>13</sup> The Gospel of Thomas, incidentally, is not included in what we call "the Bible."

<sup>14</sup> Pagels, 156

truths which ultimately enabled the knower to transcend his material existence.<sup>15</sup> Unsurprisingly then, the Cathars have often been compared to or called Gnostics.

Elaine Pagels explains that “according to Irenaeus, it is heresy to assume that human experience is analogous to divine reality, and to infer that each one of us, by exploring our own experience, may discover intimations of truth about God.”<sup>16</sup> Irenaeus, like generations of Catholic clerics who followed him, feared that people might independently interpret scripture differently, i.e. incorrectly. Professing belief in Christ was not enough to be a good Christian, or a Christian at all. There was a right way to be a Christian, and there were many wrong ways. Pagels continues that “for Irenaeus, then, and for his successors, *making a difference* between true Christians and those he calls heretics – and choosing the path of “orthodox” faith and practice – is what ultimately makes the difference between heaven and hell.”<sup>17</sup> “Getting it right” was a serious matter; it was the difference between eternal salvation and eternal damnation.<sup>18</sup> Irenaeus’s concern for correctness is particularly reflected in his writings on “the rule of faith.” For Irenaeus, “the rule of faith,” which encapsulated the central message of the Christian faith, originated with the apostles. Irenaeus particularly emphasized fundamental principles such as the incarnation and the trinity. He also called on true Christians to judge and condemn heretics, who he believed were endangering the faith – and their souls – with their false teachings.<sup>19</sup>

A century later, however, Christians were not any closer to cohesion than during Irenaeus’s lifetime. By 325, the divisions in the Christian community had become so extreme that Emperor Constantine called the Council of Nicaea to attempt to “unify fractious Christian groups into one harmonious structure.”<sup>20</sup> Some have argued Constantine’s insistence on Christian unity resulted from a desire to control his population rather than from genuine religious conviction. The emperor’s motives are

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<sup>15</sup> Edward Moore, “Gnosticism,” *IEP*, accessed March, 2104, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/gnostic/>.

<sup>16</sup> Pagels, 154

<sup>17</sup> Pagels, 156-57. In his introduction to *Medieval Heresy*, Malcolm Lambert has also supported the notion that the central conflict between “heretics” and “orthodox” Christians stemmed from disagreement over the means of salvation, and the role of a church in ensuring that salvation. Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reforms to the Reformation*, ed. 2 (Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing, 1997), 7.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel Wilson, *Deification and the Rule of Faith: the Communication of the Gospel in Hellenistic Culture* (CrossBooks, 2010), 165, 167.

<sup>19</sup> Pagels, 156.

<sup>20</sup> Pagels, 170

not necessarily mutually exclusive, however; it is entirely possible that Constantine was interested both in the political and religious benefits of cohesion.<sup>21</sup>

Twelve years after Constantin's legalization of Christianity through the Edict of Milan (313), those gathered at Nicea debated a variety of topics, chief among which was the question of Christ's divinity. In the end, the council adopted the view expressed in the Nicene Creed to this day: that Christ is of one being with the Father. Constantine, pleased with this resolution, proceeded to attempt to enforce this official version of Christianity throughout the empire. And yet, while the council settled the matter for Constantine, competing strains of Christianity continued to exist – sometimes secretly, and sometimes quite openly.

Constantine's successors adopted various measures to suppress heresy. Taking their cues from pagan Rome's persecution playbook, the Christian emperors prohibited heretical sects from meeting and worshipping and confiscated their property. Theodosius (r. 379-392) barred heretics from public office. In 381, he specifically banned Manicheans from inheriting property, making wills, or testifying in court. Justinian (r. 527-565), under whose rule the empire codified its laws, not only barred heretics from all public offices, but also from teaching and practicing law. He also continued Theodosius's policy of banning heretics from inheriting and testifying in court.<sup>22</sup> Such ostracizing measures would be recycled by popes like Innocent III and rulers like Simon de Montfort during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to combat a new heresy with ancient origins – Catharism.

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<sup>21</sup> Initially, Constantine appears an unlikely champion of orthodoxy. While Constantine's mother, Helena, was Christian, the emperor is thought to have practiced paganism until his sudden conversion in 312 at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. After his victory at the Milvian Bridge, Constantine reunited the emperorship of the East and the West. According the chronicler Eusebius of Caesarea, Constantine experienced a vision during this crucial battle. Looking up into the sky, he saw a sign, "a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, bearing the inscription CONQUER BY THIS." While we may be skeptical of this somewhat fantastical account, Constantine – whatever his reasons – legalized Christianity throughout the empire in the 313 Edict of Milan.

<sup>22</sup> Moore, 12. Because of their dualist beliefs, that Cathars have often been compared to the Manicheans in particular.

## The Medieval Church and Heresy

After the fall of the western Roman empire, the church enjoyed several centuries of relative cohesion.<sup>23</sup> Heresy largely died out in the West with the Arian faith of the eastern Germanic tribes in the fifth century.<sup>24</sup> The lingering assumption remained, however, that in the event of dissent, the church had a right to call upon secular rulers to enforce uniformity.<sup>25</sup> Historian Malcolm Lambert argues that the relative absence of heresy between the fifth and eleventh centuries was due to the absence of “a cultivated laity.”<sup>26</sup> Struggling with war, famine and disease, the people of early medieval Europe were simply too preoccupied to organize any meaningful opposition to the religious establishment. “Such outbreaks of doctrinal dissidence that did occur,” Lambert explains, “were treated mildly by the authorities, presumably because they presented no significant challenge to the Church.”<sup>27</sup>

Suddenly, in the eleventh century accounts of religious dissidence appear with increasing frequency: in Orleans around 1018, in Milan about ten years later and in Arras in around 1025.<sup>28</sup> The communities of heretics in these cities were not “treated mildly,” however: they were burnt.<sup>29</sup> The church in these areas, alarmed by the number of heretics and the nature of their teachings, began to confront heresy vigorously and violently.

This rise in religious dissent which occurred during the eleventh century preceded a period of reform, often referred to as the “Gregorian reforms” or the “monastic reforms,” during and after which instances of heresy continued to increase dramatically. The Gregorian reforms, so called because of the involvement of Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073-1084), aimed to create a church where “the sacred was more clearly differentiated from the worldly.”<sup>30</sup> The reforms especially combatted simony – the sale of

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<sup>23</sup> Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reformat to the Reformation* ed. 2 (Hoboken: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 25.

<sup>24</sup> Moore, 13.

<sup>25</sup> Lambert, 4.

<sup>26</sup> Lambert, 25.

<sup>27</sup> Lambert, 25.

<sup>28</sup> Lambert, 9; 16, 22.

<sup>29</sup> Lambert, 16.

<sup>30</sup> Julia Barrow, “Religion,” in *The Central Middle Ages: Europe 950-1320* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 126.

religious offices – and Nicolaitism – or clerical marriage.<sup>31</sup> Inspired by the process of religious renewal, new orders sprang up and old orders adopted stricter practices designed to encourage piety.<sup>32</sup>

Ironically, the Gregorian reforms – which were intended to strengthen the church and promote obedience and cohesion – opened up a Pandora’s box of popular religious enthusiasm. According to Elizabeth Magnou-Nortier, the reforms, through this process of differentiation, actually weakened the church in the Languedoc by widening the gap between the upper clergy, the lower clergy and the laity.<sup>33</sup> Unable to channel their enthusiasm through established institutional structures, the laity and the lower clergy created their own organizations. New religious groups sprung up across France, Italy and Germany. Michael Costen describes these new orders as capturing the imaginations of southern laymen.<sup>34</sup> The *vita apostolica*, or the imitation of the lives of the apostles, was especially popular in Italy and southern France.<sup>35</sup> Charismatic leaders gathered large followings as they wandered through town and country preaching and teaching. Offended by the institutional church’s apparent worldliness, these popular movements, broadly speaking, promoted piety and apostolic simplicity. Unfortunately, as Lambert explains, “the revolutionary programme of the Gregorians set before the church ideals which could never be wholly realized, and gave to some clergy and laymen a vision of a free church that, in the social and political circumstances of the time, could never be expected to be fully realized.”<sup>36</sup> In this sense, heretical sects such as the Waldensians and the Humiliati, which promoted simplicity, piety, the rejection of wealth and the imitation of Christ, can be considered extensions of the Gregorian ideals.<sup>37</sup> Both groups, however, were considered heretical; as a result, their members and supporters suffered persecution. The eleventh century “revolutionary programme,” like so many other reform movements, birthed a brood of unruly children.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Barrow, 140.

<sup>33</sup> Linda Patterson, *The World of the Troubadours: Medieval Occitan c.1100-c.1300* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 313.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Costen, *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade* (Manchester University Press, 1997), 86.

<sup>35</sup> Barrow, 139.

<sup>36</sup> Lambert, 37.

<sup>37</sup> The Waldensians were founded in the late twelfth century by Peter Waldo, a Lyonese merchant (c. 1140-c.1205). The precise origins of the Humiliati are unclear.

Throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the church adopted a “carrot and stick” approach to combating heresy. The “stick,” in the most extreme cases, was death – as the dissidents at Orleans and Milan discovered. In other cases, heretics, and heretical leaders in particular, suffered excommunication; excommunication exposed the excommunicate to secular as well as religious penalties – from the denial of the sacraments to the seizure of property. Conversely, the “carrot” might be official recognition and incorporation into an order. The Humiliati, for example, were in fact organized into three orders in 1199, fifteen years after having been declared heretical; the northern Italian group had been denounced by Pope Lucius III in 1184, but their desire to be recognized by the institutional church and their willingness to compromise with it prompted Pope Innocent III to reconsider their case.<sup>38</sup>

A middle way involved persuasion. By beginning of 1100s, wandering heretic preachers crisscrossed the country side. As R. I. Moore explains, “the message of betrayal [of Gregorian ideals] was borne by wandering preachers, men of wild aspect, conspicuous poverty and ferocious language, who railed against the avarice and lechery of priests and drew followers to themselves in alarming numbers.”<sup>39</sup> Often, the difference between heretics and reformers was not clear, especially to the average person. Even parish priests – whose status and sensibilities, in any case, were often closer to those of their parishioners than to the upper-clergy – sometimes welcomed these wandering wise men.<sup>40</sup> As a result, heretical preachers, both Cathar and otherwise, were able to gather devoted followings of people who considered themselves good Christians. In other words, not all supposed heretics or heretical sympathizers were self-consciously opposed to the church and its teachings. It was possible to be a heretic without knowing it. Pope Innocent recognized that the church was losing the messaging war due to a lack of quality preaching on the part of Catholic clergy. In 1209, the Council of Avignon retrospectively declared that the clergy of the Languedoc were “more like hirelings than shepherds...they do not preach the gospels to the people

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<sup>38</sup> Jane Sayers, *Innocent III: Leader of Europe, 1198-1216* (London: Longman, 1993), 144.

<sup>39</sup> Moore, 19.

<sup>40</sup> Costen, 56.



entrusted to their leadership and in those areas diverse and most damnable heresies spring forth.”<sup>41</sup> The church, determined to highlight the heretical – and therefore damnable – nature of the misinformation, conducted its own preaching campaigns in an attempt at damage control. The term “heresy,” after all, derives from the Greek for “an act of choice;”<sup>42</sup> initially at least, the church seemed intent on avoiding “accidental heretics.” Ecclesiastical leaders hoped that, presented with the truth, people would choose to abandon their false and mistaken beliefs. Catholic clergy attempted to gather the lost sheep. They deployed preachers to the Languedoc, even engaging in public debates to demonstrate the falseness and foolishness of heretical teachings.<sup>43</sup> In the opening of *The Song of the Albigensian Crusade*, William of Tudela describes these preaching campaigns by the “order of Citeaux.”<sup>44</sup>

The most effective preachers, however, turned out to be from the new mendicant orders: the Franciscans and the Dominicans.<sup>45</sup> These friars, whose simple and pious lifestyles paralleled that of popular heretical groups, were able to lead not only by word but also by example. Their efforts, however, may simply have been too little, too late. The church, concerned about precisely the sort of situation that had developed in the Languedoc, had a history of limiting and regulating preaching. Unlike today, when Catholic priests are typically expected to deliver thoughtful and original sermons at every service, preaching remained the prerogative of bishops or their delegates throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>46</sup> If parish priests preached at all, they read preapproved prepared sermons. The church regulated preaching because it understood the power of the spoken word. It understood the sort of influence a skilled speaker could amass, the sort of following he could attract – for better or for worse. As Moore explains, “The successful preacher represented unlicensed, uncontrolled power. Therefore he must either recognize the authority of

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<sup>41</sup> Elaine Graham-Leigh, “Hirelings and Shepherds: Archbishop Berenguer of Narbonne (1191-1211) and the Ideal Bishop,” *The English Historical Review*, 116, no. 469 (Nov. 2001), 1085.

<sup>42</sup> Pagels, 184.

<sup>43</sup> Malcolm Barber, *The Cathars: Dualist Heretics in the Languedoc in the High Middle Ages* (London and New York: Longman, 2000), 119.

<sup>44</sup> “*l'ordre de Citeaux*.” SAC, 1.1 (9).

<sup>45</sup> Barber, 146.

<sup>46</sup> Costen, 85.

the church, and so by implication the legitimacy of secular power and the social order, or be extirpated.”<sup>47</sup>

The church, in short, understood the potential dangers of individual interpretation.

Nearly a millennium earlier, Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria had urged “believers to shun *eponia*,” which translates approximately as “intuition,” “imagination,” or inventiveness.<sup>48</sup> As Pagels explains: “What others revere as spiritual intuition Athanasius declares is a deceptive, all-too-human capacity to think subjectively, according to one’s preconceptions. *Eponia* leads only to error – a view the “catholic church” endorsed then and holds to this day.”<sup>49</sup> The popular religious enthusiasm of the eleventh century, however, had left the masses hungering for frequent and innovative religious instruction – however intuitive, imaginative, or inventive.

### **Cathar History and Cosmology**

Indeed, it is precisely through this sort of itinerant preaching that Catharism is believed to have been spread. Sometime between 969-972, a Bulgarian cleric named Cosmas complained of dualist heretics in his diocese. The heresy, according to Cosmas, was being preached by a cleric named Bogomil. In a sermon against heresy, Cosmas described the Bogomils as “lamb-like” in their appearance but as “ravens wolves” in reality.<sup>50</sup> Cosmas warned his hearers to be wary of the outward piety and humility of the heretics. He accused the Bogomils of rejecting the cross, icons, relics, saints and sacraments.<sup>51</sup> Apparently, Bogomil was also accompanied by female preachers, which Cosmas considered particularly objectionable.<sup>52</sup>

The Cathars are overwhelmingly described as dualists, which suggests a connection to the Bogomils. They have also been associated with the Manicheans, an early Christian dualist sect. Indeed,

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<sup>47</sup> Moore, 104.

<sup>48</sup> Pagels, 177.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Edward Peters, ed., “The Sermon of Cosmas the Priest Against Bogomilism,” in *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 109.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Barber, 10.

William of Tudela's *Song of the Albigensian Crusade* describes the heretics "*ab cels de Bolgaria.*"<sup>53</sup> While Eugène Martin-Chabot translates this phrase into the French as "*hérétiques,*" the phrase literally translates as "those of Bulgaria." This reference suggests that this hypothesis of the Cathar's eastern origins was shared by contemporaries of the crusade. There is also some evidence that the Cathars received some texts from the Bogomils, mostly in the period before 1170.<sup>54</sup> Because of the Byzantine church's insistence on orthodoxy, heretical groups had been pushed to the edges of the empire. In these remote regions surrounding the Balkans, dualist sects such as the Paulicians and the Messalians were able to exist relatively unmolested by the imperial authorities.<sup>55</sup>

In 1143, a clash occurred between two heretical groups in Cologne. After some questioning by the local authorities, it was determined that one of the groups claimed a connection to the Bogomils. By the 1150s, these Cathars – as they would come to be called – had an organized ecclesiastical structure in the Rhineland. By the 1160s, the heresy had spread to the Languedoc, and by the 1170s, to Lombardy. In Lombardy, they connected with other sects of Bulgarian origin. These contacts were not always friendly, however.<sup>56</sup> The various Bogomil-inspired sects disagreed – sometimes violently – about the extent to which to embrace dualism.<sup>57</sup>

By 1167, a man named Nicetas, the Bogomil bishop of Constantinople, travelled to Lombardy to organize and unite these dualist sects. At the Council of Saint Felix, Nicetas united groups in Lombardy, Northern France and the Languedoc, organizing them into a diocesan structure and urging them to embrace absolute dualism.<sup>58</sup> At the council, Nicetas also consecrated bishops for Toulouse, Carcassonne and possibly Agen.<sup>59</sup> Previously, there had only been a bishop at Albi.<sup>60</sup> These cities, particularly

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<sup>53</sup> SAC, 1.2 (9).

<sup>54</sup> Barber, 33.

<sup>55</sup> Barber, 9.

<sup>56</sup> Moore, 22.

<sup>57</sup> Barber, 7. Dualists were so called because they believed in a divided or "dual" universe where the forces of good and the forces of evil competed for power.

<sup>58</sup> Barber, 71.

<sup>59</sup> The document repeatedly refers to a city called "Aran," perhaps a misspelling of Agen. Edwin Peters, ed., "The Cathar Council at Saint-Felix-de-Caraman, 1167," in *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 121.

<sup>60</sup> Costen, 61.

Toulouse and Carcassonne, would continue to be associated with Catharism throughout the crusade. In his *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay describes Toulouse as “the chief source of the poison of faithlessness which had infested the people and deflected them from the knowledge of Christ.”<sup>61</sup> Incidentally, the city of Albi, for which the Albigensians are named, was relatively free of “heresy” by the time the crusade began. The city of Albi surrendered to Simon in the summer of 1209, shortly after the siege of Béziers.<sup>62</sup> The Albigensians, acutely aware of the horrors perpetrated by the crusaders at Béziers, had opted to forego a fight. From thence forward, the city remained loyal to the count. Unlike Toulouse, its neighbor 45 miles to the southwest, Albi never developed into a center of rebellion or resistance. The term “Albigensian,” was coined before the beginning of the crusade by Geoffrey of Breuil, a twelfth century Benedictine chronicler from the abbey of St. Martial in Limoges.<sup>63</sup>

Though information about Nicetas is scarce, it is clear from this account that the bishop ministered to an established, if disorganized, community. With the increased mobility created by a developing economy, not only goods and people, but also ideas, were traded between east and west.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, the areas where dualism was strongest – northern Italy and southern France – were important trade centers throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

While Mark Pegg disputes the notion that the Cathars were dualists,<sup>65</sup> most scholarship describes them as such. Malcolm Barber’s *Dualist Heretics in the Languedoc*, for example, betrays this belief in the title. Dualists are so called because of their belief in a divided, or “dual” universe. For the Cathars, not only was the universe divided between good and evil and spirit and matter, but between two creators or “principles” – one good, one evil.<sup>66</sup> While the good god had created the heavens and human souls, the evil god had created matter and human bodies. The Cathars rejected Genesis’s characterization of creation as

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<sup>61</sup> HA, 6 (8).

<sup>62</sup> HA, 118 (65).

<sup>63</sup> Pegg, 65.

<sup>64</sup> Lambert, 28.

<sup>65</sup> Pegg, 46.

<sup>66</sup> Barber, 89.

“good.” Some Cathars ascribed the text of the Old Testament to the devil outright.<sup>67</sup> The “Book of St. John” and the “Vision of Isaiah,” two Bogomil texts popular in Cathar circles, claimed that the devil had created humans explicitly to honor and serve him.<sup>68</sup>

Though John de Lugio’s fourteenth century *Book of the Two Principles* ought not to be accepted outright as an authoritative summary of Cathar belief, his writings almost certainly reflect pre-existing Cathar traditions. Indeed, much of what de Lugio writes squares with what we know about Catharism from earlier sources. The *Book of the Two Principles* describes the world as being divided between two principles – good and evil – each of which had created its own world.<sup>69</sup> According to this model, the visible world – the world of matter – had been created by the devil. Count Raymond V of Toulouse’s appeal to the Cistercians and Pope Alexander in 1177 supports the idea that the “Two Principles” model was widespread before de Lugio’s codification. In his letter to Rome, Raymond paints a picture of a church under siege: “Formerly venerated ecclesiastical sites lie neglected, they remain in ruins, baptism is denied, the Eucharist is despised, penance is scarcely performed, the creation of man, the physical resurrection, is utterly rejected, and all the sacraments of the Church are set at naught, and what is dreadful to relate, *the Two Principles are also taught*” (emphasis added).<sup>70</sup>

Raymond’s complaint reveals several aspects of Cathar belief and practice. First, it confirms the dualist character of Catharism in the twelfth century. Mark Pegg argues that the Cathars embraced dualism over the course of the crusade, but this statement, made nearly forty years before Innocent’s call to rid the Languedoc of heresy, suggests otherwise.<sup>71</sup> Second, Raymond alludes to their problematic beliefs about the nature of man. Finally, the letter highlights the Cathar’s anticlericalism and their contempt for the institutional church and its sacraments. This last point in particular would be problematic for the Cathars and their supporters.

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<sup>67</sup> Barber, 93.

<sup>68</sup> Barber, 84.

<sup>69</sup> Jean de Lugio, “Le Livre de Deux Principes,” in *Les Cathares*, 175.

<sup>70</sup> Raymond V, *Recueil des Histoires des Gaules et de la France*, in *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade*, Michael Costen (Manchester University Press, 1997), 61.

<sup>71</sup> Pegg, 46.

## Chapter 2

### The Practical Consequences of Catharism

In his *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay accuses Cathar sympathizers of a variety of crimes, including “usury, robbery, murder and illicit love and all kinds of perjury and perversity.”<sup>1</sup> These sympathizers – or “believers,” as he calls them – “felt they could sin in safety without restraint, because they believed they could be saved without restitution of what they had stolen and without confession and penitence.”<sup>2</sup> For Peter, the believers’ degenerate and perverse lifestyle was a direct consequence of their degenerate and perverse beliefs – beliefs which contradicted the fundamental Catholic assumptions about good and evil, sin, salvation and the role of the institutional church.

#### The Uniqueness of the Cathars

R. I. Moore differentiates between two strains of twelfth century religious dissent. The first strain included those who felt “betrayed” by the Gregorian reforms. The second included “those who rejected, not only the achievement, but the goal of the Gregorian reform, the ideal of a hierarchically organized church which claimed the right to intervene in every area of life and thought.”<sup>3</sup> The Cathars belonged to the later strain.

Differentiating between these two strains can be difficult, especially since outwardly, they often appear to embrace similar goals. There is the temptation, for example, to equate the asceticism of the Humiliati preachers with that of the Cathar *Perfecti*.<sup>4</sup> At the very least, the fact that the Humiliati were ultimately incorporated into an approved order while the Cathars were persecuted through the

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<sup>1</sup> W.A. and M.D. Sibly, trans. and ed., *The History of the Albigensian Crusade: Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay's Historia Albigensis* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. In other texts, “believers” are called by the Occitan word *credentes*.

<sup>3</sup> Moore, 19.

<sup>4</sup> *Perfecti* were Cathar holy men and women.

increasingly intricate machinery of the Inquisition<sup>5</sup> should raise some questions as to the extent of the similarities between these two groups.

Unlike other heretical groups, the Cathars never intended to reform the Catholic Church. “Reform” implies a certain acceptance of and confidence in an organization’s basic principles: reformers believe there is something worth reforming. The Cathars were not reformers; they were radicals. They utterly rejected the Catholic Church – its hierarchy, its traditions, and even its scriptures. For Cathars, the Roman Church was irredeemably corrupt. It was rotten to the core.

### **Cathars and Clerics**

In a society so thoroughly imbued with Catholic belief and practice as that of medieval Europe, heresy not only threatened the religious order, but the entire fabric of society. Michael Costen captures the essence of the problem when he explains that, for the Cathars, “since men in their fleshly existence were solely the creation of the devil it followed that human society had no divine sanction behind it.”<sup>6</sup> The Cathars, in rejecting the divine origins of humans beings, rejected the divine origins of human institutions – first and foremost, those of the Catholic Church. They also rejected any attempts at internal reform of the church, which it considered irredeemably corrupt.

Unsurprisingly then, the Cathars disavowed the church’s sacraments. In his letter to Pope Alexander III and the Cistercians,<sup>7</sup> Count Raymond V of Toulouse referred to the Cathars’ rejection of baptism, the Eucharist and penance. Catholics, by contrast, considered each of these sacraments necessary for salvation. Baptism signified one’s entry into the church; worshipping and receiving the Eucharist – the actual body of Christ – provided access to the living God; confessing one’s sins and performing penance reconciled one with God. For Catholics, there was no salvation outside of the church and no salvation

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<sup>5</sup> The Inquisition was formally institute by Poe Gregory IX in 1231.

<sup>6</sup> Costen, 63.

<sup>7</sup> “Formerly venerated ecclesiastical sites lie neglected, they remain in ruins, baptism in denied, the Eucharist is despised, penance is scarcely performed, the creation of man, the physical resurrection, is utterly rejected, and all the sacraments of the Church are set at naught, and what is dreadful to relate, the Two Principles are also taught.” See p. 25.

without the sacraments. The importance of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, is especially visible in the number of feast days and celebrations dedicated to it in the Christian calendar. Medieval Christians literally organized their lives and livelihoods around the performance, the reception and the celebration of the sacraments.

Cathars also thought little of the institution of marriage. While not officially declared a sacrament until the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the church had a long history of regulating marriage and sexual relationships. In the eleventh century, the church started clamping down on consanguineous marriage. Pope Alexander II adopted a system that prohibited marriage to the sixth degree in 1076; after Lateran IV, this prohibition was reduced to the fourth degree.<sup>8</sup> In today's world, where people have access to an almost limitless marriage-pool through innovations such as automobiles and the internet, finding a suitable mate outside the extended family seems not only desirable but also highly probable. Considering the local orientation of the medieval lifestyle, however, the prohibited degrees constituted a considerable inconvenience. For someone living in a *castrum* of 250-500 people, marrying one's cousin might simply be the best – or the only – option. The prohibited degrees, though not insurmountable, complicated the process. Individuals wishing to marry within the prohibited degrees technically had to obtain a special dispensation – a potentially time-consuming and expensive process. The Cathars, who regarded the prohibited degrees as unimportant, offered welcome relief to singles throughout the Languedoc. Since the Cathars rejected the idea of marriage, they were also unconcerned by the distinction between sex within and outside of marriage. Peter's reference to "illicit love," reflects how orthodox Christians perceived this comparative permissiveness.<sup>9</sup>

Much of the clergy's prestige and utility in the church derived from their ability to perform the sacraments. Only a priest, for example, could consecrate the Eucharist, or, after Lateran IV, officiate at a wedding. The Cathars, however, were unimpressed by Catholic priests' claims of special access to God. This rejection of Catholic clergy played into pre-existing anti-clerical sentiment. In regards to the

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<sup>8</sup> Costen, 91.

<sup>9</sup> *HA*, 13 (13).



Languedoc, O’Shea characterizes “attacking the property and persons of priests as somewhat of a national pastime.”<sup>10</sup> Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay, for example, describes the citizens of Béziers assaulting a priest and then urinating in his chalice on the eve of the siege.<sup>11</sup> Because of Peter’s clear Catholic bias, it is sometimes difficult to determine which stories to take at face value and which stories to take with a grain of salt, however.

Though Catharism certainly encouraged anti-clericalism in its rejection of the sacraments and the institutional church, anti-clericalism and heresy remain separate phenomena. Peter, in his attempt to discredit the nobility of the Languedoc, conflates hostility towards the clergy – or hostility towards a specific order or prelate – with heresy. Peter describes Count Raymond-Roger of Foix murdering a priest, for example, as proof of his heretical tendencies.<sup>12</sup> Because the Catholic Church owned large amounts of land, conflicts between clergy and the laity were not uncommon, however. In Narbonne, for example, the power of the archbishops rivaled that of the viscounts.<sup>13</sup> Disagreements often arose, as is to be expected in a situation where two powers struggle to control one area. Such disagreements might have been interpreted as signifying heresy, whether or not they actually did. Elaine Graham-Leigh has argued, for example, that the Trancevals were early targets of the crusade because of their poor relationship with the Cistercians.<sup>14</sup> Costen explains that “at the highest level the rulers of the Languedoc often had very bad relations with individual monasteries or prelates, but they never rejected the church as an institution.”<sup>15</sup> For all of his problems with the church, for example, Count Raymond VI continued to support religious foundations until his death, even rebuilding the nave of the cathedral of Saint-Etienne during the middle of the crusade.<sup>16</sup>

The nobility of the Languedoc had particularly poor relationships with papal legates both before and during the crusade. While Peter presents Raymond VI’s refusal to co-operate with the legates as proof

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<sup>10</sup> O’Shea, 50.

<sup>11</sup> *HA*, 85 (49).

<sup>12</sup> *HA*, 196 (103).

<sup>13</sup> Graham-Leigh, “Hirelings and Shepherds,” 1094.

<sup>14</sup> Graham-Leigh, 84. The Trancevals were the family of the viscounts of Béziers and Carcassonne.

<sup>15</sup> Costen, 93.

<sup>16</sup> Sibly & Sibly, xxxvi.

that “he always cherished heretics,”<sup>17</sup> hostility towards legates offers no better an indication of heretical sympathies than disagreements with a religious order. Bishops and legates often did not enjoy good working relationships either, as evidenced by Innocent’s criticism of several bishops for refusing to welcome his representatives.<sup>18</sup> The bishop of Béziers, for example, was suspended in 1203 for refusing to co-operate with the legates.<sup>19</sup> Understandably, local clergy often considered the legates – bureaucrats from Rome come to restore order to their diocese – threats to their power.

### **The Popular Appeal of Catharism**

As demonstrated by Peter’s equation of anti-clericalism with heresy, certain individuals or families might be accused of Catharism simply because some of their opinions or practices resembled those of “heretics.” In this sense, the Cathars exerted an influence and an appeal disproportionate to their numbers. Costen estimates that there were only about 1500 *Perfecti* – Perfects, or initiated Cathars – in the Languedoc when the crusade started.<sup>20</sup> The vast majority of southerners, even if considered heretics by Catholic writers, were either Cathar sympathizers or mere “believers,” as Peter calls them.<sup>21</sup> Only the Perfects – those men and women who had received the *consolamentum* – were initiated Cathars. The *consolamentum*, a sort of baptism of spirit performed by laying on of hands, was as close as the Cathars came to the Catholic sacraments. The *consolamentum* could only be administered by a Perfect in good standing. Like the Donatists, a group of early Christian heretics, the Cathars believed the validity of an act to be contingent upon the worthiness of the performer.<sup>22</sup> After an extensive and intense preparatory period, recipients were required to forgive all men their sins, abstain from sex, killing, lying, stealing,

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<sup>17</sup> HA, 37 (23).

<sup>18</sup> Sibly & Sibly, xxxix.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Costen, 75.

<sup>21</sup> HA, 13 (12-13). “It should be understood that some of the heretics were called ‘perfected’ heretics or ‘good men,’ others ‘believers of the heretics.’ The ‘perfected’ heretics wore a black robed, claimed (falsely) to practice chastity, and renounced meat, eggs and cheese...The term ‘believers’ was applied to those who lived a secular existence and did not try to copy the way of life of the ‘perfected,’ but hoped that by following their faith they would attain salvation; they were separated in the way they lived, but united in their beliefs – or rather unbelief!” Note that “believers” are also referred to as *credentes* in other sources.

<sup>22</sup> Barber, 80. For the Donatists, this “act” would have been the Eucharist.

swearing and eating meat, eggs and cheese.<sup>23</sup> Peter disputes this, insisting that the Perfects “falsely” claimed to practice these privations.<sup>24</sup> Peter’s reliability on this point is questionable, however; his primary aim, after all, was to discredit the heretics. The Cathars’ supposed near-veganism is attributed to another unusual Cathar belief: that of the transmigration of souls.<sup>25</sup> Perfects lived simply, owning nothing and travelling from town to town preaching and teaching in their signature black robes, a detail which Peter confirms.<sup>26</sup>

This ascetic lifestyle contrasted sharply and favorably with the perceived worldliness and wealth of the catholic clergy. While most parish priests were in fact quite poor, the common people would nonetheless have had ample opportunities to witness the church’s wealth. Bishops, abbots and other members of the upper clergy enjoyed lifestyles closer to those of princes than of priests. Furthermore, monastic institutions were often quite wealthy.<sup>27</sup> This wealth came from gifts, tithes and the monasteries’ own industries. The distribution of tithe money would have been of particular concern. There apparently existed some opposition to paying tithes in the Languedoc, for the authors of the Statutes of Pamiers (1212) deemed it necessary to specify that “all tithes are to be paid as is written and enjoined by the Pope.”<sup>28</sup> Many monasteries essentially re-routed money to their own coffers from parish churches. While monasteries technically possessed and cared for the parishes on their domain, the actual pastoral duties usually devolved upon members of the secular clergy i.e. parish priests.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, while the twelfth century saw an expansion in the gap between rich and poor, monasteries expanded their land holdings, often at the expense of laymen.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> HA, 13 (12). “The ‘perfected’ heretics wore black robes, claimed (falsely) to practice chastity, and renounced meat, eggs and cheese. They wished to appear that they were not liars although they lied, especially about God, almost unceasingly!”

<sup>25</sup> Barber, 25.

<sup>26</sup> HA, 13 (12).

<sup>27</sup> Barrow, 141.

<sup>28</sup> Simon de Montfort, “Appendix H: The Statutes of Pamiers, December 1212,” in *The History of the Albigensian Crusade* ed. W.A. and M.D. Sibly (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 321-322.

<sup>29</sup> Costen, 82. “Secular clergy” were so called because unlike monks, or “regular clergy, they did not live under a “rule” or *regula*.

<sup>30</sup> Costen, 19.

Perhaps more than their unique cosmology, then, the Cathars' anti-institutionalism endeared them to the people and the nobility of the Languedoc. During the twelfth century, southern Europe began to develop a semblance of a capitalist economy. Agricultural surpluses and expanding infrastructure allowed for the emergence of new markets and the improvement and diversification of the economy,<sup>31</sup> as did money, "the enemy of the agrarian caste system."<sup>32</sup> The discovery of new deposits of precious metals also precipitated an expansion in the use of coinage.<sup>33</sup> Italy and the Languedoc – the areas in which Catharism was strongest – were more commercial and less agricultural than northern France. Occitan towns enjoyed economic expansion and social mobility, with urban knights and the artisan and merchant classes wielding a considerable amount of power.<sup>34</sup>

Paradoxically, perhaps, the Cathars' rejection of the world translated into a relatively permissive attitude with regards to everything from having sex to charging interest. Though the *Perfecti* lived lives of poverty and chastity, they did not expect everyone else to be able to do the same. The church's teachings, on the other hand, touched upon virtually every aspect of people's lives and livelihoods. According to Costen, "much of Catharism must have seemed conservative and comforting, endorsing the familiar world and resisting change and interference and regulation from outside."<sup>35</sup> Because the Cathars regarded the world as evil in its origin, however, and society as a transient and unimportant ordering of things, most of the behavioral regulation which the church was attempting would have been seen as worthless.<sup>36</sup> Of particular significance in an emerging market economy was the church's prohibition of charging interest or "usury." Note that "usury" is one of the charges Peter leveled against the "believers."<sup>37</sup> The Cathars, by contrast, had no such qualms.<sup>38</sup> In 1210 the papal legate, Arnold Amalric, had encouraged the Bishop of Toulouse to preach against usury; many of the merchants who lent money with interest were

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<sup>31</sup> David Nicholas, "Economy," in *The Central Middle Ages: Europe 950-1320* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 66.

<sup>32</sup> O'Shea, 20.

<sup>33</sup> Nicholas, 70.

<sup>34</sup> Patterson, 39.

<sup>35</sup> Costen, 98. Costen here uses "conservative" as meaning "traditional," rather as a comment on the permissiveness or restrictiveness of Cathar teaching.

<sup>36</sup> Costen, 97.

<sup>37</sup> *HA*, 13 (12).

<sup>38</sup> Costen, 97.

well-known Cathar sympathizers.<sup>39</sup> It is then probably no coincidence that the rise of Catharism coincided with the rise of the merchant class. While Catharism's message was not primarily economic, it appealed to those whose productivity the church's strictures undermined.<sup>40</sup> In the words of Renée Nelli, Catharism gave bankers a cleaner conscience.<sup>41</sup>

Women too – of all classes – seem to have benefited from Catharism. Because Cathars believed all humans to be inherently sinful and all matter to be inherently evil, the distinctions between men and women were not so important: all humans were depraved, no matter their gender. Cathar hospices offered women opportunities for spiritual involvement and development.<sup>42</sup> While orthodox religious houses for women existed, they were far fewer in number than male religious houses. Furthermore, the number of religious houses for women was lower in the Languedoc than in France.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps this abundance of Cathar houses encouraged religiously inclined women in the Languedoc to turn towards Catharism. While women could not become priests in the Catholic Church, they could become Perfects – placing them on equal spiritual footing with their male counterparts. The appeal of Catharism to women is reflected in the enthusiastic support of several noble women. For example, Aimery of Montreal's sister Giraude famously supported Cathars,<sup>44</sup> as did Esclaramonde, sister of Count Raymond-Roger of Foix, as well as his wife, Philippa.<sup>45</sup>

Despite its obvious appeal for women, the peasantry and the emerging bourgeoisie, Catharism also gained support from the nobility. Nelli, echoing arguments for the later success of Lutheranism among the German princes, claims that Catharism offered the nobility “an excuse to break free from the tyranny of Rome.”<sup>46</sup> Nelli explains how, counterintuitively, Catharism managed to appeal to such a broad cross-section of society: “the peasants hoped that it [Catharism] would bring about the abolition of tithes;

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<sup>39</sup> Costen, 134.

<sup>40</sup> Nelli, 24.

<sup>41</sup> Nelli, 21.

<sup>42</sup> Patterson, 240.

<sup>43</sup> Costen, 74.

<sup>44</sup> Barber, 35.

<sup>45</sup> Note that there are two “Raymond Rogers:” Raymond-Roger of Foix (whose name is usually hyphenated) and Raymond Roger Tranceval (whose name is not usually hyphenated).

<sup>46</sup> “*le catharisme était pour eux prétexte à s'affranchir de la tyrannie de Rome.*” Nelli, 11.

the bourgeoisie and the merchants, that it would institute a new economic order where they could grow rich through the charging of interest.” Though “all of this seemed to go against feudal principles and tended, in the long run, to weaken it,”<sup>47</sup> the lords of the Languedoc faced a conundrum. While antagonistic to the aspirations of the merchant class and of the peasantry, they needed the support of their heretical and heretically sympathetic subjects to maintain autonomy from their overlords: the French crown and the church.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> “*Les paysan espéraient qu’il les affranchirait des dimes; les bourgeois et les marchants, qu’il instaurerait un ordre économique nouveau où ils pourraient s’enrichir et faisant fructifier l’argent: tout cela semblait aller contre les principes de la féodalité et tendait sans aucun doute, mais a longé échéance, a l’affaiblir.*” Nelli, 29.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 3

### The Chief Sources of the Poison of Faithlessness<sup>1</sup>

#### The Many Faces of “Feudalism”

To understand the political situation in the Languedoc, it is also necessary to understand the political development of that which we call “France.” While both *The History of the Albigensian Crusade* and *The Song of the Albigensian Crusade* refer to “France,” the France of the thirteenth century was far from being the France of today. The country of France – “la République française” – did not exist in its present configuration until the twentieth century. Furthermore, while the idea of the “state” has its roots in the Middle Ages, states cannot be said to have truly existed during 1200s. In the thirteenth century, “France” would have most commonly referred to the area around Paris, in other words, the area under the direct control of the French King.<sup>2</sup> The work of the early twelfth century cleric, historian and statesman Abbot Suger, for example, equates “France” with the Ile de France. Interestingly, Suger also refers to the French King as “King of the French” rather than “King of France,”<sup>3</sup> suggesting a nascent national identity but the relative absence of well-established geographic distinctions. While the French King may have enjoyed direct control only over the area surrounding his capital city, “French” territory expands considerable if we include areas under his nominal overlordship.

This sort of arrangement – in which one ruler, usually a king, claims control of an area outside his direct control through his relationship to other, lesser rulers, or “vassals” – is often described as “feudalism.” A vassal “held” his land, or his “fief,” on behalf of his overlord, usually in exchange for military service. The Oxford Dictionary of the Social Sciences describes feudalism as “a social, political, and economic system based on contractual relationships between a lord and the other members of an

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<sup>1</sup> In the *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, Peter of les Vaux-de-Cerney describes the city of Toulouse as “the chief source of the poison of faithlessness which had infested the people and deflected them from the knowledge of Christ and His pure splendor and divine glory.” HA 6 (8).

<sup>2</sup> John Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus*, “Philip, the Realm and the Emergence of Royal Ideology,” (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1986), 360.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

aristocratic class—most typically in the form of an exchange of land rights for military allegiance and service.”<sup>4</sup> Others expand the definition to include the relationship between aristocrats and their non-aristocratic subordinates, usually called “serfs.” Serfs, who worked their lord’s land in exchange for protection, enjoyed little to no social mobility, economic freedom or political influence; not unlike slaves, they were essentially the property of their overlords. Fundamentally, feudalism can be described as a system of mutual obligation.<sup>5</sup>

The Languedoc was characterized by what Claude Duhamel-Amado calls “a loose feudal framework.”<sup>6</sup> Despite the persistent conflation of “the Middle Ages” and “feudalism,” the same sort of “contractual relationships” cannot be said to have existed across Europe. The political organization of the Languedoc defied the simplistic overlord → nobles → knights → serfs “pyramid” model, in which a king reigned supreme over “upper” and “lower” nobles and knights (who may or may not have been nobles themselves) and serfs. This model, though simplistic in any context, nevertheless corresponds more closely to the structure of northern France than to that of the Languedoc.

Though the Counts of Toulouse were vassals of the French king, in reality they enjoyed a high level of autonomy. Until the crusade, the crown exerted little influence in the Languedoc. To begin with, the French were not the only power to which the counts of the Toulouse were technically subordinate. By the end of the twelfth century, different parts of the Languedoc were variously under the overlordship of not only the French, but also of the English and the Aragonese. Of these three powers, the St. Gilles

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<sup>4</sup> Craig Calhoun, ed., “Feudalism,” *Oxford Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, (Oxford University Press, 2002) <http://goo.gl/bYKKhT>.

<sup>5</sup> While the words “feudal” and “feudalism” regularly appear in both popular and academic publications on the Middle Ages, there exists considerable disagreement among scholars about the appropriateness and usefulness of the term. In her article “Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and the Historians of Medieval Europe,” Elizabeth A. R. Brown dismisses the term as “a simply label simplistically defined.” Brown’s criticism is not without merit. She rightly points out that “the variety of existing definitions of the term and the unwillingness of any historian to accept any other historian’s characterization of feudalism constitute a prime source of confusion.” Feudalism, a term invented in the seventeenth century, is indeed a “construct;” medieval men and women would not have described themselves as living in a feudal society. And yet, despite Brown’s objections, “feudalism” does not appear to be in any danger disappearing. The term, “feudalism,” however flawed, at the very least suggests that notions of rulership and ownership in the Middle Ages differed considerably from our modern understanding of these concepts. Elizabeth A. R. Brown, “Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe,” *The American Historical Review* 79, no. 4 (Oct. 1974), 1065, 1070.

<sup>6</sup> Patterson, 19.



family and other Occitan nobles were most closely connected to the kings of Aragon than to either the kings of France or of England. When he succeeded his father in 1194 as viscount of Béziers, Albi, Carcassonne and the Razès, for example, Raymond Roger Tranceval held most of his land from Aragon; the rest, he held from the Count of Toulouse, who in turn held much of his land from the French crown.<sup>7</sup> Part of this affinity with Aragon was geographic – Toulouse is far closer to Zaragoza<sup>8</sup> than to Paris. Part of this affinity was also cultural.

As a general rule, the Languedoc is characterized as being more tolerant and more egalitarian than France-proper. This relative tolerance and egalitarianism can be seen as both a cause and an effect of political decentralization. The relationship between the peasantry and their overlords also seems to have been less strict in the south than in the north: serfdom was uncommon in the Mediterranean region.<sup>9</sup> Southern peasants may have been better off than their northern counterparts as they were generally less burdened with labor services.<sup>10</sup> Because landholding was so fragmented in the Languedoc, there was also less distance socially between nobles and peasants. With the average *castrum* (a semi-autonomous, fortified town) numbering between 200-500 individuals, people of different social classes came into frequent contact with one another. Incidentally, these tiny, independent, tight-knit and often isolated communities were also the perfect breeding grounds for heresy.

Much of the Languedoc also rejected the strictly hierarchical model common in the north, where vassals owed military service to their lords, in favor of “free fiefs.”<sup>11</sup> In a free fief, the holder was obliged to offer use of his fortress, rather than his service or that of his men, to his overlord. Though vassalage was not entirely foreign to Occitans at the end of the thirteenth century, Linda Patterson argues that “there are clearly several regions where it was viewed with an active hostility or not taken seriously or else

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<sup>7</sup> Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 102.

<sup>8</sup> Zaragoza was the capital of the Kingdom of Aragon beginning in the twelfth century. It remains the capital city of the province of Aragon in modern-day Spain.

<sup>9</sup> Patterson, 136.

<sup>10</sup> Patterson, 146.

<sup>11</sup> Patterson, 16.

ignored in favour of more egalitarian compacts.”<sup>12</sup> The *Song of the Albigensian Crusade* seems to support this assumption in portraying the nobility of the Languedoc as enjoying a considerable degree of autonomy. At the battle of Castelnaudry, for example, William of Tudela describes the soldiers rallying not only around cries of “Toulouse” but also “Comminges” and “Foix.”<sup>13</sup> We also see several instances of individual lords taking initiative in battle, such Giraud de Pépieux at Castenaudry;<sup>14</sup> and defending their territory with or without assistance from their overlord, such Pierre-Roger of Termes;<sup>15</sup> or the seemingly leaderless defenders of Cabaret in November 1209.<sup>16</sup>

There is a term, however, to describe the nature of the “system of mutual obligation” in the south: *Paratge* or *Parage*. Malcolm Barber, for example, uses *Paratge* to differentiate between vassalage in the north and the looser system in the south.<sup>17</sup> Vassalage ties, characterized by *Paratge*, were traditionally weak in the south, while relations among freemen were more egalitarian than in the north. Unfortunately, there is no adequate English translation for this Occitan word, which appears with increasing frequency throughout the course of *The Song of the Albigensian Crusade*. Eugène Martin-Chabot, in the notes to his translation of William of Tudela, describes *Paratge* as the “personification of the chivalric ideal, in which all of the virtues of a noble and generous heart are combined: loyalty, equity, respect for the rights of others and a feeling of honor.”<sup>18</sup> Significantly, the poet denies these virtues to Simon de Montfort, the military leader of the crusade and the rest of the French.<sup>19</sup> This definition is Martin-Chabot’s, however, not that of the poet. Fortunately for the modern reader, the term “*Paratge*” almost always appears accompanied by another, similar term or series of terms. By examining these companion terms, it is possible to come close to understanding what *Paratge* would have meant in thirteenth century Languedoc.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> SAC, 9.96 (223).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> SAC, 4.56 (135).

<sup>16</sup> SAC, 4.40 (101).

<sup>17</sup> Barber, 55.

<sup>18</sup> Martin-Chabot, vol. 2, (16). “*Personification de l’ideal chevalresque, où se résument toutes les vertues d’un Coeur noble et généreux: loyauté, équité, respét du droit d’autrui et sentiment d’honneur, que le poète ni a Simon de Montfort et aux autres croisés.*”

<sup>19</sup> SAC, 14.137 (17).

Most often *Paratge* is paired with “Worth” and “Merit.”<sup>20</sup> “Worth” and “Merit” referred not only to a person’s virtues but also to their status. In *The Song of the Albigensian Crusade*, Count Bernard IV of Comminges assures Count Raymond VI of Toulouse that “*Paratge* will reawaken and regain its luster” if he recaptures Toulouse from the crusaders.<sup>21</sup> In Bernard’s eyes, Raymond is a more worthy ruler both because he is a better person than Simon – who is variously described as “arrogant,” prideful<sup>22</sup> and “mean, hard and cruel”<sup>23</sup> – and but also because he is the city’s legitimate, hereditary lord. After the Toulousains rout the crusaders during the 1217 siege, the inhabitants declare, “Toulouse! She has destroyed the senseless! The cross has covered the Lion in blood and revived him with freshly splattered brains; the ray of the star has illuminated the darkness; and so Merit and *Paratge* recover their value.”<sup>24</sup> *Paratge* – or the social and political order – has here been restored through the defeat of the Simon and his “imperial heart”<sup>25</sup> and the reinstatement of the “legitimate lord.”<sup>26</sup> A year earlier, before the siege of Beaucaire, troubadour Guy of Cavaillon cautioned the count, “If you do not restore Worth and *Paratge*, then *Paratge* will perish and the entire world perishes in you.”<sup>27</sup> *Paratge* – if Guy of Cavaillon is to be believed – was the glue that held all of society together. Indeed, *Paratge* was seen as being divinely ordained. During the siege itself, the inhabitants of Beaucaire cry, “We cannot fail! The glorious Christ, who died on that Friday, will restore *Paratge*.”<sup>28</sup> These descriptions of *Paratge* demonstrated that the lords of the Languedoc valued their independence and autonomy and that they considered themselves different – and better – than the “imperial” crusaders, Simon and the French king’s supposed claim on their territories notwithstanding. Patterson sums up this point by explaining that, “*Paratge* can perhaps

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<sup>20</sup> These words are capitalized in the original text, perhaps as a means of personifying them.

<sup>21</sup> SAC, vol. 2, 26.181 (265).

<sup>22</sup> SAC, vol. 2, 27.185 (293). “*Orgueil et Arrogance.*”

<sup>23</sup> SAC, vol. 2, 20.165 (165). “*méchant, dur et cruel.*”

<sup>24</sup> SAC, vol. 3, 28.188 (23). Here, the two sides are identified by their leaders’ heraldic emblems. The Counts of Toulouse were represented by the cross and Simon de Montfort by the lion.

<sup>25</sup> SAC, vol. 2, 21.169 (185). “*Sire comte...vous avez un coeur vraiment impérial.*”

<sup>26</sup> SAC, vol. 3, 28.187 (9).

<sup>27</sup> SAC, 17.154. “*Si Valeur et Parage ne sont pas restaurés par vous, alors Parage périt et le monde entier périt en vous.*”

<sup>28</sup> SAC, vol. 2, 17.157 (115). “*Désormais, nous ne pouvons échouer. Glorieux Jésus-Christ, qui mourûtes le Vendredi, vous restaurez Parage.*”

best be defined here as the right to one's inheritance: the right not only of a noble lineage but also of a whole society."<sup>29</sup>

### **Chivalric Society vs. Courtly Society**

In addition to “feudal” and “feudalism,” the terms “chivalry” and “chivalric” are also often associated with the Middle Ages. Chivalry, which shares the same root as the French word for horse – *cheval* – is connected to the concept of knighthood. Though warriors on horseback existed throughout Europe, the idea of chivalry, *per se*, had not developed in the south as it had in the north. Southern lords, though certainly no strangers to warfare, were not so enamored with combat as their northern counterparts. Over the course of the twelfth century, knightly combat in the north was developing into a ritualized affair, controlled by an elaborate series of rules and customs.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, in *The Song of the Albigensian Crusade*, in contrast to northern epics such as *The Song of Roland*, the author devotes little to no attention to describing coats of arms, arms and armor. There is also little reference to particular “knightly” behaviors. The fact that knights in the Languedoc had, by the beginning of the crusade, yet to establish themselves into a hereditary caste, also points to the more informal nature of southern knighthood.<sup>31</sup>

Linda Patterson argues that “Occitania was not a chivalric society, but it was a courtly society.”<sup>32</sup> While chivalric and courtly ideals were closely connected in the north, it was not necessarily so in the south. The Occitan courts of the twelfth century were centers of culture: of art, of music and especially of literature. The medieval Occitan culture was marked by the troubadours, itinerant “singer-songwriters” who composed lyrics poems on topics ranging from the pains of love to the corruption of the church.<sup>33</sup> These poets travelled among the various courts of the Languedoc seeking patronage, often by praising a particular lord or family at the expense of another. While courts around Europe employed entertainers, the

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<sup>29</sup> Patterson, 70.

<sup>30</sup> Patterson, 88.

<sup>31</sup> Patterson, 87.

<sup>32</sup> Patterson, 90.

<sup>33</sup> Patterson, 3.

Languedoc was notable in that not only the upper-nobility, but also the lower ranks of the aristocracy, patronized troubadours.<sup>34</sup>

Unlike their northern counterparts, Occitan troubadours were traditionally more concerned with the art of love than that of war. Though the French eventually developed their own love-lyric tradition with the *trouvères*, their literature – the *chanson de gestes* – initially focused on martial rather than amorous feats.<sup>35</sup> Tellingly, in the literature of the late twelfth century, southern poets began identifying the French with “prowess at arms” rather than the Occitan “joy of love.”<sup>36</sup>

Though René Nelli overstates his case in asserting that both troubadour poetry and Catharism liberated women by “neutralizing the notion of carnal sin,”<sup>37</sup> he comes closer to the truth in claiming that Cathars’ and troubadours’ “respective ideological conceptions – though fundamentally opposed – present undeniable similarities.”<sup>38</sup> As O’Shea puts it, “from the dualists’ love your neighbor to the jongleurs’ love your neighbor’s wife all in the course of a day, the Occitan culture of piety and fine feeling was slipping the traces of traditional Christianity.”<sup>39</sup> Though their motivations differed, both the Cathars and the troubadours reflect the relatively open nature of Occitan society, which not only accepted but apparently welcomed critical assessment of social, political and religious norms.

The troubadour ethic was characterized by a certain defiance of convention. Occitan poets developed the idea of “courtly love.” In courtly literature, the speaker, usually a young man “on the fringes of aristocratic society,” expressed his admiration for and devotion to a noble lady.<sup>40</sup> The object of this admiration and devotion was almost always unavailable – either practically, because of marriage, socially, because of her status, or emotionally, because of her attachment to another.<sup>41</sup> Maurice Keen

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<sup>34</sup> Costen, 47.

<sup>35</sup> *Trouvères* were the northern French equivalent of the troubadours.

<sup>36</sup> Patterson, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Nelli, 106.

<sup>38</sup> Nelli, 109.

<sup>39</sup> O’Shea, 44.

<sup>40</sup> Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (Yale University Press, 2005), 30.

<sup>41</sup> Francis Gies, “The Troubadours and the Literature of Knighthood,” *The Knight in History* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2011), 49.

argues that this sort of love poetry expressed the social ambitions of the lesser nobility.<sup>42</sup> Though the glorification of illicit and adulterous relationships in poetry does not necessarily translate into the acceptance of these sorts of relationship in reality,<sup>43</sup> the troubadour notion of romance nevertheless clashed with the church's views on love, marriage and sex. Despite its pan-European popularity, the genre inspired some controversy. For example, the pious French King Phillip Augustus, who reigned for all but the final six years of the Albigensian Crusade, disliked the sensuous poetry of the troubadours; in contrast to the southern lords, he was reluctant to support them or any other entertainers at his court.<sup>44</sup>

The Aragonese, however, long shared the Occitan affinity for love poetry, as did the Italians. King Alfons II of Aragon in fact adopted Occitan as the official literary language of his court, perhaps as part of his strategy to further his political ambitions in the Languedoc.<sup>45</sup> By the 1170s some Italian poets were writing in Provençal, an Occitan dialect. In fact, Provençal remained the literary language of many Italian courts until the time of Dante.<sup>46</sup> Patterson explains that "frequent exchanges between troubadours in Occitania, Italy and Spain created a certain internationalism, an interest and ability in foreign languages...which was not shared by the less open-minded French."<sup>47</sup>

Troubadour poetry did not exclusively deal with love, however. A significant portion of the surviving troubadour corpus is comprised of satirical poetry, often with a political or moralizing theme.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps the most famous satirical poet, Marcabru, in fact denounced "courtly love" as disingenuous and encouraged a more practical approach to romantic relationships. Simon Gaunt describes his poems as "intensely polemical...savagely ironic, frequently obscene, and often slanderous."<sup>49</sup> Another troubadour, Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, condemned members of the aristocracy who claimed greatness solely on the

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<sup>42</sup> Keen, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Gies, 59.

<sup>44</sup> Baldwin, 358.

<sup>45</sup> Patterson, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Keen, 40.

<sup>47</sup> Patterson, 4.

<sup>48</sup> Simon Gaunt, "Sirventes," *New Oxford Companion to French Literature*, ed. Peter France (2005), <http://goo.gl/C4hcx8>.

<sup>49</sup> Simon Gaunt, "Marcabru," *New Oxford Companion to French Literature*, ed. Peter France (2005), <http://goo.gl/hkZcHn>.

basis of their birth in his *Leus sonetz*, for example.<sup>50</sup> In keeping with the comparatively more egalitarian and less hierarchical structure of southern society, troubadours criticized seigniorial avarice and acclaimed *largesse* with more frequency than northern writers.<sup>51</sup> Another well-known troubadour, Pèire Cardenal, criticized the church's corruption – particularly simony – in *Un sirventes vuelh far dels auls glotós*<sup>52</sup> and other poems. Cardenal's poetry is especially relevant as much of it was written during and immediately after the Albigensian Crusade. Though clearly not a Cathar, Cardenal, like many other troubadours, was hostile to the French and to the institutional church.<sup>53</sup> As demonstrated by Peter II of Aragon, who defended his vassal Raymond VI despite his commitment to Catholicism, and by William of Tudela, who called Catharism “an insane belief” yet criticized the crusaders' tactics, it was possible to oppose both the crusade and Catharism. Pro-crusade authors like Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay often failed to recognize or acknowledge this distinction, however.

### **The Political Structure of the South**

Stephen O'Shea describes the nobility of the Languedoc as “feckless.”<sup>54</sup> Indeed, it is worth wondering whether the “quality” of the Languedoc's nobility played a role in the outcome of the crusade, or, preceding the crusade, in the development of Catharism. Was southern society really more tolerant than that of France? Or were its leaders – both temporal and spiritual – simply too incompetent, preoccupied or unaware to successfully regulate the beliefs and behaviors of its people?

In contrast to that of northern France, the society of the Languedoc was highly decentralized. Whatever the motives of the southern nobility, it is precisely this decentralization – this absence of a

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<sup>50</sup> Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, “Leus Sonetz,” *Complete Works*, [http://www.trobar.org/troubadours/raimbaut\\_de\\_vaqueiras/](http://www.trobar.org/troubadours/raimbaut_de_vaqueiras/). “Both power and ancestry must be equaled by worth, I think.”

<sup>51</sup> Keen, 31.

<sup>52</sup> “A sirventes about those miserable gluttons.”

<sup>53</sup> Gaunt, “Peire Cardenal,” *New Oxford Companion to French Literature*, ed. Peter France (2005), <http://goo.gl/E9Czeb>.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

unifying and overarching power – that allowed Catharism not only to emerge but also to thrive in the region.

The breakdown of Charlemagne’s empire in the ninth century created a power-vacuum.<sup>55</sup> In the area around the Ile de France, the Capetians emerged as the first family during the tenth century. Hugh Capet, a Frankish nobleman, was elected king following the death of the Carolingian King Louis V. Hugh then had his son, Robert, crowned king during his lifetime, thereby establishing the Capetians as the hereditary ruling family of France. Throughout the tenth and much of the eleventh century, however, the French monarchy remained weak.<sup>56</sup> In 987, when Robert Capet was crowned king, “royal lands” included a narrow stretch between the cities of Paris and Orleans. Counties such as Flanders, Normandy, Brittany, Burgundy, Aquitaine and Gascony – to name a few – essentially operated as independent principalities. The centralizing aspirations of the French crown finally came to fruition, however, under King Philip II, who earned the epithet “Philip Augustus.” Philip not only added territory to France but also increased the efficiency and effectiveness of royal administration through a series of reforms, establishing new positions, such those of *prévôts* (provosts), and *baillis* (bailiffs).<sup>57</sup> In 1214, five years into the Albigensian Crusade, Philip won his greatest victory at the Battle of Bouvines, where he defeated the forces of the count of Flanders, the German emperor and the English king.<sup>58</sup>

While power in the north was being consolidated by the French crown, power in the south remained diffuse. This lack of central power resulted in the militarization of countryside, marked by the building of castles and recruitment of armed retainers.<sup>59</sup> Such decentralization created instability, as various families vied for power in the region. These sorts of squabbles were not unique to the Languedoc, however. Beginning at the end of the tenth century, prelates instituted the “Peace of God” in an attempt to

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<sup>55</sup> Costen, 4.

<sup>56</sup> Keen, 34.

<sup>57</sup> Baldwin, 171.

<sup>58</sup> Jim Bradbury, *The Capetians: Kings of France, 987-1328* (New York and London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), 198.

<sup>59</sup> Costen, 2.



pacify the European nobility.<sup>60</sup> Essentially, these churchmen sought to curb instances of random violence, especially against members of the clergy. The Peace was preached with renewed intensity – and minimal success – in the Languedoc throughout the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century. Raymond VI of Toulouse and his vassals were repeatedly accused of violating the Peace. Ironically, this failure to “keep the peace” would be cited by Pope Innocent III as a justification for the Albigensian Crusade.

Though the counts of Toulouse emerged as the strongest power in Languedoc, they were nevertheless unable “to create the powerful network of obligation which would enable them to master the lesser nobility and link them into a ‘state.’”<sup>61</sup> The minor principalities of Narbonne, Montpellier, Foix and Béziers-Carcassonne all competed with one another and with the St. Gilles family for influence in the Languedoc; by end of eleventh century, the viscounties of Montpellier, Béziers-Carcassonne and Narbonne essentially operated as independent entities.<sup>62</sup>

In this fractious environment, the Counts of Barcelona – later, the Counts of Barcelona and Kings of Aragon – gained a foothold in the region, forever frustrating the Counts of Toulouse’s centralizing aspirations.<sup>63</sup> To illustrate: in 1137, Raymond-Berenguer IV, Count of Provence, assumed the crown of Aragon through marriage. Twelve years later, when Viscount Raymond Tranceval reunited Béziers and Carcassonne, he offered homage to Raymond-Berenguer, rather than to the new Count of Toulouse, Raymond V. Instead of attempting to establish a closer relationship with the Trancevals, however, Raymond allied himself with the French King, Louis VII, by marrying his sister, Constance. Costen argues that “where the counts of Toulouse and other local rulers failed was in not being able to bind these military rulers to themselves with oaths of loyalty and with gifts of land.”<sup>64</sup> In short, the St. Gilles family failed to establish a strong feudal network in the Languedoc.

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<sup>60</sup> Daniel Power, ed. *The Central Middle Ages: Europe 950-1320* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 259.

<sup>61</sup> Costen, 2.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Costen, 15.

This tension between the St. Gilles and Tranceval families would continue to tear at the Languedoc throughout the crusade. Before the beginning of the crusade, Raymond VI attempted to form an alliance with his nephew, Raymond Roger Tranceval, viscount of Béziers. Raymond Roger refused, however.<sup>65</sup> Raymond VI then briefly allied himself to the crusaders, leaving Tranceval land as the crusade's main target. Had Raymond VI been able to form an alliance with Béziers-Carcassonne sooner, perhaps they could have successfully combated the crusaders.

The situation in the city of Toulouse itself also highlights the shortcomings of the St. Gilles family. Throughout the 1100s, the city was on chilly terms with its count. A consulate ruled the city by 1152; with this development, the count and his family found it difficult to enter the city, let alone control it.<sup>66</sup> According to Costen “the Count was too weak to direct the government himself.”<sup>67</sup> The fact that in 1188, the city went as far as to rebel against Raymond V and support his enemy, the Englishman Richard the Lionheart, supports Costen's assertion.<sup>68</sup> Two years later, the consuls had seized control of the city's courts. The consuls, like many in the Languedoc, rejected Roman law – incidentally, also the basis for Church law – in favor of local customs. Consulates also existed in Montpellier, Nimes, Arles, Avignon and Marseille. In these and other towns, many members of the bourgeoisie were prominent Cathars – a significant fact, since the bourgeoisie controlled town governments.<sup>69</sup> Although churchmen accused the Counts of Toulouse of abetting heresy – first, Raymond VI and later Raymond VII – it is worth wondering whether the St. Gilles family in fact had the power to prosecute Catharism in their capital city, let alone in the rest of the Languedoc. Tellingly, even the unquestionably orthodox Raymond V was unable to do so, as indicated in his letter to Pope Alexander III and the Cistercians.<sup>70</sup>

Southern inheritance law further contributed to fractiousness in the Languedoc. While in the north the eldest son typically inherited his family's property, a more egalitarian system existed in the south;

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<sup>65</sup> SAC, vol. 1, 1.9 (27).

<sup>66</sup> Costen, 31.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Patterson, 167.

<sup>69</sup> Costen, 73.

<sup>70</sup> see p. 25

land and other property was divided among heirs. As a result of this partible inheritance, a piece of land and the property on it might be controlled by different family members and organizations.<sup>71</sup> Costen describes the situation as “the state itself...being parceled out as private property and public powers divided among heirs.”<sup>72</sup> It is this sort of system that caused the collapse of the Carolingian empire,<sup>73</sup> and it is this sort of system that contributed to the decentralization – and ultimately the downfall – of the Languedoc.

### **The Southern Church**

While the jury is still out as to whether the southern lords were, in fact, “feckless,” there were clearly serious deficiencies among the Occitan clergy. Southern dioceses were plagued by poverty,<sup>74</sup> corruption and disorganization.<sup>75</sup> Jane Sayers has argued that “unlike the bishops of the north, who as Crown appointees had an important notion of responsibility, those of the south in the ferment of heresy, without a strong royal power to control them, were often irresponsible and lawless.”<sup>76</sup> Pope Innocent III – no fool – understood that episcopal ineptitude constituted a significant portion of the problem. The pope repeatedly called on the clergy of Languedoc to extirpate heresy during the end of twelfth and beginning of thirteenth centuries. In the decade before the crusade, Innocent deposed or suspended the bishops of Fréjus, Carcassonne, Béziers, Vence, Toulouse, Viviers, Rodez, Carcassonne and Auch. The Pope had a particularly poor opinion of Bishop Berenguer of Narbonne. In 1203, Innocent complained about the bishop, writing: “Rapacious wolves attack flocks under your care...because, like a dumb dog refusing to bark, you do not deter them with barking, nor do you follow the example of the Good Shepherd and lay

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<sup>71</sup> Sibly & Sibly, xxxviii.

<sup>72</sup> Costen, 5.

<sup>73</sup> After the death of Charlemagne’s son, Louis the Pious, the Carolingian empire was divided among Louis’s three sons: Lothair I, Louis the German and Charles the Bald.

<sup>74</sup> “Poverty” here refers to the wealth of the diocese as an institution, not necessarily to the wealth of individual prelates.

<sup>75</sup> Barber, 114.

<sup>76</sup> Sayers, 148.

down your life for your flock, but rather you flee, leaving them to the jaws of the wolves.”<sup>77</sup> A year later, the pope repeated the dog analogy, colorfully comparing Berenguer to “dumb dogs who refuse to bark, who return to their vomit, or embrace the things which they should rather have vomited, and shepherds who only graze themselves and neither with voice nor staff put to flight the wolves savaging the flocks of the Lord.”<sup>78</sup> At the Council of Avignon in 1209, Innocent criticized the clergy of the Languedoc, saying, “they are more like hirelings than shepherds...they do not preach the gospel to the people entrusted to their leadership and in those areas diverse and most damnable heresies spring forth.”<sup>79</sup>

Part of the problem in the Languedoc lay in the system of ecclesiastical appointments. Most of the upper-clergy came from wealthy and powerful families. Often, their personal interests conflicted with those of the papacy. Archbishop Berenguer of Narbonne, for example, was the half-brother of Alfons II of Aragon and the nephew of King Peter II of Aragon. Berenguer’s connection to the royal house of Aragon-Catalonia led him to be politically active both in the Languedoc and in Aragon.<sup>80</sup> This connection likely also influenced Peter’s decisions to fight with the Count of Toulouse and against the crusaders, despite his disdain for Catharism.

Conflicts between southern clergy and the papacy also resulted from differing conceptions of episcopal responsibility. Elaine Graham-Leigh argues that “while Berenguer may have satisfied local desires for an efficient and hard-working bishop, the move away from spiritual expectations seen in diocese like Auxerre and Narbonne by the late twelfth century was not shared by Innocent III.”<sup>81</sup> In Innocent’s opinion, bishops like Berenguer pursued financial gain and political power at the expense of their pastoral duties. Innocent, she maintains, “was acting on the belief that heresy in the Languedoc

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<sup>77</sup> Innocent III, *Patrologia Latinae cursus completes, series latina*, in *The Southern French Nobility and the Albigensian Crusade*, Elaine Graham-Leigh in (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 78.

<sup>78</sup> Innocent III, *Patrologia Latinae*, in “Hirelings and Shepherds: Archbishop Berenguer of Narbonne (1191-1211) and the Ideal Bishop,” Elaine Graham-Leigh, *The English Historical Review*, 116, no. 469 (Nov. 2001), 1084.

<sup>79</sup> Innocent III, *Sacrorum Consiliorum nova et amplissima collecta*, in “Hirelings and Shepherds,” Graham-Leigh, 1085.

<sup>80</sup> Graham-Leigh, “Hirelings and Shepherds,” 1094.

<sup>81</sup> Graham-Leigh, “Hirelings and Shepherds,” 1098.

could only be defeated if there was a return to a monastic, spiritual model for the episcopacy.”<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the pope appointed several members of the Cistercian order to replace deposed bishops in the Languedoc.<sup>83</sup> Innocent’s criticism of the worldliness of the southern clergy – and Graham-Leigh’s assessment of Innocent’s motives – ought to be questioned, however. Innocent was perfectly happy to have bishops intimately involved in the affairs of the world when these furthered his particular goals. Ultimately, Innocent sought bishops who would be loyal to him and to his agenda: bishops like Fulk of Toulouse, who the *Song of the Albigensian Crusade* describes as deceiving the nobility of Toulouse into leaving the city walls under the pretense of safe passage<sup>84</sup> or the aggressively orthodox Arnold Amalric, bishop of Narbonne, or Peter’s uncle Guy of les Vaux-de-Cernay, bishop of Carcassonne. Arnold Amalric, first Abbot of Citeaux, then a legate and finally Bishop of Narbonne, is perhaps most famous (or infamous) for instructing the crusaders at the sack of Béziers to “Kill them [the inhabitants] all. God will know his own.”

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<sup>82</sup> Graham-Leigh, “Hirelings and Shepherds,” 1101.

<sup>83</sup> Graham-Leigh, “Hirelings and Shepherds,” 1100.

<sup>84</sup> SAC, vol. 2, 23.172 (202).

## Chapter 4

### The Business of the Peace and of the Faith<sup>1</sup>

On June 18, 1209, Count Raymond VI of Toulouse was formally reconciled with the church. Two years earlier, Raymond had been “convicted as an enemy of the Gospel” and excommunicated.<sup>2</sup> In a letter to the Count in 1207, Pope Innocent III not only threatened seizure of territory held from the church, but also military action. “If this threat does not lead you to understanding,” Innocent thundered, “we shall enjoin all the princes around you to rise against you as an enemy of Christ and a persecutor of the church and to keep for themselves whatever parts of your territories they are able to occupy.”<sup>3</sup> This call for a concerted attack on Raymond VI represented a shift in the pope’s thinking. Until then, Innocent had hoped that heresy could be dealt with “in house,” with the support of Raymond and his overlord, King Philip II of France, and with preaching campaigns.<sup>4</sup>

In 1208, however, after the murder of the papal legate Peter Castelnau, the pope renewed his call for crusade against Raymond. Though Raymond had not killed Castelnau with his own hand, the pope and his legates nevertheless held the count responsible. Allegedly, the murderer had been a man in the service of the St. Gilles family. Concerned by these accusations, Raymond had dispatched a delegation to Rome to convince the pope of his innocence in this and other matters. This delegation had been somewhat successful. In 1209, Innocent appointed Master Milo, his personal secretary, and Master Thedisius, a canon at the Genoa cathedral, as legates to the Languedoc. As the pope’s representatives in the region, Masters Milo and Thedisius were responsible for assessing Raymond’s guilt and reconciling him to the church.

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<sup>1</sup> Innocent repeatedly uses this phrase to describe the crusade and his campaign against Raymond VI and the Cathars.

<sup>2</sup> Innocent III, “29 May 1207: Innocent to Count Raymond VI of Toulouse,” *Patrologia Latinae*, in “Appendix F: Translated Extracts from Papal Correspondence, 1207-1215,” *HA*, 304.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Sibly & Sibly, 316.

For the legates, Raymond's reintegration into the church must have been a bittersweet moment. On the one hand, the legates clearly disliked and mistrusted Raymond. As security, they had demanded that Raymond hand over seven *castra*. They had also demanded that the consuls of Avignon, Nimes, Montpellier, Saint-Gilles and other key cities swear to oppose the count if he reneged on his promises to the church. In short, the legates questioned Raymond's sincerity and the seriousness of his commitment to the church. On the other hand, considering the legates disdain for Raymond, it is not difficult to imagine them relishing the opportunity to publicly humiliate him.

Peter describes the reconciliation ceremony in detail.

"The Count," he explains, "was led naked to the doors of the church of Saint-Gilles. Then, in the presence of the legate, and the archbishops and bishops (of whom twenty had gathered for the ceremony) he swore on the Body of Christ and on the numerous relics...that he would obey the commands of the Holy Roman Church in all matters. Then the legate had a robe placed round the Count's neck. Holding him by the robe, he gave him absolution by scourging him and led him into the church." Peter then continues, "It should be mentioned that after the Count was scourged and led into the church, as just described, God disposed that because of the crowd of spectators he was quite unable to leave the church by the way he had entered. Instead, he had to go down through the crypt and pass, naked, by the tomb of the blessed martyr Brother Peter of Castelnaud whose death he had caused."<sup>5</sup>

Following his reconciliation, Raymond joined the crusade. Peter describes the count as "a false and faithless crusader" who "took the cross not to avenge the wrong done to the Crucifix, but to conceal and cover his wickedness for a period."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> HA, 77 (44).

<sup>6</sup> HA, 80 (45).

### The Conspicuous Absence of the Albigensians

One of the most striking features of contemporary sources on the Albigensian Crusade is their seeming disinterest in the “Albigensians” themselves. Though the crusade was ostensibly a campaign against heresy, we do not see or hear much of the actual heretics. Almost all of the action revolves around political and military figures: on the southern side, the Raymonds – the St. Gilles, Raymond VI and his son, Raymond VII – the Raymond Rogers – Raymond Roger Tranceval, Viscount of Béziers-Carcassonne and Albi-the Razes and Raymond-Roger, Count of Foix – other members of the lesser nobility of the Languedoc, and, until his death at Muret in 1213, King Peter of Aragon; on the crusading side, the Popes – initially Innocent, then Honorius III and Gregory IX – Simon de Montfort, the French crown and the nobility and of the Ile de France, Burgundy, Lorraine and other northern territories.

Though Innocent and Simon differed in their approach to the crusade and their attitude towards the nobility of the Languedoc – Innocent was more interested in conversion, Simon in conquest – both clearly recognized the crucial role secular rulers and political and social conditions played in promoting religious orthodoxy. Innocent repeatedly describes the crusade as “the business of peace and the faith.”<sup>7</sup> For Innocent, political and religious order were inextricably connected; each impacted the other. As Sibly and Sibly explain in their edition of the *History of the Albigensian Crusade*, “without peace and order, the faith could not be protected and heresy would flourish.”<sup>8</sup>

Tellingly, the crusade began not with a bonfire of Cathar Perfects, but with the flogging of Raymond VI. Raymond, though not considered a heretic *per se*, is nevertheless considered responsible for the religious beliefs and practices of the people under his control (as are the rest of the nobility of the Languedoc) by the pope, his legates and the crusaders.<sup>9</sup> The Albigensian Crusade was then not simply a matter of chasing out “the little foxes...spoiling the vines of the Lord,” but of uprooting the vineyard

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<sup>7</sup> In the original Latin, *negotium pacis et fidei*. Sibly & Sibly, “Appendix G: Innocent III and the Albigensian Crusade,” 313.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Raymond’s reconciliation in 1209 acknowledges his status as son of the Church, for the time being.



completely. Like the tree bearing bad fruit in Matthew 7, the Languedoc would be cut down and thrown into the fire.<sup>10</sup>

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The social and political and climate of the Languedoc created the perfect breeding ground for heresy. Political decentralization, combined with religious dissatisfaction, the beginnings of a capitalist economy and a comparatively open-minded culture, created an environment receptive to Catharism.

Heresy, then, was not the cause but the effect, not the disease, but the symptom. Innocent, Simon, the French crown and other proponents of the crusade understood this. As evidenced by their deliberate establishment of a new legal framework for the Languedoc, they understood that burning heretics and sacking cities, though perhaps good for the crusading army's moral, would not definitively root out heresy from the region. Broadly speaking, these things alone also would not bring the Languedoc into line with the church: without being outright heretical, a region, its leaders and its population could nevertheless be a thorn in Rome's side. Archbishop Berenguer of Narbonne and the St. Gilles family are prime examples of this.

The measures adopted at the Councils of Arles (1211) and at Pamiers (1212) reflect Innocent's initial charges against Raymond. In his 1207 letter, the Pope accuses the Count not only of "cherishing heretics," but of employing mercenaries, appointing Jews to public positions, breaching the Peace, robbing monasteries and fortifying churches and increasing tolls.<sup>11</sup> William of Tudela echoes these criticisms when he explains that Raymond had been excommunicated in 1207 because "he kept mercenaries in his service and continually pillaged the countryside."<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, William here makes no mention of heretics – only mercenaries.

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<sup>10</sup> The crusaders in fact literally set fire to the Languedoc. In *HA* 245, Peter describes Simon "destroying woods and uprooting vines" in a Shermanesque march through the county of Foix.

<sup>11</sup> Innocent III, "29 May 1207: Innocent to Count Raymond VI of Toulouse," 305.

<sup>12</sup> *SAC*, vol.1, 1.4 (15).

The ultimatum of the Council of Arles in 1211, along with the Statutes of Pamiers a year later, demonstrate the crusaders' commitment to completely reshaping the Languedoc. We might assume that the majority of the provisions in either of these documents would directly involve condemning heretics. Of the Council of Arles' fifteen or so demands, however, only one mentions heretics. Of the Statute of Pamiers's forty-six provisions, only seven mention heretics. In fact, heretics are not mentioned until the seventh section, by which point the statutes have already addressed tithing, the fortification of churches, clerical inheritance, taxation and discipline and public markets.

### **A Close Reading of the Statutes of Pamiers and the Charter of Arles**

#### *Arles*<sup>13</sup>

William of Tudela writes that when the Toulousains heard the conditions imposed by the Charter of Arles, they declared that they would rather die than be reduced to the status of serfs.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the legates must have known that their conditions would be unacceptable to the count. The Charter's demands become increasingly onerous, culminating with what essentially amounts to complete subjugation and indefinite exile: the second to last point declares that "the Count shall go overseas, in the land where the Jordan runs, and he will remain there as long as the monks or the cardinals of Rome or their representative wish him to" and the third to last point demands that "in all things, they [the Count and his followers] conform themselves to the will of the King of France."<sup>15</sup> In light of such demands, it is worth questioning the legate's commitment to reaching an agreement with Raymond VI. Even the more reasonable demands, such as observing the "Peace of God," would have been almost impossible for Raymond to enforce in his territory. As explained, Raymond's control of his territories, including the city of Toulouse itself, was tenuous at best.

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<sup>13</sup> SAC, vol.1, 6.60 (149-151).

<sup>14</sup> SAC, vol.1, 6.61 (153).

<sup>15</sup> "*le comte de Toulouse devra aller outre-mer, dans le pays ou coule le Jourdain, et y rester aussi longtemps que le voudront les moines ou les cardinaux de Rome ou celui qu'ils délègueront;*" "*en toutes choses ils se conformeront à la volonté du roi de France.*" SAC, vol.1, 6.60 (151).

The Charter's other demands reflect the concerns expressed by Innocent in his 1207 letter. The first demand requires that the Count and his followers observe the "Peace of God." The second requires mercenaries to be licensed the day of (or the day following) their employment. The tenth exacts a payment of four *deniers* a year to the keepers of the Peace; the eleventh forbids usury. The fifth and the sixth – prohibitions on eating more than two types of meat at once and on wearing expensive fabrics – seem designed to embarrass the Count more than anything; they could also be seen as imposing a penance of sorts. These interpretations are not mutually exclusive, however.

Overall, the Charter of Arles reflects familiar desires: to tie the Languedoc more closely to the church, and by extension, to France and French custom. The Charter sought to address the "lawlessness" of the Languedoc, which it considered the cause of heresy.

### *Pamiers*<sup>16</sup>

Though by 1212 Simon was technically only viscount of the former Trancevals lands, the Statutes of Pamiers were intended to also apply to lands conquered in the future. Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay explains that "the purpose of the Council was this: our count wished to develop good customs in the territories he had won." Simon was desirous "to promote both the observation of the Christian religion and the maintenance of peace and order in civil life...accordingly the Count wished to impose a definite set of customs on his vassals and to set boundaries on their holdings of land, which it would be forbidden to transgress."<sup>17</sup> The drawing up of such an extensive and detailed code reveals Simon's confidence in the success of the crusade and the permanence of the French presence.<sup>18</sup> Though the Statutes of Pamiers touch upon several of the same themes as the demands of the Council of Arles, the statutes are far more detailed and comprehensive. While Arles presented an ultimatum, Pamiers offered a blue-print for the governance of an entire region.

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<sup>16</sup> Simon de Montfort, "Appendix H: The Statutes of Pamiers, December 1212," 321-322.

<sup>17</sup> *HA*, 362 (170).

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2008), 597.

The statutes can be subdivided into several basic and broad categories. They deal primarily with clerics; religious customs and practices; heretics; prisoners and the poor; property and inheritance; tolls, taxes and tithes; and feudal obligations and customs. Naturally, these categories overlap. For example, a statute dealing with heretics might also deal with the disposal of property, a statute concerning clerics might also involve methods of taxation, and a statute pertaining to property might also require attention to feudal obligations and customs. Thinking of each statute as belonging to a particular category or set of categories is useful, however, in that it helps highlight Simon's major goals and concerns. By far, the greatest number of statutes deal with feudal obligations and customs.<sup>19</sup> This ought to come as no surprise. Simon, as the new overlord of the Tranceval territory, sought to establish clear expectations of his new vassals.

Statutes XVII – XXIII all deal with the nobility's obligations towards Simon. This "nobility" would have included native southern lords, as well as the Frenchmen Simon had installed in conquered *castra*. Statue XVII requires the lesser-nobility of France – described as "barons and knights" – to assist Simon if "there is a war against his person, arising in connection to his territory."<sup>20</sup> Statute XXI reiterates this point, specifying knights and barons "both of lower and higher rank," and detailing the penalties for those who refuse to answer their overlord's call.<sup>21</sup> Statute XXII details further penalties for failing to provide "fifteen days' [military] service."<sup>22</sup> Statute XVIII specifies that French knights coming to the count's assistance must be accompanied by other French knights, not by local knights, which Simon would have considered unreliable due to their ties to the old order.<sup>23</sup> All of these statutes stand in opposition to the traditional Occitan "free fief." Statute XX expands upon the fourth demand of the Charter of Arles by requiring lords to hand over their *castra* to the count "as often as he wishes."<sup>24</sup> Statue

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<sup>19</sup> Statutes XII, XVII-XXIII, XXIV, XXVII, XXIX, XXX, XXXII, XXXIII, XXXVIII, XLI, XLII all deal with feudal obligations and customs.

<sup>20</sup> Simon de Montfort, 323.

<sup>21</sup> Simon de Montfort, 324.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Simon de Montfort, 326.

<sup>24</sup> Simon de Montfort, 324.

XXIII, however, specifies that no new fortifications are to be built without the count's permission.<sup>25</sup>

Statute XXIV specifies that local knights not suspected of heresy may continue in their previous arrangement with their respective overlords, while knights suspected of heresy must answer directly to Simon.<sup>26</sup> The remaining statutes in this category deal with general feudal obligations and customs, as opposed to those directly related to Simon.

These provisions reflect Simon's desire to strengthen the tenuous bonds between vassals and overlords that existed in the Languedoc. They also reflect Simon's ever-present and ever-pressing need for new and loyal crusaders. Throughout the crusade, Simon suffered a shortage of manpower. If they answered the call to crusade at all, men would often complete their forty days service, then leave; others would leave before completing their forty days. In the Fall of 1209, for example, the crusading army disintegrated after many of its most valuable members returned home.<sup>27</sup> The same situation almost repeated itself a year later, at the siege of Termes, when the Bishops of Chartres and Beauvais, Count Robert of Dreux and the Count of Ponthieu determined to leave the army. Peter describes Simon's wife, Alice, throwing herself at their feet and begging them passionately "not to turn their backs on the Lord's business."<sup>28</sup> The episode ends with everyone, save the Bishop of Chartres, leaving despite Alice's entreaties. Shortly thereafter, Peter reveals that the papal legates were "aware that most of the crusaders were somewhat lukewarm in their enthusiasm for the campaign and perpetually anxious to go home;" as a result, the legates announced that "the indulgence promised to the crusaders by the Pope would not be granted to anyone who failed to complete at least one full period of forty days in the service of Jesus Christ."<sup>29</sup>

Simon also understood, however, that creating a stable society required not only regulating the relationship between himself and his vassals, but among the different classes. These provisions protected

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<sup>25</sup> Simon de Montfort, 325.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> 3.38

<sup>28</sup> HA, 181.

<sup>29</sup> HA, 184.

both lord and vassals. Statutes XLI and XLII involve the paying of rents.<sup>30</sup> Statute XXXVIII specifies that bakers must make and sell their bread “according to the manner and measure or weight laid down for them by their lord.”<sup>31</sup> Statutes XXVII and XXIX limit a lord’s ability to restrict his vassals’ movement.<sup>32</sup> Statute XXXII ensures that townspeople enjoy the same use of woods, water and pastures as they have for the past thirty years; and statute XXXIII prevents any man from being imprisoned on account of his lord’s debts. Statute XXX specified that vassals performing a day’s labor for their lord are to be given food “according to custom.”<sup>33</sup> In this sense, Nicole Schulman is right in pointing out that the statutes “represented guarantees in the continuance of custom.”<sup>34</sup> Some statutes – such as Statutes XXXII (use of woods) and XXX (food for labor) – were clearly meant to reinforce, rather than undermine, local traditions. The entirety of the statutes, however, cannot be characterized as such. As a whole, the statutes were very clearly not designed to support the status quo. The status quo was precisely what had nurtured and protected the heretical beliefs so detestable to Simon and to the pope. Malcolm Barber’s statement that the Statutes of Pamiers replaced southern customary law with Francian – or French – law is thus more apt.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed – and perhaps somewhat ironically – Simon seems to have been rather concerned about the welfare of the common people in the Languedoc, as suggested by Statutes XXII and XXIII. Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay claims that “the area [the Languedoc] had indeed long been exposed to plunder and rapine; the powerful oppressed the powerless, the strong the weak.”<sup>36</sup> On the one hand, the crusaders slaughtered thousands of men, women and children, burned hundreds of *castra*, ravaged acres of farmland and destabilized the entire political, economic and social order of the Languedoc. On the other hand, Simon attempted to implement a measures designed to protect the rights of the marginalized – the poor,

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<sup>30</sup> Simon de Montfort, 328.

<sup>31</sup> Simon de Montfort, 327.

<sup>32</sup> Simon de Montfort, 325-326.

<sup>33</sup> Simon de Montfort, 326.

<sup>34</sup> Nicole Schulman, *Where Troubadours Were Bishops: the Occitania of Folc of Marseille* (London: Routledge, 2001), 110.

<sup>35</sup> Barber, 124.

<sup>36</sup> *HA*, 362 (170).

prisoners and widows. Statute III specifies that poor widows, in addition to clerics, are not to be taxed.<sup>37</sup> Statute XXVI declares that lords are not to exact taxes in excess of the amount determined by the Count de Montfort.<sup>38</sup> If the people are “aggrieved” by excessive taxation, then Statute XXXI encourages them to appeal to Simon, who will then summon the accused lords and call them to account.<sup>39</sup> Statute XL demands that all tolls less than thirty-four years old be abolished.<sup>40</sup>

Taxes and tolls were of particular concern to both Simon and Innocent. In his 1207 letter, the pope criticizes Raymond for increasing tolls. Elaine Graham-Leigh explains why tolls presented such a problem to the church:

“In Languedoc, the operation of *guidagio* and *pedagia* tolls by the nobility demonstrates a similarly lawless attitude. These tolls, frowned on by the Church, appear to have been charges for the provisions of armed guards along particular stretches of road and were frequently sold off by the higher nobility to castellans living along the route...They seem to have operated much like a protection racket, suggesting that some of the Languedoc nobility gained what was probably a substantial part of their income through what was essentially banditry.”<sup>41</sup>

The pope’s objection to tolls was thus connected to its objection to mercenaries and to the Languedoc’s general disregard for what it considered to be the characteristics of a law-abiding – and therefore Christian – society.

The statutes dealing with taxes and tolls were also in large part designed to protect the rights of the church and its ministers. Statute IV exempts clerics from taxes, and Statute VIII reiterates this point by clarifying that “no barons or knights [may] compel men of the churches or religious houses to pay *tallia*.”<sup>42</sup> Statute XVI extends this prohibition to tolls – unless the cleric

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<sup>37</sup> Simon de Montfort, 322.

<sup>38</sup> Simon de Montfort, 325.

<sup>39</sup> Simon de Montfort, 326.

<sup>40</sup> Simon de Montfort, 328.

<sup>41</sup> Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 97.

<sup>42</sup> Simon de Montfort, 322. *Tallia* is a general word for “taxes” used throughout the text of the Statutes.

also happens be a merchant.<sup>43</sup> Other statutes, such as Statute I and Statute XXV further define the rights and responsibilities of clerics. Statute I, which parallels the third demand of the Charter of Arles – declares that “all privileges of the churches and religious houses granted by canon or human [i.e. civil] law, and their liberties, are to be kept and preserved by all men everywhere.”<sup>44</sup> Statute XXV states that only a cleric can determine whether a person is a heretic.<sup>45</sup> This last statute seems to foreshadow the birth of the Inquisition. Though the Inquisition is usually associated with Spain, inquisitorial methods were in fact developed in the aftermath of the Albigensian Crusade (1231).<sup>46</sup>

Predictably, the Statutes also address what was to be done once a person had in fact been declared a heretic. The statutes dealing with heretics are essentially designed to marginalize heretics and their supporters by destroying the framework that allowed them to exist. Broadly speaking, the entirety of the Statutes can and should be seen as destroying the political and social framework in which Catharism was able to flourish. The heresy statutes target the issue directly, however. Statute XI states that anyone who shelters a heretics shall have his property confiscated.<sup>47</sup> Statute XXXVII threatens anyone who passes on an opportunity to capture a heretic with having his lands occupied by Simon and that his person shall be “at the mercy of the Count.”<sup>48</sup> This statute in fact encompasses “enemies of the faith or of the Count,” which could therefore include people not formally declared heretics but nevertheless considered threats to the orthodox order. Statute XIV prohibits heretics, former heretics and Jews from occupying public posts, a concern also addressed in the fourth demand of the Charter of Arles.<sup>49</sup>

If any doubt remains that these statutes and Simon’s crusading enterprise were designed to reshape Occitan society along more Catholic, more French and more “feudal” lines, however, then

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<sup>43</sup> Simon de Montfort, 323.

<sup>44</sup> Simon de Montfort, 322.

<sup>45</sup> Simon de Montfort, 325.

<sup>46</sup> Moore, 9.

<sup>47</sup> Simon de Montfort, 323.

<sup>48</sup> Simon de Montfort, 327.

<sup>49</sup> Simon de Montfort, 323.



Statutes XLIII and XLVI ought to clarify this point. Statute XLIII declares that “succession to inheritances amongst barons and knights, also burgers and peasants, is to take place according to the custom and usage of France round Paris.”<sup>50</sup> Simon re-iterates this intention in an addendum which states, among other things, that “amongst barons and knights and also amongst burgers and peasants, heirs are to succeed to their inheritances according to the custom and usage of France around Paris” and that “in please, judgments, and matters concerning dowries, fiefs and the apportionment of land the Count is obliged to guarantee for his barons from France and others to whom he has granted land in these parts the usage and customs observed in France around Paris.”<sup>51</sup> Essentially, this statute and these addenda eliminate the Occitan custom of partible inheritance in favor of French-style “winner-takes-all” primogeniture. As discussed previously, partible inheritance contributed, if not caused, the political decentralization and fragmentation of the Languedoc. Determined to consolidate his power, Simon decided to import this system to his newly conquered territory. This statute is also relevant in that it supports the view that “France,” at this time, was the area around Paris – otherwise known as the “Ile de France.” More than any other, however, Statute XLVI reflects Simon’s desire to create a new society. The statute declares that “no women of high rank, whether widows or heiresses, who possess castles or *castra*, are to dare to marry, within ten years from now, with men of local origin without the permission of the Count because of the danger to the territory; but they may marry Frenchmen as they wish, without seeking the permission of the Count or any other.”<sup>52</sup> Simon quite literally sought to create a new people, a new generation of lords devoted to France and to the church, rather than to local custom and tradition.

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<sup>50</sup> Simon de Montfort, 328.

<sup>51</sup> Simon de Montfort, 328-329.

<sup>52</sup> Simon de Montfort, 328.

## Conclusion

Though Simon seemed poised for continued success after the Winter of 1212, the crusade would drag on for another seventeen years.

In 1213, Simon defeated King Peter of Aragon at Muret. Peter, as overlord of a considerable portion of the Languedoc, had watched warily as the French had descended upon his territory. Initially, Peter attempted to play both sides. As a devout Catholic, he supported the pope's ostensible goal of ridding the Languedoc of heresy. He had energetically pursued heresy in his own territory, ordering in 1197, for example, that unbelievers be burnt.<sup>1</sup> After his stunning victory against the Moors at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, Peter had solidified his status as a Christian King. Peter's ultimate decision to support Raymond VI – his vassal and brother-in-law – angered both Simon and the Pope, however. William of Puylaurens opens his account of the battle with this biting phrase: “The King of Aragon, having enjoyed success against the Saracens, wished to try for success against Christians.”<sup>2</sup> Had Peter survived Muret, it is difficult to say whether or how his relationship with Rome would have recovered.

By 1215, Simon controlled most of Raymond's land. That same year, the Fourth Lateran Council granted Simon control over St. Gilles family until Raymond VIII came of age. Innocent's account of the council's decision asserts that “all the territory which the crusaders have won in the fight against the heretics, heretical believers and their supporters and receivers, together with Montauban and Toulouse...is to be handed and granted to the Count of Montfort (a man of courage and a true Catholic who more than any other has labored in this business).”<sup>3</sup> As Raymond's rule demonstrated, however, holding a territory and actually controlling it were two very different things. Simon, though nominally the ruler of the Languedoc, lacked manpower and loyal subjects. Two years later, in 1217, Raymond returned

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<sup>1</sup> Moore, 8.

<sup>2</sup> William of Puylaurens, *Chronica*, in “Appendix I: William of Puylaurens' Account of the Battle of Muret, 1213,” in *HA*.

<sup>3</sup> Innocent III, “14 December 1215: Innocent III publishes the decision of the Fourth Lateran Council,” *Recueil des Histoires des Gaules et de la France*, in “Appendix F: Translated Extracts from Papal Correspondence, 1207-1215,” in *The History of the Albigensian Crusade*, ed. W.A. Sibly and M.D. Sibly (Rochester: Boydell Press, 1998), 311.

to the city of Toulouse, where he was enthusiastically welcomed by both the city's inhabitants and the local nobility.<sup>4</sup> On September 25, 1218, Simon was killed attempting to retake "the place most corrupted by the stigma of heresy."<sup>5</sup> The crusade's best known leader died from the impact of a rock fired from a catapult by an unknown soldier.<sup>6</sup> William of Puylaurens mourned: "So the man who inspired terror from the Mediterranean to the British sea fell by a single stone."<sup>7</sup> An anonymous troubadour sings of an alternative epitaph, however. According to this troubadour, there is an inscription above the tomb of Simon de Montfort that reads:

"That he is a saint and a martyr and that he shall breath again  
and inherit and flourish in marvelous joy  
and wear a crown and be seated in the Kingdom.  
And me, I have heard it said that this must be so  
if, by killing men and spilling blood  
and by squandering souls and by sanctioning deaths  
and by trusting evil counsel and by setting fires  
and by destroying barons and by dishonoring *paratge*  
and by seizing lands and by nourishing pride  
and by lauding evil and mocking the good  
and by massacring ladies and slaughtering children,  
a man can win over Jesus Christ in this world,  
then the count of Montfort wears a crown and shines in heaven."<sup>8</sup>

Simon's legacy then is decidedly mixed. Indeed, despite William's adulation, Simon's reputation was mixed even during his lifetime. The anonymous author of the second part of *The Song of the Albigensian Crusade* portrays Simon as a "tyrant" who even his own men suspected of having less-than-

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<sup>4</sup> SAC, vol.2, 26.181 (265).

<sup>5</sup> Innocent III, "14 December 1215: Innocent III publishes the decision of the Fourth Lateran Council," *Recueil des Histoires des Gaules et de la France*, in HA, 311.

<sup>6</sup> Barber, 130.

<sup>7</sup> William of Puylaurens, *Chronica*, in *A Most Holy War*. Mark Gregory Pegg. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 160.

<sup>8</sup> *Crozada*, in Mark Gregory Pegg, *A Most Holy War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 161.

honorable motives.<sup>9</sup> Simon's relationship with Innocent was also shaky. While both men understood that the Languedoc would need to be reshaped politically if it was to be reformed religiously, Simon was less concerned with differentiating among heretics, heretical sympathizers and opponents of the crusade than was Innocent. As evidenced by his careful consideration of Raymond's case in 1208 (after the murder of Peter Castelnau) but also in 1212 (after appeals from the King of Aragon) and in 1214 (after the Battle of Muret), Innocent was hesitant to condemn without weighing all sides of an argument.<sup>10</sup> According to Innocent's 1199 decretal *Vergentis in senium*, the property of heretics could be confiscated by the curia if the land was subject to papal lordship and by the secular overlord if it was not.<sup>11</sup> As overlord of the Tranceval lands by 1212, Simon would have enjoyed this prerogative. Innocent was put off, however, by what he considered unlawful seizures of land on the part of the crusaders. In a letter from January 17, 1213, Innocent accused Simon of attacking territories where there were no heretics. The pope reprimanded him, writing: "We hereby instruct you to restore these territories to the King and his vassals, lest by retaining them illegally you appear to have worked for your own personal advantage rather than the general advantage of the Catholic faith."<sup>12</sup> For Simon, however, if the goals of the crusade were to be accomplished, there was no room for such technical distinctions.

After Simon's death, his son Amaury inherited not only his titles but also his role as military leader of the crusade. Unlike Simon, however, he was not "a powerful baron, courageous and strong, hardy and combative, wise and experienced, a good horseman, generous and forthcoming, mild and frank, of pleasant manners and of easygoing spirit."<sup>13</sup> Amaury lacked his father's zeal and skill for pursuing heretics and subjugating the Occitan nobility. By the time of his death in 1222, Raymond VI had retaken possession of most his land. The St. Gilles family held Toulouse, and in 1224, Raymond VI's son,

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<sup>9</sup> SAC, vol. 2, 27.185 (295).

<sup>10</sup> Sibly & Sibly in "Appendix G: Innocent III and the Crusade," HA, 318-19.

<sup>11</sup> Sibly & Sibly in "Appendix G: Innocent III and the Crusade," HA, 314.

<sup>12</sup> Innocent III in HA, "Appendix F: Papal Correspondence," from "17 January 1213: Innocent III to Simon de Montfort," (PL 216, 741-3).

<sup>13</sup> a description of Simon de Montfort in SAC, vol.1, 3.35 (87).

Raymond VII, and Raymond II Tranceval, the new Count of Foix, retook Carcassonne.<sup>14</sup> Emboldened by this turn of events, Cathar preachers openly reappeared in the Occitan countryside.<sup>15</sup> In June of 1219, Amaury attempted to re-capture the city of Toulouse, a feat his father had died trying to accomplish.<sup>16</sup> Ultimately defeated and disgraced, Amaury quit the Languedoc and returned to France, turning over his feudal rights to the French crown in 1225.<sup>17</sup>

So it was that with Simon's death, the crusade acquired a decidedly royal character: the power of northern lords diminished and the power of the crown increased.<sup>18</sup> Nelli reflects on this change, writing: "The feudal crusade is finished. The main characters of the tragedy's first act are dead or have disappeared from the political scene: Philip Augustus, Raymond VI, the Count of Foix. We are approaching the ending. The royal conquest is about to begin."<sup>19</sup> Prince Louis, Philip Augustus's son, made up for Amaury's lack of enthusiasm. While his father had been hesitant to wage war against his vassals,<sup>20</sup> Louis welcomed the opportunity. In 1219, Prince Louis had led an unsuccessful force to the Languedoc. But after 1225, Louis – now no longer prince, but king – pursued the crusade with renewed vigor. The Cathar revival of the early 1220s was curtailed by the royal conquests of 1226-1229.<sup>21</sup>

On November 8, 1226 King Louis VII died of dysentery in Montpensier. Meanwhile, the crusade gained another pair of enthusiastic champions: King Louis IX and his mother Blanche of Castile, then regent of France. It should come as no surprise that a man so pious he would later become a saint was determined to subjugate the heretical Languedoc once and for all.<sup>22</sup> After a series of defeats, Raymond VII surrendered to Louis IX in Treaty of Paris (1229). According to its terms, Raymond VII ceded

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<sup>14</sup> Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 45. Raymond Roger Tranceval died in prison in 1209. Some southerners suspected foul play on the part of Simon and his men.

<sup>15</sup> Barber, 136.

<sup>16</sup> Nelli, 47. "*La croisade féodale est terminée. Les principaux personnages des premiers actes de la tragédie sont morts ou ont disparu de la scène politique: Philippe Auguste, Raimon VI, le comte de Foix. Nous approchons du dénouement. La conquête royale va commencer.*"

<sup>17</sup> Barber, 125.

<sup>18</sup> Bardbury, 187.

<sup>19</sup> Nelli, 47.

<sup>20</sup> Philip Augustus, *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, in "Appendix F: Translated Extracts from Papal Correspondance, 1207-1215," in *HA*, 316.

<sup>21</sup> Barber, 136.

<sup>22</sup> King Louis IX, later Saint Louis, was canonized in 1297 by Pope Boniface VIII.

Provence to the Church and the southern and eastern lands of the Bas Languedoc to the Crown. He also agreed to marry his daughter, Jeanne to King Louis IX's brother, Alphonse of Poitiers. Though Raymond VII retained the city of Toulouse and parts of the Languedoc, the treaty spelled the political and military defeat of the St. Gilles family.<sup>23</sup> Without a male heir and unable to remarry, Raymond's remaining territory was passed on to his daughter's husband – and therefore to the French crown – after his death.

While not Innocent's explicitly stated intention in launching the crusade, the attempt to eliminate heresy from the Languedoc ultimately led to the region's loss of independence through subjection to the French crown. This result does not, however, automatically validate O'Shea argument that the crusade, in its inception, was a "pretext" for French occupation. If anything, Philip Augustus's reluctance to engage with Innocent or Raymond suggests the opposite. What this does demonstrate, however, is the difficulty of effecting far-reaching and long-lasting religious change without addressing underlying social and political issues. Only after the Languedoc was brought under direct control of the French crown could Catharism be eliminated. As Moore explains, only after the crusade's political goals were secured by the Treaty of Paris could persecution of heretics begin in earnest through the establishment of Inquisition in 1231.<sup>24</sup>

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During the massacre of Béziers in July of 1209, the papal legate Arnold Amalric spoke the best-known words of the crusade: "Kill them all. God will know his own." The soldiers of Christ had asked Arnold how they were to differentiate between heretics and good Christians.<sup>25</sup> The abbot, allegedly, responded with the now infamous phrase.

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<sup>23</sup> Barber, 141.

<sup>24</sup> Moore, 145.

<sup>25</sup> Simon de Montfort did not become the military leader of the crusade until August of 1209. Peter describes this process in Ch. 101 of the *HA*.

William of Tudela and Peter of les-Vaux-de-Cernay, contemporary chroniclers of the Albigensian Crusade, describe the massacre at Béziers as an impromptu assault by the *ribauds* – hangers-on to the crusading army: servants, beggars, thieves, etc. The *ribauds*, William writes, stormed the city without warning.<sup>26</sup> Considering the apparent spontaneity of the attack, Arnold Amalric's answer then seems anachronistic. The best-known words of the crusade may in fact never have been spoken.

Unfortunately, we will never know what Arnold Amalric actually said on that hot Wednesday afternoon. We will never know whether the crusaders actually approached their leader for advice, or exactly how many people died, or how many of those killed were “heretics,” or how many were “God’s own.” We do know, however, that in a matter of hours many thousands died at Béziers that day. According to William, only 150 souls survived the carnage.<sup>27</sup> William describes the sack in brutal detail. The attackers, he writes, were not afraid of death. “They killed and massacred everyone they met, took and carried away many objects of value...all of those who had sought refuge in the church,” he explains, “were killed: nothing could save them, neither cross, nor altar nor crucifix...those insane savages killed clerics and women and children; no one, I believe, escaped.” He concludes: “I don’t believe such a savage killing had been resolved or accomplished since the time of the Saracens.”<sup>28</sup> The papal legates, in a letter to Pope Innocent III, estimate the dead “around 20,000.”<sup>29</sup> As historian Mark Pegg succinctly put it, “All the inhabitants of Béziers were annihilated in an afternoon.”<sup>30</sup>

Arnold Amalric’s chilling reassurance, whether literally true or not, captures something of the horror of Béziers, and of the crusade more generally, however. It was a bloody twenty years – and in the end, the people of the Languedoc would not be God’s own until they were also the Crown’s.

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<sup>26</sup> SAC, vol.1, 2.19 (55).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> SAC, vol.1, 2.21 (59). “*Ils tuèrent et massacrèrent tous ceux qu’ils rencontrèrent, prirent et enlevèrent à foison les objets de valeur...tous ceux d’entre eux qui s’étaient réfugiés dans l’église furent massacrés; rien ne put les sauver, ni croix, ni autel, ni crucifix; les ribauds, ces fous et ces geux, tuèrent clercs et femmes et enfants; pas un, je crois, n’échappa...Je ne crois pas que jamais si sauvage tuerie ait été résolue ni accomplie depuis le temps des Sarrasins.*”

<sup>29</sup> Martin-Chabot, (58).

<sup>30</sup> Pegg, 77.

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