Secrecy and the Social Construction of Heresy in Medieval Languedoc

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ABSTRACT

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Secrecy is a powerful tool in religious conflict. The careful manipulation of information is critical to the strategic success of a religious group in its attempt to gain recognition of its legitimacy and status in a community or region. This work uses the historical context of the encounter between the Church and the Good Men and Women of Languedoc in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to analyze the use of secrecy the discourse of religious conflict. Reports from Languedoc describe communities who have left the institutions of the Church behind, and fallen into what the Church interprets as dangerous heresy. The "dangerous heresy" are the beliefs and practices of people who self-identify as "Good Christians". The encounters between the representatives of the Church and the Good Christians begin with debate and argumentation and proceed into war and physical coercion. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the allies of the Church assemble armies in order to extirpate the heresy from the lands around Toulouse. Following the Albigensian crusade, the Inquisition is founded to finish the work of reconciling the people of the region of Languedoc to the rest of Christendom. This thesis looks at the role played by secrecy in the conflict and its overall impact on the outcome.

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INTRODUCTION

This work is about the dangerous power of secrecy and suspicion. The idea of hidden truths appeals to those dissatisfied with appearances and superficial resemblances. Critical minds, trained to examine topics according to rigorous standards can not only find failures, but can hypothesize about the reasons for those failures. The truly secret can only survive behind a flawless facade of normalcy. In the area of religious information, the power of secrecy is even greater, if only because the religious sphere, in the historical context we will examine in this work, expresses some of the more important and sensitive concerns of people's lives, and provides a meaningful story about their community, its relation to other communities, and its larger significance in the cosmos. In the lands of Languedoc in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, religious experts serve the sociological role of providing a grand narrative into which each person can situate themselves.

The power to control religious information includes the power of defining "good" religion and "bad", of distinguishing between the correct teachings and the false ones. It also includes the power to teach and spread the information. The conflict in this work is between two competing coteries of religious experts each with their own understanding of how religious authority is acquired, and what a religious life entails. Secrecy appears in a variety of ways in this work: opponents accusing each other of secrecy, withholding information about themselves for their protection, deceiving others in an attempt to gain advantage, controlling and manipulating events and the record of events to suit their personal perspectives or to present a particular image to others. The legitimacy of these acts also varies, depending on the reader's perspective and historical bias.

The rival coteries of religious experts in Languedoc in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are either representatives of the Church or their opponents, these opponents are "heretics". This label has a kind of *de facto* appropriateness to it, but it rests on a false dichotomy. The contents of Church "orthodoxy"alter over time, its authority and powers change.[1] One of the central theme of this work is the strategic use of information and power by the Church to construct the "heretics" of Languedoc and thereby reinforce their position as the source for right teaching and practice. The two things, orthodoxy and heresy, are bound together.[2] In the context of this work we examine how secrecy, the concept of secrecy, accusations of secrecy, and actual deception and obfuscation contribute to the outcome of the conflict between the Church on one side, and "heretics" on the other. The historical range of this work includes the development of the idea of "popular heresy" as it relates to the region of Languedoc, tracking the important elements in the identity created for the "heretics". It then follows through the historical application of the Church's ideas showing how the heresy is created to then be eradicated. This work is about the social construction of heresy and the contribution made to this construction by the notion of secrecy. The utility and power of secrecy in religious conflicts will be explored with conclusions that can be applied outside the historical context of Languedoc.

The power of the idea of secrecy in this conflict cannot be ignored. Before turning to an outline of the argument made in the chapters that follow, I would like to provide an

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1 A number of Church councils and Papal writings that established new elements of the "orthodox" position will be addressed throughout this work where appropriate.

2 For an excellent analysis of the Christian history of creating orthodoxy through the rejecting of heretical positions see Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress,1971).

example of the types of statement that drew me to this subject. The fascinating use of the idea of secrecy in the representation of the heretics around Toulouse in the year 1209, by a young monk named Peter des Vaux-de-Cernai who writes an account of the war called the *Historia Albigensis*, which begins with a description of the problem:

> It is said that since its first foundation, treacherous Toulouse has rarely if ever been free of this detestable plague, the sin of heresy. The poison of superstitious unbelief was passed from father to son one after another. [...] So infected with this ancient filth were the people of Toulouse – the generation of vipers – that even in our own times they could not be torn from their deep-rooted wickedness; indeed even after their inborn disposition to embrace heresy has been driven out by an avenging pitchfork, they are always ready to allow its return – such is their thirst to follow the ways of their fathers and their reluctance to abandon their traditions.[3]

and the source of the problem:

> It should be understood that some of the heretics were called 'perfected' heretics or 'good men', others 'believers of heretics'. The 'perfected' heretics wore a black robe, claimed (falsely) to practice chastity, and renounced meat, eggs and cheese. They wished it to appear that they were not liars although they lied, especially about God, almost unceasingly! They also said that no one should take oaths for any reason. 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! Those called 'believers' were dedicated to usury, murder, and illicit love, and to all kinds of perjury and perversity; indeed they felt they could sin in safety and without restraint, because they believed they could be saved without restitution of what they had stolen and without confession and penitence, so long as they were able to recite the Lord's prayer and ensure a 'laying-on of hands' by their masters, in the final moments of their lives.[4]

The region around Toulouse, the lands stretching from the Rhone river to the Garonne, were infamous, in Peter's account, for their traditional love of heresy. Their culture, passed from father to son, had been corrupted by the persistence of heresy in the region. These heretics spread their lies and their believers used them as justification for

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[3] Peter des Vaux-de-Cernai "Historia Albigensis", translated by W.A. and M.D. Sibly in *The History of the Albigensian Crusade* (Boydell Press, 1998), p.12.

[4] Ibid., pp.12-13.

the most anti-social, transgressive behavior one can imagine. This is the picture painted by the young monk. His views on the nature of the heresy are influenced by the polemics that have already been written in the century leading up to the Crusade, and his position in the invading army obviously does not make him an objective observer.

In the above quote from the *Historia Albigensis*, secrecy had already made an appearance. In it, the "heretics" among the people of Languedoc were not just wrong, not just objectors, they were "liars" and "hypocrites". Their apparent truthfulness was a cover for their lies. Their apparent virtue was a cover for their perversions. They claimed to be "Good Men" but their supposed beliefs were just license for vile practices. These secret practices and beliefs, described by Peter des Vaux-de-Cernai so confidently, had become the "traditions" of the people of Toulouse, inherited so that the correction of individuals was no longer enough. The violence of the war, and later the physical punishments of the process of inquisition, was justified by stories about transgressions that were characterized by their secrecy.

Outline

This work applies modern sociological theory about the production of social fact onto a historical context in which secrecy is a central issue. Our model posits that the conflict between two such coteries of religious experts plays out in a particular way, defined by the importance of their knowledge, and bound up with issues of exclusivity and conserving authority.

There are several problems when doing research on a group that has been described as "secretive", and social constructionist theory plays a role in the analysis that

follows to offset these problems. The power of this framework lies in its focus on the ongoing relationship between individuals, their beliefs about reality, the social institutions they produce, and their lived experience in a social world. By underlining the importance of information we gain access to three significant things: an appreciation of the social power of religious information, a focus on the potential social power of concealing information, and on the results of applying methods used to transform a society over time through coercion. This model also provides us with the link between the products of discourse, the authors of that discourse, and the audience interpreting their information. This is critical to the analysis of secrecy in defining the norms and expectations that govern the existence of secrecy.

The analysis of secrecy as a the strategic manipulation of information is not the same as an analysis of the secrets held by any one group. This work is about the concept of secrecy itself, its beneficial and detrimental effects on social conflict between two religious groups. As such, I deal with representations of secrecy far more than with facts about secrets. From a sociological perspective, the suspicion of secrecy functions in precisely the same way as actual secrecy does. In the realm of social discourse, a successful bluff has the same effect as genuine hidden information, because the contents of secrecy are always withheld, always absent. The existence of the secrecy, the maintenance of secrecy, the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate secrets, all of these issues are matters of perception, a manipulation of appearances that occurs within a particular set of social norms. In this work, the question is never "Are there secrets or not?" or "What are the value of these secrets?", instead it is always "what is the effect of secrecy itself on the way things play out?" The manner in which degrees of secrecy,

transparency, suspicion and trust appear in and affect discourse are the central interests of this analysis of religious conflict.

This theoretical grounding will allow us, in the next chapter, to look at the discourse community of the region of Languedoc and highlight those elements that are most useful in the understanding of secrecy and religious conflict. The contest between the "heretics" and the Church involves competing claims on the authority to define religion for the populace, and to understand the significance of both the heretics and the Church's tactics in this conflict we need to appreciate the context of their actions. Compelling arguments, sympathetic characters, violations of tradition and trust all play a large role in the conflict, determining the success or failure of particular strategies. Recognition of religious authority must come from the people. Both groups, claiming authority in the interpretation of religious matters and, essentially, the sole correct interpretation of lived experience, construct interpretations of their opponents that reveal their "true nature" and both seek to establish their general perspective as the sole guiding perspective in the region.

The words of the "heretics" of Languedoc survive only in the documents preserved by the Church, their opponent. Our awareness of the existence of this religious difference begins in the work of polemicists warning of the dangers in the region, and continues through the Albigensian crusade, into the period of Inquisitorial trials and persecution affecting the perceptions and expectations of ecclesiastical writers, their audiences and eventually, the people of Languedoc themselves. The third chapter of this work discusses the nature of the representations of the "heresy", and the role played by secrecy in those representations, and observes the effect these have had on the traditional

of scholarship surrounding "Catharism". As stated above, we do not have as a goal the uncovering of the "truth about the heretics", beyond some minimal description of what has been said about them. What is important, to us, is establishing the power of the Church's representation of heresy, the effect it had on both history and on the people of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Although Church polemicists used the labels "Manichean" and "Cathar", the records of the Inquisitorial trials in the region, those of a few disputations, and the *Historia Albigensis* above use two main labels for their opponents; the "heretics" and "Good Men" or "Good Women". Throughout I have referred to these people using Good Men and Women or Good Christians, collectively, or the "heretics" when emphasizing how they are perceived by the Church. While "heretics" is fairly accurate given the definition the Church provides at the time, it remains an external label useful primarily to highlight the conflict. The name "Cathar", however, says something positive about the hidden identity, beliefs, and history of the group. The use of this label is too much a part of our subject to be used in what follows, though it will appear in quotes from the Church polemicists who coined it, the scholars who accept it, and our discussions of its problems.[5] Understanding the effects of these representations is not possible without appreciating the tool for social transformation the Church employs, the "Inquisition into heretical depravity".

Our fourth chapter looks at the development of the concept of Inquisition from the perspective of discourse about heresy, and the record of actions against the "heretics" of Languedoc. This background of stories about the way the heresy is dealt with by the Church, form the rationale for the development of a new particular relationship between

[5] An excellent recent example of historical scholarship that accepts and uses the label "Cathar" is Malcolm Lambert's *The Cathars* (Blackwell, 1998).

the Church, the temporal powers, and the populace whose religiosity is in question. Beginning with the early twelfth century documents, this analysis looks at polemics, conciliar action, papal bulls, and the records of the crusade to explain the nature of the institution of Inquisition that was developed. Inquisition used a variety of powerful social tools to establish the kind of control the Church desired in the region. In addition to its own manipulations the Church relied on the support of temporal powers and the obedience of the local populace, its tactics are shaped by the expectations and norms as it seeks to change them.

The fifth chapter deals with these expectations and provides a description of the religious difference of the region, of the Good Christians. This minimal description is based on the work of Mark Gregory Pegg and uses as its base the testimony of the people of Languedoc on the topic on "heresy" in front of the tribunals of the Inquisitions that last throughout the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century. The description of the distinct culture of Languedoc and the people's descriptions of the "heretics" they interacted with, provide us with a picture of the Good Christians that both confirms the "heretics" as opponents of the Church, and calls into question much of the conventional knowledge about the Cathar movement in Languedoc. This chapter also focuses on the effects of the Church's tactics in the region and its role in creating the heresy it opposed.

Heresy cannot exist except in contrast to legitimate authority, and the establishment of the Church in the region, the imposition of its power on the lives of the populace and the effect its tactics had on the Good Christians, created a situation that conformed to the preexisting narratives about the secrecy of heretics. This chapter discusses the coercive power of social institutions and how manipulation of those

institutions provides a mechanism for social change. The dual roles of publicity and secrecy, used to resist the Church and to promote its goals, are examined to clarify the relationship between the manipulation of information and the manipulation of social reality. This sixth chapter deals directly with the period of Inquisition in Languedoc, paying particular attention to the effectiveness of the Church's use of power to demonstrate its authority in religious matters.

The final chapter deals with the decline of heresy in Languedoc by focusing on the destruction of "heretical" strongholds and the physical bodies of Good Christians. To establish to overall effectiveness of the Church's tactics, I look at the shape of the "heresy" in the early fourteenth century and the structures of authority that exist after a century of conflict. Although resistance to the process of inquisition still existed, the protagonists in the struggle have changed. Using the example of the conflict in Albi, and the roles of the Franciscan, Bernard Delicieux and the King of France in that conflict, the analysis addresses the transformation that has been affected in the region. The analysis then moves on to a discussion of the social mechanism by which this transformation has taken place, drawing on our model of social construction to explain the justification of force, and the strategic victory of the Catholics. This chapter also discusses the fascination of secrecy that has made "Cathars" into such a useful tool for those seeking to critique both general history and the history of the Church. This persistence of the "heretics of Languedoc", if only in the discourse about religious authority, is tied directly to the tactics the Church employed when it first imposed its interpretation of the Good Christians on the populace of Languedoc.

CHAPTER ONE: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SECRECY

This project uses a theory of the sociology of knowledge to approach the role of secrecy in the conflict between the representatives of the Church and the Good Christians in Languedoc of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This theory, grounded in the work of Berger and Luckmann on the social construction of reality, serves to draw our attention to the general nature of discourse in the historical context, and to focus on the role played by secrecy in the historical conflict. The nature of secrecy is negative, it is perceived as an absence. Scholarly research into the use of secrecy must contend with the interpretive problems that arise when its object is indicated by a lack of evidence. Secrecy is a social act that appears only in the dynamic between the mind of the speaker, the actual message, and the listener or reader who interprets. The perception of secrecy is not always accurate, speculation on the rationale for secrecy is not unbiased, and the legitimacy of that rationale can be called into question. There are issues that confront any analysis of secrecy: How do you distinguish between valid and invalid suspicion? Is there such a thing as a legitimate secret? a legitimate betrayal of secrecy? What actual impact can an absence of information have? what impact the suspicion of absence? What role do expectations and preconceived notions play in our speculations about the contents of the secrets kept from us?

Secrecy plays a critical role in the various stages of this conflict's development, as the popularity of both sides varies and their strategies for achieving dominance in the region alter according to the shifting climate of political and cultural arenas. Each group is committed to a particular vision of absolute truth, and convinced of the legitimacy of

its claims of authority, so that its opponent's tactics and claims are never met with anything but the suspicion of hidden agendas. The belief in the truth of one religious system goes along with a belief in the falsehood of any other religious position. The perceived falsehoods of opponents are separated from simple error by intent, by the deception of the liar. The entire difference is in the subjective intent of the liar. As Georg Simmel puts it in his discussion of falsehood and human relations:

> Every lie, no matter how objective its topic, engenders by its very nature an error concerning the lying *subject*. The lie consists in the fact that the liar hides his true idea from the other. Its specific nature is not exhaustively characterized by the fact that the person lied-to has a false conception about the topic or object; this the lie shares with common error. What is specific is that he is kept deceived about the private opinion of the liar.[6]

Simmel points to the basic subjectivity of the difference between a malicious lie and common error. Their appearance is the same, their effect on the message is the same, the difference lies in the "private opinion of the liar". The ability of the person being misled to distinguish a lie from error depends on the ability to perceive that hidden intent to deceive.

Beyond addressing the importance of the notions of secrecy and suspicion in the historical context of Languedoc, this chapter will outline the general field of secrecy theory and highlight those notions about secrecy and its uses that are of the most use to this project of analysis. The definition of secrecy as 'withheld information' is discussed, to clarify the ethical and epistemological components of the concept that form the axes on which my analysis rests. Two central concepts are explored to address typical formulations of secrecy. The first is the idea of "legitimacy" in the concealment of certain

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[6] Georg Simmel's "Knowledge, truth and Falsehood in Human Relations" in Kurt H. Wolff's *Sociology of Georg Simmel* (Free Press, 1964) p.312.

types of information, and the other is the distinction between appearance of secrecy and the reality of secrecy. In short this chapter will discuss from the perspective of sociological theory the sources of normative idea about proper, legitimate communication, and the possibility of determining the contents of secrecy.

It begins with a discussion of the perspectives of both the Church and the Good Christians, to establish the seriousness of the conflict and the special power of religious ideas in social discourse. In the next part, the discussion moves directly into the methodological and theoretical issues surrounding secrecy as a social tool. I then apply these ideas to the particular context of the work. Finally, we will highlight the uses of social constructionist theory in this work, both its particular strengths in the analysis of secrecy, and the weaknesses and complications that are associated with this type of theoretical work.

Part I: Secrecy and suspicion: Interactions

Heresy is a violation of authority. The act of choosing one's own path,[7] or of refusing to follow the path set by another, is an act of willfulness that in certain contexts can challenge the fabric of a community, a culture or an entire polity. When obligations are ignored, expectations flouted, or responsibilities neglected, the dynamic interconnections that support the family, the village, etc... may be threatened with crisis and, ultimately, dissolution. The threat to social institutions and positions that provide meaning for everyone in the community is also a challenge to those who represent the authority of those institutions. The violations of heresy are perceived as at once social,

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[7] From the Late Greek, *hairesis* "choice".

communal, and personal. There are, in every society and culture, individuals who carry with them the stories that explain the way of things, the basic values and perspectives on the world that underlie even the most taken-for-granted beliefs and practices of the group. [8] These stories contain the outline of what is good and true, and from them the lives of the participants draw meaning. This particular work examines with happens when two competing groups of individuals with differing versions of these types of stories struggle for dominance in a society. Most importantly, it is concerned with the methods used by each group to both promote their story, and undermine the other.

What is at stake is the authority of the universal claims of religious narrative, and the lives of religious adherents. Correspondingly, the conflict in medieval Languedoc was about information. It was about the revelation of truth, the transmission of teachings, the education of the ignorant and the deception of the foolish. More than anything else it was a story about secrets and suspicion.

There were already many records available to the participants in the struggles over the religion of Languedoc of the various heresies that plagued the early Church and it was possible to interpret these latest groups are simply reiterations of those old errors, in the Church's view. In attempting to appreciate the way in which heretics are represented in the Church sources, one must considered the attitude of the faithful in respect to those who reject the Church's traditions and authority. The "heretics" are, in the literature, the human agents of the Devil, who himself can appear as an angel of light

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[8] See Chapter 2 "Society as Objective Reality", section 2 "Legitimation", subsection b. "Conceptual Machineries of Universe-Maintenance" in Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann *The Social Construction of Reality: a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York, Doubleday & Company, 1966) pp.56-57.

to lead humanity astray.[9] Any apparent purity, wisdom, and humility in the people the Church saw as "heretics" must be interpreted as lies that cover a diabolical desire to separate humans from their only access to God and salvation. Rainier Sacconi was a thirteenth-century Dominican who self-identifies as a former "heretic", and using this insider knowledge, damns his former fellow religionists as liars and unrepentant sinners:

> The Penance of all the Cathari is, beyond all doubt, false, vain, delusive, and noxious, as will be shown in what follows. For in order to constitute true and fruitful penance, three things are required- namely the contrition of the heart, the confession of the mouth and the satisfaction of works. But I, Brother Rinherus, once a heresiarch, now, by the grace of God, a priest of the order of the Preaching Friars, though unworthy, do unhesitatingly say, and testify before God that I lie not, that there is nothing of those three things among the Cathari, or in their penance. For the poison of error, which they have drunk from the mouth of the old serpent, does not allow them having any sorrow for their sins.[10]

Rainier's work, as an Inquisitor, is preaching against and persecuting Good Christians. This description of the falsehood of their penance may simply be an explanation of his failure to "redeem" the "heretics" or his failure to convert them to the worldview of the Church. This failure is explained in the above passage by the sheer power of the error they have consumed from the mouth of the devil. Rainier claimed that the "heretics" lack contrition of the heart, his first element of "true and fruitful penance". He claims to know what is in someone else's heart. Rainier could make the claim to know what is in the heart of the "heretics" because he claims to have been one.[11] His claim to have been a heresiarch is a claim to insider status in the "heretical" movement. This claim

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[9] This is a reference to the section of the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, in which he describes false apostles and compares their deceit to the deceitfulness of the devil who can masquerade as an angel of light (2 COR 11: 13-15). This dichotomy of 'true apostles and deceitful liars' applies, in this context, to representatives of both the Church and the Good Christians. The world-maintaining story about the truth includes the description of opponents, defining them and constructing them. Who is the truth-teller and who is the liar depends on who is telling the story.

[10] "Rainier Sacconi: A Thirteenth century Inquisitor on Catharism" in Edward Peters' *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe.*(Philedelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1980) P.126-7.

implies that he knows all their secrets and can reveal these. His description of the falsehood of the "Penance of all the Cathari"is useful to us because it highlights the role that suspicion and secrecy play in this discourse. It makes clear how the Good Christians' failure to recognise the authority of the Church is transformed into a movement of deceptive secretive "heretics".

For the Good Christians of Languedoc, the hypocrisy and corruption of the Church was well-known and the need for real religion in the land is clear. The scriptures of the Christian religion are full of tales of the persecution of the just by the powers of the world, and the Church of Rome is the most powerful worldly institution there is. Given the corruption of Church officials, their concern with worldly power and pleasure over following the example set out in the gospels, it is obvious, to the Good Christians, that the Church's claims regarding its charismatic power are nothing but lies used to perpetuate human suffering. The author of the *Historia Albigensis* provides this description of the Church's opponents' views:

> They said that almost all the Church of Rome was a den of thieves, and that it was the harlot of which we read in the Apocalypse. They so far annulled the sacraments of the Church, as publicly to teach that the water of holy baptism was just the same as river water, and that the Host of the most holy body of Christ did not differ from common bread, instilling into the ears of the simple this blasphemy, that the body of Christ, even though it had been as great as the Alps, would have long ago been consumed and annihilated by those who had eaten of it.[12]

In the face of absolute truth, diversity of belief can only be accounted for by positing willful deception and secrecy on the part of an opponent. The ignorant are

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[11] Although the claim of heretical identity is part of Rainier's authority, it is also self-defeating. Rainier evokes a version of the liar's paradox by identifying himself as a former heretic and then discussing the vanity of their penance.

[12] Peter des Vaux-de-Cernai "Historia Albigensis", translated by W.A. and M.D. Sibly in *The History of the Albigensian Crusade* (Boydell Press, 1998), p.12.

amenable to instruction, it is only the malicious who willfully oppose the truth. Any claim about the truth or goodness of the opponent is naturally met with suspicion. The legitimacy of the challenge is denied by both sides, each seeing their own religious authority as the only possible, true authority. This goes beyond error, into the realm of deliberate deception because the interpreter, on either side, cannot conceive of a legitimate resistance to their position. The issue is, in the religious experts' eyes, far more serious than one of social authority. It is about the process of human salvation, about the good Christian life. The only other alternative to the falsehood of your opponent's position is the falsehood of your own position, an error that would mean centuries of lives spent fruitlessly following empty traditions, hundreds of thousands of souls lost to God's kingdom, and the rejection of countless miraculous events and revelatory experiences. The weight of the evidence is so clear, to both groups, that they would not expect it to be denied. As Bernard of Clairvaux puts it:

> Unhappy People! At the voice of one heretic you close your ears to all the prophets and apostles who with one spirit of truth have brought together the Church out of all nations to one faith in Christ. Therefore the divine oracles are deceived and the eyes and hearts of those who believe what they said to have been fulfilled are also deceived. With what stupendous and more than Jewish blindness does this man alone either close his eyes to the clear truth or, because he resents its fulfillment, by some diabolic art persuade stupid and foolish people to ignore the obvious facts in front of them, and believe that the prophets were deceived, the apostles were in error; that the whole world even after the shedding of Christ's blood, is going to perdition; and that the riches of God's mercy and his grace to the world are only for those that follow him?[13]

The suspicion of secrecy comes from exactly that violation of expectations. Who could believe someone would sincerely reject the authority of the traditions of the

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[13] Bernard of Clairvaux on Henry of Le Mans in his letter to the Count of Toulouse, 1145,in Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans' *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York and London: Columbia University Press,1969) p.123

Church? How could someone not see the purity of the apostolic life? Not recognize the clear instructions of the scriptures?

How does one interpret the unexpected? If everything appears precisely the way it is supposed to, suspicions are not raised. It is only when something inexplicable happens, when things stop making sense, that suspicion begins to grow. The suspicious person thinks that there must be some hidden rationale, some unknown element, something that is required in order for things to make sense again, for a return to the normal state of affairs. Even if the secret is never known, the fact that there is something hidden explains the lack of fit between expectations and experience. Bernard of Clairvaux's characterization of believers in heresy as displaying "stupendous and more than Jewish blindness" and the *Historia Albigenses*' heretics describing the Church as "a den of thieves and the harlot we read of in the Apocalypse" are examples of this gap between expectation and experience. What people expect is obedience and what they see is a rejection of their understanding of how things should be.

Secrecy and suspicion are social. They are an expression of some set of norms about how much, and what types, of information should be shared. There are actual secrets, concealed intentionally usually for some reason deemed legitimate by the secret-keeper. There are guilty secrets, concealed in fear of social repercussion. There are things kept private, interpreted as secrets by those who discover them. There are a multitude of scenarios in the exchange of information where one can use secrecy, or suspect it. Judging the legitimacy of an act of concealment will depend on the social norms of the participants, as will the accuracy of the manipulation of appearances. A skilled liar knows how to appear to be telling the truth. When the consequences of being fooled by a liar are

embarrassment, loss of prestige, etc... there are many legitimate concerns regarding the truth of the situation. When the stakes are so much higher, when the conflict is over the truth of the proper religious life, then the desire for clarity and certainty amounts to a kind of necessity.

For both the Good Christians and the representatives of the Church, the concept of secrecy has a significance that extends far beyond their conflict and supports a larger worldview in which truth and goodness are transcendent eternal concepts. The moral and theological realities they accept are not understood as the product of human learning or experience. It is not empirical or contextualized truth that leads to a good life and, ultimately, to salvation. Humans have access to this ultimate reality to the degree that it penetrates the mundane world from above, and makes itself known through revelation. This information can only be protected from corruption once received. It cannot be added to, reinterpreted, or even properly translated outside divine action. The danger of multiple interpretations here must be emphasized. The revealed truth about the good life can only be conserved in traditions and scriptural documents. The authority to teach, the authority to spread the word of God, the authority to bestow His grace on believers, these are the gifts that belong to the true Christian religion. Both groups make their claim to that authority, and both see the lie in the other's pretensions.

The importance of the role of secrecy and suspicion in this struggle lies in the methods used in different contexts by both groups to achieve acceptance and dominance in the region of Languedoc. Although the fundamental struggle is between two competing narratives, it is not simply an issue of heated debate or clever rhetoric between the Church and the Good Christians. Heresy is, as it is defined in the time, an activity, a

public practice. Robert Grosseteste defined heresy as "an opinion chosen by human perception contrary to Holy Scripture, publicly avowed and obstinately defended".[14] Descriptions of the expectations of both the local populace, the Good Christians themselves, and the injunctions of the Church make it clear that a religious life is much more than the details of theology or allegiances with particular institutions. Salvation depends on participation in a way of life.[15] The Church and the Good Christians had distinct interpretations of what that way of life was, but both had theories of participation that depended on status and identity within their respective groups. What each group is vying for is the support of the population, from every class, from every village and town. The survival of their vision of salvation, the success of their religious narrative over alternatives, depends on enlisting others into their way of life, and dissolving the support enjoyed by their opponents.[16] There must be some balance between what is withheld and what is revealed, there must be both protection from threats and encounters with the uneducated and unconvinced. There must be evidence of the truth of the things they claim if they hope to succeed in establishing their authority in the minds of the people of Languedoc.[17] They must meet the larger expectations that exist about what the religious life is, and demonstrate the superiority of their path, their understanding. What they teach

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[14] Malcolm Lambert's *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Blackwell: Oxford, Cambridge, 1992) p.5, for a similar definition see Moore, *Origins of European Dissent,* p. ix.

[15] For a clear example of the notion of participation in the religious life of the Good Christians, see Guillemette Clergue's Inquisitorial testimony in Jean Duvernoy's translation of *Le Registre d'Inquisition de Jacques Fournier (Eveques de Pamiers)1318-1325*, Tome I, (Mouton: Paris, La Haye, New York) p. 324. in particular the conflict in her life caused by her mother's participation in the way of life of the Good Christians and her husband's rejection of them.

[16] On the importance of "secular" or external support see Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p.119.

[17] What will end up counting as "evidence" will, of course, depend on community standards.

and how they live their lives must both reflect social norms about the religious elite, and what they withhold and what they reveal will shape the lives of those who follow them and accept their authority in spiritual matters. The following quote comes from Malcolm Lambert's work on the motives of the Cathars, and it reflects his interpretation of the movement of the Good Christians of Languedoc as part of a larger, more unified and structured movement, which differs from the way this work interprets the Good Christians.[18] Despite this difference, I agree with the reasons for similarities between Good Christian and Catholic that Lambert identifies. The expectation of the "sympathizers"was a force shaping both the Good Christians' and the Church's religious performance:

> Sympathizers who venerated the self-denying life of the Cathar ascetic might well have no intention of imitating it themselves. Yet they expected high standards from the perfect who were, in a sense, their proxies before God. In return, the perfect gave their followers their prayers and counsel, both spiritual and material, perhaps, too, an ultimate assurance that they could keep to their more indulgent way of life and still, in the end, secure salvation. There are affinities here to the attitudes of orthodox patrons to their religious houses. The life of the perfect gave weight to their teaching and, as is well known, superficial likenesses between Catharism and contemporary Catholicism - scriptural language, ascetic attitudes and practices, apocryphal material, even the use of chains of pater nosters in prayer - aided a process of instruction which carried hearers away from orthodoxy.[19]

The similarities Lambert is talking about are not coincidental. In the struggle between the Good Christians and the representatives of the Church, the local populace's recognition of 'the true religious life' is of great importance. What a person reveals about

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[18] See p. 101-108 of Chapter three for our interpretation of the group.

[19] M.D. Lambert's "The Motives of the Cathars: Some Reflections" pp.49-59 in *Religious Motivation: biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian,* Derek Baker (editor)(Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), p.57.

themselves, and what they conceal, what they share about themselves will determine whether they are accepted as person living a good life or reviled as "heretic" and outsider.

There is no way to understand the shape secrecy takes outside the social context of the discourse in which it operates. Secrecy is only discernible in the absence of some expected element of social activity, some form of expected communication that is withheld, some recognition that what should be transparent is, in fact, obscured. This means that suspicion of secrecy arises not only when information is actually being withheld, but also when the people involved in the discourse misunderstand or misapply the generally accepted forms of discourse. Put more simply, people's suspicions may be more an expression of their own lack of understanding of what is "normal",[20] than the perception of some real absence of information that would point to a secret being kept. Subjectively, the two things, concealment versus the appearance of concealment, are difficult to tell apart, particularly if one has a certain level of confidence in one's own comprehension of what is true and what is normal. When dealing with competing sets of religious experts, who see themselves as setting the standard for what is true and what is normal, the obstacles in ascribing suspicions to some personal failure to grasp the reality of the situation are almost insurmountable. What would it take for someone like Bernard of Clairvaux to see criticism of the Church's traditions by those acting as rivals, to see their "more than Jewish blindness" as legitimate?

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[20] Normal, here, refers to the conventions and styles of a particular community or type of discourse. The norms of conversation, correspondence, etc... that would either meet the expectations of the participants or would violate them, causing them to see missing elements or unnecessary additions that might hint at something "out of the ordinary". Small irregularities might be errors or might be signs of something more sinister.

These difficulties increase again if you have people engaged in discourse with individuals from completely different communities, with completely different norms regarding how and what types of information should be shared. The potential for misunderstanding simply continues to increase as you add diversity to the audience and participants in the discourse. In an exchange of information between a Good Christian from a rural village in Languedoc and an Inquisitor from Rome, there is a considerable gulf in the forms and meaning of their speech, even if they are using the same language. These gaps in the participants' understanding of what is normal creates the opportunity for both real deception and unfounded suspicion.

Neither group was interested in determining whether or not their suspicions about their opponents were correct. There can be no doubt that for the Church, the Good Christians were at least in error if not maliciously deceptive. There are texts that claim to record the "heretics" side of the issue, and they use a similar language of deceit and suspicion targeted at the Church. From a text attributed to the "Cathars", recorded in Durand of Huesca's *liber contra Manicheos*: "O senseless men of learning, who hath bewitched you into incomprehension of these things? O full of all guile and of all deceit... o blind leaders of the blind, what can be plainer in Holy Scriptures?"[21] For the Good Christians, following the ways of the apostles was as simple as following the instructions contained within their preferred sections of the New Testament. Neither Church representatives nor their opponents doubted the superiority of their own understanding of both religious truth or the ways of the world. The information that they possessed was, in their eyes, the most important information that existed. Their teachings

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[21] Lambert,1978, p.54.

and their traditions were the only way for human beings to acquire any access to salvation. Any secrecy they may have employed was required for the protection of this valuable, irreplaceable information,[22] justified by the fundamentally conservative nature of revelatory traditions. The concept of "legitimacy", then, depends on sympathy with a particular side in this conflict, since both sides claim the are under threat, both sides construct their opponents as threats, and then use those threats to justify any resistance they may engage in.

Beyond the specifics of this historical context, the value and importance of religious knowledge is such that there are a variety of ways that religious experts try to control and protect the social life of religious information.

Part II: Secrecy, Society and Religion

The uses of secrecy in society have received some attention from researchers interested in the larger issue of information and social discourse. There are some particular issues with the definition of secrecy that need to be addressed in order to make useful distinctions between privacy issues, secrecy and, particularly in relation to religious issues, the concept of mystery or the ineffable. These distinctions depend on exploring both the ethical and epistemological axes along which information issues range.

Privacy is information that is not shared for legitimate reasons.[23] There are types of information that are not expected to be shared, and withholding them does not make

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[22] In this context 'information' includes not only the contents of religious teachings, but also the charismatic connection to the figure of Christ himself, the apostolic traditions represented by the sacraments of the Church and the rituals of the heretics.

one see oneself as a secret-keeper. "Mystery" is information that cannot be shared regardless of the will of the knower. Whether through some failure of language or the need for preparation and experience before something can be properly understood, there are forms of information that seem ineffable to their possessor. The inability to share such information does not constitute secret keeping. A secret is something you should share, but do not, and something you can share, but do not. Who decides if you can share something, or should share something? There will be an element of shared normative expectation around degrees of intimacy and expectations of sharing. Two people from the same culture and class will probably have roughly the same idea about what you should keep quiet about around whom.

Research into the secrets of others suffers from what Hugh B. Urban refers to as the "double bind of secrecy."[24] This "bind" is both ethical and epistemological. If there are true secrets belonging to some group, the researcher must establish how and why they are being revealed. If the researcher acquires their information through illegitimate means (for example; subterfuge, espionage, coercion) the ethical ground required for the reader to trust their findings is undermined. Obviously, there's no reason to trust the report of a liar, torturer, bully or thief. This is the ethical element of the double bind, the trust one must be able to have in those who collect and present information.

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[23] 'Legitimate' refers to the norms of a particular discourse community. Again, like "normal", the idea that there is some information that is not shared, a kind of etiquette in its mildest form, is a reflection of the social mores of a particular group. In our own context, some topics may be seen as 'rude' when discussed with a new acquaintance, but legitimate in an intimate relationship; inappropriate at work, but appropriate at a party, etc... More seriously, sharing information about someone's health or finances without their consent, for example, goes beyond 'rudeness' into a serious breech of ethical behavior. These are social standards dependent on ideas about privacy, intimacy, trust, etc... They are rules that govern communication and the value of types of information.

[24] See Hugh B. Urban's article "the Torment of Secrecy: Ethical and Epistemological Problems in the Study of Esoteric Traditions" in *History of Religions,* Vol. 37, No. 3 (1998): 209.

If the researcher acquires their information legitimately (participant observation, informed consent, interviews, etc...) the reader can never be sure that the researcher received the full truth about a group that they know is secretive. If you have accepted the fact that the group is secretive, why would you then believe that they revealed accurate information to the researcher about their secrets? How can you be sure, if they claim to be revealing their secrets, that they are revealing the true secrets and not simply misdirecting the researcher? At any point, subjects could have been withholding information in order to manipulate the report of the researcher. Epistemologically, there's no way to be certain the report is accurate. "Secrecy [...] is better understood, not in terms of its contents or substance – which is ultimately unknowable, if there even is one but rather in terms of its *forms* or *strategies* the tactics by which social agents conceal or reveal, hoard or exchange, certain valued information."[25] The problem with trusting research into the secrets of a group begins as soon as the label "secretive" is applied to them. The problem of trust and certainty, the double bind, is not caused by anything the group does.[26] It is caused by the logical and ethical implications of secretiveness as a label that, *a priori*, justifies the attempt to uncover the group's secrets.

It is for these reasons that this work is not focused on uncovering any secret beliefs and practices of the Good Christians in Languedoc, or on unearthing the facts about "what really happened" during particular Inquisitorial trials. What is at issue here is the manifestation and effect of secrecy itself, or the suspicion of secret-keeping, not the

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[25] Urban, 1998, p.210.

[26] Meaning that whatever the group does may be interpreted as suspicious once you have decided they are "secretive" (in an "it's quiet, *too* quiet" fashion). Even the most normal behaviour is described as the sign of someone trying to cover their transgressions in Church documents we will look at in later chapters.

contents of secrecy, which are inaccessible to us in any reliable form. The shape and effects of secrecy in a religious conflict cannot be properly understood without recognition of the dual nature of secrecy, its combined ethical and epistemological character. Even when used as a label for the behaviour of others, even when secrecy is only a label applied by some third party, the nature of the accusation remains a combination of doubt and error, epistemological and moral concerns.

The ethical element of secrecy is most obvious in the phenomenon of "open secrets". As Ian Keen reported in his work on the Poro of Liberia, there are some narratives that seem to belong to particular people or groups of people, and those outside that group will not relate the story. They will claim ignorance if asked about it: "Standing with other onlookers at a ceremony, I would occasionally ask a neighbour the identity of the dance being performed. If the person was not closely related to the group whose dance it was, or if the person was young, the answer was often, 'I do not know'".[27]

This points to a general social principal of a 'right to know', of information as a kind of valuable possession that can be said to belong to someone. The "right to know" has to do with stories that have social value, and are part of a larger system of social boundaries relating to identity. It is not the information that is restricted, considering how widely known it is. The restriction is on the sources of that information. Those who possess the knowledge, without the right to share it, will remain silent. Silence, in this instance, reflects some social conception of appropriate transmission of information. The issue is not with the content of the information but with who has a right to share it with others. This right to share information is a form of social status, and recognition of their

[27] See Keen's *Knowledge and Secrecy in an Aboriginal Religion (Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology)*(Oxford University Press, 1994) pp. 134.

rights by other people in the group is an acknowledgment of their status, as a holder of restricted information. As Hugh Urban phrases it, in his discussion of secrecy as symbolic capital: "In this sense, secrecy is a discursive strategy that transforms a given piece of knowledge into a scarce and precious resource, a valuable commodity, the possession of which in turn bestows status, prestige or symbolic capital on its owner."[28] This amounts to secrecy if the outsider feels that information should be shared with them, and does not recognize the legitimacy of the "right to know". To insiders this silence would be interpreted as respecting the rights or possessions of others, to an outsider it may seem to be secretiveness.

Another ethical component of the use of secrecy is its mobilization by a person or group as prophylaxis against the intrusion of illegitimate external forces. As Simmel notes in his treatment of the sociology of secrecy, "The intention of hiding, however, takes on a much greater intensity when it clashes with the intention of revealing. In this situation emerges that purposive hiding and masking, that aggressive defense, so to speak, against the third person, which alone is usually designated as secret."[29] It is the intent, or perceived intent, of the external forces that justifies the secret-keeping. In minority groups, the physical or cultural threat of the majority may lead to situations in which information is withheld that would normally be shared, either to preserve cultural traditions from examination and assimilation, or to preserve actual physical bodies from persecution and coercion. In the same way that violence may be justified in self-defense, secrecy is justified as a valid option in opposition to illegitimate external force.

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[28] Urban, 1998, p.210.

[29] Georg Simmel *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, Compiled and translated by Kurt Wolff, Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1964. p. 330.

A final common use of secrecy lies in its use by some dominant or socially sanctioned elite to restrict and control the spread of particular types of information seen as dangerous or somehow sensitive. The overarching ethical stance, here, is that of a benevolent protection of those for whom the information is either useless or, in the worst cases, dangerous. From government secrets to the internal workings of particular professions and trades, this form of secrecy posits a gradual sharing of information to those who require and will benefit from it, and its withholding from those not yet prepared or in need of it. This is the basis of numerous forms of initiatory models of a variety of institutions. According to this model, there are levels of belonging even within a particular group, and certain individuals control who knows what and when. "[...], the strongly emphasized exclusion of all outsiders makes for a correspondingly strong feeling of possession. For many individuals, property does not fully gain its significance with mere ownership, but only with the consciousness that others must do without it. The basis for this, evidently, is the impressionability of our feelings through *differences*."[30] Simmel's point here is similar to Urban's use of the concept of symbolic capital, though less individualistic. Simmel is pointed to a system of information sharing that frames the contents of the restricted information as dangerous. It is shared only with those who are "prepared" or who can use it. Here the status and privilege is shared among all insiders who hold the dangerous knowledge and shared possession reinforces group solidarity. The ethical argument is similar to the self-defense argument, except it focuses on the internal structure of the group and claims that some information must be withheld to maintain the structures of the group, which secures the pedagogy by which people can

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[30] Simmel,1964, p. 332.

acquire any knowledge at all, if they prove themselves capable of handling it. The legitimacy of this argument depends on the acceptance of the authority of those managing the system. This method of controlling information is not considered "secrecy" by those employing it; secrecy implies some moral violation and they consider this control legitimate. From the outside, however, groups with special teaching that they refuse to share with outsiders are generally referred to as "secretive". Without knowing what the information is, it is impossible to tell if the group is actually controlling information for some valid reason. Government security measures frequently cause these types of doubts in outsiders, to use a non-religious example. A religious group that claims special information available only to participants is vulnerable to the accusation of secrecy in the same way. To an outsider, without knowing what the restricted information is, it is impossible to know if it is being withheld for legitimate reason or not. If too much is withheld, the religious group may become vulnerable to competitors who offer people a chance to share in religious information without restriction. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, in their *Social Construction of Reality*, discuss this dynamic:

> The emergence of full-time personnel for universe-maintaining legitimation also brings with it occasions for social conflict. Some of this conflict is between experts and practitioners. The latter, for reasons that need not be belabored, may come to resent the experts' grandiose pretensions and the concrete social privileges that accompany them. What is likely to be particularly galling is the experts' claim to know the ultimate significance of the practitioners' activity better than the practitioners themselves. Such rebellions on the part of 'laymen' may lead to the emergence of rival definitions of reality and , eventually, to the appearance of new experts in charge of the new definitions.[31]

Both the Good Christians and the Church function in sociological terms as "universe maintainers", with a message about the ultimate significance of all the elements

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[31] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann *The Social Construction of Reality: a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York, Doubleday & Company, 1966) p.118.

of life, and a program for everyone's participation in the good life. Both groups control information that they perceive to be very important. To be clear, this control of information is justified according to those who undertake it, it is only perceived as an illegitimate withholding of information by those outside the group, or unsympathetic to the group. The idea of secrecy, the accusation of secrecy depends on the suspicions of an outsider. The suspicion of secrecy, therefore, is a moral stance that interprets a situation as being in violation of normal ideas of what should be shared. The suspicious person feels there is something lacking which they have a right to possess. There is something that could be shared, but is being withheld for illegitimate reasons.

The epistemology of secrecy has features that will reappear consistently throughout this work. First among these, given the focus on notions of "correct belief" and "heresy", is the issue of determining the truth of any particular claims about the beliefs of another person. It is the issue of dealing with what can be conceived of as a "mind crime". The rhetoric around the persecution of heresy depends on the idea that society is filled with threats in the form of divergent beliefs and that these threats are all the more insidious because the "heretic" may look and act like a "normal person", all the while carrying a toxic payload of nonconformity deep into the heart of a community. When you begin with the hypothesis that a person is an untrustworthy liar, it is difficult to establish the proper means of acquiring evidence about their beliefs.[32] The only way to discern the thoughts of another person is, one assumes, for the person to volunteer them. It is difficult to imagine the situation in which you could trust the confession of a known liar.

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[32] See pages 86 and 87 of Chapter three of this work for a historical example of this difficulty in Bernard Gui's warning against trusting the evidence of "heretics".

Of course there are ways of establishing what another person believes, even if you assume they would lie to you, presumably they would not lie to everyone consistently. Interviewing their family or close associates would be useful as long as there's no conspiracy of silence at work,[33] or those close associates don't harbor some resentments, or haven't been given some incentive, that would promote false reporting. Physical coercion is perhaps another method of forcing the truth from a person, but it has never been non-controversial.

The difficulty is for the external inquirer to be able to move beyond the detection of the existence of some secret , and into the contents of the secret itself. The basic misunderstanding that arises is caused by a false dichotomy between information withheld and some completely transparent discourse in which every expectation of the audience is met. There is no such transparent discourse. There is no way for any speaker or writer to reveal every bit of information that their entire potential audience would want. This has been explained most clearly by Richard Mitchell in his work on the study of secretive groups in the field:

> Attempts to define secrecy in absolute terms as the opposite of some hypothetical condition of pure, transparent actuality presupposes that social scientists (if not ordinary persons) possess a precise, complete and context- and value-free discourse... To keep no secrets, to be totally honest, to totally disambiguate each component of symbolic communication, to define each word, to provide historical and contextual qualifiers for each statement, and to spell out all motivations for and implications of the content and assertions in any interaction is a near-infinite task.[34]

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[33] See page 196 of Chapter six of this work for a historical example of this issue in Languedoc or its sources in Mark Gregory Pegg's *Corruption of Angels* (Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2005) pp.63-65.

[34] Richard G Mitchell, jr. *Secrecy and Fieldwork* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1993) pp.6-7.

Normal discourse is tailored in particular ways according to particular needs or goals and the limits of time and media, and there will always be things that are withheld. The suspicious person sees these empty spaces as intentional and illegitimate but it is extremely difficult to establish this convincingly for something as substantial as another person's beliefs. The difference between "tailored" speech and "misleading" or "deceptive" speech is frequently in the perception of the hearer.

The difficulty of researching the use of secrecy, then, is distinguishing between the social forms of secrecy and the contents that are secret. The sociological approach to this problem focuses on the impact of secrecy on social organization and particular historical events. How and why information is manipulated by the groups involved is discernible from the historical record in a way that the actual contents of secrecy, or the objects of suspicion, frequently are not. Accusations of secrecy can be recorded even if the "true teachings" of the accused group never are. There are particular issues that arise in the context of the struggle between the representatives of the Church and the Good Christians of Languedoc that are edifying to those with a sociological interest in secrecy and the social life of information.

Part III: Applications to the Historical Context

Both the Church and the Good Christians of Languedoc perceive their opponents as using secrecy in order to maintain their authority in the eyes of the population at large.[35] Both believe that their opponents' true interests and concerns are not those they promote to the world at large. They see themselves as the true guardians of religious

[35] See part IV of Chapter three of this work for a historical example of this; a debate between Church authorities and local Good Christians at Lombers in 1165.

tradition, and their opponents as scheming to subvert them. In short, many of the things said about the Church by the Good Christians and *vice versa* were geared toward stripping away the falsehoods of their opponents' speech and revealing some "true nature" or "true intentions."[36] Whether or not someone in particular kept a secret is not as important to our analysis as recognizing the role such propaganda plays in recruitment and alienation of support at particular times in particular situations. What is of interest to me is whose version of events is accepted as the most plausible and why, because such acceptance informs us about the expectations and normative conception of the audience receiving the rhetoric of the two groups. With an outline of the discourse communities involved in the struggle, their acceptance and rejection of particular elements of propaganda at particular times takes on a significance beyond the historical or empirical accuracy of the claims being made. What is important is how closely the claims made by a particular group reflect the preconceptions of the community about the nature of the religious life and the appearance of a religious expert.

This lies at the core of the interests of this work, the public growth of the "heresy" of the Good Christians and the struggle against it by the Church. The spread of a "popular heresy" indicated a disconnect between not only the "heretics" themselves and the Church, but fracture lines within the population of Languedoc as a whole. How is it possible that something so public and obviously transgressive, in the eyes of the representatives of the Church, could be accepted and recognized by so many as a good religious life?

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[36] Recall Rainier Sacconi's description of the falsehood of the penance of the "heretics". He aimed to reveal the true nature underlying the appearance of penance.

This is, fundamentally, a question about identity, about what it meant to be religious and what was understood by the idea of a religious life, and the ways that both groups were understood by the population at large. Identity is a difficult issue to deal with using a social constructionist model of society. What can be analyzed is the recognition and promotion of social roles that are made available to individuals in the process of socialization. What is available are records of particular stereotypes and forms within the available narratives that outline the roles which individuals can be seen to have adopted, or have been portrayed as adopting. Again, our interest is not so much in the truth about specific people's identities as the uses to which identity politics are put in the course of the conflict between two religious groups, or between these groups and the population they hope to influence. Through the course of the two centuries covered by this work, there is a constantly shifting dynamic in the association of "religiosity" with particular formulations coming from both "heretics" and the Church.[37]

The central religious issue for the population of Languedoc, its nobility, the city-folk, and the inhabitants of the smaller villages, remained the access to salvation and religious merit. The spread of "popular heresy" in the region can only be understood in relation to the fulfillment, or failure to fulfill, the expectations of the wider community in regard to religious expertise and manifest sanctity.[38] These social markers, as part of a

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[37] For a discussion of the Church's relationship to the more general apostolic movement in Europe at the time, a popular religious movement grounded in the gospels and apostolic writings, see Herbert Grundmann's *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages* translated by Steven Rowan (University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame & London, 1995).

[38] For one description of the nature of the Good Christians' perceived sanctity see Karen Sullivan's Truth and the Heretic (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) in particular page 34: "For these villagers, *Be* ["the Good", in Provençale] appears ultimately to be the divine presence which descends into the heretics at the moment of their heretication and radiates out from them, in a series of concentric circles, to encompass the believers who lives in their midst and the witnesses who participate in their ceremonies."

generally recognized set of beliefs about the religious life, and about access to beneficial religious power, are what would regulate the success or failure of the examples set by either of the competing groups. The most effective of these claims to religious authority highlight those standards of authority most closely held by the community; tradition to conservative groups, erudition to the educated, diligence to the hard working. The standards of the competing groups must reflect values already held by those whose support they require, before they can begin to shape the community.

Beyond the ability to identify a "proper Christian" both groups attempt to establish ways of identifying the "false Christian": the heretic. Again, the success or failure of these formulations depends on the degree to which they conform to some preexisting notion of social transgression and religious fraud. The best of these narratives evoke the appropriate fears and prejudices of the larger community and associate them with the hidden identities of their opponents. The heretic is the wolf in sheep's clothing par excellence, pretending to the best of the community's virtues while in reality, secretly working toward its destruction.[39]

It is a mistake, however, to try to represent religious figures' narratives about the nature of religiosity as monologues direct from their traditions' sources. There is, in each, a historical development that draws on popular conceptions of religiosity and is constantly negotiating how belief and tradition is best represented. Although it may be tempting to see Christendom as a broad general culture in which these narratives operate, each region and culture's religion develops individually along with the other elements of

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[39] See Eckbert of Schonau as a historical example. In his 1163 *Sermons Against Cathars* he describes the problem of heresy as spreading across the land and "infecting the limbs of Christ as it goes". See "Eckbert of Schonau: sermon against the Cathars" pp.88- 93 in R.I. Moore's *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (Edward Arnold, London, 1975) for this translation of Eckbert's sermons.

society, though restrained or encouraged by some broader trends belonging to the whole. Both Good Christians and the Church maintain a particular critique about the religiosity of the time, and seek a transformation of the popular conception of the religious life to bring it more fully into conformity with their judgment. If it is true that the most compelling religious narratives are those that meet the expectations of the audience toward which they are directed, it is also true that the most successful narratives diagnose most accurately the problems the audience can perceive, and supply a viable solution for those problems. The expertise of the religious specialist goes beyond seeing the truth of what is, and into describing some attainable, attractive vision of how things should be.

So the role of the religious elite in society includes both a pedagogy on the nature and content of religion, and services that provide access to the benefits of the sacred for their adherents. These are the fields in which the control of information operates, where secrecy and suspicion find their uses. The levels of religious information available to the populace at large will shape the needs and expectations they have in relation to the religious elite of their communities. However, religious authority cannot be easily separated from the other forms of authority that operate in the community. As Berger and Luckmann discuss the issue, the decision between two religious narratives frequently is made based upon the power of the adherents those narratives attract, rather than the actual comparison of the contents of each cosmology or theology.[40] If both groups offer plausible descriptions of the world and viable answers to the community's more urgent concerns, then the most common way of choosing between them tends to fall to the

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[40] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann *The Social Construction of Reality: a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York, Doubleday & Company, 1966) pp.56-57.

external political or military allies of the religious institutions, a situation which would encourage the recruitment of strong political and militant adherents by each group.

In the presence of military and political persecution, both sides of the conflict between the Church and the Good Christians engage in secrecy that relates directly to the movement of actual people. It is a weakness of the sociological approach that information and community can, at times, be discussed as though they are disembodied, or at least not existing in any one particular body. For the study of the uses of secrecy this must be avoided, particularly when it is sometimes the people themselves who are hidden or revealed, or when the destruction of a set of beliefs depends on the discovery and elimination of all the people who adhere to them. Georg Simmel highlighted the ultimacy of this particular level of secrecy with his statement: "Of all the protective measures, the most radical is to make oneself invisible."[41] Strategically this extreme social erasure amounts to the furthest development of secrecy in which the lives of individuals can be reduced to rumors of something hidden. In these cases, unlike hidden beliefs or unspoken opinions, the contents of secrecy are readily available. Hidden people are captured or they are not. If they are actually "heretics" or not matters less than the fact that what they believe will not survive them. No one can maintain an interest in controlling religious information without dealing with the fact that the information is embodied in the narratives, lived experiences and, most preciously, the minds and hearts of believers.

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[41] Simmel, 1964, p.345.

Part IV: The Social Constructionist Model

The justification for the use of the social constructionist model in this work lies in the need for a reliable method of focusing in on the use of information in society. As such the constructionist approach to social realities provides a robust framework dedicated to the examination of the discursive aspects of a variety of social institutions and forms. The critical postulate for our purposes is the identification of the process of socialization with the perception of realities both social and physical. These realities combine to form each person's conception of "objective reality" through education and personal experience. Each person learns what is external and independent from us.[42] The focus on how ideas about reality are constructed provides those interested in secrecy a fertile environment for examining how the manipulation and control of information effects historical events. To what extent does control of the information in the process of socialization amount to control of reality?

The constructionist model reduces society and its institutions to messages that individuals receive and contribute to, in a dynamic process of participation in the manifestation and promulgation of social constructs. Berger and Luckmann discuss a variety of stages and aspects of this process of social construction, and critical to our purposes are the processes of primary and secondary socialization, the process whereby social facts are understood as either subjective or objective reality.

The process of primary socialization is the initiation of the individual into the social world through the process of childhood learning, typically guided by parents and other family members. In the constructionist model, the first language, logic and ethics

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[42] Berger and Luckmann, 1966, pp.56-57.

received uncritically from sources of absolute external authority are the categories and basic referents that will form the backdrop of all later learning. Identity issues and orientations toward the larger structures of society are all tied to this basic stage of socialization, wherein the infant acquires their first notions about a variety of social facts and truths about the physical world.[43] This is the first set of expectations brought to the social world, which the successful use of secrecy will manipulate and against which suspicions are founded.

The process of secondary socialization refers to those forms of learning that occur afterward, generally undertaken to establish the individual in an occupation or social role with specialized knowledge or skills. This process involves more elaborate rules and more specific narratives about the nature of things related to some specialized field, and adds to the identity and social role of the individual. Farmers, merchants, clergy, the nobility and the lower classes, all undergo some process beyond their initial introduction to human society by their parents that equips them with the tools to understand and survive in their particular social role. This second process of instruction provides a further set of expectations and ethical boundaries around which understandings of legitimate and illegitimate controls of information can arise.

These constructions, received and interpreted by individuals in society, form the framework through which reality is apprehended and against which expectations are measured. To the extent that every member of the community consents to the validity of these ideas, the individual perceives them as objective fact, not as "simply a construct". This is because the contents of these constructions are not altered by the interpretation of,

[43] Berger and Luckmann's discussion of the process of primary socialization "the course of being inducted into the societal dialectic"occurs on pages 119-127 of *the Social Construction of Reality*.

or even rejection by, any one member of society. Social facts about gender, economic survival, kinship ties, or any number of issues are perceived as external realities unaffected by the desires of the individual. The language used to describe experience reinforces these constructs and ties empirical events to the social framework of the individual. Beyond the specific narratives about who the individual is, and what he or she is in relation to the larger community, there are also larger narratives that address the identity of the community and its relation to all others, and the relationships that exist among all things. These stories, referred to by Berger and Luckmann as 'universe maintaining' narratives, provide the larger meaning and context in which the entire society operates, and the ultimate ends of human life in general.

> Every society is a world building enterprise. Out of the near-infinite variety of individual symbolizations of experience society constructs a universe of discourse that comprehends and objectivates them. Individual experience can then be understood as taking place in an intelligible world that is inhabited also by others and about which it is possible to communicate with others. Individual meanings are objectivated so that they are accessible to everyone who co-inhabits the world in question. Indeed, this world is apprehended as 'objective reality', that is, as reality that is shared with others and that exists irrespective of the individual's own preferences in the matter. The socially available definitions of such a world are thus taken to be 'knowledge' about it and are continuously verified for the individual by social situations in which this 'knowledge' is taken for granted. The socially constructed world becomes the world *tout court* – the only real world, typically the only world that one can seriously conceive of. The individual is thus freed of the necessity of reflecting anew about the meaning of each step in his unfolding experience.[44]

Religious cosmology and theology of the kind found in the historical context examined in this work fit the description of the universe-maintaining narrative,[45] and the pair of opposed elites constitute orders of specialists in this form of social construction of

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[44] Peter Berger's "Identity as a Problem in the Sociology of Knowledge" pp.273-285 in *Towards the Sociology of Knowledge: Origin and Development of a Sociological Thought Style*. Edited by Gunter W. Remmling. (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) p.275-6.

[45] On the conceptual machineries of universe maintenance see: Berger and Luckmann, 1966, pp.104-128.

meaning. What this means is that, ultimately, the truth of who the Church and Good Christians were, and what their practices and teachings meant to people depended on the outcome of the conflict between the two groups. Whoever controlled the universe maintaining narrative controlled the stories about reality that people were socialized with.

Berger and Luckmann are clear about the role played by these universe maintaining elites within society, and the general process whereby conflicts between two such groups are resolved. Unlike other forms of competing specialists, there are no tests or standards against which two competing universe maintaining narratives may be judged by the larger society.[46] What occurs instead is a political or physical struggle between the 'carriers' of these beliefs. The fulfillment of social expectations is of critical importance in the area of religious conflict and is why both the Good Christians and the Church are so involved in attempting to fulfill and affect popular conceptions of the religious life. Ultimately, religious power and influence in society depends on the strength and will of adherents. As Berger and Luckmann put it:

> We cannot really blame such theoreticians if they resort to various sturdier supports for the frail power of mere argument – such as, say, getting the authorities to employ armed might to enforce one argument against its competitors. In other words, definitions of reality may be enforced by the police. This, incidentally, need not mean that such definitions will remain less convincing than those accepted 'voluntarily'- power in society includes the power to determine decisive socialization processes and, therefore, the power to *produce* reality. In any case, highly abstract symbolizations (that is, theories greatly removed from the concrete experience of everyday life) are validated by social rather than empirical support.[47]

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[46] Berger and Luckmann use a comparison to two competing theories of hunting held by two opposed groups within society. Set one against each other, than one that yields the highest take of game for the lowest cost in effort, materials and time, could be considered the 'winner' between the two theories. Narratives about the ultimate good for humans and salvation from the evils of the world can have no such empirical test. p.110 in *The Social Construction of Reality: a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, 1966.

[47] Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p.119

Secrecy cannot exist except in relation to the expectations formed in the processes of primary and secondary socialization. Suspicions are aroused when expectations are not met and it is within this framework of expectation that the success or failure of the religious conflict will be determined. The Church must convince the populace that "the heretics" are not what they seem, while establishing the authority of Church ritual and theology in the minds of the people. From the perspective of the Church, this is not so much recruitment as it is reform. When Bernard of Clairvaux speaks of the heresy in the region of Toulouse in the speech quoted above, he speaks of people turning away from the truth. The Church's goal is not conversion to some truth unknown before, it is the recognition of the legitimacy of the Church as the source of salvific power, the recognition of an objective fact. Similarly, the Good Christians are engaged in their own reform, addressed to those can recognize the true religious life, and who are willing to stand against the "lies" of the Church.

R.N. Swanson in his *Religion and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, refers to the reality of Christendom as an umbrella term for a number of distinct "discourse communities".[48] The notion of discourse communities is drawn from a work on the social construction of written communication by Bennett Rafoth.[49] In it, he describes the process of secondary socialization as initiation into a particular discourse community, with its own rules about the form and content of appropriate communication, establishing

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[48] R. N. Swanson's *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c.1215- 1515.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) p. 9.

[49] Bennett A Rafoth, "Discourse Community: Where Writers, Readers, and Texts Come Together", p.131-146 in *The Social Construction of Written Communication.* Bennett A. Rafoth and Donald L Rubin, eds. (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1988.).

a kind of code which all those who belong to the community find meaningful, and those outside it either do not recognize or misunderstand:

> Community norms and expectations are embodied not only in writers who address and invoke audiences, nor only in the audiences themselves, but in the particular *community* of writers and readers who engage themselves through the medium of text, all together (writers, readers, and text) making up a discourse community. Thus texts, which are often the only visible manifestation of a community, also embody community norms.[50]

This type of conventional knowledge, although not in itself a form of secrecy, is important to the conflict in Languedoc because it provides an explanation for a number of the suspicions of secrecy that arise between the diverse communities who become involved in the religious, economic, political and military turmoil in Languedoc in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Individuals coming from different communities and reading each others' expressions of religious truth, while ignoring the differences between communities, see violations of their expectations as evidence of secrecy, rather than seeing a simple lack of understanding that can arise between different discourse communities.

Rafoth's notion of a discourse community is also useful in that it provides the link between each documentary source and the community that created it, that it is created for. Community involves the expectations and perception of social norms inculcated in the author of a particular document for a particular community. For this reason each document is an instance of the normative and conventional formulations of a particular discourse community, containing information not only about the attitudes and beliefs of the author, but also the expectations and understandings of the intended audience.[51]

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[50] Bennett A. Rafoth, 1988, pp. 140-141.

The perception of secrecy by opponents, and the use of secrecy by a religious group in conflict, relies so heavily on the expectations and perceptions of a particular audience to be effective that the social constructionist model of the sociology of knowledge is almost demanded as the framework for this project. The strengths of this model lie in its ability to focus primarily on the transformation of social knowledge into social action and social realities that are perceived by believers as objective fact. For any sociological interest in the use of secrecy, this identification of society with information, and the processes by which that information is controlled, the constructionist approach has many clear benefits.

Despite the obvious strengths of the constructionist approach, there are many limitations to this model that need to be closely monitored if it is to be used and its results understood correctly. The constructionist model provides a vision of a part of society that is useful in this work because of the focus on secrecy. It does not describe every element of society or culture, nor is it useful in addressing issues outside the sociology of knowledge. In particular, while providing a clear account of the process of socialization from the standpoint of the larger community, it does not address the impact of socialization on particular individuals. However, the constructionist viewpoint does rely on a dynamic understanding of the role of individuals in the creation and instantiation of social constructs, as one generation interacts within itself and socializes the next.

It would also be a mistake to imagine any strong determinism in the model as it is used in this work. There is a tendency to interpret the existence of a particular social

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[51] Of course, by their sheer survival, these documents also say something about other discourse communities: those that preserved them, and the current academic discourse for which this work uses them.

construct to mean the necessity of that construct. It is important to remember that in each instance of socialization there is the opportunity for alteration and reinterpretation, that individuals are not strictly formed by the process of socialization, but that they receive it. Giving too much power to the concept of a social construct destroys the theory's ability to explain social change, rendering it useless.

On the other hand, there may be a tendency to conceive of social constructs as purely subjective artifacts of tradition and culture which can be easily altered. As one finds in a number of 'deconstruction' projects, there are many applications of the notion of a social construct that over-emphasize the constructed nature of this or that social fact. Recognizing the "constructed-ness" of something like gender, for example, does not imply that the normative conception of gender is malleable or open to debate. In the particular context of this work, the religious institutions of the region, the stereotypical religious roles, and many other social constructs become life and death issues for individuals in that society, issues of such importance that individuals are willing to sacrifice their own lives rather than question them. The motivations that lie behind the suspicions and secrets of the subjects of this work cannot be understood if one misunderstands the objective power of social constructs.

An objection might be raised about the problem of reducing this historical conflict to a matter of sociology of knowledge and the use of secrecy. This objection might critique the ability of such a limited approach to say anything of value about the actual historical occurrences under examination. My response to such a critique is that the theory used in this work has been selected to focus on the social use of information, specifically the illegitimate withholding of information. The application of this theory

cannot shed light on any reality beyond the social, and the social realities it considers are those related to the twin issues of secrecy and suspicion.

This struggle between religious elites, for recognition and acceptance in the culture of Languedoc takes many forms through time. Religious experts may clash openly in verbal debate. At other times, secular believers and local nobility struggle to maintain alliances and adhere to their particular traditions. Physical violence and peaceful mendicant preaching both contribute to this on-going argument over the authority and legitimacy of particular social institutions and religious social roles. The analyzes of the roles of secrecy in this debate depends on an understanding of the discourse communities involved. Otherwise, the difference between the secrecy of the participants and our perception of some missing element will not be discernible.

The self-conception of the people of Languedoc, the representations of that society and its religion both locally and abroad, are part of the larger information culture of Languedoc, and need to be understood in the context of the forms and stereotypes of the more general constructions that underlie the entire dynamic between society and its individual participants. How secrecy or suspicion affect the larger historical context cannot be understood without this insight into the social life of knowledge in the society of Languedoc.

Properly understood and applied, the constructionist model used in this work provides the key whereby individual documents and records are located in a larger field of discursive norms that outline a network of conventions and expectations and ultimately outline communities. These expectations are the backdrop of any successful use of either

secrecy or suspicion. It is only in the violation of a generally accepted notion about what can and should be known, that secrecy can be discerned and suspicions proven valid.

CHAPTER TWO: DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES OF LANGUEDOC

The region of Languedoc in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries underwent a number of political, economic and social changes. This chapter will highlight these changes in order to paint a picture of the context in which the conflict between the Roman Church and heresy takes place. In the preceding chapter, the theory of social construction of reality was discussed, with a focus on discourse and education. This general theory about societies must now be focused onto a particular social and historical landscape. Because we are interested in secrecy and suspicion in religious conflict, a vision of what is normal is required before the disruption of the normal can be properly appreciated. Secrecy and suspicion are grounded in normative social ideas about what can and should be discussed, revealed, confessed. What is interesting about the context of medieval Languedoc is the opportunity to see these normative values regarding discourse change over time.

Much of this chapter is focused on themes of diversity, autonomy and lack of political or economic cohesion, but it is important to begin with the issue of what unifies the region of Languedoc. The label is a linguistic one, referring to communities that share a broad similarity in manner of speech. The region of Languedoc is generally considered to consist of the lands around the city of Toulouse, the lands between the two major rivers of the region, the Rhone to the east and the Garonne to the west, and the mountains of the Massif central to the northeast and the Pyrénées in the southwest. The virtue of the name, for the purposes of this work, is the focus on the fracture between populations separated by linguistics differences and forced to translate from their native

tongue if communication is to occur between an envoy from the Vatican and someone living in the towns and villages of the region. Shared language provides a link between communities and localities that, in this context, lack any other overarching unifying elements. The lack of shared language between the people of Languedoc and the northern invaders and, of course, marks the difference between the preaching of the Good Men, who are labeled heretics by the Roman authorities, and later crusaders and various Inquisitorial tribunals.

This chapter outlines, generally, the important elements of the discourse communities in Languedoc by focusing first on the social structures of the region, and the areas of political or economic power related to them, and then outlining the forms of information exchange that we have records of from the period. The overall image is of two conflicting models of discourse , each with different notions about the role of text, orality, embodied knowledge, and the diffusion and the sharing of authority. The Roman Church, in the period of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was undergoing a process of organization and innovation in regards to the social role of clergy, the education of priests and laypeople, and the expectations placed on society in general. This process is most visible in the 1215 Fourth Lateran council, with its canons on a variety of reforms and organizing principles. At the same time there was a movement within Christianity that focused on the pursuit of an apostolic, mendicant, gospel-focused religious life. This movement has its "orthodox" exemplars in the new mendicant orders of Francis and Dominic, but is expressed through European Christendom in a variety of ways, not all of which met with papal approval. In his seminal discussion of the transformations that occurred in twelfth century European Christianity, Herbert Grundmann makes clear that

the issue of difference between the religious movement of which the people of Languedoc were a part, and which the authorities of the Roman Church were responding to, were issues of authority and practice that created different uses of discourse.[52] On the one hand Grundmann describes a popular religious movement "authorized by the gospels and apostolic writings", and on the other the Roman Church's ongoing process of reform, control and definition of powers. Those Christians who were referred to as the "Good Men" and "Women" of Languedoc, take part in this broader movement within European religion, which would eventually be manifest within the Church in the form of innovative religious orders.[53] To reiterate, there is a broad shared culture of information in Languedoc, the shape of which is determined by the communities that use it to pursue religious, social, political and economic ends. If the conflict that develops in the region can be said to have two sides, the differences between these sides are in their attitudes about and expectations of discourse, as will be shown below.

This general outline will be more clearly embedded in specific circumstances in later chapters, but the relevant issue at the moment is to lay the groundwork for recognizing both the contributions of the historical context and the general culture to the shape of religious discourse in the region, and also the sources of suspicion and misunderstanding between the various groups and individuals who find themselves at odds over the issue of the religious authority. How could the authority of Rome meet such resistance in the towns and countryside of Languedoc? What is so different about

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[52] Grundmann Herbert *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages* translated by Steven Rowan (University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame & London, 1995) p. 22

[53] As Grundmann says earlier in the same section: "These investigations derive from the assumption that the rise of orders and sects was not a series of isolated. mutually independent developments formed only by the will and deed of a founder, nor by the accidental reception of a heretical doctrine; rather they belong together in historical relation to the total religious development of the the West" (1995, p. 3).

this region? Why were the counts of Toulouse, the viscounts of Carcassonne, and other putative authorities unable to control their people? Where did resistance to Church authority arise and how did it spread? What conception of religious authority did the people of Languedoc have? All of these questions demand a closer look at the historical context in which the conflict over religious authority occurs.

Part I: Power and Authority in Languedoc

The political structure of Languedoc, from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, is characterized by strong local authorities, fairly distant ties to the power of Counts and even weaker ties to any overarching hegemony, either secular or ecclesiastical. In its great towns, power was negotiated between local consuls, noble families and the bishops of the Church. In the countryside fortified villages and monasteries were the focus of legal and social authority. Independence and the diffusion of power were the hallmarks of this period between the fall of the Carolingian empire and the imposition of the rule of the Capetian monarchs of France.[54]

Internal and external forces of social change were brought to bear on Languedoc by the various powers invested in her future as struggles over the religious, economic, political and physical landscape take place. A theory of the social role of secrecy depends on normative social institutions and their operation as the backdrop against which both

[54] For an excellent example of the power of local consuls see John Mundy's "Village, Town and City in the Region of Toulouse" in Raftis, J.A. (ed) *Pathways to Medieval Peasants* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies: Toronto, 1981) pp.144 and 164. For a discussion of the establishment and spread of town consul organization see Phillipe Wolff, *Documents de l'histoire du Languedoc* (Toulouse, 1969) pp. 126-128 in which the rapidity of the spread of town & village council organization is discussed, from just the city of Toulouse in 1220 to the 143 councils that swear to the king in 1271.

actual secrecy and the suspicion of it arose.[55] The struggle for authority in the society of Languedoc can be understood only in reference to the existing structures of authority and the relationships between them, from the organization of individual families and households, to the machinations of the ecclesiastical lords and the most powerful of the noble class.

Social and political power in the region strained between the hereditary nobility, ecclesiastical forces and the local councils of lesser nobility, merchants and tradesmen. Using the powerful city of Toulouse as an example:

> The first characteristic of the state of Toulouse, then, was its extreme fluidity. There was, however, a center of gravity- like the duchy of France from Orleans to Soissons, the cradle of the Capetian dynasty, with the ile de France. This was the county of Toulouse proper, which coincided more or less with the bishopric of Toulouse, this being, exceptionally enough in the South, almost without lands of its own. So the Counts held the city which was for them both a strength and a weakness. It brought them considerable revenues; it was a genuine capital, more powerful and more influential than Paris. But it was inhabited by an influential bourgoisie with institutions of its own, and the Count was in practice master of Toulouse only in so far as the burghers consented. Toulouse was a free republic, exactly like the Italian republics of the same period, but living in relative peace with its Count.[56]

The powerful Count of Toulouse, frequently blamed for the situation in his city and the region, was not entirely free from negotiations of authority even within his own city.

The rural nobility were in a similar situation, largely free from the interference of distant overlords, they, nonetheless, had multiple ties to a variety of powers to manage and the power of the local industry and trade affected the level of their influence. Great

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[55] More on the connection between social context, expectations suspicion and the idea of secrecy will follow. My use of these concepts is based on Frank Kermode's analysis in *the Genesis of Secrecy* (London: Harvard University Press, 1979). to be discussed below.

[56] Barbara Wall's translation of Jacques Madaule's *The Albigensian Crusade* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1967) p.6

abbeys for religious orders and military fortifications were built throughout the region, creating powerful local autonomous leadership and complicating the creation of large viable principalities. Additionally, scattered throughout the region were sixteen mints surviving from the Carolingian age, held by a variety of lords and providing potential independent sources of wealth, and more importantly, currency:

> These years saw a spread of mints and a money economy into more remote areas of the countryside. By the mid-twelfth century, this had resulted in peasant dues and services often being commuted into money payments, whether these were the traditional *cens* or *tasca*, or payments made by the *fief routuriers* found near Toulouse or the *pays du Selve*. Similarly, the shares which members of the nobility possessed in divided or subdivided allodial castles or other property or the *feva, guarda, or alberga* perscribed by the rather unique feudal system of the Midi and often regulated by the *convenienta* more and more took the form of money rather than the service so typical of the Northern French feudal system.[57]

The *convenienta,* mentioned by Archibald Lewis in the above quote, was a form of binding legal contract that saw wide usage in the juridical systems of Languedoc. In his discussion of the spread of Roman Law in the region Paul Ourliac describes this form of bond as the spirit of the law, rather than the legalism of the jurists engaged by the Roman system:

> les exemples sont, d'autre parts, innombrables et permettent d'en bien comprendre la portée; un pacte est conclu qui conserve toute sa valeur même si son auteur, après une blessure, a perdu usage de la parole; ce pacte n'exige ni forme, ni solennité quelconque et il n'impose aucun autre devoir [...] Ce sont exactement les traits de la *convenienti* dont on a tenté de dessiner les contours et qui constituent l'une des figures juridiques les plus originales du Midi. Son ancienneté – elle remonte au x^{e} siècle – prouve son originalité; elle prévaut au Languedoc et en Lombardie, mais est à peu près inconnu ailleurs; surtout, elle est

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[57] '*Feva*', '*guarda*' and '*alberga*' refer to the three forms of habitations: fiefdom, military fortification and guest-house, and more abstractly to the concomitant duties associated with them: management, protection, and hospitality. Archibald Lewis "Patterns of economic Development in Southern France, 1050-1271 AD" in *Medieval Society in Southern France and Catalonia* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984) p.60

> conclue, le plus souvent, en prévision de la mort et fait intervenir dans le contrat le «facteur temps».[58]

Distinguished, here, from the vision of feudal ties as hierarchical forms of vassalage, the concept of *convenienta* suggests a limited term agreement between equals upheld through honor, or more specifically the ideal of *paratge* ('peerage'). Legal and social bonds are drawn together in the *convenienta* and those bonds play a large role in the allegiances of the people of the region, amongst themselves and to their local rulers.

The ideal of *paratge*, promoted by troubadours and chroniclers of the crusades, critical of the violence inflicted on the society of Languedoc, represents the highest values of the romantic conception of nobility. It is this ideal against which the actions of violent, deceitful men are contrasted, as in the famous portion of the song of the Albigensian wars, describing the epitaph of the leader of the Northern invaders:

> The epitaph says, for those who can read it,
> That he is a saint and martyr who shall breathe again
> And shall in wondrous joy inherit and flourish
> And wear a crown and sit on a heavenly throne.
> And I have heard it said that this must be so
> If by killing men and spilling blood,
> By wasting souls, and preaching murder,
> By following evil counsel, and raising fires,
> By ruining noblemen and besmirching *paratge*,
> By pillaging the country, and by exalting Pride,
> By stoking up wickedness and stifling good,
> By massacring women and their infants,
> A man can win Jesus in this world,
> Then Simon surely wears a crown, respondent in Heaven.[59]

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[58] Paul Ourliac, "La société languedocienne du XIIIe siècle et le droit Romain", pp. 199-216 in *Le Credo, la morale et l'inquisition* , Cahiers de Fanjeaux no.6 (privat, 1971) p.205.

[59] Michael Costen, *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1997) p. 148. See also in Malcolm Barber's *The Cathars: Dualist Heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages* (Longman, 2000) p.56 on *paratge* as a way of life.

This concept, contrasted here polemically with the "villainous" behavior of the leader of the French forces, encompasses the honor, gentility, chivalry and nobility of spirit that is seen, in some ideal way, as the character of the culture of the nobility of Languedoc. The poet's point in the above is to elide the culture of the region with the target of the crusade. Simon's force kill more than heretics, they besmirch the concept of 'peerage'. This poetic language around the notion of *paratge* and the *convenienta* reflect the practical, legal notion of dynamic agreements and systems of duty and obligation that are not part of the hierarchical "feudal" system as generally conceived. Concepts about "nobility" reflect the material truth of the diffusion of power in the region, seen as divergent from the violent pride of the Northern lords, and promoting ties and agreements based on contractual oaths.

The idealized image of nobility does not mean that military or physical might were not recognized and even considered prestigious.[60] When they were not raiding each others lands and feuding, many of Languedoc's nobility were involved in military expeditions into the Holy Land, and against the Muslims of the Iberian peninsula. These lords acquired status as 'Crusaders' and created deep ties with the interests of the Church, and frequently they joined one of the militant orders who were establishing themselves throughout Languedoc. The counts of Toulouse had themselves established a crusader state in Tripoli in the early twelfth century, and Raymond VI, despite his conflicts with Rome, was buried in a Hospitalier's habit at their commanderie in Toulouse.[61]

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[60] For a discussion of *prestij* and the local recognition of military venture see Mark Gregory Pegg, *A Most Holy War* (Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 20- 34.

[61] Barber, 2000, p50.

By the twelfth century, the militant orders and monasteries were firmly established as independent units throughout the lands of Languedoc, with lands of their own and the power to collect ransoms. In 1155, the Templar order had been made responsible for maintaining the "Peace of God" in the region, the protection against violence guaranteed by the Church at various times of the year generally, and specifically invoked during times of crisis. Yearly sums of money were collected for the purpose of funding the 'defense of the Peace' by the responsible parties, and oaths of the peace were at times required of all men over the age of 12.[62] This fairly flexible notion of the "Peace of God" was generally the sole overarching method of policing the disparate landscape of the domains of Languedoc. Its general validity was recognized even if it was not always uniformly applied or enacted. The power and authority residing in this chartered right of enforcement blurred the obligations of authorities over large spaces of Languedoc, complicating any clear assessment of responsibility and duty.

Also by the middle of the twelfth century the growth of the towns and a rural industrial centers in textiles and dyeing, as well as the financial centers created around the surviving mints, created large commercial interests in the cities of the region, lending power to the merchant class, and strengthening economic and cultural ties with regions well beyond the borders of Languedoc.[63] By 1229, the cities of Languedoc are, to some degree specialized into particular forms of economic activity, as Archibald Lewis categorizes them:

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[62] T.N. Bisson, "The Organized Peace in Southern France and Catalonia" in *the American Historical Review*, vol. 82, No. 2 (April 1977), pp.294-298. This notion of oaths of peace has future relevance to our work, existing as they do, prior to the oaths of loyalty recommended by Church councils by the end of the thirteenth century, of all inhabitants above that age.

[63] Archibald Lewis "Patterns of economic Development in Southern France, 1050-1271 AD" in *Medieval Society in Southern France and Catalonia* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984) p.64.

> Thus at last by 1229, Southern French merchants had begun to reap the benefit of both their local agricultural, commercial, and industrial productivity and their overall geographical location to join the Italians as intermediaries between the Mediterranean world and the Northern European markets. It is important, however to distinguish between three different types of towns which had appeared in the Midi by the first years of the thirteenth century. A few by this time can be regarded as centers of international importance linked with international trade and attracting numbers of foreign merchants who settled there. [eg. La Rochelle, Marseilles, Saint-Gilles, Narbonne, Montpelier] Others, like Cahors and Gaillac, resembled Italian towns such as Siena, Plaisance [...] in being the home of financiers who had begun to have international importance as bankers and money-lenders. Most Southern French towns of this period , however, were much more local in their economic functions and in the population they attracted, which generally came from nearby regions [eg. Bayonne, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Lyons, Arles, Nimes, Beziers].[64]

The effect of these transformations is to add yet another layer of diversity and autonomy to the cultural networks of Languedoc, with very specific concerns separating particular cities, while increasing the value and danger of the region as a whole in its independence from any recognized structure of European authority. The greater the concentration of wealth and power in these regions the greater the struggle for influence and profit by the various kings and ecclesiastical powers tied to specific dioceses and families.

With the growth of the power of the cities and the development of economic activity, the powers in the cities from the middle of the twelfth century onward, begin to be regulated by councils of the wealthiest and well-born in the city and bourg, reducing still further the power of the counts of the region. The *viguiers* as local representatives of the Count in the cities, and *bayles* in the countryside, had to deal with this powerful "bourgoisie", reducing substantially the power of the Count to enact changes in either

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[64] Ibid., pp.71-72.

taxation or law, while not affecting his responsibilities to the people of his region or to the powers that be in France, Spain, England, Germany or Rome.[65]

Opposing the Count's, and ecclesiastical powers in the *castra* and countryside villages, the central organizing principle of rural life remained the *domus,*[66] the wide network of kinship tied to particular homes or households.[67] This did not necessarily represent all direct family members, but more roughly a loose association of closely related individuals organized under a single male head. Ownership and identity arose from these bodies more so than from any civic identity or national one, particularly in the isolated villages of the mountainous regions.

Rural life in the region of Languedoc transformed over the period of our study, from primarily small-scale agricultural activities closely associated with a particular town or fortification, to larger scale pursuits tied to international trade and manufacture.

> Equally impressive was the Midi's industrial development, especially in textiles that began to be produced in rural workshops in Narbonne's hinterland, in the Massif central and in Alpine regions and went to Mediterranean ports where they were shipped to North Africa and the Near East. Much of the cloth was a coarse inexpensive fabric. [...] fine [Flemish] cloth was refinished in the Midi by dyers who made use of the *kermes*, which was abundant in Mediterranean coastal areas. Also important was an iron ore produced at Clermont-Ferrand and Navarre, shipped out of Bayonne along the Atlantic routes, and fine leather, cutlery, and arms that were produced at Toulouse and in a number of other workshops.[68]

The ecology of the region shared more with the other Mediterranean nations than it did with the North, and the culture and technology of peasant life reflected those

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[65] Ibid., pp.71-72.

[66] For a description of the role of the *domus* in rural life see Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error* translated by Barbara Bray (New York: Vintage, 1979) particularly Chapter II: the domus.

[67] Lewis, 1984, p.59.

[68] Ibid., p.77.

differences. The landscape itself, separated by natural geographical boundaries of mountain and river, created real social and political boundaries that resisted the creation of simple hegemonies, but remained linked by worldview, tradition, kinship, and economic interests and, of course, language. All of this promotes an internal picture of independence and freedom for local small communities,[69] and the corresponding requirement that they organize and protect themselves in the face of an overall vacuum of external authority.

The purpose of this outline of the material and social structure of Languedoc, at least those elements related to our study, is to lay the groundwork for an understanding of the context in which the discourse of this region occurs, and from there to an understanding of secrecy and suspicion as they appear in the religious conflict between the Good Men and the representative of Roman ecclesiastical interests. This brief outline reflects the influence of these social and non-religious structures on the form and progress of both the spread of the Roman Church's interests in the region and the inhabitants resistance to those interests. The independence and fragmentation within the region's temporal authorities highlights the difficulty of imposing order and control over the region. Its growth and independence, political and economic, suggests a disinclination toward a single unifying system, with strong preexisting group identities reinforced by language and custom. The differences, here, are both internal and external. The region as a whole differed from the larger, theoretical, polity of Christendom; and, within Languedoc, individual towns, villages, and fortifications organized themselves with

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[69] R.I. Moore has a well-developed argument about the nature of the "Small Community" mentality and social organization in the region at the time. See p.28 in his chapter "Literacy and the Making of Heresy c.1000-1150" in *Heresy and Literacy, 1000-1530.* Edited by Peter Biller and Anne Hudson. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

political and economic models that best suit their position in the social and physical geography of the period. Understanding who resists the intrusion of Roman authority and in what way is not possible without this image of the landscape of Languedoc: the isolated villages, the rural industry, the town councils, the spread of monastic orders, etc... What unifies the region is its language, its tangled politics of peerage and obligation, and its relative freedom from a single overarching authority.

Part II: Authority and Information in Languedoc

The social structures of the region of Languedoc are the framework against which religious discourse must be understood. Systems of education, laws and traditions, the inheritance of social mores from a variety of sources depending on the cultural context of the individual, all of these shape the expectations about religion an religious people. The power-structures of the region, be they secular or religious, inform patterns of discourse and the process whereby information is disseminated or restricted during the progress of the conflict between the Church and the local religious resistance.

There is little information on the nature of education in the period, particularly that of children, and the processes whereby they are prepared to fulfill particular roles. The information that we do have, in terms of apprenticeship roles in the trades and clergy, with family and hired tutors fulfilling the roles of educators for the young.[70] John Mundy, in his article on the village and towns of Languedoc,[71] points to evidence of the

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[70] Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error* translated by Barbara Bray (New York: Vintage, 1979) see Chapter XIII for his description of childhood in a village in early fourteenth century Languedoc.

[71] John Mundy's "Village, Town and City in the Region of Toulouse" in Raftis, J.A. (ed) *Pathways to Medieval Peasants* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies: Toronto, 1981) pp.141-190.

training of boys in monasteries and ecclesiastical institutions, making reference to evidence in the Inquisitorial record. He points to evidence that by 1245/46, in which rural trials provide some interesting details:

> From the end of the crusade, the town's parishes began to elicit more attention on the part of the testators, and , within twenty years, we learn what had been only dimly perceived before, namely that parish priests or *capellani* were assisted by *subcapellani* and others, and that all parishes had *scholares* or *clerici*, boys or young men learning letters and serving minor clerical functions.[72]

These boys are being trained in letters to fulfill the role of scribe, if they do not proceed further along the religious path. The need for educated scribes in the region, to the extent that each parish had some system of producing them, suggests at least some model of educational institutions, if not much insight into the curriculum.

Le Roy Ladurie's analysis of village life in Languedoc does admit to the existence of some schools run by ecclesiastics for the children of the wealthy and noble, but for the most part, describes the system of education as occurring within the *domus* in imitation of work, and lessons communicated while working: "through work performed in common. The boys would dig the turnips with their father and the girls would reap the corn with their mother. As they all laboured together, the older people would talk to the youngsters."[73] At the age of twelve, the occupations changed and the boys would seek apprenticeship with a craftsman or take care of their father's sheep, juvenile girls would become wives.[74]

Assuming then that agricultural or rural industrial work was transmitted through networks of kinship, our model of primary education assumes the shape of apprenticeship

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[72] Mundy, 1981, p.156.

[73] Le Roy Ladurie, 1979, p. 214.

[74] Ibid., p.215-216.

as was the case in the urban trades and the rural regular clergy. In this system, interested individuals associate themselves with the skilled and work for them while acquiring the knowledge they need in order to be successful in those fields. There is nothing particularly interesting about this arrangement apart from the ways it organizes authority in the rural and urban settings, the dynamic between the family identity and the secondary career identity, and all the elements of worldview, ethics, and ritual activity associated with an individual's process of learning about their place in the world, and social relationships and mores. The close association between religious identity and familial ties, among both the nobility and the peasantry, suggests the strength of these ties in the minds of the people, at least. In his *Montaillou*, Ladurie paints a fairly clear image of the village separated into "heretical" and "orthodox" households, with alteration of allegiance causing division and conflict. Similarly, during the process of crusade and Inquisition numerous individuals fall under suspicion because of their familial ties to known "heretics."[75] The bonds of the family and its role in the socialization of individual into particular religious allegiances are of primary importance in understanding the spread of the religious movement that was called "Catharism" and the methods adopted in its repression by the representatives of the Roman Church.

The details of both "orthodox" and "heretical" theologies, were the province of those people literate, educated in clerical apprenticeship or in the new universities of Europe.[76] These institutions are all founded during the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth

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[75] "Heretical kin" as John Arnold puts it in his *Inquisition, Texts and Discourse*(University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001). p.74 in his discussion of Jacques Fournier's register and the concept of *genus hereticalis.*

[76] See Sara Hamilton "The Virgin Mary in Cathar Thought" pp.24- 49 in *the Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* Vol. 56, No. 1, (January 2005).

centuries, and represent a significant alteration in the production of information of the region. I do not intend to suggest that religious identity is in anyway coterminous with the appreciation of complex theologies, but rather to point to a form of rhetoric and discourse promulgated by these institutions. Sarah Hamilton's discussion of the possible use of the *Glossa ordinaria*, the standard text of biblical exegesis at the time, in an early thirteenth century Italian polemical text, addresses this point:

> The inclusion of Augustine's interpretation in the *Glossa ordinaria* means that it would have been available to any reasonably well-educated thirteenth century cleric. [...] The works of M. R. Harris and Bernard Hamilton suggest that, whilst the Cathars derived the texts of their rituals from their Eastern counterparts, the Occitan version of the New Testament, at least, was probably derived from the Vulgate. We should therefore allow for a possibility that a careful reading of the *Glossa ordinaria* may itself have been the source for the heretic's own interpretations of scripture. For those *perfecti* from both northern Italy and the Languedoc who attended the schools of northern France c. 1200 almost certainly knew the *Glossa* as did their lay opponents.[77]

Hamilton's point is that the spread of resistance to Church authority, and the spread of "heretical" ideas, requires no external sources but can erupt from within the existing educational structures of the region. Her point is that in any debate, there is the possiblity that both sides learned what they know about religion from the same sources. The question is, again, of the hermeneutic applied to the texts, the light by which they are read, rather than some fundamental issue of curriculum.

The spread of education and literacy created community standards for debate and polemic, stylistic and formal similarities that point to a shared discourse community.[78]

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[77] Hamilton, 2005, p. 40-41.

[78] Throughout this work, the idea of "discourse community" refers to the aggregate of writers, audiences and texts, into which participants are socialized and each of which manifest the communities norms in some fashion. see Bennett A Rafoth, "Discourse Community: Where Writers, Readers, and Texts Come Together", p.131-146 in *The Social Construction of Written Communication*. Bennett A. Rafoth and Donald L Rubin, eds. (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1988.) pp 140-141 for the source of this idea.

The *disputatio*[79] as form of examination and education, used in institutions of law, medicine and art, stands as a general form that reoccurs a number of times in the descriptions of the encounters between the orthodox and learned heretics in the period before the conquest and Inquisition of Languedoc.[80] This recognizable form of public disputation carries an authority with its chroniclers for reasons that go beyond the argumentation of the figures portrayed therein, it serves to link the theological disputes to the larger framework of authoritative discourse, drawing validity from its form as well as its contents.

There has already been some discussion in the above of the legal role of custom and tradition in the region, and the slow spread and resistance to the Roman code, seen sometimes as a survival from ancient times, and sometimes as an imposition of the northern invaders. There is no doubt that, during the process of some of the Church's Inquisitorial trials, the process of accusation and the assignation of punishments all reflected the customs of the region as much as ecclesiastical juridical models. Of particular interest to us here is the evidence of individuals being found innocent of the heresy charges based on oath taking rituals by well-known citizens. Jacques Paul's work on Inquisitorial procedure in Carcassonne notes the use of contract over physical constraint: "Or ils semblent préférer une sorte de transaction avec les prévenus avec les serments, cautions et fidéjusseurs. L'obligation contractée, plus ou moins librement

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[79] See Olga Weijers' "La *Disputatio* à la Faculté des arts: le Midi de la France" pp.245-259 in *Église et culture en France méridionale (xiie – xive siècle)* no. 35 (2000)

[80] Hamilton in her work on Marian conception among the Cathars (cited above, see footnote 76) , gives three contemporary examples of polemical works arranged in the 'argumentative' style of proposition and counter-proposition: the northern Italian *Disputatio inter catholicum et paterinum hereticum* (c.1210), Alan of Lille's *Quadripartita* (c. 1170-1202), and Moneta's *Summa* (c. 1241), p.36.

d'ailleurs, semble remplacer le recours aux moyens de contrainte."[81] There are times and places in which the Church chose to use local ideas about contract and *convenienta* and the process of its inquest.

One specific custom that greatly affected the power and authority of both secular and ecclesiastical powers in the region, in comparison to French customs, was the practice of partible inheritance among the lower nobility and non-noble classes. Unlike the rules of primogeniture that conserved both power and wealth in a single heir, the practice of equal division of shares among all the inheritors meant the diffusion of power and wealth and the complication of political and geographical influence. If all the offspring of a particular family receive shares in the land and monetary wealth of their estate, it does not take many generations for the creation of elaborate networks of allegiance. In a single *castra* held by three sons jointly, each tied to the families of their wives who have shares in the holdings of their families, and the daughters' shares held by them still despite living at the husbands holdings. While on the rural lower class scale, this system of inheritance simply promotes jointly-held agricultural activity, and close inter-familial ties, on the level of national aristocratic power, this form of inheritance left the nobility at a disadvantage when attempting to respond with overriding authority to threats both internal and external. The larger the problem, the less likely it would be to have recourse to any single, uncontested authority.

Before leaving behind the family as a nexus of both pedagogy and authority, there is one final element relevant to the issue of information exchange; the family visit. The

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[81] Jacques Paul, "La procedure Inquisitoriale a Carcassonne au milieu du XIIIe Siecle" in *Cahiers de Fanjeau No.29: L'Église et le Droit dans le Midi (13e – 14e siècles)* (Centre de Fanjeaux: Édition Privât, 1994) p.365.

Inquisitorial records are full of stories of this kind, a genre of confession associated with those accused of "harboring heretics". The "friends of heretics" brought to trial and in confession, tell the stories of their meetings with "heretics", and how these meetings are disguised as simply visiting a particular family. This stories highlight the importance of this mode of social interaction between families, webs of obligation that make traveling very long distances and frequent sharing of hospitality among neighbors an entirely unsuspicious activity in the general society. Given the importance we have already put on the *domus* as a locus of authority and information, it is perhaps unsurprising to find that the hospitality of friends and family plays a large role in the general movements of people and information through the culture of Languedoc, but its importance in resistance to the Roman authorities and the protection of "heretics" from Inquisitorial eyes cannot be underestimated. The outlines of "underground" networks of "sympathizers" in villages and town all over Languedoc, linked largely through household ties, can appear malevolent unless one realizes that this form of network may have been simply being put to use in the service of the heretics, rather than created in response to repression. Julien Thery in his discussion of Catharism and anti-clericalism, uses the example of a burgher of Albi in 1286 and describes the tenor of his meetings with heretics in this fashion:

> Enfin, la pratique religieuse dissidente revêtait des formes s'apparentant, bien plus qu'à une vie d'église constituée, a une simple sociabilité, peu spécifique d'ailleurs, malgré sa clandestinité. C'est le vocabulaire de l'amitié et de familiarité qui prévaut dans les confessions pour évoquer les relations avec les ministres, et non celui de l'adhésion, de l'engagement spirituel ou de la croyance (si on laisse de coté la terminologie imposée par la vision ecclésiastique). On va «visiter» les bons hommes; le fait de manger, boire et converser en leur compagnie semble très important. Pour une bonne part, la substance de la

> dissidence consiste en ce commerce ordinaire, quoique transgressif, avec eux, ainsi qu'en actes de soutien à leur activité de ministres et à leur vie d'errance.[82]

At least in this period of the conflict, the social structure and modes of transmission in the "heretical" movements of the Good Men of Languedoc reflect commonly held notions of hospitality, and use them to connect with their supporters. Whether this is entirely strategic or just these religious peoples' natural participation and engagement in normal social interaction is difficult to discern through the record of their opponents.

Closely associated with the religious discourse of the region, obviously tied to their conception of proper conduct of religious people, is the amount of preaching described in the Inquisitorial records and in the letters of the clergy to their superiors. The "Cathar heresy" is not the only one identified by the Church as preaching error, there were several heresies that promoted preaching of the gospel in vulgar tongues and the scriptural study and theological speculation among their members.[83] Many studies of "the Cathars" put emphasis on the cosmic dualism present in their beliefs, primarily because they use similarities between theologies to link heretical groups together, and provide them with a provenance.[84] It is interesting to note, then, either in the trials' records or in their audiences, those who seem to barely remember any of the details of the sermon beyond a few stereotypical dualist or anticlerical comments:

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[82] Julien Thery's "Cléricalisme et hérésie des bon homes: l'exemple d'Albi et de l'Albigeois (1276-1329)" pp.471-508 in *L'anticléricalisme en France méridionale (milieu XIIe-début XIVe siècle)* Cahiers de Fanjeaux, no.38, (2003) pp.487-488.

[83] See pp. 22-30 of Grundmann's *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages* translated by Steven Rowan (University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame & London, 1995) for a fairly complete resume of the elements of the Church's successes and failures on the problem of identifying, defining, and punishing heresy.

[84] For the Good Christians in Languedoc this is to the Cathars, then to the dualist Bogomils and then to the dualist Paulicians, religious identity and theological models being considered the same thing.

> Souvent, comme dans le cas de Garnier de Talapie, les accusés ne se souviennent pas de ce qu'on dit les bons hommes (*non recolit*, disent les textes). D'autre part, les procès-verbaux indiquent systématiquement que le accusé n'a «pas compris» (*non intellexit*) les *verba* prononcés par les ministres dissidents lors des *hereticationes*. [...] plus généralement, celle-ci semble marquée par une grande passivité des croyants. Tout se passe comme si les bons hommes, comme les moines du Moyen Âge, assumaient seul les relations avec le ciel pour le compte de tous leur adeptes – lesquels n'ont nullement à se soucier d'atteindre le pureté de ces spécialistes du divin, ni à comprendre la signification précise de leur paroles et gestes sacrés.[85]

Whether this is reticence in the face of potential punishment, or actual failure to remember the details of the sermons the villagers were exposed to, it is difficult to say. If you have already admitting to meeting with a "heretic", it is difficult to see what purpose is served by pretending to not have been paying attention. This representation of the meetings with local "heretical teachers" is important for our purposes in that it underlines the actual forms of secrecy required by the "heretics" in their conflict with ecclesiastical authorities. The issue is not so much secret teachings as it is the secret meetings of individuals.

The lack of interest in the details of the cosmology or theology of the heretical preachers reflects a general conception of the role of the religious elite in society that is not out of step with the Church's own formulation of things. It isn't until the Fourth Lateran council of 1215 that Innocent III lays down guidelines for both lay instruction and practice,[86] and it is hard to imagine these guidelines were suddenly and rigidly applied throughout Christendom. What we are looking at is a populace essentially unable to discern heresy, uneducated in the details of the orthodox versions of theology and, initially at least, without rigid official guidelines regarding proper religious practice.

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[85] Thery, 2003, p.484.

[86] Carol Lansing's *Power and Purity: Cathar Heresy in Medieval Italy* (Oxford University Press, 2001) p.16.

The beliefs the Church is concerned about are the peoples' beliefs about the authority and purity of a Good Christian. Once persecution begins, the Good Men and Women of Languedoc hide who and where they are. From the very beginning of the conflict, the "heretics" do not trouble to hide their beliefs about the Church, or about authentic religiosity. Throughout the entire period of the conflict, as long as there were opportunities, the "heretics" engaged in public debates with representatives of "orthodoxy" and both Bernard of Clairvaux, in 1140, and Dominic of Osma, in 1200, added to their reputations through their efforts at counter-preaching and debating these "heretical" leaders in Languedoc.

Beyond the record of preaching and public debate, and the evidence of visiting from *domus* to *domus*, there is also the record of textual usage by those who resisted the Roman Church's claims to authority. Records of their debates with bishops and legates make clear their use of scriptural text, and the description of the Good Men and Women of Languedoc frequently includes references to texts. Peter Biller, in his analysis of the use of written materials in the region, discusses three broad types of books associated with the "heretics", most of which survive only in so far as they are referenced in Inquisitorial depositions. He finds references to financial documents; charters relating to property belonging to heretics, will and legacies of the same, Church organization documents; records of meetings and councils, letters of correspondence between "heretics", and finally what he calls service books; vernacular translations of Scripture, theological works, and ritual guides.[87] These written materials, every mention of which

[87] See pages 63-69 in Peter Biller's "Cathars of Languedoc and Written Materials" pp.60-79 in *Heresy and Literacy, 1000-1530.* Edited by Peter Biller and Anne Hudson.(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

that is preserved in the Inquisitorial record, reflect the general use of textual authority in legal, personal and religious discourse in the region. Interestingly, in the case of the religious texts, Biller points out the form of the books, their small size, as an indication of the need for both portability and secrecy.[88] The fact that these texts reflect the core descriptors of the group's members, as itinerant, preaching, ritual experts, suggests that textual authority is an important component of the religious movement of the Good Christians. Although the group obviously has a different approach to textual authority than the Church does, it remains an important component of their religious discourse. This contrasts starkly with the stereotype of the ignorant heretic called to appear before the learned friar Inquisitors. Brian Stock, in his *Implications of Literacy*, theorizes that although both the Church and the "Good Christians" use texts, they use them in different fashions, and that it is the mode of use that creates solidarity, rather the doctrinal uniformity among the new literate society that Stock sees in these developing "sects": "With shared assumptions, the members were free to discuss, to debate, or to disagree on other matters, to engage in personal interpretations of the Bible or to some degree in individualized meditation and worship."[89]

So far this presentation of religious discourse in Languedoc has addressed a number of the core elements of authoritative sources of information and typical forums for its transmission, and in this brief overview, the records of the Church's Inquisitions have been mentioned a number of times. The records of Inquisitorial tribunals in Languedoc provide important information about the strategy adopted by the Church to combat the local resistance to their authority. The records of Inquisition are primary

[88] Ibid., p. 73.
[89] Brian Stock's *Implications of Literacy* (Princeton university Press, 1987).

documents in this work; the very bureaucracy and systematic process-thinking that created them are critical to the strategy of the Church and underline the transformation they attempted to establish in the society of Languedoc into order to bring it under control.

R. I. Moore, in his discussion of repression and the growth of heresy in the middle ages[90] makes this very point, that the growth in "heresy" in the region is really a growth in the bureaucratic institutions for the repression of heresy. The problem, he suggests, is not the spread of error, but the spread of social institutions designed to recognize and record error, the growing need among those in power to have clarity and a process for assuring obedience. The struggle was, in Moore's view, between these new institutions and those challenged in towns and villages. Between old local authority and new larger institutions.

The Albigensian crusade replaced the traditional nobility of the region with individuals in direct vassalage relationships with the king of France, their traditional judicial system was slowly replaced by the codes of Roman law used by the monarch, and the jurist became a new prominent social figure in the society, and universities, of Languedoc.[91] The Inquisitorial courts processed town after town, moving through the region recording not just the activities of suspected "heretics", but also the genealogies of families and the networks along which "resistance to orthodoxy" was transmitted. These records were saved. The friar Inquisitors wrote manuals describing the questions and responses one should expect during the process of establishing "orthodoxy" in a town or

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[90] see Moore's, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (Basil Blackwell, 1987).

[91] Paul Ourliac, "La société languedocienne du XIIIe siècle et le droit Romain", pp. 199-216 in *Le Credo, La Morale et L'inquisition* , Cahiers de Fanjeaus no.6 (privat, 1971) p.199.

region. As consequences were enumerated, expectations elaborated and records of the proceedings filed, the culture through which the Inquisitions moved was itemized and represented back to itself in a new way. Although this re-imaging of the society is never absolutely successful, and is never totally unopposed, it has an obvious effect on the environment, an effect that would eventually destroy the Good Christians' resistance to the Roman Church and its vision of society and good religion.

Part III: the Strategic Uses of Information

This preliminary expository work is the foundation for an understanding of the goals and expectations of the Church and "heretics" in Languedoc. The use of information cannot be understood without insight into the context in which the conflict occurs. The strategic use of information depends on an accurate understanding of the target discourse communities. The results of any attempt at secrecy and the result of attempts to uncover it, therefore, can only be understood in relation to the normative discourse of Languedoc.

It is because of the theoretical model at use in this project that the nature and quality of the discourse communities involved in the conflict in Languedoc are so important. This model recognizes the local and contextualized over more abstract formulations of identity and truth. Using the constructionist model as our framework, we see the power to shape the population's primary socialization as the ability to create a *de facto* social reality. This means that what is important for us to understand is not some objective truth about the opponents in this conflict, but rather to understand who believes what about them, and why.

This is particularly in evidence in the discussion or identification of the heretics in question, and explains any reticence that may surround a simple identification of these individuals as part of a "dualist" "Cathar" "counter-church". It is more useful, in the context of this work, to highlight the local outgrowth of the religious movement and the connections between it and the large discourse communities of Languedoc. What is important is what succeeded and what failed in the manipulation of information and power in this particular conflict, and so our representation of the discourse involved necessarily reflects those concerns.

Specifically in the field of religious discourse, keeping in mind Berger and Luckmann's theories about universe-maintaining narratives in the process of socialization,[92] the opportunity for entirely novel formulations of religious truth would appear to be fairly few and far between. Popular recognition of an individual as an authoritative source of religious information or of effective religious power, indicates that that individual conforms to some preexisting expectation among the population to whom the appeal for authority is made. Understanding the normative discourse of the community in which the "heresy" spread allows one to see the attraction of the religious ideas and practices to those who support or become participants in it. It is the success or failure of particular strategies in particular contexts that is of interest to us, in the end. The goals and expectations of the adherents limit and shape the goals and expectations of both the Roman Church and the "heretics".

The Church's goals in this period are social and concerned with the establishment and control of structures of authority in a region that has been contested ground for

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[92] See Chapter one, pages 38-42.

centuries. The lack of overarching aristocratic power in the region benefited the Church in a number of ways, leaving aside, for a moment, the problem of heresy. The Midi region had been of particular interest to the papacy for several centuries before the crusade, and remained important to the Church well beyond the papal installation in Avignon in 1304, which lasted into the beginning of the fifteenth century. It is not difficult to see the attraction to them, given the difficulties the Pope himself had with the powerful families of Rome, the relative lack of powerful authorities in the region, and the presence of a number of ecclesiastical lords and aristocratic families tied to the papacy through crusades to the Holy Lands and in the Iberian Peninsula and membership in military orders.[93] Although the "chaos and anarchy" in the region is frequently described as a problem for the Church, in reality it represented an opportunity for the Church to establish itself in lands without powerful royal, or imperial, opposition. The anticlerical or reformist critiques of the Church's involvement in the economy and politics of the region reflect a real interest on the part of the Church to establish its authority as the sole, or primary, arbitrator of authentic Christendom.

The twelfth and thirteenth century reforms of the Church lie at the foundations of the Good Christians' goals and expectations as well. The mixture of asceticism and engagement in the world, of poverty and labor, of preaching and meditation on the message of scripture, of simplicity and humility are stereotypes of the wandering ascetic that reflect a kind of de-institutionalized monastic ideal, a more approachable one perhaps than the isolated abbeys and tower commanderies of the orders of the Church. In short, the Good Christians' religious movement in Languedoc was part of a larger

[93] Archibald Lewis "The Papacy in Southern France and Catalonia, 840-1417" in *Medieval Society in Southern France and Catalonia* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984) p.4.

movement in European Christianity at the time.[94] It fulfilled the idea of the apostolic life for those who became involved in it, and this same way of life made them recognizably holy to the individuals who supported them. It was a vision widely shared across Christendom, and it took a particular shape in the context of Languedoc. The goal, then, was a kind of religion in which salvation depended on adhering to this *vita apostolica* much more than adhering to any particular theology, worldview, or institutional authority. What was clearly important to both those who practiced the "heresy" and those who supported it was the manifest power of the way these individuals lived their lives. As Karen Sullivan describes in her discussion of the representation of the heretics by villagers in their testimony before Jacques Fournier, in the early fourteenth century: "For their believers, the heretics embodied a certain ideal. Newcomers to the faith first learned not so much about the doctrines of Catharism as about the special status of the 'Good Christians,' whose harsh diet, poverty, and itinerancy made their lives more ascetic than those of even the most austere of their Catholic counterparts."[95]

The struggle between these Good Christians and the Church spreads over centuries, and the historical situation changes drastically from the original public debates between religious experts, and the period of Simon de Montfort's military conquest of the region in the name of the pope and the King of France. The process of inquisition is developed over the course of the Church's response to the "problem" of this region. What begins with letter-writing and disputation is transformed into chronicles of war and the publishing of papal bans and finally becomes the records of Inquisitorial trials. All along

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[94] See Grundmann's *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages, 1995* for his discussion of the broader movement within Christianity, sometimes tolerated by the Vatican, sometimes, domesticated, sometimes extinguished.

[95] Karen Sullivan's Truth and the Heretic (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) p.29.

the way the tenor and type of the records available to us suggest model of religious discourse being put to use for the successful alteration of social fact; to transform history or manipulate future events. Both "heretics" and the Church make their bid to determine the shape of religiosity in the region, but only one of them succeeded in any recognizable way.

The transformation undergone within Languedoc from the twelfth century to the beginning of the fourteenth occurs through debate, diplomacy, legislation, and warfare. Returning to the questions posed at the end of the introduction to this chapter, we can now see how the resistance to Church authority arose, and the difficulties face by those seeking to control the people of Languedoc. The original political and economic situation in the region was fragmented with diverse economic interests, and political and social power unevenly distributed though a network of heriditary nobility, ecclesiastical centers and wealthy tradespeople. There was no one individual or institution that managed more than its local environs. It is not surprising that the Church's leaders could look at this situation and interpret the whole region as out of control, or open to control. Attempting to appreciate the insider's view requires seeing this diversity and lack of control in terms of independence and freedom from external authorities, the protection of their local interests against external intruders. The religious elite of this system, the Good Men and Women of Languedoc symbolize, more and more as the pressure mounts, a lifestyle and model of social norms that has diverged too far from the thirteenth century papal vision of a good Christian society.

CHAPTER THREE: REPRESENTATIONS OF HERESY IN LANGUEDOC

The discussion of the representations of heresy in Languedoc begins with a look at the nature of the sources we have available to us and the role suspicion must play in our interpretations of that material. We then move to the first textual document that labels the group "the Cathars" and the impact that polemical work had on the later Inquisitorial interpretation of the heretics of Languedoc, and still later, on the scholars who reconstructed the "heresy of the Cathars" from polemical works and Inquisitorial registers. The chapter then moves to the representations of heresy in Languedoc from a different sort of document, the hagiographies of saints. This analysis establishes the role of the "heretics" as the opponent of "true religion" while simultaneously outlining the strategic manipulation of appearances by The Church. This section deals primarily with the figure of Dominic of Osma, the founder of the order that would be used to establish the first Inquisitorial courts in the region. The next section of this chapter deals with the representation of the "heretics" of the region as "Good Men", which first occurs in the record of a debate between a bishop and local heretics at the town of Lombers in Languedoc, in 1167, before the Albigensian crusade. This section proceeds with some cautious descriptions of the Good Christians of Languedoc drawn from the testimony of people appearing before the Inquisitorial courts of the mid-thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries.

Our knowledge about the Good Christians relies on a record largely created and preserved by their enemies, and most of the interpretive work that has been done on the group has been forced to read between the lines of these texts and prepare a

representation of the religious group from information from a source it holds in deep suspicion. As Malcolm Lambert puts it in his *Medieval Heresy*:

> The historian thus faces acute problems of evidence when he wishes to study the behaviour, motives and beliefs of the medieval heretic. He is dealing much of the time with underground movements existing behind a barrier of secrecy – and because Church and State are most often combined against them, they are willy nilly secret opposition movements hostile to authority. As a modern historian, he must elucidate motives from sources which are very rarely concerned with them, and scrape off layers of convention and prejudice from his originals in order to reach a true delineament of the heretics.[96]

The ecclesiastical sources that we have from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are not operating in a vacuum, they participate in a larger discourse about religious obedience, resistance to Papal authority, and the natures of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Beyond being part of larger wholes, these records and reports of heresy belong to a history of ecclesiastical writings that is as old as Christianity itself, a living tradition of correction and reform that is part of the engagement of generations of believers with the institutions of their faith. The resistance the Church encounters, that it perceives as the existence of popular heresy, prompts new concerns about the ability of the institutions and representatives of the Roman Church to impose doctrine and practice on the population of Languedoc. Edward Peters, commenting on the work by R. I. Moore on the origins of dissent in the medieval period, makes the point clearly that the focus of so much of the dissent in the twelfth century on particular issues is less because of some new resistance to Church authority as it is a resistance to innovative ideas that were being proposed by the Church:

> Hence the ecclesiological, antisacerdotal and antisacramental, focus of so much early twelfth century dissent: the new church buildings and their permanently

[96] Malcolm Lambert's *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2002) p.4.

> attached property, infant baptism, the eucharist, clerical status and authority, new controls over marriage (and virginity), original sin, saints and relics, prayers for and to the dead,- the entire papal, priestly, sacramental, and disciplinary apparatus that had arrived in the wake of ecclesiastical reform and been represented by the reformers as authentic tradition.[97]

The concern with "orthodoxy" is new and may be interpreted in a number of ways, more compelling perhaps as a result of the transformations within the Church and its own perception of its role in the world. From the middle of the twelfth century to the end of the thirteenth, we see a number of Church responses to the problem of religious authority it perceives in the region. These responses ranges from preaching missions from authority figures like Bernard of Clairvaux in 1143 and Diego of Osma in 1203, to conciliar rulings like the Lateran councils III & IV, to the military campaigns and finally the establishment of the first formal Inquisitorial courts. The information that we have about the "heretics" comes from the records of these activities, so it is appropriate to begin with their representations of the group.

Part I: Ancient Errors – Cathars, Albigenses and Manichaeans

In every region of Europe, dualist ideas, anticlerical rants, popular preaching and asceticism are recorded at one point or another, and the perpetrators are described as devil-worshipping, secretive, hedonistic[98], life-denying, infanticidal[99], redemption-forsaking, society-destroying liars and thieves. There is one document, despite the fact

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[97] Edward Peters, "Moore's eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: Travels in the Agro-Literate Polity" pp.11-33 in Frassetto, Michael (ed) *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages: Essays on the Work of R.I. Moore* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006) p.24.

[98] "They hold meetings in cellars and secret places, the sexes mingling freely. When candles have been lighted, in the sight of all, light women with bare buttocks offer themselves to a certain one lying behind them. Directly the candles are extinguished, they all cry out together "Chaos!" and each one lies with her who first comes to hand" from *"Manichaeans" near Soissons -1114* in Wakefield & Evans, p.103.

that it is written about heretics outside of Languedoc, that needs to be examined. This document is important to our study because it contains the first recorded use of the name "Cathar" to describe a group of heretics it makes explicitly the link between this group and the Manicheans, describes a number of the elements of religious belief and practice that become the foundation of identification of this group in Languedoc in the work of polemicists and the later historians influenced by them.

In 1163, more than forty years before the Albigensian Crusade, and sixty before the first Inquisitorial tribunal in established, Eckbert of Schonau wrote his *Sermon against the Cathars.*[100] To be clear, Eckbert is not writing about the Good Christians of Languedoc, he is writing about a local group. His description of the group in his sermons was influential and it served as the foundation of later writers' ideas about "Catharism", a huge movement that included the Good Christians of Languedoc.[101] The sermons were a defense of the Church from the popular anti-clericalism of the day and, in particular,

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[99] "The child who was born of this foul union was put to the test of the flames after the manner of the ancient pagans, and burned. The ashes were collected and kept with as much reverence as the Christian religion accords to the body of Christ, to be given as a last sacrament to the sick when they are about to depart this life. There was such power of diabolical evil in this ash that anyone who had succumbed to the heresy and tasted only a small quantity of it was afterwards scarcely ever able to direct his mind away from heresy and back towards the truth" from *Paul of St. Pere de Chartres: Heretics at Orleans, 1022* in Peters, p.69 .

[100] See "Eckbert of Schonau: sermon against the Cathars" pp.88- 93 in R.I. Moore's *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (Edward Arnold, London, 1975) for this translation of Eckbert's sermons..

[101] Claire Taylor in her *Heresy in Medieval France: Dualism in Aquitaine and the Agenais* (Royal Historical Society, Boydell Press, 2005) makes this dependence clear. Her work describes a large organized Cathar Church and she thinks Eckbert's assertion of there link to Manicheism is plausible: "This does not seem quite as implausible to me, as it did not to Borst. Eckbert had a good knowledge of the twelfth century sect and we rely on his account in many ways. It is not impossible that the heretics identified themselves in some way with the ancient sect just as their detractors did, misleadingly but with some cause, even though no actual line of descent seems likely. Certainly Eckbert's suggestion is more plausible than the suggestion by Alan of Lille that the term derived from an over-familiarity with cays."(171) She is referring to is Arno Borst, who wrote the influential *Die Katharer,* in 1953. A summary of Borst views on the Cathars, again a description of an organized dualist church, appears in his *Medieval Worlds: Barbarians, Heretics and Artists in the Middle Ages* (University of Chicago Press, 1992) in pages 92-100 he describes medieval heresy as "seismograph-like indications of the spirit of the various periods." and "psychic epidemics"(91).

made an effort to deal with the threat the author perceived toward the institutions of the Church. The sermons are sent to the Archbishop of Cologne, Rainhald, with a prefatory letter that outlines Eckbert's experience with the "heretics", and his rationale for composing the sermons, namely providing material for the refutation of the heresy for his fellow churchmen: "I have written this work to describe their errors; to note the scriptural authorities with which they support their errors and show how these authorities should be properly understood; to defend the parts of our faith which they attack. [...] They are very fluent, and always have their case against us ready to hand. It is shameful if educated people like us find ourselves dumb and speechless before them."[102] Eckbert claims to have debated with these "heretics" and listened closely to their beliefs, and to have learned from those who have left the group about it's true nature, and his first sermon gives his representation of the Cathars from his experiences and learning. Obviously, this is not an even-handed attempt to do justice to the religious beliefs and practices of the people Eckbert has met, from the beginning the sermons show the influence of a tradition of heresiology and religious polemic as old as the Church itself:

> According to St. Matthew, he said to his disciples, among other things, "Then if any man shall say to you, here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect."[103]

Warnings of deception, struggles for authority and suspicion are written into the very scriptural documents of Christianity. Eckbert's sermons are focused on outlining the difference between the apparent knowledge and discipline of the heretics, and the true nature of their errors and deceits.

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[102] R.I. Moore's *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (Edward Arnold, London, 1975) p.89.

[103] Moore, 1975, p.90.

> They are the hidden men, perverted and perverting, who have lain concealed through the ages. They have secretly corrupted the Christian faith of many foolish and simple men, so that they have multiplied in every land and the Church is now greatly endangered by the foul poison which flows against it on every side. Their message crawls like a crab, runs far and wide like infectious leprosy, infecting the limbs of Christ as it goes. Among us in Germany they are called *Cathars*, in Flanders *Piphles*, and in France *Tisserands*, because of their connection with weaving. As the Lord foretold, they say that Christ is in closets, for they claim the true faith of Christ and true worship of Christ are to be found only in their meetings, which they hold in cellars, in weavers huts, and such underground hideouts.[104]

This single paragraph contains many excellent examples of the types of uses to which the idea of secrecy is put in the conflict between religious groups. Eckbert's analogies to poison and disease represent an attempt to explain the spread of heresy through contagion. Written by an ecclesiastical figure, for an ecclesiastical audience, one of this text's tasks is to explain how it is possible that anyone, and in this case many people, could fail to see the obvious truth and authority of the Roman church. Poisonous ideas, an infection in the body of Christ, the "heresy" grows through contagious evil and invisibility. Eckbert is trying to show that the problem is not some actual competition to the Church's version of religious life, the problem is magical, its spreads like an infection, not through the people's deliberation or the virtues of the "heretics". The connection to the weavers is Eckbert's second layer of explanation of heresy's spread: It is carried from place to place by deceivers, mingling among the merchant class, using weaving as an alibi for their itinerancy. Eckbert also makes the important accusation that not only are Cathar beliefs false and secretive, but their practices and places of worship are also hidden, underground hideouts. With this representation, justification has been provided for a suspicion that will be attached to the idea of "the Cathars" up to the present day: that

[104] Moore, 1975, p.90.

regardless of what you may hear or see, their true beliefs are withheld, their true practices concealed. Leaving aside Eckbert's point by point refutation of the substance of this group's beliefs and social teachings,[105] Eckbert makes another central contribution to the representation of the Cathars that should be noted: He is the first to link his "Cathars" directly to the Manicheans, mobilizing all the strength and authority of Augustine's work on that group against what he sees as the medieval heir to Mani's errors:

> It should be known, and not kept from the ears of the common people, that this sect with which we are concerned undoubtedly owes its origin to the heresiarch Mani, whose teaching was poisonous and accursed, rooted in an evil people. They have added much to the teachings of their master which is not to be found among his heresies, and they are divided among themselves, for some of them assert what others deny [...] They are derived from certain disciples of Manichaeus, who were called Catharists. [...] Those who were called Catharists were thought more wicked than the others, because of certain secret obscenities which they practiced among themselves. Those about whom I am preaching these sermons undoubtedly follow their life and teachings. But I plan to explain why they were first called *Catharistae*, which means purified, elsewhere, in case the beginning of my book should become revolting if I recite all their depravities at once.
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> I have collected, and summarized briefly, what St. Augustine wrote about the Manichaens in three of his books, the *Contra Manicheos,* the *De moribus Manicheorum* and the *De haeresibus*. I shall bind this summary at the end of my book so that my readers can understand the heresy properly from the beginning, and see why it is the foulest of all heresies. They may find that some of the things which they say themselves smack of Manicheism, and that St. Augustine has discovered their secret thoughts.[106]

Eckbert's work is, explicitly, part of a tradition of studying and explaining heterodoxy in the Christian religion. Once the label "Cathar" is used, and linked historically with Mani and his followers, the beliefs and practices of the heretics are transformed from an incomprehensible failure of the catholicity of the Church, in the center of Christendom, to a re-occurence of an external threat that is by its nature stealthy

[105] Because, really, the details of the group itself are irrelevant compared to the strategies Eckbert provides to his audience for identifying Cathars even among the seemingly orthodox.

[106] Moore, 1975, pp.93-94.

and difficult to discern. What Eckbert did by making this "ancient error" argument was explain away the actual social and religious causes of the religious difference around him.

Eckbert himself noted that the people he was talking about were different from what he had found in Augustine's writings, that they had "added much to their master's teachings that is not found in his heresies" and that some of Mani's teachings have parallels in Christian thought and cosmology, that some of his readers may have recognized some of their own ideas in his "summary" of Augustine's representation of Manicheism. None of this suggested anything to him other than how dangerously powerful these erroneous beliefs were to those who don't have access to the tradition of heresiology in the Church.

The revelation of the hidden identity of the "heretics" in Schonau and the links between the "Cathars" and the heresies of the past is intended to be prophylactic. Eckbert's representation of the religious group he has encountered is balanced between the need to make clear the dangerous error of these individuals and the need to provide a method for dealing with the problem. His construction of the problem focuses on similarities he has noted between this group and a well-known group from the past that had already being dealt with by one of the Church's most authoritative figures. By constructing an image of his "Cathars" as medieval Manichaeans, he can both explain their presence and provide a solution to the problem. The notion of secrecy is critical to this construction, it explains the spread of the heresy, explains how it may remain undetected, and explains the lack of fit between the apparent nature of the group and its true (dangerous) identity. Eckbert's descriptions of their practices and beliefs are full of this type of language: "that is the reason they give in public. Privately they have an even

worse one [...]", "another of the things they say commonly, although secretly, is [...]" and, "they say that they alone make the body of Christ, at their own tables. These words are deceptive: they mean [...]"[107] Whatever the nature of the original statement, the "true hidden" meaning he provides is a more Manichean one. The people Eckbert described were making no effort at this point to appear particularly respectful of the Church's expectations of them, and they seemingly were willing to enter into conversation with people about the nature of their beliefs and practices, and the superiority of these to the Church's sacraments and the lifestyles of its clergy. Eckbert himself is the one who described them this way but he also points out the true poison behind the deceptive openness of the heretics, the devious use of scriptural authority and the falsity of the heretics' self-representation.

The records of Inquisitorial trials, from the middle of the next century, are full of references to "Manichaean" heresies in the region of Languedoc in the period we are interested in. The links made by Eckbert between the local heretics, a Cathar movement, and the ancient Manichaean religion get taken up by those whose job it is to root out heresy in the region and return Languedoc to its place in Christendom.[108] For our purposes, the best example of the lasting effect of Eckbert's effort to link heretics to "Manichaeans" is the section *De Manicheis Moderni Temporis* in Bernard Gui's *Practica Inquisitionis Heretice Pravitatis*, perhaps most famous Inquisitor's manual, from the fourteenth century. Combined with the list of heretical items is the list of questions to be asked of those appearing before the Inquisitor. What the Inquisitor is after are the social

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[107] Moore, 1975, p.91.

[108] See Rainier Sacconi quote in Chapter One, p. 14, regarding the falseness of all "Cathar" penance

relations of the "heretics"; whether the person has appeared before an Inquisitor before, whether any of their family have been charged with heresy, whether they have gone to listen to a "heretic" preach, given them support, asked for their blessing, etc... The Inquisitor is interested in interactions. On the secrecy and duplicity of "heresy", Bernard Gui is quite clear, and ends his summary account of their erroneous beliefs with this caveat: "But, if we look more closely, if we seek and discover the truth, we see that they maintain these things with duplicity and falsity, by their proper conception of them explained above, in such a way that they trick the simple and even the wise who are inexperienced with them."[109]

The nature and work of the Inquisitorial process will be addressed in later chapters, what is important to recognize in the representation of heresy by Inquisitors like Gui, is their inheritance from the twelfth century polemicists like Eckbert of Schonau. Eckbert's sermons attempted to draw attention to the problem of heresy and provide a response for people, creating a set of "things to look for" that prepared the inexperienced for what they should expect from "heretics". Gui's work is written at the end of a long career in Inquisitorial courts, in 1323, one hundred and sixty years after Eckbert's warning. What Gui did do was continue to prepare later Inquisitors for what they should expect, particularly when the "heretics" seem to be acting and speaking like normal Christians. Bernard Gui attempts to provide the key to decode the speech of those who appear before an Inquisitor, allowing them to see the "duplicity and falsity"in even the most benign personal beliefs of a cunning "heretic".

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[109] Bernard Gui, *Manuel de L'Inquisiteur,* French translation and edited by G. Mollat (Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion ,Paris, 1926) pp.14-17.

In the realm of representations of the heretics of Languedoc as the ancient enemies of the Church, documentary sources like Eckbert of Shonau's in the mid-twelfth century or Bernard Gui's *Practica* from the early fourteenth century, find sympathetic ears in the historians of religion that come later on. Even among those who condemn the Church's Inquisitorial process as completely morally indefensible, the stories of the Good Christians" origins and beliefs are accepted without much alteration, from Eckbert to scholars like Runciman in the twentieth century, the "medieval Manichee" becomes the key to interpreting the existence and spread of heresy in Languedoc in the twelfth century, and the Church's war and Inquisition in the thirteenth. This understanding of "Catharism", whether as a "Christianized form of Manicheism" or as a survival of "earlier gnostic forms of Christianity" influenced by Mani, depends on a lineage of groups to link the "Cathar Church" with the Manichaean religion. As Steven Runciman puts it in his *Medieval Manichee*, discussing some "pre-Cathar" heresies found in medieval Europe:

> The self-confessed doctrines of this community show them to have been in the great Gnostic tradition. During the next few decades there was apparently a certain spread of such doctrines through Italy, though its history is somewhat difficult to trace. Probably missionaries from the Balkans were definitely operating in and from Italy; and it is possible that the occasional pilgrims from the East came back imbued with heterodox opinions acquired in Bulgaria or in Constantinople [...] Pons' *Apostolics* with their hatred of material things, Clementius's disapproval of marriage, and still more Eudes with his paraphernalia of *eons* all to some extent deserve the epithet of Manichaean hurled at them. Somewhere they must have met with Manichaean-Gnostic lore.[110]

The identity and history of the Good Christians of Languedoc of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is represented as a part of a larger movement, geographically and historically. In the above quote, the third sentence addressed the link between the western

[110] Steven Runciman's *The Medieval Manichee* (Cambridge, 1960) pp.118-120.

"popular heresy" and the eastern "Manichean-Gnostic" lore of the Balkans. Notice the wording in that sentence: "Probably missionaries from the Balkans were definitely operating in and from Italy." Only the most tenuous speculation supports the movement from "probably" to "definitely" in Runciman's description of his medieval Manicheans. The rhetorical strategies of the polemicists of the twelfth century suggested the connection, but the scholarship of later years was required to flesh out the connections between the Manicheans and their offspring.

Earlier, I identified Eckbert's desire to identify the local resistance to Church authority to some larger, more threatening, historical movement with his desire to explain away the concerns at the heart of the resistance he saw. This entire project of linking particular "heretics" to the "Cathars" and then finding the "origins of Catharism"in the Balkans, or the ancient gnostic teachings wherever, depends on the notion that tracing the origins of a thing is tantamount to explaining that thing. For this system to work, a great reduction must take place, to isolate those few elements that are the hallmarks of the some theoretical "Manichaean heresy", and then follow those things, wherever they may go. In the case of the "Cathars", their ideas about the power of evil and the corruption of material creation became the links to previous heresies going back to "Mani", in Eckbert's writings. In Runciman's work the beliefs and practices of the "Cathars" can only be explained through missionary activities from the east. Not only are these links themselves tenuous and forced, and not only is the idea of a Manichean-Gnostic tradition incredibly problematic, the reduction of the entire religion of Manicheanism to simple cosmic dualism is wrong-headed, and in the end the entire structure explains precisely nothing about the power and attraction of the Good Christians in the social context of

twelfth and thirteenth century Languedoc. As Mark Gregory Pegg puts it in his *On Cathars, Albigenses, and good men of Languedoc*: "The heresy of the good men, for instance, becomes nothing more than a set of stable ideas (good God, bad God, benign spirit, evil matter) lodged in the heads of people – which, if those minds move, so too do those vacuum-sealed beliefs. The original heresy, no matter how many different societies rose and fell through the decades, no matter how great the geographical and cultural differences, stays recognizably the same."[111] This is not the type of definition of a group that is useful to a social constructionist analysis of religious conflict. The idea that beliefs and ideas travel about unaffected by social context or historical distance runs counter to the stance I adopt in this work, which is that religious identity, information about religion, and the social facts of religious lives are in constant interaction with one another. Theology is not the determining factor in religious identity from a sociological perspective.

This is why work like Carol Lansing's work on "Catharism" in Orvieto, Italy does not contribute much as a secondary source in this work. The quality of her historical and analytical skills are not in question. In her words, her argument is that:

> [...] the struggle over the Cathar faith was at the heart of a set of crucial and interrelated changes in thirteenth century Italian towns: the creation of independent civic authority and institutions in associating with the restructuring of Catholic orthodoxy and authority and the narrowing of gender roles. This set of changes marked the establishment of a political and institutional order with clear ideological underpinnings.[112]

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[111] Mark Gregory Pegg's "On Cathar, Albigenses, and good men of Languedoc" pp. 181-195 in the *Journal of Medieval History* V. 27 (2001) pp.183-185.

[112] p.5 in Carol Lansing's *Power & Purity: Cathar Heresy in Medieval Italy* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Works like Lansing's, while useful analyzes of religious conflict and discourse in medieval Italy, are not useful for understanding the use of secrecy in the conflict in medieval Languedoc. Her argument is explicitly focused on the changes in urban Italian life. She makes the identification of the heretics in her work with a larger Cathar movement whose defining characteristic is a degree of dualist belief,[113] but identifying that group with the Good Christians of Languedoc does not help explain the conflict in Languedoc. Lansing's work contains a vivid depiction of the urban situation in Orvieto in the medieval period, but it does not explain the Good Christians of Languedoc.

From a sociological point of view the question: "How did there come to be such a successful alternate vision of Christianity in medieval Languedoc?" is not answered by Runciman's geneaology. Even if you grant that there are shared core elements of practice or doctrine between Eckbert's "Cathars", the Bogomils, the Paulicians, Patarenes, Christian 'gnostics' and Manichaeans, and the "Cathars" of Italy, France, Germany, Languedoc, Spain, and other countries, you have yet to explain the local shape, persistence and spread of the religious ideas and practices in medieval Languedoc. For the Church, there are compelling reasons to make these connections. For them, there does seem to be some explanatory power, and some comfort, in the idea that "the new was always revealed in the old, that heresy had always lingered in the world, and that heretics were never isolated, never unconnected to each other, but always organized, always threatening."[114] There is no reliable way for the historian to determine the actual levels of

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[113] Her description of the "Cathar Community" begins on page 7 of her introduction. It's defining characteristic is its "dualism", she says that the major sources for their identities are the Inquisitions that repressed them (a situation similar to that of Languedoc) but that the "direct confessions and the testimony of witnesses do not survive".

[114] Pegg, 2001, p.184

threat or organization existing in heretical movements in the region at the time,[115] but this is less important than the perception of threat and belief in their organization which texts like Gui's help to promote and which justify the reaction against heresy by those in power. The rationale for the promotion of this image of "Catharism" among historians themselves is more difficult to imagine. It is only by stripping away the specifics of the historic and geographical contexts that we can meaningfully see the great Manichaean-Gnostic tradition that Runciman describes in what was quoted above.

Even as modern scholars arrive at new interpretations of the material, the meaning and explanation of the resistance of the Good Christians of Languedoc in historical narrative about "popular heresy" and "Catharism" has changed only slowly if at all. A good example of this is the issue of the connection between Catharism and Bogomilism, the foundation of the lineage issue, and a critical element of Cathar identity in most modern heresiology. Jeffrey Burton Russell is our starting point in the discussion, which he takes up in his section on Catharism in his 1965 *Dissent and Reform in the Early Middle Ages*:

> In the last decade, new perspectives have been gained. Pere Antoine Dondaine has succeeded in showing beyond a doubt that dualism was introduced into the Occident by Bogomil missionaries. This link in the chain is now firmly forged. But Pere Dondaine's missionaries arrived, not in 1000, but in the 1140's. Many historians had already discovered that there was a great difference between the

[115] My work does not explore the speculative organization of the "Cathar Church" that is based on the 17th century document regarding the Council of Saint-Felix (see p.94 below for my explanation of this). I do not consider it reliable. Scholars who are not suspicious of this document have access to a description of Cathar Bishoprics and dioceses that are highly organized. See p.177-179 in Claire Taylor's *Heresy in Medieval France: Dualism in Aquitaine and the Agenais*(Royal Historical Society, Boydell Press, 2005) for a thorough description of the latest thinking about the configuration of Cathar dioceses. Her own work is on Aquitaine and the Agenais and she can not lay claim to a diocese: "It has been noted how difficult it is to establish exact boundaries of jurisdiction for the Catholic bishoprics of Agen and Cahors in the Middle Ages. The task is even more difficult for the Cathar church." (177) This point is briefly made by Taylor but it is incredibly important given the way the "Cathar church" part is taken for granted if you have proceeded to discuss the borders of its dioceses.

> Catharism before the mid-twelfth century and that which flourished after that period, and Dondaine's discoveries confirmed their knowledge.[116]

Russell's statement that " there was great difference in the Catharism before the mid-twelfth century" glosses over the issue of identification, as the term is never used until our record of Eckbert's sermons in 1163. What is neglected is the possibility that the earlier groups were different because they were not "Cathars", that the story being told about "Catharism" is perhaps wrong. There is more uniformity after Eckbert and others work at defining and classifying the heresy, but can we be certain this was the work of missionaries who brought unifying teachings? Could the transformation in our record of the heresy of Languedoc be caused by the way growing belief in the representation of the group through the heresiologists' depiction? Russell reports the consensus response to Dondaine's 'discovery' of the link between Bogomilism and Catharism[117] at a date later than one would expect: "The 'Catharists' of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries were less exotic dualists then Reformists whose puritanism led them to exaggerate those elements of dualism inherent in Christianity itself."[118] Russell avoids questioning the larger structure of the image of the "Cathar Church." His idea that the earlier record could be explained by local religiosity, that is later influenced by an external ordering force, ie. Bogomil missionaries, could be taken further. Russell suggests that the early twelfth century "Catharists" are just reformers whose concerns for purity lead them to exaggerate the dualism in Christianity itself, and it isn't until they encounter an external ordering force, from the Balkans, that they become more unified.

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[116] Russell, 1965, p.192

[117] See Antoine Dondaine, "Nouvelles sources de l'histoire doctrinale du neomanichiesme au moyen age", Revue des sciences philosophiques et theologiques, XXVIII (1939), 465-488.

[118] Russell, 1965, p.192

Before Dondaine's 'discovery', the origins of the "Catharist" heresies depended on the influence of the Bogomils to explain their beliefs and practices. New evidence has caused him to re-interpret how these groups might have taken on these elements before the contact Dondaine describes. This process of re-interpretation can be taken further, once we ask why we need to see "Catharism" the way Eckbert describes it, why it needs to be so structured, so ancient. So what is the new evidence that is discovered? What evidence is there, really, of contact between the "Cathars" and the Bogomils which would transform the "Cathar church" into something more recognizably tied to the "Manichaean/Gnostic tradition"? The story modern historians of Catharism tell is that, in the mid twelfth century, there was more and more contact between heretics from the Balkans and those in Languedoc, culminating in a heretical council in 1167 (four years after Eckbert of Schonau's sermons in Germany), the Cathar Council of Saint-Felix.[119] Mark Gregory Pegg relates the story and the problems with it in his article *On Cathars, Albigenses, and good men of Languedoc*:

> "The Cathar council of St. Felix reconsidered" is generally assumed to have proven the historical validity of Besse's appendix. Now because so much about this document resembles a story by Jorge Luis Borges, and because one needs to already believe the connections between the Cathars and the Bogomils to see the evidence within the text (even though the text itself is the foundational proof underlying this belief about Catharism and Bogomilism), it is more prudent, for the present, to remain unconvinced about its historical veracity.[120]

Abandoning the story of the "Bogomil/Cathar council" would mean recognizing the power of the heresiological narrative, both in the field when the original examinations took place, and in the historiography of European religious conflict. Without the

[119] See Hamilton's appendix to R.I. Moore's *The Origins of European Dissent* (London: Penguin, 1977) for the whole story of the Council document.

[120] See footnote 14 on p.187 in Pegg, 2001. The article he references is Bernard Hamilton's "The Cathar council of St. Felix reconsidered", *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum*, 48 (1978) 23-53.

influence of the Bogomils, the entire basis of the vision of a "Cathar Church" organized and threatening, begins to fall apart.

Many scholars retain the idea of a large, organized transnational Cathar church, and although this work does not pursue this description, we must recognize that many respected historians see "Catharism" as a real thing that spread through Europe as an organized counter-church. An excellent example of this form of scholarship is the work of Malcolm Lambert, particularly in his *The Cathars* (1998). The image this type of work provides of the Good Christians of Languedoc is that they were a part of a international counter-church movement in Europe, created by influence from Bogomil missionaries, particularly the figure of Nicetas who organises the Saint-Felix council in 1175, and assigned bishoprics to various people there. The defining characteristic of this group or organization is its belief that the material world is the creation of the devil, and that material things are bad: "Doctrinal unity held firm; a form of radical dualism, Albigensian 'two-principle' doctrine, broadly prevailed."[121] The main difference in this representation of the Good Christians of Languedoc from the depiction favored by this work is the account of the twelfth-century origins of the problem. In this account there is an organization or religious institution that arrives in Languedoc and spreads through the land by missionary work,[122] acquires adherents until it is noticed by the Church which mobilizes against it and eventually eradicates it. Unlike the depiction of the Good Christians in my work, works like Lambert's limit the involvement of the Church in the construction of the problem.

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[121] Malcolm Lambert *The Cathars* (Blackwell, 1998) p. 58

[122] See pp. 60-91 Lambert, 1998.

We have already seen how and why Eckbert of Schonau characterizes the heretics he comes into contact with the way he does, and how the Manual of Inquisitors instructs its reader to look beneath the words of confession to find the "truth" of the "Manicheans". All of the tools for constructing and maintaining an ordered external threat to Church power are present in the discourse of the Church authorities in Languedoc at the time of the debates with heretics in the twelfth century, the justification for crusade at the beginning of the thirteenth and the establishment of the Inquisition twenty years after that. The change Russell is looking to explain is not in the heretics' themselves being influenced by missionaries, but in the impact of the strategies of polemicists like Eckbert of Schonau on the way the problem of heresy is addressed. The problem of "heresy" in Languedoc can be explained by the local situation and the impact of local religious authorities, like Eckbert or Bernard Gui, shaping the preconceptions of those out examining the populace for heresy. If the Good Christians acquired some popularity in Languedoc, if the authority of the Church was contested, these facts cannot be explained by focusing on the lineage of ideas or the connections to ancient heresy, when there are real religious differences being expressed.

Part II: Enemies of saints

If the "heresy" of Languedoc was not an organized counter-church movement that originated in the east and drew inspiration and charismatic force from some hidden "Gnostic/Manichaean" tradition, then what was it? A useful alternate representation of "the heresy of Languedoc" was presented in the hagiographical material surrounding a central figure in the conflict in Languedoc. St. Dominic's life and legacy transform the

Church's available strategies in their battle for religious authority in the region. The shape of his commitment, and the order he founds will be two enormous factors in the eventual eradication of "heresy" in the region. In the stories told about him, the "heretics" do not appear as the ancient Manichean threat, or as demonic servants of social and spiritual corruption. Instead they appear as the proving ground for Dominic's faith, the challenge which he consistently overcomes. What we are given in this next set of documents, the story of the life of St. Dominic, is not a more reliable witness (one can hardly imagine a less reliable one). Instead, what we are shown is a representation of heresy as the stubborn resistance of an entire people, of groups of heretics, and all their local supporters choosing to remain blind to the truth of Dominic's witness. Within this classic representation of heresy as stubborn blindness, an image developed of a land and a people who have turned away from the Church. The heresy was never named, its doctrine or practices go largely unmentioned. It was their resistance to the truth that is important.

In the early thirteenth century, we have a particularly important record of representations of "the heretics of Languedoc" in the record of the struggle against heresy turned into hagiography. St. Dominic and the order he established provide the Church with the key to deal with the "problem of heresy" in Languedoc. The Good Christians of Languedoc take on a new shape when they appear in the story of Dominic, as the opponents of the saint. Unlike the "Cathars" in the reports of Eckbert of Schonau in the mid-twelfth century, the "heretics" in the story of Dominic exist purely as foils against which the purity, wisdom and strength of the orthodox preachers can be displayed. The beliefs and practices of the heresy are not described, the heresy is not named. The

religious difference in Languedoc is the opportunity for both Dominic and God to demonstrate the truth of the Catholic faith.

The story begins with a strategic manipulation of the expectations of the local populace. This is not understood as deception, but rather wisdom and bravery, however the reader cannot fail to see the parallels that exist between what the "heretics" of the story are accused of doing, and the strategy adopted by the Church's preachers. Diego of Osma, is the bishop in charge of the delegation sent to Languedoc in the early thirteenth century to preach against "heresy". Dominic is a part of that delegation. Diego is the one credited in the story with discerning the best strategy for the region, the strategy Dominic pursued. In a discussion of the best method of fulfilling the mission of preaching and conversion set before the twelve Cistercians, Diego provides this analysis:

> Look at the heretics! While they make a pretense at piety, while they give counterfeit examples of evangelical poverty and austerity, they win the simple people to their ways. Therefore, if you come with less poverty and austerity, you will hardly give edification, you will cause much harm, and you will fail utterly in your objective. Match steel with steel, rout false holiness with the true religion, because the arrogance of these false apostles must be overthrown by genuine humility. Was this not the way whereby Paul became unwise, namely by enumerating his true virtues and recounting his austerities and dangers, in order to burst the bubble of those who boasted about the merits of their holy lives?' So they asked him, "What is your advice, then, good Father?" and he answered, ' Do what I am about to do.' and the spirit of the Lord entering into him, he called the men he had with him and sent them and his carriages and furnishings back to Osma.[123]

Diego leads the preachers into Languedoc in imitation of the "heretics" they are there to oppose. He, wisely, sees that the expectations of the people around the idea of an apostolic life will affect the reception of the words of the representatives of the Church. What is important here is that the narrative's description of the need for wandering

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[123] Francis Lehner's *Saint Dominic Biographical Documents* (Thomist Press, Washington D.C., 1964) pp. 15-16.

preachers who are obedient to the Church and who yet meet the local populations understanding of the idea of apostolic living. This is a critical change in the Church's understanding of the strategic situation in Languedoc. Although character of Diego in the narrative describes the local populace as "simple people" who are more likely to be convinced by example, than words alone, what the narrative accidentally describes is a strategic demonstration of the "truth of the Catholic faith" geared to the norms of the local populace. Through imitation of the "heretics", the main characters hope to remove the obstacle of appearances, so their message can reach the simple.

The character of Dominic, following Diego's strategy, is depicted wandering Languedoc preaching and entering into disputations with heretics. Dominic goes beyond appearances, fulfilling the idea of apostolic poverty and humility in a variety of miraculous ways. The false piety of the "heretics" is not mentioned again in the story of Dominic's work in Languedoc, they appear only in order to oppose him. One example of an encounter with "heretics" will suffice to highlight the important elements of the role they play in the hagiography of the founder of the Dominican order:

> At the time a miracle which we deem worthy of insertion here took place. one day, some of [these] religious men, our preachers, were disputing against the heretics. One of ours by the name of Dominic, a man of complete holiness who was a companion of the bishop of Osma, reduced to writing the authorities he had used in a debate [and] gave the manuscript to a certain heretic to study before giving his reply. That night, as the heretics sat by the fire in the house where they had assembled, the one to whom the man of God had given the manuscript produced it and [showed it to] his companions [who] suggested that it be thrown into the fire. If the manuscript caught on fire , the faith (or perfidy) of the heretics would be true; if it remained intact, they would admit that the faith which our men were preaching is good. What then? They all agreed and the manuscript was cast into the fire, but, although it remained in the midst of the flames for some time, it leaped from the fire without being burned at all. They were astounded. But one of them, more hardened than the rest, said "Throw it back into the fire, so that we can make a fuller test of the truth." So it was thrown again into the fire and once

> more it came back unharmed. When the man who was calloused and slow to believe saw this, he said, "Throw it back a third time and then we shall have no doubts about the outcome of the affair." For a third time it was cast into the fire and for a third time it escaped burning and came back whole and unscorched. But in spite of so many manifest signs, the heretics even then refused to be converted to the faith, but, remaining fixed in their hardness, they pledged themselves in the strictest manner to keep the miracle from coming to the knowledge of our men. But a certain knight who was there [and] who was slightly inclined to hold our faith refused to cover up what he had seen and made it known to many persons.[124]

The "heretics" who appear in the accounts of Dominic's life are deceptive and secretive. Their appearance of religion hides depravity and maliciousness. The story of the burning book gives us an interesting insight into the representation of Languedoc's heretics. Dominic's manuscript is a symbol of the transparency of the true teachings, he provides it to his opponents to give them a chance to formulate a reply. The story does not describe what he had written, the nature of his arguments are not important. His words are tested in fire. Divine intervention provides the judgment on who has the real religion between the two groups. The symbolic indestructibility of Dominic's work is clearly important, but there are other interesting elements to the story.

Trials by ordeal were vivid demonstrations of divine will, when used in storytelling. The truth that the "heretics" attempt to destroy is redeemed from the flames by the power of God. The fundamental worldview behind the idea of ordeal, or any kind of revelatory miracle, is the continued participation of God in the unfolding of history, through human agents or direct intervention. The stories of the miraculous that surround this period and the later stories of the crusade reflect a providential understanding of the world that seeks to justify results by God's tacit assent. There is, in short, a hidden

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[124] Francis Lehner's *Saint Dominic Biographical Documents* (Thomist Press, Washington D.C., 1964) pp 21-22. The *Historia Albigensis*, written during the Albigensian Crusade, describes some of the work of Dominic and other preachers, the Dominicans are not founded until 1215 at the fourth Lateran Council, and the Crusade begins before that.

ordering of events, a plan that creation adheres to, and in which the divine will is made manifest. Beyond the intervention of the supernatural, and the meaning of Dominic's non-flammable works, there is the reaction of the heretics themselves to consider.

The heretical characters in the story claim that they are willing to accept the results of the test but, in fact, they resist the truth in the end. When Dominic's words reveal themselves to resist the fire, the heretics decide to cover up the miracle, knowing that they have been proven wrong. These people are not ignorant of the nature of their error. Their guilt is far greater than someone who has never been told the truth. They go beyond error into willful obfuscation of the truth, and the only way that that truth comes to light is the work of an informer, a knight with some slight inclination "to hold our faith". This can be read as a prefiguring dramatization of the Inquisitorial process that will hold Languedoc in its grip for the next century or so: In the face of the truth of the teachings of the Church, "heretics" make a show of operating in good faith, when in reality they are opposed to the truth and try to cover it up, the only way they can be uncovered is for people of good faith to report whatever they know to the authorities.

The narrative of Diego's words and the account of Dominic's mission, taken together, form a classic representation of heretics: deceptive, manipulative, secretive, obstinate, callous. In the story of Dominic they, of course, serve as a foil for the image of the true exemplar of the religious life. Dominic is a transparent, generous, genuinely holy figure. The land of heresy is the arena in which the saintly figure can bear witness to the true faith and face all the challenges required to prove their mettle. Although we cannot use hagiography as historical fact about the nature or activities of the "heretics", we can use it to see how the idea of heretical secrecy was useful in the construction of a saint's

life. Without the clarity and truth of an exemplary Christian, who attracts the sympathy of local people, the secretiveness and hidden motives of the "heretics" would never be known. The opposite is also true, this representation of the heresy in Languedoc both highlights the strength and purity of Dominic, and also justifies the methods used by the Church in its campaign for dominance in the region.

Before continuing on to the final major representation of heresy in the region, let us return to Diego of Osma's strategic decision to have the members of his delegation emulate the heretics and their appearance and habits. Although the hagiographical material makes it clear that the "heretics" only have the appearance of religiosity, it doesn't deny that they have that appearance. The truth behind the example is a matter of speculation. Leaving aside this speculation for the moment, there appears to be a depiction in both of the above sources, though it is not central, of a group of people wandering, preaching and debating, without possessions or interest in material gain,whose example is so compelling that large numbers of people have begun to recognize them as legitimate religious figures. The heretical figures in the story of Dominic's sainthood are characterized by their adherence to a particular lifestyle, their deceit, and their resistance to the Church.

Part III: a "Good Man" is hard to find

In 1165, approximately two years after Eckbert of Schonau's writings, there is a record of a debate in Languedoc between Catholics and "heretics" in the city of Lombers. These heretics are said to choose to be called "Good Men."[125] The heretics are described

[125] see "A Debate between Catholics and Heretics" translated by Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1969) p.190.

as secretive and duplicitous in their speech, and the bias of the work is clearly toward the institutional authority of the bishops. The label "Cathar" does not make an appearance, in the twelfth century so close to the city of Albi. The bishop's questions are general and address issues of anticlericalism and scriptural authority, but there is little in the Good Christians answers to suggest that this group displays the hallmarks of the "Cathar/Manichaean" tradition Eckbert of Schonau so clearly describes in his sermons two years earlier. Although they resist describing their beliefs in detail, the account ends with them offering a fairly orthodox profession of faith.[126] This account is interesting beyond its failure to reflect Eckbert's teaching about his "Cathars" in Cologne. It describes an interesting relationship between the clergy, the nobility, and the local populace at the end of the twelfth century. At this point, before the Albigensian crusade, before the Inquisitorial trials, the local ecclesiastical authorities gather people together themselves, and seem to be engaged in creating a demonstration of the "problem of heresy". Although the "debate" between ecclesiastical authority and Good Christians can be read a number of ways, it is definitely not the same model as the interactions that occur later during the Albigensian crusade (1209-1229) or post-crusade periods in Languedoc, since the Church lacks the support of the rulers. This record makes clear the problem of disobedient and heterodox lay people that was recognized by the Church and made apparent to the local nobility. We are not told what the results of the meeting are, all we are told is who was there and what they heard. Later on, these very same noble families, the counts of Toulouse, the Trencavels, in particular, will be consistently accused of being aware of the heresy in their lands and of doing nothing to address the

[126] This is before the fourth Lateran Council and the notion of a clear "orthodoxy" is still very problematic. This is why I describe the profession of faith as "fairly orthodox".

issue, records like this one from Lombers in 1165 are evidence of their awareness at the very least. The presence of people accused of heresy in Languedoc is no secret.

We have, so far, brought into question the representation of the Good Christians of Languedoc as an organized, transnational counter-church, threatening to replace and destroy the Church of Rome by feigning piety while secretly spreading lies and sin through the land. This representation of the Good Christians can be seen to serve a particular purpose for the authors of the stories, but the stories themselves do not serve as evidence about the religiosity of the people of Languedoc in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This section of the work will provide the beginning of a minimal description of the Good Christians grounded in the evidence available that does not speculate on potential secret teachings or practices or connections to ancient heresy. This begins with words of warning from Pegg's *On Cathars, Albigenses, and good men of Languedoc:*

> one must never approach inquisition documents from Languedoc with the *cathari* in hand, No person, whether mendicant inquisitor or the men, women, and chil dren they questioned, ever used the noun 'Cathar' to describe heretics in, for in stance, the Toulousain, the Lauragais, or in the *pays de* Foix. Instead it was al ways, with no exceptions, *boni homines, bone femine, bons omes, bonas femnas,* good men and good women; while the good men and good women themselves frequently referred to each other as 'the friends of God'.[127]

Attempting to approach the material positing only what is necessary, reflecting only what is positively said about the "heretics" in the record, means avoiding speculation on the "true nature" of the heretics beliefs and practices, levels of organization, etc... This means that what I am prepared to think of as "general assumptions about the nature of the heresy in Languedoc" will be tentative and more cautious than the average work on "the truth about the Cathars". Pegg's concern with the

[127] Pegg, 2001, pp.191-192.

Inquisitorial record has been the guide for this work, not only because it represents the most suspicious stance among historians of this movement, but also because it allows us to maintain the integrity of our object of study. This cautious approach is the one most focused on what we know, what is hidden and what is lost.

The sources we have for reconstructing a minimum description of the Good Christians' beliefs and practices are the records of the Inquisitorial trials , and three written documents that we are relatively certain are not forgeries; the Book of the Two Principles, the Lyon Ritual and its Provençal text of the New Testament.[128] The Book of the Two Principles is not a product of the Good Christians of Languedoc, but rather of "heretics" in Italy, and none of these documents date before the mid thirteenth century, well into the post-crusade, Inquisitorial period. This is thin gruel out of which to construct a representation of the heretics of Languedoc, but there are a number of elements we can endorse, tentatively, regarding their presentation of their beliefs, their practices and their organization from all these sources taken together. We can say some things about the Good Men and Women of Languedoc and their religion.

The Good Men were Christians who saw their religion as a separate thing from the teachings and authority of the Roman Church, grounded in scriptural documents and the theological speculation available to them in the local discourse community. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the standard text used for exegetical work, the *Glossa ordinaria*, contained explanations of common heretical views as well as the orthodox interpretations of such, and it is not unlikely that a reasonably educated person would be

[128] see Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1969) pp.465-630 for translations of these documents.

familiar with that text.[129] As Karen Sullivan describes in her discussion of testimonial evidence, from the early fourteenth century, on the nature of the "Good religion":

> Throughout these records, believers refer to *Be*, or "the Good", a word left in Oc citan in the Latin transcripts apparently out of the notaries' own recognition of its slipperiness. [...] For these villagers, *Be* appears ultimately to be the divine pres ence which descends into the heretics at the moment of their heretication and radi ates out from them, in a series of concentric circles, to encompass the believers who lives in their midst and the witnesses who participate in their ceremonies.[130]

The description of "religious reformers with an exaggerated puritanism" given earlier by Russell is sufficient to explain the existence of the Good Men.

The appeal of a vision of the apostolic life, of a life of poverty and preaching of the "Good Word", can be seen in the foundation and growth of both orders of mendicant preachers in the same region, in the same time period. The Franciscans and the Dominicans are are founded to operate as orthodox versions of the popular heresies they combat.[131]

The records of Inquisitorial trials mark many occasions where adherents are seen to make signs of respect to a heretic to receive his blessing (*melioramentum*) and to be especially concerned with the heretics' presence at a loved one's deathbed (*endura*). These seem to be the greatest times of recognition, were the Church authorities can pin down heretical acts definitively (a far simpler task than pinning down the heretical ideas

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[129] see Sara Hamilton "The Virgin Mary in Cathar Thought" pp.24- 49 in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* Vol. 56, No. 1, (January 2005), pp.40-41.

[130] Karen Sullivan's *Truth and the Heretic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) p.34.

[131] See Malcolm Lambert's analysis of the role of the mendicant orders in his *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Wiley-Backwell, 2002). Of particular interest is his analysis of the late twelfth/ early thirteenth century pontificate of Innocent III, during which both mendicant orders are founded. Lambert sees Innocent's approval of the order as having two core effects: they "provided trained personnel to preach against heresy and to pursue its recalcitrant adherents" and "diminished the dangers in the movement of wandering preaching in poverty by welcoming this form of apostolic life under safeguards within the Church", pp. 91-92.

someone might have). It may be that the most concrete sites of interaction represented the most important thing about the "heresy" to the Inquisitors. Documents written by the Good Christians are too few to draw generalizations from.

The one document that we do have that describes the Good Christians' heretical practices,[132] the Lyons Ritual, is a very interesting example of what the Church records refer to as the *consolamentum,* the ritual used to create a Good Man or Woman, or to mark their transition into the religious life. It is interesting because it is clearly a heretical rite, outside the bounds of the Church, which competes with three of the sacraments of the Church (Baptism, Ordination, Extreme Unction),[133] but its heretical content is minimal. It is a heretical act, clearly, I don't think you could more clearly reject the rites of the Church than by coming up with your own. but scholars have difficulty interpreting the lack of explicitly "Cathar beliefs" in the Good Christians' only extant ritual. The modern historian, Steven Runciman, in his influential *Medieval Manichee* provides the best example:

> But the ritual of the Consolamentum provides strangely little evidence about Cathar beliefs. The candidate for admission had been prepared by the asceticism of the Abstinentia, a course demanding a renunciation of matter stricter than even the most extreme orthodox orders suggested. But the ceremony itself was conducted in words and actions that almost all might have been written by Catholics for Catholics. Almost the only formula that would at once strike a Catholic as strange was the substitution in the Lord's Prayer of 'supersubstantial bread' for 'daily bread.[134]

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[132] The other two, the Book of the Two Principles and the Provençal New Testament, do not discuss specific rituals. The Book of the Two principles discusses cosmological disputes among two groups of "heretics", and the Provençal translation of the New Testament contains an interesting gloss on the Lord's Prayer, but no description of ritual.

[133] Baptism, in that it marks entry into the community of the religious, Ordination, in that it conveys the authority to preach and perform rites, and Extreme Unction, in that it is frequently administered to the dying so that they may pass away in a purified, meritorious state.

[134] Runciman, 1960, p.154 .

He goes on to describe the ritual over several pages, noting elements he thinks might point to the beliefs we'd expect from Cathars. The expectations of modern scholars, like Runciman, about the nature of "Catharism" lead them to suspect hidden meanings in the evidence we have that was produced by the Good Christians themselves. This is so important to us because the text of the Lyons Ritual is obviously different, but it needs to contain hidden meaning if it is to be heretical in the right way. Scholars committed to the "Cathar" story use the idea of secrecy to explain why the text falls short of what you would expect from Cathars. The representation of the Good Christians that I favor, the minimal description of them as representative of a local religiosity grounded in the scriptures and the popular ideals of poverty and mendicant preaching, would actually not predict that there would be any obvious Manicheanism in the text of the Lyons Ritual, not because of secrecy, but because the Good Men and Women would reflect local religious ideas including plenty of "words and actions that almost all might have been written by Catholics for Catholics."

Leaving aside the accusation of secrecy for the moment, and taking the words recorded by the Church's Inquisitorial trials and the few documents produced by the Good Christians themselves at face value, what we have is an image of a group of people who use biblical authority to support the veracity of an ascetic lifestyle of wandering preaching of the gospels in the local tongue, and whose only known rituals (the blessing of bread, baptism of the spirit, etc...) have clear biblical exemplars. The beliefs they preach mingle with criticism of the corruption of Rome, and reject the effectiveness of the religious practices of the Roman Church.

I have drawn a picture of a small local group, whose speech and practices are described in polemic, in works of history, and in the hagiography of their opponents. The group is uniformly presented as secretive because it fails to meet the expectations of those examining it. What the next chapters will show, by focusing in on particular historical points, is the way these representation affect the group. The situation changes drastically from the middle of the twelfth century to the end of the thirteenth. This image of the Good Christians of Languedoc as a small group engaged in disputations, preaching, and local theological speculation does not remain constant over the long period of persecution from the Church. The strategies adopted by the Church to deal with the reality of religious difference in the region of Languedoc transforms the individuals who self-identified as Good Christians. As the chapters that follow will show, the power of the Church and its military allies, applied on the region of Languedoc redefines the local situation in a way that is impossible to ignore. If we take as our initial image a group of Good Men debating with the Bishop of Albi in Lombers in 1165, accusing the bishop of heresy and walking free to return to their homes, and contrast that with the new reality of the Albigensian crusade and then the Inquisitorial courts, we will see how the Church's suspicions about the "heretics"are eventually confirmed. As Eckbert describes them in the mid twelfth, the Good Christians are, by the end of thirteenth century, "hidden men" "secretly corrupt[ing] the Christian faith of many foolish and simple men", "claim[ing] the true faith of Christ and true worship of Christ are to be found only in their meetings, which they hold in cellars, in weavers huts, and such underground hideouts".

CHAPTER FOUR: DEVELOPMENT OF INQUISITION

This chapter will examine the development of the Church's Inquisitorial process from the perspective of the struggle against religious difference in Languedoc in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. This period, containing both the earliest evidence of the trouble in Languedoc, and the record of the Albigensian crusade in the region, forms the backdrop against which the later Inquisitions play out their stories of dangerous heresy, noble responsibility, and the ordered Christian society. The stories of this period are symbols of the mentality and worldview that will bring the persecution of the Good Christians of Languedoc into reality.

The Church's Inquisitorial trials in medieval Southern France relied on the participation of the local authorities, as well as the goodwill of local clergy and the general populace to deal with the "problem of heresy". The process of inquisition applies to both individual "heretics" and, more abstractly, to the "Land of Heresy" itself. As the twelfth century moves on, growing in both the chronicles of encounters with religious difference and in official documents of the Church is the idea of "heretical lands", of entire villages, towns, of the entire region of Languedoc as devoted to heresy, to disobedience. Beginning with both a theory and a method for dealing with individual "heretics", we see the development of a social program that reflects the scale of the problem; the development of methods for the trial, penance, and reconciliation of an entire land. John Arnold, in his *Inquisition and Power* describes the development of a "'mature' Inquisition" by the end of the thirteenth century, having four distinguishing features: it was conducted *ex officio*; it sought heresy out; it recorded and collated

information; and people from all social level were interrogated.[135] This work contends that the Church's Inquisitorial courts are the community-level enactment of this regional social program, whose task is to demonstrate, village by village, the reality of the orthodox claim of religious authority over all of Christendom.

Part I: Twelfth Century: Local 'inquisitio' and the Agents of the Papacy

The twelfth century marks the beginning of the recognition by the Church of the religious difference in Languedoc, and the initial attempts to deal with it. The preceding chapter has already dealt with some of the initial reports that form the basis of the identification of the "heretics" of Languedoc in the eyes of the Church. General accounts of the existence and proliferation of heresy in the region can be traced further back. The attempts by local religious authorities to deal with the existence of heresy in their own dioceses constitute our first stage of Church reaction to the "problem of heresy".

Although this set of records begins a century before the formal institution of the first Inquisitorial tribunal in Languedoc,[136] the stories we have of these encounters with religious difference in the region reflect the development of not only a method of confronting "heretics", but a movement of religious authorities in the region seeking support from external authorities. The direct involvement of agents of the papacy in the religious affairs of a region can occurs later because of the history of precedents such as these.

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[135] John Arnold *Inquisition and Power* (Phildelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001) p.31.

[136] Our first story discusses the heretics of Orleans and dates from 1022, St. Bernard's mission to Languedoc occurs in 1144-45, etc... the Inquisition is not founded until 1233 in Toulouse, after the treaty that ends the Crusade against the Albigensians.

The Church's Inquisitorial method was created in Languedoc, in the struggle with the Good Men and Women of the region. The documents of encounters between "heretics" and the "orthodox"[137] from the twelfth century form the historical record used later in the thirteenth by the Church to shape its message about religious difference. The power and importance of the textual record at the time is a reflection of the growing power and importance of the scribe in Church culture, specifically, and European culture, generally.[138] The importance of the scribe in the culture of the institution, reflected a larger bureaucratization of the Church and centralization of authority of which the Inquisitorial process is just an element, though a dramatic one. Moore's theory of the bureaucratization of the Church contends:

> To the *literati* the displacement of ordeal by inquest, the centralization and systematization of the process of canonization and of the acknowledgment of miracles and the power to perform them, together with the reform of the church, the growth of both canon and civil law in theory and practice and many other triumphs of their age and culture, represented the victory of reason over superstition and of truth over custom. Historians have generally been content to accept such judgments at their own valuation, perhaps adding another victory, of centralization over particularism, to the list.[139]

The record of local individuals seeking help from external powers reflects what will be the shape of the Inquisition as the friar-Inquisitors represent the papacy directly in the villages and towns of Languedoc. The importance of this idea of a movement of increasing centralization, systematization, bureaucratization finds its expression, in this

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[137] This term denotes the self-identification of those within the Church hierarchy as setting the standard of proper religiosity, as far as they are concerned. I don't mean to imply that a rigid structure of proper beliefs and practices had been clearly outlined as the one true orthodoxy by the institution and imposed on all Christians. As can be seen in Papal Bulls and Council documents of the time, the definition of "orthodoxy" is ongoing, and the Church's authority is not uncontested. This work is, of course, about just such a contest.

[138] See pages 59-60 in Chapter two for the discussion of the spread of scribal education in the region of Languedoc itself or the original source for my discussion of it: John Mundy's "Village, Town and City in the Region of Toulouse" in Raftis, J.A. (ed) *Pathways to Medieval Peasants* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies: Toronto, 1981) pp.141-190.

[139] R.I. Moore's *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (London: Wiley- Blackwell, 2007) p.138.

chapter, in the struggle against "popular heresy", as a movement from local reports of local responses to the development of a Church-wide institutionalized process of dealing with religious difference wherever it appears. This movement takes many decades but it begins with the first reports of widespread religious difference in Orleans.

The first recorded evidence of the "popular heresy" of the period occurs in 1022 in Orleans. The document I'd like to focus on is the record of Paul of Chartres, telling the story of a nobleman, Arefast, and his dealings with the "heretics of Orleans".[140] The story begins with the infection of a household cleric, Heribert, with heretical ideas after a period of study in Orleans. The cleric then attempts to convert his master, Arefast, to his new way of thinking. Arefast's reaction is important:

> His master, lending him a intelligent ear, perceived by the man's words that he had strayed from the path of righteousness. He quickly informed Duke Richard of the situation, asked that the latter disclose to King Robert by letter the pest then lurking in his kingdom, before it could spread, and requested that the king not refuse needful aid to this same Arefast in driving it out.[141]

When Arefast is traveling to Orleans he pauses in Chartres to seek advice from the sacristan of the Church on how to proceed with dealing with these heretics and receives this advice:

> [...] to go piously to church every day, the first thing in the morning, to seek the aid of the Almighty, to devote himself to prayer, and to fortify himself with the most Holy Communion of the body and blood of Christ. Then, protected by the sign of the Holy Cross, he should confidently proceed to listen to the heretical depravity. He should contradict nothing that he would hear from them but, in his assumed role of a disciple, should silently store up all things in his breast.[142]

The Arefast character's infiltration of the group is supported by the secular authorities above him, and his deceptive, secretive methods mandated by a representative

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[140] "Heresy at Orleans" translated in Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1969) pp. 76-81.

[141] Ibid., p.76.

[142] Ibid., p.77.

of the Church. After Arefast has infiltrated the group, the king and queen arrive in Orleans with a "company of bishops" and the entire heretical group is arrested and brought before them. Arefast acts as a plant in the group of accused and, when the "heretics" attempt to weasel out of the accusations against them, turns on his former teachers: "I thought to have in you masters of truth, not of error, when you consistently preached to me that teaching as health-giving. I witnessed your instruction, and you promised me that you would never deny it to avoid punishment, not even in the peril of death."[143] Although he is himself a turncoat and secretly aligned with their opponents, Paul of Chartre's Arefast character is depicted as the loyal servant to the King and Church, pointing out the deceptiveness of the "heretics".

Arefast goes on, playing the betrayed disciple, to list all the heretics' false teachings which the bishops then condemn. The heretics, with the truth revealed, suddenly refuse to deny their faith and accept death rather than renouncing it:

> After all had striven in manifold ways from the first hour to the ninth hour of the day to recall them from their error and they, harder than iron, paid not the least attention, they were ordered each to be garbed in the sacred dress of his order; and forthwith each was deposed from his particular office by the bishops. At the king's order, Queen Constance stationed herself before the doors of the church, lest the people should slay them within it. Thus were they expelled from the bosom of Holy Church. And as they were being led out, the queen, with a staff which she held in her hand, struck out the eye of Steven, who formerly was her own confessor.
> Thereafter, when they had been taken out beyond the walls of the city to a little hut where a great fire was kindled, they were burned, except for one cleric and one nun[...] The cleric and the nun, by divine will, recovered their senses.[144]

This story perfectly frames the problem and solution to heresy. Each character plays their role to perfection: the diligent obedient nobleman, the deceitful obstinate

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[143] Ibid., p.80.
[144] Ibid., p.81

heretic, the secular and religious authorities working together to support the common good while preserving justice. This story appears more than two hundred years before the founding of the first Inquisitorial court in Languedoc but it already contains the important elements of the construction of the heretic and general ideas about the strategic use of secrecy in a conflict of this kind: in order to not be deceived, one must deceive.

What is distinct about the stories of this pre-crusade period[145] is that the authors of the stories, are still concerned with making the case for the existence of heresy. The bishops in the Arefast story do not simply condemn the heretical views of the clerics of Orleans, they explain the nature of the error:

> When the bishop said to them that he preferred a Christ who was born of the Virgin – as was possible- and who suffered in His humanity for our salvation, so that on the third day, death defeated, he might arise in His divinity and might teach us that we, cleansed of sin, shall rise again, they replied with the tongues of vipers, 'We were not there and we cannot believe that to be true.' At this the bishop questioned them as follows: 'Do you or do you not believe in parents of the flesh?'[146]

This question-and-answer format goes on for some time, and ends with the heretics' rejection of the bishops judgment of them as "heretics", which, ironically, reveals their stubborn arrogance – a trademark of heretics:

> You may spin stories in that way to those who have earthly wisdom and believe the fictions of carnal men, scribbled on animal skins. To us, however, who have the law written upon the heart by the Holy Spirit (and we recognize nothing but what we have learned from God, Creator of all), in vain you spin out superfluities and things inconsistent with the divinity. Therefore, make an end to words and do whatever you wish with us. For we shall see our King, reigning in Heaven, Who will raise us in heavenly joys to everlasting triumphs at his right hand.[147]

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[145] The Albigensian Crusade sets out in 1209. For the purposes of this work I am considering the period before that as a block of time in which the Church has less direct temporal power in the region and therefore different tactics. Part of this chapter's analysis involves the shift of power in the region that makes a regional set of Inquisitions possible.

[146] "Heresy at Orleans", Wakefield and Evans, 1969, p.81

[147] *Ibid.*, p.81

Unlike later Church writers, Paul of Chartres is intent on producing more than a report of a historical occurrence. He is producing a story that helps to clarify what it means to be "heretical", the characters who represent orthodoxy in the story present proper views and refute the positions taken by the heretics. This is the construction of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" at work. The story's central concern seems to be the demonstration of the way things should occur, if order is to be maintained. The heretical characters are the only ones in the story who disrespect and disobey both religious and secular authority.

From this very early example in the eleventh century in Orleans, moving in to the twelfth century, examples of heresy from Languedoc itself become available. The earliest of these stories are focused on the activities of "heretical" leaders and their influence among the people, but as the century moves forward, the issue of religious difference moves from an individual problem to a social or regional problem for the Church. As an early example of the individual problem of "heretical" religious leaders take the record of Bernard of Clairvaux's mission to Languedoc to confront the heretic Henry of Le Man's in 1144. As Beverly Kienzle describes it in her *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229*, the contents of Bernard's preaching against heretic is available to us from letters written on the subject a few years before he ventures into Languedoc: "A corpus of extant texts provides evidence for Bernard's preaching and his denunciations of heresy. The abbot's attacks sound particularly vehement against the dissidents' abstinence, whether dietary or sexual. His anger emerges most strongly when dissidents lay claim to religious practices that were the special reserve of monks."[148]

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[148] Beverly Kienzle *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229* (Boydell Press, 2001) p.103

Bernard of Clairvaux travels through Languedoc on his way to meet and debate Henry, performing miracles and preaching against the "pseudo-hermit", foreshadowing St. Dominic's role in Languedoc in 1203, and providing the first example of a 'mission' to the heretical region. This signals the shift in conception from a heretical leader, like Henry of Le Mans, Bernard's opponent in this story, to a suspicion of the entire land, an key element to the eventual justification of the Albigensian crusade. Before leaving on his mission, Bernard writes to the count of Toulouse, in 1145:

> This, as I have said, is the reason for my visit. Nor do I now come of myself alone but I am equally drawn by the summons of and by the compassion of the Church. Perchance that thorn and its evil seeds can be rooted out of the field of the Lord while they are still small, not by my hand, for I am nothing, but by that of the holy bishops in whose company I am, with the help of your own strong right hand. Chief among these is the venerable bishop of Ostia, sent by the Apostolic See for this purpose. He is a man who 'has done great things in Israel' and through him almighty God given victory to his Church in many instances. It is incumbent upon you, illustrious Sir, to receive him and his associates with honor and exert yourself, in accordance with the power vouchsafed you from on high, so that this great labor of these great men, which is undertaken especially for your salvation and the salvation of your people, be not in vain.[149]

Again the dual authority of Church and nobleman is evoked, the shared responsibility for the welfare of the inhabitants of the region. Bernard makes two direct references to the honor of the Count, but there are no laws or even papal bulls yet compelling the Count's cooperation, such as will come later. At this point the Count must choose to help the delegates of the Pope fight heresy in his jurisdiction.

The heretic, Henry, fails to meet the challenge of Bernard's mission and flees into the wilderness to avoid a confrontation, according to the writings of Bernard's secretary, Geoffrey. But Bernard manages to turn so many against the heretic that he is eventually captured and delivered to the bishop in chains. This accomplishment is due to more than

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[149] "Bernard's Denunciation of Henry", Wakefield and Evans, 1969, p.123-124.

diplomacy towards the nobility, though Bernard displays proper respect for the secular authorities of the towns he passes through. It is more than his obedience to religious authorities, though he is clear on this issue as well. He is successful because of the popular support he is described as accruing through his miraculous power. His tour of the region displays an attention to all of Henry's audience, noble or common, urban and rural, making an effort at convincing the populace with displays of religious power and virtue, rallying support in the areas the heretic had claimed for himself. As R.I. Moore describes in his *Origins of European Dissent*:

> The patient work of diplomacy and negotiation was, of course, no different in kind from that which had enabled Henry to consolidate his position at Le Mans by offering solutions to the grievances of its citizens. This was the practical test of a man's claim to exercise influence in the community, and St. Bernard's miracles were the popular endorsement of his assertion that the teachings of the true Church were better able than its adversary's to assist the relief of distress and the solution of tribulations which appeared insoluble.[150]

Moore's notion of a "practical test" reflects our earlier discussion of the importance of the recognition of the community.[151] The need to bring together secular and religious authorities for the proper and lasting suppression of religious difference is already being recognized in both these examples of early encounters with "popular heresy", but for the moment there is no system in place to facilitate this interaction, it relies on local leadership and the willingness of all the parties.

We have looked in the preceding chapter at the standoff that occurred in Lombers, in 1165, in which the Church representatives, without local support, are forced to allow unrepentant "heretics" to depart unharmed. We have also mentioned the letter sent by the

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[150] R.I. Moore's *The Origins of European Dissent* (London: Penguin, 1977) p 277.

[151] Already discussed generally in Chapter one (p.20-21) & in Chapter three specifically in reference to the hagiographic story of Dominic (p.97).

count of Toulouse in 1178 to the Cistercian order, requesting aid against the preaching of the 'two principles' in his city, the results of that request was a joint legatine and royal commission that arrived in the city to find and deal with the "heretics". The Annals of Roger of Hoveden record the events and circumstances of this tribunal, paying particular attention to the authorities involved in its establishment. According to the Annals, the King of France and that of England work together to form this commission:

> Therefore they dispatched thither Peter, cardinal-priest of San Crisgono, the legate from the Apostolic See; the archbishops of Bourges and Narbonne; Reginald and John, bishops of Bath and Poitiers respectively; Henry, abbot of Clairvaux; and many other churchmen, with instructions to convert those heretics to the Christian faith by their preaching or to prove to them, on solid grounds, to be heretics and drive them from the bounds of Holy mother Church and form the company of the faithful. [...] Furthermore, these kings chose Raymond, count of Toulouse; the viscount of Turenne; Raymond of Castelnau; and other mighty men, and commanded them to attend the cardinal and his companions in the faith of Christ, and to banish those heretics from their lands by the force of their power.[152]

The sought-after end of this great collaboration is the banishment of "heretics" from the lands of the Count of Toulouse and his allies. All the religious and secular authority gathered here is directed toward that goal.

In those cases where the threat of death for convicted heretics is absent, the alternatives of expulsion or imprisonment have serious repercussions. As we saw with St. Bernard, the heretic he sought, expelled from the north, traveled down toward the Mediterranean, "because for evil deeds like these he has been forced to flee from all parts of France, he has found only those lands open to him" as Bernard puts it in his letter to the count in 1145.[153] Bernard's opponent, the heretic Henry was held and released, and local authorities expelled him, essentially aiding the spread of Henry's teachings and

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[152] "Action Against Heresy in Toulouse", Wakefield and Evans, 1969, p.196.
[153] "Bernard's Denunciation of Henry", Wakefield and Evans, 1969, p.123-124.

followers from one diocese to the next. This latest, 1178, action against heresy in Toulouse begins with the intention of doing no more. The focus of local authorities on their limited jurisdiction meant that the problem of a "popular heresy" could only be temporarily shifted from one place to the next, as "heretics" are located, convicted, and then deposited into neighboring regions.

Although strategically no better than any other local effort against religious difference, the two kings' mission in 1178 to Toulouse did introduce one element that will reappear in the Church's procedures of Inquisition. The abbot in charge of the tribunal, Henry of Clairvaux issued this demand, that "the bishop and certain clergy, the consuls of the city and some other faithful men who had not been touched by any rumour of heresy to give us in writing the names of everyone they knew who had been or might in the future become members or accomplices of heresy, and to leave out nobody at all for love or money".[154] With this demand we have the first appearance of the link between the "heretics" themselves, those aiding them, and anyone who may know of such. The entire community now falls under the legitimate purview of such a tribunal. Where once the target of the inquest was an individual's behavior, now the target is the social in general and what it will reveal about heresy.

Apart from that new method of acquiring denunciations, the details of the record of this action against heresy follow very closely the details of the incident at Lombers in 1165, involving the archbishop of Albi, mentioned in the preceding chapter: those reported of "heretical belief" were summoned before the council and they respond with requests for safe passage, which are granted.[155] The "heretics" at first claim to be Good

[154] R.I. Moore's *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (London: Wiley- Blackwell, 2007) p.26.
[155] "Action Against Heresy in Toulouse", Wakefield and Evans, 1969, p.197.

Christians, but the count and others present deny this and make accusations about their true teachings,[156] these being a laundry list of the usual accusations around cosmic dualism and anti-clericalism, but the Good Christians stand firm and make an orthodox confession of faith, though they refuse to take an oath on the issue. The bishops warn them to put aside their "heretical" disobedience and swear a vow on what they believe but the Good Christians are "hardened in an incorrigible attitude and refuse to do so."[157] Deceptiveness proven, the Good Christians are condemned, their teachings declared false, and the audience is warned that "if in the future the men should preach to them anything but that which had been confessed in their hearing, they should reject the preaching as false and contrary to the Catholic and apostolic faith, and they should drive them far from their lands as heretics and forerunners of the Antichrist."[158] At which point, the Count and the other nobility present take an oath not to protect "heretics" in their lands. This entire story reads, like the Lombers incident of a decade earlier, like a warning. Although the superficial elements of the story appear to record the success of the joint workings of the ecclesiastical and noble orders, the representatives of the Church in the story go into quite a bit of detail on the elements of the Good Christians' error, explaining it and making sure that everyone present was aware of how heterodox it all was. The Good Christians themselves are never depicted as admitting to any of the beliefs the Count and other locals ascribe to them. Instead the are recorded as presenting a clear account of what a good Christian should believe, although it is presented in the story as cunning deception.

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[156] Ibid., p.198.
[157] Ibid., p 199.
[158] Ibid., p 200.

The next year the third Lateran council produces a canon (#27) making heretics "and all who defend them" anathema.[159] Seven years later, Pope Lucius III produces the decretal *Ad abolendam*, consolidating the lessons of the previous decades and proposing fixed methods for dealing with the threat of religious difference in every diocese. This process extends the anathematizing beyond the heretics, and those who aid them, to those who are suspected and have not demonstrated "their innocence by sufficient proof, at the discretion of the bishop"[160] and to "any city which shall think fit to resist these decretal ordinances."[161]

Most interesting are the mandated oaths of loyalty which bishops should now gather in their lands:

> To these things we add, with the concurrence of the bishops, and by the suggestion of the emperor and his princes, that every archbishop or bishop, by himself, or his archdeacon, or by any other trustworthy and fit persons, shall twice, or once, in the year go round any parish in which it shall have been reported that heretics reside; and there call upon three or more persons of good credit, or, if it seems expedient, on the whole neighborhood, to take an oath that if anyone shall know that there are heretics in the place or any persons holding secret conventicles or differing in life and manners from the common conversation of the faithful, he will make it his business to point them out to the bishop or archdeacon.[162]

The entire community might be called upon to take an oath of obedience to the Church, and any refusing to take this oath punished as a heretic and also "that any favorer of heretics, as being condemned to perpetual infamy, are not to be admitted as advocates, witnesses, or to other public offices."[163] Both in terms of court procedure and social manipulation, this is only one step away from the shape of the formal, papal Inquisitions,

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[159] See "The Third Lateran Council, 1179: Heretics Are Anathema" pp.168-170 in Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980 p.168.
[160] See "Pope Lucius III: The Decretal *Ad Abolendam*, 1184" pp.170-173 in Peters, 1980 p.173.
[161] Ibid., p.173.
[162] Ibid., p.172.
[163] Ibid., p.173

the only remaining difference here being the respect for the bishop's jurisdiction, allowing them to proceed on their own as opposed to the papal use of friars from the mendicant orders to pursue the inquest.

This brief analysis of the most important stories regarding popular heresy from the century before the establishment of the Church's Inquisitions provides us with an outline, not only of characteristics of the institution, but the justification for its establishment. It can be seen from the recurrence of heresy stories in the region of Languedoc, that the story about "popular heresy" contained a number of popular or useful themes for the authors. The core ideas developed over the span of the twelfth century involve the transformation of the idea of heresy from an infection spread by a single individual, a heresiarch like Henry Le Mans, or a strictly limited group of religious deviants, like the clerks of Orleans, to a suspicion of the entire region, of entire communities that must be made to swear their allegiance to the Church. The developing notion of the problem in the hierarchy of the Church more and more includes those who believe in the Good Christians, and those who may not believe but provide some aid, and those who may not provide some aid but who know something about them, and so on, encompassing a greater and greater proportion of the populace in the sweep of people who must confess to the authorities.

Similarly we see the presentation of secular and religious authority as complimentary, each story contains its version of the proper support provided, the proper respect shown, the negotiation of jurisdiction and rights between that various local powers and, increasingly as we move toward the thirteenth century, the role of the outsider, the representatives of king, pope and emperor. Despite this idealized

presentation of the proper roles of authority, despite the fact that each story ends in a successful chastisement or eradication of religious difference, the larger story is one of failure. The "problem of heresy" does not disappear, it merely goes underground, the best that the representatives of order can do is insufficient to deal with an entire region of "heresy".

Expelling Good Christians from the lands of one count does not solve the problem of heresy, it aggravates it, spreading heretical teachings around. The only permanent solution to the problems of heresy were conversion and execution, and both St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1143) and St. Dominic (1203) with all the miracles of God, with all the persuasion of their arguments, could not transform difference into obedience. As long as the efforts against the religious difference of Languedoc depended on the cooperation of the entrenched powers of Languedoc, who, even if willing, had authority over increasingly small spaces and fewer people, the struggle against heresy could not succeed. In 1208, the same efforts, although strengthened by bulls like *Ad abolendam* (1184) and Innocent III's own *Cum ex officii nostri* (1207), were still in use to encourage the nobility's participation in the repression of "heresy", while avoiding taking away from the authority of local bishops through papal interference.

As Lambert puts it so concisely, Innocent III's new approach, triggered by the murder of a papal legate in the lands of Toulouse, attempts to carry on the anti-heretical measures of his predecessors, while adding a new powerful tool to the papacy's side:

> Innocent's part in this upswing of orthodox fortunes was that of the initiator who set out the principles for future action. His approach was two-sided: he offered to enthusiasts who had strayed a means of returning to the church, and diminished the dangers of wandering preaching in poverty by welcoming this form of apostolic life under safeguards within the Church; and at the same time he

> attempted to make the use of force against fautors and recalcitrant heretics more effective.[...] Five years before the fourth Lateran Council, at which St.Dominic's plans were discussed, St. Francis of Assisi, with eleven companions, asked at Rome for confirmation of a way of life of the most extreme poverty blended with preaching based on the Gospels,[164]

With the Dominicans and the Franciscan preaching orders established, the Church created not only a viable alternative to the lifestyle of the Good Christians of Languedoc, but created the orders from which it would draw its Inquisitors. Even as Dominic and Bernard had sought to compel the devotion of the population away from the false teachers and back to orthodoxy through imitation of the heretics' lifestyle and appearance of holiness, the institutions of mendicant preaching, the Dominicans and the Franciscans became permanent sources of credible preaching brothers for the papacy, tied directly to the Apostolic See rather than to the episcopal authorities of any given region.

The date 1208 is significant because it is the year of the murder of the papal legate Pierre de Castelnau, and the beginning of the Albigensian crusade, which will change the region of Languedoc from an uncontrolled diverse land with conflicting authorities into a land controlled by Northern lords and policed by the agents of the Pope. The fourth Lateran Council, in 1215, with its third canon *On Heretics* restates all the developments in the Church's social program against "heresy" and allies this idea, finally, with the coercive tactics referred to above by Lambert:

> We excommunicate and anathematize every heresy raising itself up against this holy orthodox and catholic faith [...] Let those condemned be handed over to the secular authorities present, or to their bailiffs, for due punishment [...] Those who are only found suspect of heresy are to be struck with the sword of anathema [anathematis gladio feriantur], unless they prove their innocence by an appropriate purgation, having regard to the reasons for suspicion and the character of the person. If they persist in the excommunication for a year, they are to be

[164] Malcolm Lambert's *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2002) pp. 91-96.

> condemned as heretics [...] if they wish to be held faithful, to take publicly an oath for the defense of the faith [...] If however a temporal lord, required and instructed by the church, neglects to cleanse his territory of this heretical filth he shall be bound with the bond of excommunication [...] if he refuses to give satisfaction within a year, this shall be reported to the supreme pontiff so that he may then declare his vassals absolved of their fealty to him and make the land available for occupation by Catholics [...] Catholics who take the cross and gird themselves for the expulsion of heretics shall enjoy the same indulgence, and be strengthened by the same holy privilege, as is granted those who go to the aid of the Holy Land. Moreover, we determine to subject to excommunication believers who receive, defend or support heretics.[165]

This was a program for more than the investigation of "popular heresy", it was the program for the transformation of a society from one of local difference and custom to one that recognizes and obeys the authority of the Church. The Church was asserting, by fiat, a range of authority it has never possessed before, in response to a crisis which, because of its secretive nature, demands explicit statements of orthodoxy, proof of the falsehood of suspicions. The Lateran IV canon *On Heretics,* demanded explicit assertions of obedience to the Church and rejection of "heresy" from all the people regardless of station in Languedoc, wielding the weapon of anathema against those who fail to comply and leveraging the loyalties and politics of the northern lords in their favor, the Church created the situation in which their authority and power was demonstrated and proven. It created the framework in which the eradication of the support for the Good Christians occurred.

The events of the twelfth century; the sermons, the polemics, the disputations, provide the context and the model for the successful suppression of heresy in local situations, but these stories also highlight the weaknesses of the attempts of the local Church representatives; for an entire century the reports of religious difference, the

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[165] see footnote 14 on p.187 in Pegg, 2001.

problem of "popular heresy" has existed in Languedoc. In the writings of popes and Church authorities we have looked at, we have seen how the suspicion of heresy has grown to include all the people of every order in the society of Languedoc. Although Pope Innocent III had, up to 1208, attempted to deal with the local powers in Languedoc, the failure of this tactic, the murder of a papal legate by forces ultimately loyal to the count of Toulouse, sets him on a new, more drastic track in the search for a solution to the problem of "heresy". In his *Historia Albigensis* (1212-1218), Peter des Vaux-de-Cernai describes this pivotal event by referencing a letter written by Innocent III condemning the murder:

> News has reached us of a cruel deed which must surely bring grief on the whole Church. Brother Peter of Castelnau of blessed memory, monk and priest, a man surely renowned among righteous men for the conduct of his life, was sent by us with others to the South to preach peace and support the faith. [...] Against him the Devil roused his minister, the Count of Toulouse. This man had often encountered the censure of the Church for the many grave outrages he had committed against her, and often – as might be expected of a person who was crafty and cunning, slippery and unreliable – had received absolution under the guise of feigned penitence. [...] He then summoned Peter and his fellow papal legate to the town of Saint-Gilles, promising to give complete satisfaction on every heading under which he was accused. When they came to the town the count at one moment seemed truthful and compliant and promised to carry out all the salutary instructions given to him; at the next he became deceitful and obdurate and absolutely refused to do so, with the result that the legates at last decided to quit the town. [...] As night fell the legates settled down to rest, unaware that encamped with them were some of the Count's attendants who, as events proved, intended to seek their blood [...] After the murder of that just man, the South sits without a comforter in sadness and grief. We are told that faith has vanished, peace has perished, that the plague of heresy and the madness of our enemies have gone from strength to strength, and it is clear that potent help must be provided for the ship of the Church in that area in the unprecedented storm if she is not to flounder almost totally. [...] In the name of the God of peace and love, apply yourselves vigorously to pacifying those nations. Work to root out perfidious heresy in whatever way God reveals to you. Attack the followers of

> heresy more fearlessly even than the Saracens – since they are more evil – with a strong hand and a stretched out arm.[166]

Peter des Vaux-de-Cernai's reproduction of Innocent's letter displays the shift from reliance on local authorities to a radical suspicion of them. The Count of Toulouse, appearing in the 1178 action against heresy as an ally and supporter of the Church, is now identified as the primary minion of the Devil in the region, justifying the call for temporal aid against him and his military forces.

Earlier in this work we looked at Berger and Luckmann's conception of 'universe maintenance' as a model for the conflict between the heretics of Languedoc and the representatives of orthodox Christianity. Identifying the role of religious discourse in medieval European society as that of providing interpretations of universal, or ultimate significance. Berger and Luckmann, describing the competition between two theories of universal order, write: "The respective theoreticians are forced to substitute abstract argumentation for pragmatic testing. By its very nature such argumentation does not carry the inherent conviction of pragmatic success. What is convincing to one man may not be to another"[167] We have seen this problem play out in the twelfth century struggle of the Church against what they conceived of as broad "popular heresy". They are continuously attempting to supplement argumentation with some pragmatic standard. Whether it is Bernard's miracles or Dominic's asceticism, the holiness of the orthodox and the perfidy of the heretics need to be displayed in their narratives. Unfortunately, the continued failures of this approach, and the sudden eruption of violence against a representative of the pope, himself, draws the competition into a different field. Berger

[166] Peter des Vaux-de-Cernai's "Historia Albigensis" translated by W.A. and M.D.Sibly in *The History of the Albigensian Crusade* (Boydell Press, 1998) pp.31-38.

[167] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann *The Social Construction of Reality: a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York, Doubleday & Company, 1966) p.110.

and Luckmann continue: "We cannot really blame such theoreticians if they resort to various sturdier supports for the frail power of mere argument". The Church's ability to harness support for their particular vision of society, and the universe, is what determined their success at repressing the religious difference of Languedoc and replacing those in power with people sworn to uphold the Church's vision of religious and secular authority. Using only the fear of anathema and the promise of religious benefits the Church mobilizes, in that first summer of crusade, an army consisting of both northern and southern nobles larger than any of the previous expeditions into the Holy Lands or against the Saracens. The nobility in power at the end of the 20 years of crusade in Languedoc are either transplanted northern lords, like Simon de Montfort, or southern lords who have proven their allegiance to the French and the Pope. Without these representatives of secular authority on whom the Church could rely, it would have been impossible to use systematic Inquisitions to enforce an external religious or social agenda in Languedoc.

Part II: Early Thirteenth Century, the Albigensian Crusade

Without attempting a full summary of the events of the twenty years of crusade against Languedoc, two examples of the events of the first summer will provide us with excellent examples of the goals and effects of the Crusade; the reconciliation of the count of Toulouse, and the sacking of Béziers. We have already seen that the count of Toulouse appears as the very cause of Innocent's call for the campaign against Languedoc, so what could possibly reconcile the count to the crusaders who marched toward his lands? During the winter of 1209 Raimon VI, Count of Toulouse had made his move to

reconcile himself with the Pope and prevent his lands from falling under the threat of the invaders from the North, now in early summer he joined the crusaders. He rejected the accusation of involvement with the murder of Peter de Castelnau, and sought to avoid losing his lands to the growing army in Lyons, set to march that summer. The *Historia Albigensis* describes both the Count of Toulouse's reconciliation and his joining with the crusaders in this fashion:

> The Count was led naked to the doors of the church of Saint Gilles. There, in the presence of the legate, and the archbishops and bishops (of whom more than twenty had gathered for the ceremony) he swore on the body of Christ and on the numerous relics of the saints which priests were displaying with great reverence in front of the church gates, 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. 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 entered. Instead he had to go down to the crypt and pass, naked, by the tomb of the blessed martyr Brother Peter of Castelnau whose death he had caused. How just a judgment of God! The Count was compelled to show reverence to the dead body of the man he had used so spitefully whilst he lived.[168]

The reconciliation of the Count with the Church is described not only as a spectacle of divine judgment, but also as the Church's narrative about the treachery of heretics. Although the story's bias and lack of realism make it difficult to accept as history of the events of the Count's reconciliation, it is interesting as an instance of the Church's narrative interpreting events before and after. Vaux-de-Cernai's account ended with this personal statement: "I declare the Count a false and faithless crusader; he took the cross not to avenge the wrong done to the crucifix, but to conceal and cover his wickedness for a period."[169] The suspicions of both the Pope (not trusting the Count) and

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[168] Peter des Vaux-de-Cernai's "Historia Albigensis" translated by W.A. and M.D.Sibly in *The History of the Albigensian Crusade* (Boydell Press, 1998) pp.40-45

[169] W.A. and M.D.Sibly, 1998, p.45.

the Count (not trusting the abbot of Citeaux), seem to be warranted given the manipulations on both sides, what was being described by Peter des Vaux-de-Cernai was the "true meaning" of these events that lies underneath the untrustworthy veneer of genuine repentance and absolution. Suspicion and the hidden meaning of events are at work in these narratives, as the Church writer sought to impose a particular meaning on the brutal public humiliation of a secular leader guilty of attacking the Church.

The Count then goes to join the army assembling at Lyons. Michael Costen, in his *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade* gives a good, brief, account of the army:

> Fortified by the protections offered by crusading status, the army assembled at Lyon in late June. It included the Duke of Burgundy, the count of Nevers, the count of St-Pol, the Count of Montfort, The Count of Bar-sur-Seine, and many other Noblemen, as well as the archbishop of Sens and the bishops of Autun, Clermont and Nevers. There were also contingents from Germany, as well as from Gascony, Poitou, and the Saintonge. Another army of Gascons advanced through the Agenais. Between them the aristocratic crusaders and their followers made a great army, duly reported to the Pope as the biggest ever to assemble in the Christian world. [...] With customary exaggeration the *Chanson* reported 20,000 knights and 100,000 common soldiers, many of whom were peasants. The whole expedition was led by Arnauld-Amalric [abbot of Citeaux], and it set out down the Rhone Valley. Raimon VI viewed the preparations for the Crusade with growing alarm.[170]

If the Count of Toulouse's humiliation and reconciliation to the Church can be seen as the fate of the abettor of heresy, writ large, the first military encounter of this army can be seen an alternative fate; the fate reserved for the unrepentant heretic. The first city to offer resistance to the crusaders is the town of Béziers, under the control of the scion of the Trencavel family, the second most powerful family in the region. Raimon-Roger Trencavel, Viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne was allied with the King

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[170] Michael Costen, *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1997) p.121.

of Aragon and thought he could stand against the Church's army.[171] The *Historia Albigensis* goes into great detail on not just the destruction of Béziers, but how this destruction was a "splendid example of divine justice and Providence"[172].

The bishop of Béziers tried to negotiate some agreement with the encamped army outside Béziers, but the citizens of the town rejected his advice and refused to lose any of their wealth or honor to the besiegers. They believed in the strength of their walls.[173] These are the stories that are the foundation of the justification of the use of force in the region. The first act of the armies of the north in Languedoc was to destroy an entire town and kill all its inhabitants, seven thousand people according to the *Historia Albigensis*, 20,000 according to the report sent by Arnald-Amauric to the Pope.[174] The nearby town of Narbonne capitulates immediately when word of the slaughter reaches them, Jonathan Sumption, in his *the Albigensian Crusade* describes the crusaders as quickly capitalizing on the fortuitous events at Beziers: "they reflected that news of the massacre would discourage resistance in the other cities or Languedoc. After the city had fallen, they met in council and resolved that in every city that resisted them the entire population would be put to the sword."[175] Mark Gregory Pegg provides this interpretation of the killing and destruction at Béziers in that first summer in 1209:

> Almost half a century of ecclesiastical admonitions warned, over and over, that most of the persons who lived in and around the county of Toulouse were wholly or partially diseased with heresy and *did not know it* . A plea of ignorance was no more than a sign of willful complacency and, in all probability, a symptom of

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[171] Actually there's far more to the situation than that, the back and forth of the political wrangling does not, however alter the fact that the town was poised to resist the army of the Church. for a detailed account of the position Raimond-Roger found himself in, a good secondary source is Mark Gregory Pegg's "A Most Holy War", Chapter 7 deals with the destruction of Béziers.

[172] W.A. and M.D.Sibly, 1998, p.51

[173] Mark Gregory Pegg *A Most Holy War* (Oxford University Press, 2008) pp.72-76

[174] Costen, p.123.

[175] Jonathan Sumption *The Albigensian Crusade* (Faber & Faber, 1978)

> infection. *What appeared Catholic and correct on the surface was, so very often, so very cleverly, a facade hiding rampant heretical pestilence.*[176] [italics mine]

The dangerous license of suspicion in the attitudes of the Church toward religious difference have resulted in the destruction of this town.The appearance of innocence was, again, dismissed as a deception one might expect from "heretics". These two examples, of the humbling of the Count of Toulouse and the destruction of Béziers are tied together by this common thread of perceived deception, an inability to trust appearances because of an opponents' secretive nature. The way the Church and its leaders in the Albigensian crusade dealt with this uncertainty provided the final elements of the Inquisitorial process, the Albigensian crusade serves not only to functionally replace the nobility of Languedoc with secular authorities who have explicitly promised to follow the Church's will, it also provides larger than life examples of the effectiveness of physical coercion in reconciling the region to the rest of Christendom.

This is the larger program of which the Church's increasingly centralized, systematized, and bureaucratized Inquisitorial procedures are one part. It is tempting to think of the Inquisitorial trials as a kind of religious legal court in which religious crimes were investigated. From the perspective of the social constructivist theory underlying this work however, the process more closely resembled an increasingly systematic process of confession, penance and reconciliation on the community level, through which entire towns and villages are processed and brought back into direct relationship with the discourse community that is Christendom, as far as the Church and her allies are concerned. It is a process through which "dangerous" and "suspicious" elements are reduced, marginalized and repressed wherever possible, but the goal is not the discovery

[176] Pegg, 2008, pp.78

of "heresy". The Church is already clear about the presence of a "heresy" that has corrupted the entire region. The goal is the conversion of the region back to acceptance of the norms of the Church. The definition of heresy is, again, the open and stubborn rejection of the authority of the church.[177] The military action against the people of Lamguedoc and then the Inquisitorial trials are the practical response of the Church, the evidence of their claim that their religious authority is the only actual religious authority in Languedoc.

Part III: Mid-Thirteenth Century: The Effects of Inquisition on Social Order

It is tempting to speak of a single medieval Inquisition, but one should not imagine a greater cohesion than existed in this period. The process of inquisition is being created and shaped over the period of this conflict. As James Given warns in his introduction to *Inquisition and Medieval Society*, "In the Middle Ages there was no single Inquisition, with a Grand Inquisitor supervising the Holy Office from Rome. Instead, there were simply a number of Inquisitorial tribunals, staffed by papal judges delegate, some Dominicans, some Franciscans, scattered across Europe."[178]

The historical origin of the papal Inquisitions lies in the 1231 decretal by pope Gregory IX *Ille humani generis* to the Dominicans of Regensburg.[179] The letter is simple and begins with the now-familiar formula denouncing the heresy in the land: "Although the heretics have lain concealed for a long time, scuttling about in hiding like crabs and,

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[177] Defined as such by Robert Grosseteste in the thirteenth century, quoted in Malcolm Lambert's *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Blackwell: Oxford, Cambridge, 1992) p.5, for a similar definition see Moore, *Origins of European Dissent,* p. ix.

[178] James Given *Inquisition and Medieval Society* (Cornell University Press, 2001)

[179] Given, 2001, p. 13-22.

like little foxes, attempting to destroy the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts."[180] The "heretics" were now out in the open, willing to fight publicly, and so Gregory commissioned, for the first time, an independent tribunal with direct papal authority to enforce the "statutes against heresy recently promulgated":

> We seek, urge, and exhort your wisdom, by apostolic letters sent to you under the apostolic seal, that you be sent as judges into different districts to preach where it seems useful to you to the clergy and people assembled together, using for this purpose other discreet people known to you, and to seek out diligently those who are heretics or people infamed of heresy, unless they should be willing, upon examination, to obey the commands of the Church, [...] You may exercise the office thus given to you freely and efficaciously, concerning this and all of the things which we have mentioned above, and all in particular places who are swayed by your preaching within twenty days. We release from their penitence for three years by the power and mercy of Almighty God and the blessed apostles Peter and Paul those who offer you help, advice, or favor against heretics, or their helpers, receivers, or defenders in fortified places, castles, or other places against the rebels against the Church. [...] and lest anyone be reluctant to aid you in the business mentioned above, in offering censure against those contradictors and rebels against the Church which we wield through your priesthood, we concede to them the free faculty of wielding the sword against the enemies of the faith.[181]

This commission records not only the birth of the papal Inquisition, but also the basic elements that will create a powerful social tool for the Church in undermining the local community and establishing the authority of the Church in the society of Languedoc: the twenty day period of grace, the use of local "discreet individuals" as agents, and the free use of the sword, not only without penalty but actually granting release from penitential status. These outside agents have at their command the ability to manipulate the spiritual economy of sin and penitence as well as the right to co opt the secular authority's use of physical force.

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[180] See "Pope Gregory IX: The Decretal *Ille humani generis, 1231*"pp. 196-198 in Edward Peters' *Heresy and Authority on Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), p.196.

[181] "Pope Gregory IX: The Decretal *Ille humani generis, 1231*", Peters, 1980, p.197.

The central theme of the process of inquisition was confession, submission to the orthodox sacramental system and acknowledgment of its benefits. As Church historian, Charles Lea puts it: "[...] if we would rightly appreciate its methods we must understand the relations which the Inquisitor conceived to exist between himself and the offenders brought before his tribunal. As a judge, he was vindicating the faith and avenging God for the wrongs inflicted on him by misbelief. He was more than a judge, however, he was a father-confessor striving for the salvation of the wretched souls perversely bent on perdition."[182] The goals of the Inquisitorial process are precisely those of confession, writ large on the entire region. The sins of the nation lay in its resistance to "orthodoxy", embodied in its "heretics", like the individual sins of a believer's confession. Every individual processed by the Church's Inquisition that underwent penance of any kind brought the nation closer to absolution and reconciliation. As it revealed its sins, its heretics, to its confessors and submitted to penance, it moved, one community at a time, back into the discourse community of Christendom. The task of the Church's Inquisitorial process was to bring the populace of Languedoc from "heresy" to "orthodoxy" through transformation of the way its inhabitants looked at the world and their fellows.[183]

The Albigensian Crusade placed the local secular authorities of Languedoc, at least theoretically, firmly behind the program of the Church, but the hostility among the

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[182] Charles Lea *The Inquisition of the Middle Ages* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1963) p.152.

[183] This distinction between legal court and collective sacrament of confession is interesting, but there is not sufficient place in this work to fully explore all the developments of either system in this period. Suffice it to say, that there is some confusion at the time even, about which sets of rules apply, at least in the eyes of the participants. Mark Gregory Pegg provides only a single example of such, but it is interesting. In his *The Corruption of Angels: The Great Inquisition of 1245-1246* (2001) He describes the condemnation of the friar-Inquisitors of Toulouse as *proditor confessionum*, violators of the seal of confession: "The disgust and fear that Piere Baussa felt toward the Inquisitors, and so his advice about the necessity of being on your guard when questioned by them, reveal a man keenly aware of the difference between priest-confessor and friar-Inquisitor. Piere Baussa simply knew that an Inquisitor, unlike a confessor, could never be anything but a *proditor confessionum*.", from p.67.

populace towards outsiders and the representatives of the pope after twenty years of war in their land is not difficult to imagine. The period of grace, the strategic use of secret informants, and the offers of absolution for aiding the Church served to undermine local resistance. During the period of grace any confession of guilt would be punished with light penance, allowing the informant to avoid prison. The most obvious form of contrition was the naming of "heretical" accomplices, aiding the friar Inquisitors in collecting a list of those who must appear before them. As Malcolm Barber describes it in his *Two Cities*:

> the names of witnesses were not revealed, thus creating a sense of unease in a community which had something to hide. The possibility that the Inquisitors already held denunciations delivered in secret during the period of grace encouraged others to defend themselves in the same way. Once the facade of community solidarity could be cracked and the Inquisitors had names and places to hand, then the search could begin in earnest. A person brought before the Inquisition was being directed in one way, that is along the path of confession, penitence and reconciliation. He had no legal defender, no knowledge of those who had denounced him, and only a precis of the evidence.[184]

The utility of the period of grace should not be under-emphasized, the only security available to the population lay in confession and informing for the Church's program, the only safety lay in accepting both the vision of their society and the sacramental absolution offered by its representatives. The avoidance of prison meant that the informants were released back into society sworn to appear before the tribunal when the proceeding began.[185] Jacques Paul, in his study of Inquisitorial procedure in Carcassonne, gives a brief list of the obligations incurred by those who confessed: they could not leave the diocese without the Inquisitor's permission, must help the Inquisition

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[184] Malcolm Barber's *The Two Cities: Medieval Europe, 1050-1320* (Routledge, 1993) p.134

[185] For a complete look at the use of informal agreements and oaths by Inquisitors read Jacques Paul's "La procedure Inquisitoriale a Carcassonne au milieu du XIIIe Siecle" pp361-396 in *Cahiers de Fanjeau No.29: L'Eglise et le Droit dans le Midi (13e – 14e siecles)* (Centre de Fanjeaux: Edition Privat, 1994)

in every way, and denounce, capture and bring to the Inquisition all heretics, believers, defenders, their messengers and all fugitives.[186] Those released by the Inquisitorial court became, at least in theory, their agents in society. The reward for confession and informing on your fellow townsfolk was the guarantee of remaining in society; no prison terms, exile or lengthy pilgrimages could be given to those who took advantage of the period of grace. In other words, the inhabitant owed their continued social existence to cooperation with Church. As confession is seen to save people from removal from society, the efficacy of the orthodox sacramental system is made manifest in people's lives.

The Inquisitorial tribunals focused on "heretical" associations and people's interactions with heretics. This functioned to create a sense of social danger around those with whom the average citizen interacted, raising the level of suspicion among the inhabitants by creating the need to avoid being seen to engage with "heretics". As Ruthven outlines below, the most common activities could be dangerous if the "orthodoxy" of the participants was unknown:

> In 1244, the council of Narbonne stated that it was sufficient that the accused had shown by any word or sign that he considered the heretics "good men". Inordinate emphasis was placed on 'popular repute' and the most unreliable hearsay evidence. In 1254, the council of Albi declared that entering the house of a heretic amounted to 'vehement suspicion'. According to Bernard Gui, some Inquisitors held that visiting heretics, giving them alms or guiding them in their travels was enough for condemnation. A Florentine merchant of unimpeachable orthodoxy found himself in serious trouble for bowing socially to a group of men who subsequently turned out to be heretics – his polite gesture having been taken as an act of 'adoration'. A priest was once condemned for eating some pears in the company of a group of heretics he met in a vineyard.[187]

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[186] Jacques Paul, 1994, p.384

[187] Malise Ruthven *Torture: the Grand Conspiracy* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nisholson, 1978) p.93

Mistaking the intentions of the Inquisitorial process, it might appear bizarre that guilt can arise from speaking to someone, entering their house, or eating with them. None of these things are evidence that a person was a heretic. However, if the goal is to establish a taboo, a clear delineation of the socially dangerous and the benign, then these criteria for guilt begin to make sense. The Church is not interested in guidelines for discovering who is engaged in "heretical activity", it is interested in creating a vivid image of the dangers of tolerating Good Christians or other "heretics" in the imagination of the populace of Languedoc. The presence of anonymous, secretive "heretics" meant that at any time a normal social interaction could turn into a crime. Obviously, the only way the community can feel safe is if all the "heretics" are revealed and removed, and the Church fully satisfied. Again the methods of the Inquisitorial process create a social situation through the manipulation of the local norms of interaction, coercing the inhabitants to want to be obedient and not to want to risk harboring "heresy". The danger was made clear.

By turning the community against itself, the friars conducting the Inquisitions were always able to receive sufficient confessions and condemnations. The next stage in the process lies in the interrogation of the guilty. As we have already seen, the interrogations tend to focus on social acts which have been deemed illegitimate. the questions revolve around contamination through association with "heretics"; had the individual seen a heretic? heard them preach? Received anything from them? given anything to them? Guided them or arranged escorts or meeting places for them? Sheltered them? etc... The guilt being confessed here is not the guilt of believing things opposed to

Church teachings, but rather of being part of a heretical society, of participation in social acts with Good Christians.

The use of torture in the process of inquisition, although indefensible in terms of intelligence gathering or the fundamental ethics of the Church at the time, actually promote the idea that the goal of Inquisition was more social transformation than judicial inquiry. Although there have been a number of ethical and legal discussions about the validity of the use of torture, in the case of the papal Inquisitions of Languedoc, torture is reserved for those extreme cases that did not respond to the initial manipulations of the redefinition of social behaviors given in the process of acquiring suspects, and the messages embedded in the questions of the normal interrogation procedure. Those who could not be coerced mentally or emotionally could be coerced physically into the orthodox worldview. As Ariel Glucklich writes in his *Sacred Pain*: "The painful procedures of the Inquisition cannot be understood only in terms of the judicial concept of pain as the remover of fault. Inquisitional pain was also a medical and alchemical agent of change that transformed a confused soul into a saved one in a manner that defies easy condemnation."[188] Ronald Creslinsten has studied the modern phenomena of torture extensively, and in his conclusions as to its purpose seem to neglect the question of guilt or innocence on the part of the sufferer, instead focusing on the application of power by a regime: "The ultimate purpose is to impose the will of the regime even upon those condemned to die. The question and answer is but the vehicle for the larger purpose."[189] The use of torture in the Inquisition imposed the power of the regime on those who

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[188] Ariel Glucklich *Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the sake of the soul* (London: Oxford University Press, 2001) p.158. I am not sure that it defies easy condemnation, even if the rationale is understood.

[189] Ronald D. Creslinsten "In their own Words" pp. 35-51 in *The Politics of Pain* edited by Ronald D Crestinsten and Alex P. Schmed (San Francisco, Westview Press, 1995) p.39.

resisted their more subtle coercions. The use of pain on an unrepentant sinner transformed resistance into an ordeal that would reveal the truth of the situation to the person who was put to the question.

Those sentenced in the process of inquisition could expect a variety of penances depending on the severity of their misdeeds in the eyes of the friars entrusted with the process. These punishments were further manipulations of the social order on the Church's part, as it attempted to create an obedient southern France out of the Languedoc region. The most common 'severe' penance was imprisonment. Pilgrimages could be imposed. Penitents might be forced to wear crosses on their clothes (similar to those worn by perjurers). Public scourging might be imposed.[190] All of these penances operate through the manipulation of social reality, either removing the sinner from society completely, forcing them to undergo public humiliation, or marking them out as untrustworthy perjurers to their peers. All of these punishments remove the access to society from those who have been shown to prefer the community of the Good Christians to that of the Church.

The most extreme punishment was relaxation to the secular arm, a sentence that implied that the protection of the Church was being withdrawn, and the secular authorities were to put the prisoner to death as a traitor. Although quite rare as a sentence, these deaths loom large in the imagination. Again, these deaths have symbolic transformative power that transcends the particularities of the individual case of "heresy" in Languedoc. The death of the unrepentant "heretic" was the ultimate "incorrect death".

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[190] On the penalties imposed: Walter Wakefield's *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition in Southern France 1100-1250* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994)

The issue of a "good death", or a horrifying one, is linked to Berger and Luckmann's notion of symbolic universes created by social discourse:

> All legitimations of death must carry out the same essential task- they must enable the individual to go on living in society after the death of significant others and to anticipate his own death with, at the very least, terror sufficiently mitigated so as not to paralyse the continued performance of the routines of everyday life. It may readily be seen that such legitimation is difficult short of integrating the phenomenon of death within a symbolic universe. Such legitimation, then, provides the individual with a recipe for a "correct death".[191]

It is clear from the records of the trials in Languedoc that the notion of a "correct death" was an important one to the people, and socially significant is the attempt to establish the Church's death rituals as the sole "correct death". Secondary sources on the "religion of the Cathars" never fail to mention the importance of their death-bed *consolamentum* rite in the lives of the "*credentes.*" The fiery spectacle of the deaths of the unrepentant was an expression of the ultimate "incorrect death" for the orthodox symbolic universe, presuming that the purgative effects of the flame would not lessen the horror of the onlookers at the idea of dying impenitent and unshriven, unburied and unmourned. These events were rare according to the records of the trials of the thirteenth century. Wakefield's resume of Yves Dossat's records of the diocese of Toulouse between 1249 and 1257 shows fewer than 10% of cases leading to execution, twenty-six people over eight years.[192] However, the power of these deaths should not be underestimated, and the symbolic power of them is made even more evident given that the punishment could be carried out postmortem.

This is the final piece of evidence that the Church's concern is with social transformation rather than the discovery of particular heretics in its process of

[191] Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.101.

[192] See Walter L. Wakefield *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition in Southern France 1100-1250* (University of California Press, 1974) p.184.

inquisition: the processes of the Inquisition can proceed whether the heretic is alive or dead. There cannot be any concern, here, for the individual, who is already dead. This issue is social control, of instilling the eternal consequences of disobedience to the Church in the minds of the community. Molinier in his *L'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France,* discusses the two forms that this took, the first being a case of a person whose heresy was not discovered until after his death, or who relapsed into heresy unbeknownst to the authorities while he still lived, the second being someone who died while engaged in penitence for heretical acts. While the remains of the heretic are "trainés sur la claie à travers les rues des ville et enfin brûlés, châtiment sans portée véritable, infligé brutalement à la matière insensible, et fait, il semble, pour inspirer le dégoût et l'horreur plus encore que la crainte."[193] The heretic is not to be allowed a "correct death" and their fate must inspire horror in the hearts of the community. The process that condemns these corpses is indistinguishable from the trial of a live person; witnesses are heard, a case is built, sentence passed and penance imposed. The consequences "integrate the phenomenon of death within a symbolic universe", creating "heretics" from human remains and demonstrating the transcendence of the problem of heresy over particular human lives. Just to emphasize this point about the nature of the process, which was created to deal with the "problem of popular heresy" in Languedoc, it proceeded the same way regardless of whether the accused was alive or dead.

In reviewing the process of inquisition and its manipulation of the social order, it can be seen that the controls it attempted to put on the situation in Languedoc depended on physical coercion and submission to the Church's vision of the social hierarchy. This

[193] Charles Molinier *L'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1972, originally Paris, 1880) p.360.

vision had been depicted clearly a century earlier in the isolated struggles against heresy by individual bishops and saints, as we have seen in Orleans in 1022, in Bernard's letters from 1143 and in the conciliar actions in Toulouse in 1178. The new secular lords of Southern France are given the opportunity, by aiding the process of inquisition, to establish their own power in the minds of the populace, while the Church made manifest the effectiveness of its sacramental system in the lives of the surviving inhabitants. It used the power it holds by apostolic authority and secular support to redefine the normal social activities of the communities of Languedoc, to create the suspicion of aiding Good Christians, respecting Good Christians, listening to Good Christians, eating with Good Christians, and it then set the populace against itself, encouraging each to seek security for themselves and their family by helping the Church discover the "believers in heretics" and "supporters of heretics". The Inquisition's methods manufactured the truth of "heresy in Languedoc" by taking control of the local definition of heresy and imposing it with physical force. Through emotional, intellectual, and, finally, physical coercion the inhabitants of Languedoc were put through the process of inquisition and made to participate in the institutions of the Church. The theoretical argument between two coteries of 'universe maintaining experts', as Berger and Luckmann describe, became in Languedoc, through the efforts of the Inquisition as an increasingly systematic and bureaucratic institution, a pragmatic display of the truth of the Church's position, as revealed by the destruction and suffering brought about by the presence of "heresy".

The shape and methods of Inquisition arise from the preceding century's records about the Church's struggle against "popular heresy". Each of these records is a story that provided the thirteenth century participants in the struggle in Languedoc with

normative statements about the role of the clergy, the role of the papacy, the role of the nobility, and the role of the heretic. Each of these stories also provides evidence of the continued "problem of heresy" in the region despite the missionary attempts of some of the Church's most miraculous and devoted preachers. The failure of the local nobility and local clergy to deal with the "problem of heresy" in the twelfth century becomes the justification for the use of external forces, first a military expedition guided by the abbot of Citeaux, and secondly by the founding of a new form of "*inquisitio*" that operates outside the jurisdiction of any one local bishop or count, with friar Inquisitors empowered directly by the pope working with the blessing and support of the nobility.

In a powerful manipulation of the links between individual lives and the construction of social facts about life, the effect of Inquisition in Southern France transforms the suspicion of anonymous heretics in communities into a very real danger for the average citizen. By focusing on social interaction as the signs of heretical identity, the Church forced communities to recognize the safety that obedience represented. By processing entire villages and towns in this fashion, the Church was able to know that all those they left behind had either recognized the truth about the danger of "heresy", or been eradicated from the body of the community, like individual sins expunged in the sacrament of confession.

The historically complex and nuanced lines of religious and secular authority in the region of Languedoc are, by the end of the thirteenth century, clarified by demonstration. The authority of the king of France has been demonstrated, as worthy Crusaders take possession of the lands of traitors, and the power of the Church is made clear as Franciscan and Dominican friars spread through the region. These brothers

embody not only the orthodox version of mendicant asceticism and preaching, so familiar to the average citizen of Southern France, but also frequently are under direct orders from the pope to extinguish heresy wherever they find it. Every person who believes in the Good Christians who was brought before an Inquisitorial tribunal reinforced the Church's symbolic universe, demonstrating at the same time the existence of "hidden heretics", the danger these characters pose to faithful Christians, and reliance of the populace on obedience to the Church for salvation.

CHAPTER FIVE: EXPECTATIONS AND SUSPICION

The previous chapters have focused on the subjects of this analysis, the Good Christians of Languedoc and the Church's Inquisitorial process. Although the issues of secrecy and suspicion have appeared, the focus has not been on the strategic use of information itself. This chapter will focus on the social context of Languedoc before the Albigensian crusade (1209) and analyze the specific types of expectations that sustained the conflict between the Good Christians of the region and the representatives of the Church. These differences lead to interpretations of the other that account for appearances and rely on accusations of hidden motives and concealed malice to explain the resistance they both encounter in the other. The expectations and suspicions of both groups are considered in relation to what we know about the culture of Languedoc before the invasion of external forces in the Albigensian crusade, the culture of *paratge.* The expectations of the people of Languedoc from their religious elite, and the particular shape of the suspicions the Good Christians have of Church representatives will become clear as the analysis moves forward. Our analysis is, therefore, focused on the pre-crusade period, the twelfth century, when the "heresy" of the Good Christians was still a topic for debate. In addition to this focus on the use of secrecy in accusation, this chapter's historical context provides the opportunity to outline what is known about the elements of the religious identity of the Good Men and Women of Languedoc. This current chapter provides the description of how the conflict was sustained to the point of violence, what shaped the expectations of the Good Christians of Languedoc and the people who believed in them.

As mentioned in chapter one, secrecy depends on the expectations of others for its success or failure. The successfully kept secret depends on a lack of suspicion to provide the cover it requires to avoid investigation. People become suspicious when their expectations are not met, when communication seems enigmatic or fractured; if the shape and the contents of speech are off, if the speaker seems uncomfortable, if there is anything that suggests something beyond, or behind, the normal. What is "normal" is a function of the discourse community whose expectations around speech or text have been shaped by membership in a particular community with particular conventions, styles, and habits. As Bennett Rafoth puts it in his work on written communication:

> Community norms and expectations are embodied not only in writers who address and invoke audiences, nor only in the audiences themselves, but in the particular *community* of writers and readers who engage themselves through the medium of text, all together (writers, readers, and text) making up a discourse community. Thus texts, which are often the only visible manifestation of a community, also embody community norms.[194]

In this chapter, the textual record, often the record of speech, serves as the basis for an analysis of the kinds of expectations that exist for those in the Church hierarchy and those that exist in the communities of Languedoc. These differ in significant ways, and this difference leads each to suspect the other of hidden motives behind the appearance of normalcy. In his *Genesis of Secrecy*, Frank Kermode gives numerous examples of the drive to interpret hidden meanings in text, and finds in the diverse field of interpretation the mark of cultural and historical expectations which texts fail to meet:

> Every such hermeneutic encounter is still, in a measure, historically conditioned, though now that limitation is no longer thought of just as a limitation – it is the prerequisite of interpretation, each act of which is unique, one man on one stool, so to speak, seeing what no power can withhold from him, his glimpse of the

[194] Bennett A Rafoth, "Discourse Community: Where Writers, Readers, and Texts Come Together", p.131-146 in *The Social Construction of Written Communication*. Bennett A. Rafoth and Donald L Rubin, eds. (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1988.) pp 140-141.

> radiance, his share of what is sometimes called the 'hermeneutic potential' of a text. [...] What it meant and what it means are both actualizations of its hermeneutic potential, which, though never fully available, is inexhaustible. An interpreter working in this tradition cannot altogether free himself from historical and institutional constraints. He will try to avoid them, insofar as they are avoidable; but he cannot escape his own historicality, and he was trained in an institution [...] Yet the world is full of interpreters, it is impossible to live in it without repeated, if minimal, acts of interpretation; and a great many people obviously do much more than the minimum. Interpretation is the principal concern of their lives. So the question arises, why would we rather interpret than not? Or, why do we prefer enigmas to muddles?[195]

Kermode's suggestion that we prefer "enigmas to muddles" is the basic idea behind his theory about why we perceive secrecy in others so readily. If we are confused, or something appears meaningless to us, we prefer to believe that the meaning of it is hidden rather than absent altogether. We would prefer to interpret meaning into something than fail to understand it. In the context of my work, the interpreters are all the participants in the conflict, every polemicist who puts forward an explanation of heresy, every heretic who accuses the Church of villainy, every person who is swayed to support one side or another, and even the historians and scholars who tell the stories later. Each individual who receives the information interprets it according to each one's expectations and historical context. Kermode posits that behind the drive to interpret is a desire for fulfillment, the fulfillment of expectation, an intrusion of our training regarding 'what is normal' onto the specificity of the text that creates the impression of a "fractured surface", this fractured surface is then reconciled to our expectations through interpretation, through the revealing of "hidden" meaning and senses. "It is a prior expectation of consonance, the assumption that as readers we have to complete something capable of completion."[196] This is the cause of suspicion; to judge a speech or

[195] Frank Kermode, *the Genesis of Secrecy* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 1979) pp.39-40

[196] Kermode, 1979, p.54.

text as "fractured", as requiring interpretation before its true meaning will be apprehended, is a comparison to what we expected to find, a comparison to the norms and conventions of a community of discourse. The fractured surface is constructed and then remedied through acts of interpretation. In the descriptions of interactions that follow, the participants on each side of the conflict create interpretations that smooth over a surface perceived as fractured. The primary conflict is over who has the authority to define the situation.

The conflict over the authority to preach publicly and over claims of possession of sacred power drives the debates and mission of the twelfth century in Languedoc. This conflict involves the strategic use of information, involves secrecy, insofar as it seeks to lay claim to a monopoly on public speech. Ian Keen's work among the Poro of Liberia,[197] outlined the use of this concept of 'right to know' in the storytelling practices of the people. The struggle in Languedoc, before the Albigensian, crusade is a struggle over the monopoly of religious activity in the region. The Church's right to interpret and teach the Scriptures, and the right of their ritual experts to mediate the sacred for parishioners is challenged by the claims of local Good Christians regarding their fulfillment of the apostolic ideal. Both groups are defending their "right to know", their right to speak with authority on religious matters, against interlopers. Both groups are struggling to receive the recognition of the populace and to defeat and silence their opponents.

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[197] See Ian Keen's *Knowledge and Secrecy in an Aboriginal Religion (Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology)*(Oxford University Press, 1994) p. 134.

Part I: The fundamentals of suspicion (expectation and discourse)

The stories about "heresy" told by the Church formed the backdrop against which the conflict in Languedoc over religious authority was waged. On the one hand, the local Good Men and Women, and on the other ecclesiastical figures and a host of outsiders, both groups vying for the obedience and respect of the populace. At the core of this struggle was the issue of recognition. Compelling arguments and miraculous signs were not sufficient for success unless a particular side in this struggle controlled the social conception of both itself and its opponents, unless they could demonstrate their authority in the religious sphere. Social control was required for a particular reason: to promote the participation of the populace in a single symbolic universe, a single worldview. In the twelfth century, the Good Christians embodied the local worldview and the representatives of the Church succeeded only in so far as they adhered to the expectations of the culture they were attempting to impress.

The Good Men and Women promoted a vision of local authority and stability, a vision of holiness that rejected wealthy simoniacal bishops and sacramentalism. In 1165, in their debate with the bishop of Lodeve, the Good Christians condemn the Churchmen:

> They said also that Paul stated in his Epistle what kind of bishops and priests were to be ordained in the churches, and that if the men ordained were not such as Paul had specified, they were not bishops and priests but ravening wolves, hypocrites, and seducers, lovers of salutations in the marketplace, of the chief seats and the higher places at the table, desirous of being called rabbis and masters, contrary to the command of Christ, wearers of alb and gleaming raiment, displaying bejeweled gold rings on their fingers, which their Master Jesus did not command; and they poured forth many other reproaches.[198]

[198] "A Debate between Catholics and Heretics" pp.189-194 in Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1969) pp.191-192.

The Church, meanwhile, promoted a vision of universality and authority grounded in a divinely-sanctioned hierarchy, linked to a venerable tradition of holy men and women, saints of all kinds, dating back to Jesus and before Him back to earlier covenants with God. In St. Bernard's words, to the Count of Toulouse in 1145: "at the voice of one heretic, have grown silent all the voices of prophets and apostles that had rung out in one spirit of truth to call together the Church in the faith of Christ out of all nations. Thus have holy oracles deceived! Thus are deceived the eyes and minds of all who perceive the fulfillment of the prophecy whereof they read!"[199]

Both the Church and the Good Christians have a compelling vision to offer their audiences grounded in the authority of Christian scripture and the spiritual needs of the people. Both groups are embedded in the region, in different ways, and each threatens to make the other irrelevant. This conflict changed as the Church changed, as the local political and economic situation altered, as the beliefs of both the Good Christians and the general populace were affected by debate, military expedition, and persecutions of various kinds. The struggle over the nature of good religion in the towns and villages of Languedoc proceeds along these lines, with each group asserting its own legitimacy and the "heresy" of the other, and establishing links to secular powers, garnering popular support, and generally seeking recognition from others of their status as the sole religious authorities of the region.

The Good Christians of Languedoc had the advantage of a religiosity grown up organically from the culture of the region, in a time when no one hand pressed too heavily on the countryside. In the absence of either strong religious representatives, or the

[199] "Bernard of Clairvaux against Henry"pp.122-126 in Wakefield and Evans, 1969, p.123.

power of any one secular ruler, the localism of the Good Christians reflected the conditions from which their practices were born. Spreading through a network of relationships and norms that were easily recognizable to the people of the region, the holiness of the Good Christians was already established by the time the Church responded to it, tied up with the ideas of courtesy and prestige that governed all social interaction in Languedocien culture.

The label "Good Man" (*bon ome* in Provençal or *bonus homo* in Latin) had a long history in the region. The term was originally a legal one, used to designate the officials of some local authority, a person designated to sit in judgment or to witness an important contract, a usage found in the tenth and mid-eleventh century documents.[200] Mark Gregory Pegg provides a full characterization of the Good Christians of Languedoc in his history of the Albigensian crusade, *A Most Holy War*:

> These new Good Men, far from embodying deference to a superior person, represented only themselves, each other, and their communities. Occasionally, a a 'prudent [or proven or tested or perfected] man' – *prodome* in Provençal, *probus homo* in Latin – was honored, and, though a less frequent term, the name was simply another way of saying 'good man'. The prestige and pervasiveness of the Good Men derived from an intense localism focused on a particular village or town or even a city like Toulouse, where fourteen 'prudent men of Toulouse and the bourg' shared authority with the comital court as early as 1120.[...] In the maintenance of this communal harmony, a fluid and episodic rhythm secured by day-to-day courtliness, one or two Good Men exemplified not just the routine sameness of all men but how, in periodic variations on this mundane theme, the holy could flare and flicker in a human.[201]

This description of the religiosity of the region could not be more different than the characterizations of the "heretics" that we are familiar with from the polemicists and missionaries from outside Languedoc. The religiosity of Languedoc's towns and villages

[200] Paul Ourliac "Juges et justiciables au Xie siecle: Les Boni Homines," *Recueil de memoires et travaux publies par la Societe d'histoire au droit et des institutions des ancien pays de droit ecrit* 16 (1994): 17-33

[201] Pegg, 2008, p.27

of in the twelfth century is a development of a region left, essentially, to its own devices for many generations. A picture emerges of an internal system of social relation that privileges stability, moderation, and discipline in a world without an externally imposed order.[202]

These religious Good Men and Women, these "Friends of God", with their questions about the nature of the world, about good and evil, about the true nature of Jesus' example, about the proper role of religion in daily life, are eventually identified with the *heretici provinciales*, the Albigensians, and the Cathars by Churchmen and later historians and scholars of religion. Although these labels all refer to the same individuals, the representations of the Churchmen and later historians mingle the religious identities of the Good Christians with a much larger, cohesive tradition and organization. They then attribute any differences between the actual people they meet and their own descriptions of "Cathars", as evidence of the heretics' secrecy.

The holiness of a Good Man or Woman is recognized by a standard that arises in the local villages and towns between the Garonne and the Rhone. Returning to Pegg's description:

> Yet the very use of 'good man' or 'good woman' to designate a person who was a 'friend of God' takes us straight into the way in which villages in the Lauragais understood holiness, the *bon omes*, and the *bonas femmas*. The holy was to be understood and embraced as something decidedly ordinary, as something accessible to any man or woman, as something capable of being switched on, felt, enjoyed, admired – even something by which some might be repulsed- in the most simple nods and most familiar words. Routinely polite actions, like unavoidable head-bobbing as one entered the low doorway of the *domus*, and the most

[202] R.I. Moore over a number of his works, develops a model of medieval society generally focused on this shift. For an exploration of these ideas in Moore's work and the influences on this conception of his, please see Edward Peters, "Moore's eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: Travels in the Agro-Literate Polity" pp.11-33 in Frassetto, Michael (ed) Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages: Essays on the Work of R.I. Moore (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006)

> common forms of address, like *bon ome*, when said and done at particular times and places, instantly transformed, pierced, relieved the burden of, even if for only a moment, the oppressive visible world of the Lauragais village. It was always within the watched, heard, and unavoidable activity of the ordinary that a silent, passive, and invisible extraordinary dwelt.[203]

The re-construction which Pegg is engaged in, here, is grounded in the testimony of the witnesses before Inquisitorial tribunals. This record is as close to the speech of the people of Languedoc as we can get. What is so compelling about the vision Pegg provides us, though, is that it provides us with an explanation for the growth and spread of religious difference in the Languedoc region, without depending on the supernatural explanations of the polemicists, or the tenuous lineages of later scholars.[204] It is impossible to understand the expectations of the populace or of the Good Men and Women without analyzing the culture from which they arose.

Before the Albigensian crusade, there existed in Languedoc a culture of courtesy and honor, privilege and rank, and a corresponding system for the transferal or claiming of rights and dignities in the social sphere. We have already discussed the important elements of the discourse community of Languedoc, but it is necessary to revisit a few important issues before considering how the suspicions of the Church are raised by this state of affairs. The importance of honor and courtesy in the system of *paratge* ('peerage') that is reflected in the songs of the troubadours and the legal records of contracts and land claims, suggests a complex system of social interactions made manifest in the physical spaces of the villages and noble holding of the region.

> This *cortezia* was not a stylish pastime, a mannerism without meaning; on the contrary, it organized time and space, governing them, controlling them, through prudent speech and behavior, through loving words and actions. Most important,

[203] Mark Gregory Pegg *The Corruption of Angels: The Great Inquisition of 1245-1246* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001) p.97.

[204] Eg. Cathars to Bogomils to Paulicians to Manicheans ...

> it was in modest variations and improvisations of quotidian courtliness that individuals tested, interpreted and so made sense of each other and their world. [...] The honor and prestige of being a good man (holy or otherwise) was such a profound demonstration of wisdom through moderation, of the achievement of communal stability through individual restraint, that these men really were (and were thought to be) the ideal embodiments of *cortezia*.[205]

Essentially what we are discussing is a system of social ordering through demonstrations of courtesy and respect, manners and etiquette, governing and shaped by the local communities of Languedoc, with the figures of the Good Man and Good Woman standing for the embodiment of these ideals. As discussed in the Chapter Two, authority and power in the region were not organized in clear rigid hierarchies such as the ideal of a "feudal hierarchy" might expect.[206] Claims and contracts were far more frequently governed by the notion of *convenienta*, a horizontal mutual pact and agreement. Land and wealth were apportioned equally among sons and daughters in a system of clear partible inheritance that encouraged diversity and blurred lines of ownership over individual plots of land and even buildings within a town. Courtliness and honor had as much to do with protecting personal claims to wealth and power,[207] by insuring their social recognition, as it did with enjoying social privilege. As Pegg points out, the honor of a man lay in the protection and communal recognition of his proprietary claims and rights, "to the point were the Latin *honor* and the Provençal *onor* were synonyms for land rights."[208]

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[205] Pegg, 2008, pp. 28-29

[206] Chapter Two, pp.54-55.

[207] Pegg also makes an interesting comment on the isolation of good women in houses of heresy, seemingly in the style of convents for girls and widows. This issue of the importance of property rights, combined with the custom of partible inheritance, suggests that the isolation and control of unmarried women, frequently noble, may in fact have been strategic on the part of brothers and fathers who wished to maintain control of the property of daughters and sisters: "The *fin'amor* of the troubadours was, when all was said and sung, less the perfect love given to and received from a noble lady than an overripe and overdone possessive passement entwining and entrapping a lady and her property" p.36.

[208] Pegg, 2008, p.31.

Cortezia, as part of the larger ideal of *paratge* that operated in the region prior to the crusade, can be seen as the local performance of identity, the recognition of claims and possessions. In this context, It is easier to understand the actions of the Good Christians in the story of the 1165 debate with at Lombers, the stories of "heretics" discussing religion with Eckbert of Schonau in 1163, or those "heretics" who oppose St. Dominic and St. Bernard. As we have seen, the Inquisitorial process focused on instances of courtesy to Good Men and Women as the what they classified as the "adoration" of heretics, an act which put the performer firmly in the position of a "believer in heretics", one of the *credentes.* From the perspective of the Good Christians, however, the desire to maintain the recognition of their claim to the sacred in their local community meant standing and debating with the external authorities, resisting outside claims and protecting their honor.. The struggle to maintain honor and local status was played out through the processes that govern all social action in the villages of Languedoc before the changes of the thirteenth century:

> In a world where the holy was as fragmented as honor, where the sacred ebbed and flowed through (and around) all humans, questions of holiness as much as questions of honor were answered through *cortezia.* The holiness of a good man lay in constant protection and communal recognition of his possessive claims and rights to the holy.[209]

The Good Chrisitans stood in their communities as sources of holiness, through the performance of proper *cortezia* towards them. The interaction not only reinforces the holiness of the one but increases the holiness of the other, both walk away from the exchange having gained, socially. Similarly, the Good Christians' claim on the sacred is reduced if respect is transferred to some other source of holiness. The presence of the

[209] Pegg, 2008, p.34.

"heretic" characters in the stories of the century leading up to the crusade against the Albigensians may be understood if one sees these challenges not only from the perspective of the orthodox recorders of events, but from the potential local significance attached to a public disputation on religious belief and the nature of a truly holy person. Instead of seeing these Good Christians as the local representatives of a "heretical church", one can see them as the representatives of the local community who have the reputation of being holy men, themselves, called to defend this reputation before an external, and therefore suspect, authority.[210]

Part II: Expectations and Suspicion

With this representation of the Good Christians in mind, the 1165 encounter between the bishops at Lombers and the "heretics" they summoned to appear before them provides some insight into the clash of discourse communities occurring in these encounters. The two sides as they are depicted in the narrative, each with their proper expectations and ideas about authority, completely fail to engage with each other, at times playing to the audience, at times simply misunderstanding each other. The original text appears in a collection of descriptions of councils from the region (*Acta concilii Lumbariensis*) but Wakefield and Evans, in their introduction to the translation of the material provide us with an interpretive gloss:

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[210] There is a danger of taking this representation to constitute a statement of the "truth about the heretics of Languedoc" of the kind we rejected in Chapter Three. I'd like to reemphasize the distinction between the minimum descriptions made in this work, and the speculative theories of those who want to explain the hidden truth of the heretics. The minimum description is what is required to explain the record we have, taking descriptions of the Good Christians largely at face value. Because this work is about the power of secrecy as a strategic tool in religious conflict, we want to limit the degree to which we depend on hidden connections or secret teachings in defining the participants in the conflict.

> The spread of heresy in Languedoc met no consistently effective resistance during the second half of the twelfth century. The Church was everywhere in low esteem, its authority discredited by the sorry character of certain of its ministers. The teaching of the Cathars made an appeal to some elements in every class and locality; their proselytizing was tacitly permitted when it was not actively abetted by nobles of the countryside and burghers of the towns. Attempts by local ecclesiastics to curb Catharist influence little availed, as the following account shows. [...] The procedure followed at Lombers – confrontation of heretics and their accusers in open debate before judges – became not unusual in Southern France in the following years. The episode at Lombers is included here primarily because it illustrates the growth of heresy in the region and the increasing boldness of heretics.[211]

Unlike the vision of the religiosity of the Good Christians presented above, Wakefield and Evans see the incident at Lombers in 1165 as confirmation of the stories about heresy told by the Church. Taking into account what we know about the culture of *paratge,* and the nature of the *cortezia* it operated by in the villages of Languedoc, the debate at Lombers can be interpreted to illustrate not the "spread of heresy", or the "boldness of heretics", but the alienation of the populace from the worldview of the Church, and the strength of the local expectations of holiness which these bishops had failed to meet. The suspicion of the Good Men is that, far from being interested in the correctness of particular beliefs, the Church was interested in money and power. The Good Men's suspicion, revealed in the record of their speech at the council, is that the religious elements of this debate are a ruse. In the Good Men's words (as recorded by the Church scribe): "The heretics retorted that the bishop who delivered the sentence was a heretic, not they; that he was their enemy; that he was a ravening wolf, a hypocrite, an enemy to God, [...] and they were prepared to prove by the Gospel and the Epistles that he was no good shepherd, neither he nor the other bishops and priests, but rather they

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[211] Introductory preface to "A Debate between Catholics and Heretics" pp.189-194 in Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1969) p.189.

were hirelings."[212] The Good Christians suggested that the charge of heresy against them covered other motives.

The response attributed to the bishop makes the cultural gulf clear: "The bishop replied that the judgment found against them was based on law. He was prepared to uphold it in the court of the Catholic Pope, Lord Alexandre, or in the court of Louis, king of France, or in the court of Raymond, count of Toulouse, or in the court of Trencavel, who was present [...]" The bishop's appeal followed the line of authority directly down the ladder from Pope, Emperor, King, Count, Viscount. He claimed that his charge of heresy against the Good Christians is based on a law recognized in all the courts of the land. It completely ignores the local web of authority (the knights present) or the basis of the authority of the Good Christians (lifestyle, local reputation and Scripture).

The statement of faith made by the Good Men near the end of the debate did not alter the bishops' impression of them. The questions the bishops asked made clear the type of error they suspected these "heretics" of being guilty of, and the Good Christians' overt claims of mostly correct belief were not sufficient to allay those suspicions. The questions from the bishop ranged over the gamut of heresiological commonalities: "In the first instance, the bishop of Lodeve , [...] asked those who chose to be called Good Men whether they accepted the law of Moses, the Prophets, the Psalms, the Old Testament, and the doctors of the New Testament", "second. he asked about their faith, as they themselves were wont to expound it. In reply they said they would not speak to that point unless forced to do so", "third he asked them about the baptism of children", "Fourth he questioned them about the body and blood of the Lord", "Fifth he asked them about

[212] "A Debate between Catholics and Heretics", Wakefield and Evans, 1969, p.192.

marriage and if husband and wife who were carnally united could be saved.", "Sixth he questioned them about repentance", finally there is a list of there "unsolicited statements." Their responses, when they chose to share their opinions with the bishop, are not exactly what the Church would recognize as "orthodox" answers.[213] They accept only the new Testament, believed that the consecration of the host could be effected by any good man, quoted the apostle Paul in their opinion about marriage and salvation, and replied that St. James said that the sick could confess to anyone.[214]

Their confession of faith, as presented, reiterated the points they had already spoken on but in answer to the bishop's questions and added elements like: "We believe in one God, living and true, triune and one", that the body of Christ is "not consecrated except in the Church and also unless by a priest, whether he be good or bad", that everyone should "be baptized by a priest in a church" and they round it out with "if there be anything further in the Church that can be shown from the Gospels and the Epistles, that we will accept and confess."[215] This particular group of Good Christians sound more like reformers than Manichean heretics, like individuals who had more access to the New Testament than they did to Church doctrine or regular exposure to sacramental theory. Unfortunately, the bishops asks them if they will take an oath to uphold and believe this faith and the Good Men refuse, as they considered it "contrary to the Gospel and Epistles". It is at this point that their questioner pronounces his judgment: "the heretics hold wrong opinions in the matter of oath-taking. They ought to take oath if they wish to

[213] They aren't particularly dualistic or "Manichean" either.

[214] "A Debate between Catholics and Heretics", Wakefield and Evans, 1969, pp.190-193.

[215] Ibid., p.193. Just to be clear, the Good Christians are making their criterion clear here and it is not obedience to the Church. Saying that they are willing to accept anything if it comes from scripture is difficult to argue with as criterion for Christian practice, but it constitutes a rejection of blind obedience.

be reasonable, and an oath should be taken when the faith is in question."[216] The matter comes to a conclusion, with everyone agreeing, apparently, that the Good Christians are heretics and should receive no support from the knights of Lombers. Because of the agreed-to preconditions of the debate, the Good Christians are free to leave at that point, without any actual consequences beyond the label of "heretic".

The bishop's focus on the issue of oath-taking in the final pronouncement of heresy serves to validate the representation of the Good Christians not only as obstinate misfits with bizarre stubbornness on the issue of swearing oaths, but rather as liars who fear to swear on the contents of the deceptively "non-heretical" seeming elements of their profession of faith. Whether the Good Christians actually lied, or actually felt that they had scriptural authority behind their refusal to take the oath, is impossible to discern. Perhaps they felt that the bishop was not the type of person who could demand an oath on the contents of their faith. It is difficult to tell from the record, but the formula they use to open their profession of faith is interesting:

> When, indeed, they saw that they were overcome and confounded, they turned to the whole people and said: "Listen, good people, to our faith which we will declare. We do this now, moreover, out of love for you and your sake." The aforesaid bishop replied, "You do not say that you will speak for the sake of the Lord but for the sake of the people." [...][217]

It is pushing the evidence too far to read contempt for the bishop in the tone of this episode, but the Good Christians did appeal to the assembled populace in a way that making clear that they were not impressed by the bishop but also wanting to avoid misleading anyone present about their position. It seems fairly clear that they resisted giving the appearance of submitting to the bishop's demands in this case, and later by

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[216] Ibid., pp.193-194.
[217] Ibid., pp.193.

refusing to swear an oath on the profession they had just made, they again seemed to be rejecting the status and authority of the bishop as a "mere hireling" making demands of Good Christians.

The bishops' suspicions of these men, that they are engaged in overthrowing the Church, with the support of the local nobility, are clearly grounded in the twelfth century stories about heresy. The questions posed by the bishop suggest the issues that occur again and again in these stories and indicate "Catharist" tendencies of rejecting marriage, criticizing the sacraments, denying the human elements of Christ's story, and so on. The word "Cathar" is never used in the record, though it appears in Wakefield and Evans' introduction to the translation. From the Church's perspective, regardless of the labels, these "heretics" are the same as all the other heretics the Church has had to deal with over the years.[218] Whatever appearance of holiness they may put on, for the purposes of deception, they are evil in substance.

The suspicions of both groups are based on their expectations, their preconceived notions about the nature of their opponents which provide, for them, a hidden meaning in the process of debate. Duplicity and deception in speech undermines the sense of the encounter creating a situation in which both parties walk away with their suspicions confirmed. There is no real communication between the groups.

The question is not so much what the true beliefs of the Good Christians were, or what the true motives of the bishop may have been, but rather what the presentation of the secret meaning of a suspicious normalcy means in light of what the Church

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[218] As the Lateran IV canon 3 will put it in 1215: "condemning all heretics under whatever names they may be known, for while they have different faces, they are nevertheless bound to each other by their tails, since in all of them vanity is a common element" see p.233 in Norman P. Tanner S.J. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils vol. I Nicaea to Lateran V* (Georgetown University Press, Sheed & Ward, 1990)

representatives already believed about heresy, and in light of what uses this idea of "suspicious normalcy" was eventually put. The Good Christians' attempts at Lombers to avoid being labeled "heretics", their self defense which included avoiding swearing an oath on the nature of their beliefs, reinforced the Church's concerns about deceptively pious, normal-seeming Christians who are, in fact, hidden heretics. This record of this debate provides evidence for the Church of the existence of hidden heresy in the region supported by the local knights. Heresy is public, a social interaction, and one might be tempted to locate it in the Good Christian's alterations of theological concepts and their denials of sacramental tradition. In fact, the telling elements of the story are when the heretics refused to answer the questions of the bishop "unless forced to do so", when they rejected the judgment of the bishop and when they refused to swear an oath.[219] These negations and rejections are the substance not only of secrecy and a refusal to speak, but of public, stubborn, refusal to recognize the authority of the Church, to obey the Church without coercion, to be transparent regarding errors and accept the Church's right to judge. The Good Christians described in the scene at Lombers were perhaps not "Cathars" and almost certainly not secret Manicheans, but they were definitely heretics in the Church's eyes, as much as the bishop is a heretic in theirs.

The idea of strategy, here, returns us to a consideration of the goals of both Good Christians and the Church in the region..Success for the "heretics" was seen by the Church as a kind of infection, a corruption spreading further, a threat to the rest of the body of Christ. This is a misapprehension of the goals of the "heretics". Success for the Church entailed conversion of the people, purification of the land, the repression of

[219] The Biblical injunction regarding oaths appears in the gospel of Matthew 5:33-37. Despite the authority of this source the bishop's interpretation of this refusal is that it is suspicious or irrational.

challenges to personal or institutional authority. Even Wakefield and Evans make a reference to "heretical proselytizing" in their introduction to the debate at Lombers. Their interpretation follows the Church model of deviant beliefs being spread by "heretical missionaries". However, Pegg's description of the Good Christians suggests that their goals were stability and the maintenance of social order, as embodiments of the ideals of *cortezia*. These figures are not interested in converting anyone to any view. Their goal is a kind of status quo, moderation, social and communal stability. They are representatives of communities, who have the status they have, locally, because of the value their communities recognize in them. Their engagements with the Church in debate are personal, to some degree, in that they are forced to defend the status they have before outsiders in order to maintain and protect their communities from outside disturbance. The Good Christians' views on the goals of the Church, the way they serve as hirelings, seeking wealth and power, are attempt to explain away the presence of the bishops with their accusations as a clear power grab from hirelings working on behalf of external forces. This interpretation explains away the possible that the Church saw a real problem in the loss of their authority in the region, a serious religious problem in the spread of evil teachings and practices by people outside the umbrella of the Church.

Strategically, the Good Men are playing a defensive game already, even before the use of force against their communities, they are defending their own status and privilege in their communities by confronting and resisting external agents. When they speak, it is "to the people, out of love, for their sake" as they say in the Lombers debate. The "heresy" of the people of Languedoc lay in this intense localism. The irony of the situation is that the religiosity in question depends on interaction, social relationships,

public preaching and sermon, to exist, it is the furthest thing from 'secret' one can imagine. Although they are accused of being deceptive and secretive, their faith depends on communal recognition and social interaction. As embodiments of *cortezia* the Good Christians of Languedoc were not proselytizing figures on the edge of society, they were the exemplars of normative behavior. The religious among them may have been seen as living an ideal, but through etiquette and honor they brought the sacred into the community and made it part of everyday interactions, made it available and accessible. The lifestyles of the Good Christians made them into symbols of the divine in the world, and it put in their hands two religious tools that the Church expected to have a monopoly on: the power of blessing and that of public preaching. The social function of the Good Christians, to create access to the holy for the villagers and townsfolk of Languedoc, meant that their public speeches on religious topics and the transferal of merit to others through social interactions and blessings were interpreted by the Church as co opting the sacramental function and authority to promulgate dogma seen as the sole property of the priesthood.

Part III: Norms of Public Communication

In Languedoc particularly, though everywhere in Christendom, the practice of public speech and skillful use of words were particularly valued in relation to reputation and social standing. A debate between authorities on religious issues was an important educational and entertainment event,

> The composition and performance of general sermons before large communal audiences was a fundamental responsibility of mature Good Men. The Good Women almost never preached before 1220; if they did it was always in the

> seclusion of their own houses before other Good Women. The necessity to hear and evaluate sermons on the relationship of humanity and divinity, while common to all Christians from the Mediterranean to the North Sea in the twelfth century, was unusually intense between the Garonne and the Rhone. Crowds traveled from village to village to hear Good Men, monks, priests, and other holy persons explain the meaning of existence, either alone or in debate with one another. [...] The talent and skill that a Good Man displayed in his preaching, always judged and appraised by his audience, complemented and enhanced his accumulated honor and holiness.[220]

The importance of public speaking of this kind, of responding to challenges to authority, of being recognized as having a right to speak, all of these counter-indicate the idea of secret "heresy".

In the land of the troubadours, the style and substance of the speech was important, the performance of a fine sermon was honorable.[221] An unwillingness to engage in debate marked the individual as unworthy of support, at least that is the claim made about the "heretic" Henry in his flight from St. Bernard in 1145, according to Bernard's secretary on the mission to Languedoc, Geoffrey:

> The abbot spoke in the villages which he [Henry] had led astray; his comrades willingly testified their faith in eternal life in the hearing of the people. Some of the knights we found obstinate, not, it seemed to us, through error, but through greed and evil will. They hated clerks and enjoyed Henry's jokes, and what he told them gave them a reason and an excuse for their malice. All of them however, now said that they would support him no longer, because he had fled from debate with the abbot.[222]

A willing audience, the recognition of authority, the honor of representing a set of beliefs or practices in public debate, all of these things are issues of openness and silencing that speak directly to social norms of communication. What should be shared, and who has a right to particular kinds of information and particular kinds of speech are

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[220] Pegg, 2008, pp.40-41.
[221] Pegg, 2008, pp.41.
[222] See "Henry: St. Bernard's Mission, 1145" pp.41-46 in R.I. Moore's *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (Edward Arnold, London, 1975), p.43.

important aspects in understanding the social life of secrecy. Before the Albigensian crusade, for all the suspicions of secrecy appearing in the records, and the accusations of hidden motives implied and explicit in the stories themselves, one of the keys to success in the religious conflict between the Good Men and the representatives of the Church was compelling public speech that conforms to popular expectation in its performance. It is ironic that, in the beginning, the real problem faced by Church authorities was not "silent heretics" or "hidden heretics". The problem was the need to undermine, and reveal the true meaning of, an overabundance of religious speech from bold confrontational Good Christians, that the Church wanted recognized as "heretics".

The primary issue with the region of Languedoc in the twelfth century is the growing awareness of a loss of respect and prestige for the Church and its practices in the general populace of Languedoc. As St. Bernard put it in his letter to the Count of Toulouse before beginning his mission in 1145: "Churches are without congregations, congregations are without priests, priest are without proper reverence, and, finally, Christians are without Christ."[223] Obviously, for Bernard, the absence of the Church means an absence of Christianity altogether, though the Good Christians would disagree. Bernard continues: "sacraments are not deemed sacred; solemn feast days are stultified. Men die in their sins. Souls everywhere are snatched away to the dread tribunal, alas, unreconciled by penance, unfortified by the Holy Communion." Bernard is not in a position to know that a local response to the crisis he is seeing in 1145 has already developed, that the Good Christians provided for their community what the Church did not, through a process of transference of merit, referred to as *melhoramen* in Provençal,[224]

[223] "Bernard of Clairvaux against Henry" pp.122-126 in Wakefield and Evans, 1969, p.122.
[224] Pegg, 2008, p.34.

merit accrued through lives of scrupulous *cortezia* and transferred by the same. In what the manual of Inquisition would later categorize as "adoration of heretics", the respect and honor shown to a Good Man or Woman, while reinforcing their status, added to the holiness of the "adorer", it improved them, perfecting them incrementally. The social interactions of the normal person with the religious good people of the village, the integral communal recognition of their possessive claim on the holy, was the local system that stood in the place of the sacraments of the Church: confession, the consecration of the host, last rites, etc. The Church's notion of the mediation of the Holy Spirit through ecclesiastical channels was challenged by the blessing and power of the local embodiments of virtue. Pegg refers to the *melhoramen* in his *Most Holy War*, as the "exemplification of all the potential variations of *cortezia*".[225]

This strict courtliness that governed the interaction of those more holy with those less, and the transference of merit that occurs in the process, both ways, is of course not hidden, not secret. The social interactions that define the identity of the Good Men and Women of Languedoc are versions of the everyday open interactions of the entire populace, it is only the participation and relative status of the Good Man that differentiates the normal social interactions of the inhabitants of the region from the *adoratio* of *credentes* toward the *prefecti*. These exchanges become the bedrock of the Inquisition into heretical depravity because they are public and visible, serve their role only when witnessed, unlike the speculative never-heard secret doctrines and never-witnessed secret meetings of the heretics where they engage in their blasphemous depravity.

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[225] Pegg, 2008, p34.

The focus on the suspicions of the Good Christians, and the suspicions of the Church authorities is only part of the story. "Heresy", or the religiosity of the Good Men and Women, was being supported by the populace. The entire region of Languedoc was seen by the Church as a land of heresy, poisoned and corrupt. As the author of the *Historia Albigensis* puts it, in the early thirteenth century:

> The root of bitterness springing up was now so deeply rooted in the hearts of men that it could not longer be easily dug out. Time and again the citizens had been strongly urged to renounce heresy and drive out the heretics, urged by men following the ways of the Apostles, but with little success; their listeners had abandoned life and were determined to cling to death. Infected and diseased with a worthless animal cunning, earthly and devilish in its nature, they knew nothing of the true wisdom which comes from above and is easy to be entreated and in harmony with virtue.[226]

The real problem, then, was the audience. It is the audience who listened to a debate between a bishop and Good Christians and evaluated for themselves the relative worth of the sermons and arguments they heard, as though the two sides were equal competing groups. This audience had some standards it used to judge what was compelling and what was not, some familiarity with religious arguments and good debating. This standard was not entirely dissimilar from the rest of Christendom's, in that the success of miracles and the appearance of holiness seem to succeed for St. Bernard (1145) and St. Dominic (~1200), according to the hagiographies, at least. The Good Christians' status depended on being the embodiment of religious values as well as social ones, themselves. Both the Good Men and the Church authorities sent to debate them were shaped by popular opinion.

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[226] Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernai's *Historia Albigensis,* translated by W.A. and M.D.Sibly in *The History of the Albigensian Crusade* (Boydell Press, 1998) p.8.

Part IV: Popular Opinion in a Land of Heresy

Beyond meeting the expectations of the crowd in public debate, and being present in their lives as conduits of the sacred, those recognized as truly religious needed to conform to social expectations of a holy person, and in this time that meant *imitatio Christi*, living an apostolic life. As the Good Christians in the debate at Lombers in 1165 make clear, their example, their source of rules for living, is the New Testament: "only the Gospels, the Epistles of Paul, the seven canonical Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse."[227] One imagines that the idea of the holy life in the minds of the audience was less detailed, grounded in popular conception more than scriptural authority, but the centrality of the Scriptures in the lives of the religious would be part of this image.

There is not one *vita apostolica* that all Christians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries share, but with the power of miracle stories and the stereotype of the wandering ascetic preacher, one can point to the elements that resonate with the audience of these missions and debates. In 1147, the monk Heribert wrote a letter, from the town of Perigueux, to the Pope, warning of the "heretics" in the region and their success at "converting" the locals:

> I, Heribert, a monk, wish to announce to all Christians how warily they should deal with the pseudoprophets who are endaevouring to subvert Christianity, for numerous heretics who say that they follow the apostolic life have appeared in the neighborhood of Perigueux.[...] Very many persons have already gone over to this deception, not only some who abandoned their noble status, but also the clergy – priests, monks and nuns. No one is such a rustic that, if he but ally himself with them, he may not become in the space of eight days so wise a scholar that *he can be overcome neither in discussion nor in citation*. There is no way to confine them, for when they are captured, no chains will hold them, because the devil himself sets them free. Thus, perversely, they desire and seek out persons to

[227] "A Debate between Catholics and Heretics", Wakefield and Evans, 1969, p.190.

> torture or execute them. They perform many prodigies: wherever they have been bound with iron shackles and placed in a wine tun turned bottom side up, with the strongest guard posted, they were not to be found on the morrow until they again disclosed themselves of their own free will; a wine cask that was recently emptied was found full in the morning. They also perform many wonders.[228](emphasis mine)

Although Heribert frames the success of these heretics as evidence of diabolical support, his warning makes clear the effectiveness of the preaching and lifestyle of the "heretic" as fundamental to their appeal among people of all classes. We have already seen the temporary successes of St. Bernard and Dominic, where these elements of poverty, humility, and demonstrated access to the sacred are compelling, if only for a time, to the people of Languedoc. Erudition and style, the appearance of an apostolic life, all these combine to create compelling religious figures in the popular life of Languedoc, and in fact all of Christendom. As Pegg points out in his discussion of "holy mimesis":

> The Good Men, sharing God's honor and showing His love in the world, followed the Apostles and imitated His Son. [...] This holy mimesis defined Latin Christendom from the end of the eleventh century until the beginning of the sixteenth. The Good Men modestly conformed to this model of the Saviour. Nevertheless, his footstep to a good man and his gait to a Cistercian, though similar, were still distinct.[229]

Obviously, the withdrawal from daily life pursued by the monastics was a kind of apostolic life far different than the embedded-ness of the Good Christians in the mundane reality of Languedocien society. This situation changed when the mendicant orders were founded in the early thirteenth century, but before then the Church could offer the people of Languedoc no permanent alternative that adhered to their vision of the ideal religious life, there is only the worldly power of the bishops and the withdrawal of the monks.

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[228] "A Warning from Perigrueux", Wakefield and Evans, 1969, p.138-139.
[229] Pegg, 2008, pp.47-48

The region of Languedoc, with its particular idea of the religious life grounded in *cortezia*, and the localism that resisted external authority, developed its own religiosity not only outside the control of the Church of Rome, but competing with it, locally, for a possessive claim on the holy. The Church's successes in debate or mission during the twelfth century are never sufficient to cause the people to "drive out the heretics" because the "heretics" were simply the citizens of Languedoc. The Good Men and Women were just that, whoever in the society who was understood to be living a good life. The religious among them, the people the Church defined as "perfected", or completed, "heretics" were really just whoever the local people recognized as their authority on religion, whoever has successfully made the claim through lifestyle, learning and charisma to be in touch with the divine.

Before the Albigensian crusade in 1209, "conversions" back to the Churchamounted to recognizing the personal holiness of a figure like St. Bernard or St. Dominic. These are episodic victories wherein *cortezia* swings the recognition of the populace toward the representative of the Church. A well-spoken sermon, a miraculous sign, etc... would be recognized as a sign of holiness. Although the Church explained its failure in the region with reference to the works of the devil, and the secret depravity of the "heretics", the true difficulty lay in the fact that it was the culture of the region itself they were opposed to. The people accepted the Church when its representatives met the standards of holiness recognized among the people. The nobility of the region were responsible for the suppression of the heretics, and the Church didn't realize it had asked them to repress and drive out the pillars of their society. The people, called before a council or before their archbishop, were asked to inform on anyone who adored or

supported the "heretics". This amounted to asking them to denounce courtliness to a religious person, to denounce people trapped in a code of social interaction. Pegg gives a good example of this in his text on the Toulousian Inquisition (1233), *The Corruption of Angels*, when he tells the stories of formal respect given to the Good Christians by non-believers:

> Esteve de Vilanova's acts of adoration seem to be ordinary expressions of village politeness, a couple of courteous hellos and goodbyes performed in the style he knew to be correct when in the presence of the *bon omes* and their believers. By contrast, Raimon Capel and Marti de Verazelh's sly civilities, with a dropped word here and half-bow there (deceits obviously stressed for the benefit of the friar-Inquisitors), are nevertheless examples of two men constrained by a specific situation, and this singularity is important, that they adored more out of esteem for family and friends than as an acknowledgment of genuine belief in the *bon omes*. "On account of the familiarity that my parents had with heretics," the knight Guilhem Garsias of Fanjeaux explained, "I did those things that it is right to do with heretics, not owing to any faith or belief I had in them."[230]

These are post-crusade accounts, which means that the understanding among the people of who was or was not a "heretic" has changed significantly. There is serious physical danger in showing respect to any religious person outside the Church's hierarchy at this point. Yet people still feel the power of these local bonds of family and politeness. It is not surprising that the periodic missions and warnings to abjure heresy failed to solve the "problem of heresy" in the region. Even when the Church sent impressive individuals to the region to preach the "true faith" these individuals succeeded only insofar as they reinforced the local expectations about religion and the religious expert.

If we look at "heresy" as a social problem, rather than a doctrinal one, we can see that the accuracy of the Church's claims about the nature of the heresy of the Good Christians are fairly irrelevant except that they reinforce and explain the nature of the

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[230] Pegg, 2001, pp.94-95

threat according to preconceived orthodox heresiology. Regardless of the hidden teachings involved or the diabolical agency at work, the social effect of the "heretics" is the same. This tradition of dealing with diversity and innovation in Christianity appears in the oldest records of the Church's cherished tradition. Frequently referenced by polemicists is the Pauline condemnation of Manichean-type belief and practice in the New Testament's first epistle to Timothy:

> [1] The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. [2] Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. [3] They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. [4] For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, [5] because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.[231]

If the Church expects to find hypocritical liars who forbid marriage and practice forms of ascetic denial in Languedoc, it has a long history of such heretics sprouting up in the New Testament, Augustine's work and over and over throughout its history. The origins of the Church's beliefs about the "true nature of the heretics", and thus their suspicions about the hypocrisy and secrecy of the heretic, are not difficult to understand. It must be appreciated, though, that the Good Christians did in fact represent an entrenched rival for the respect and social status of the Church in the region, and that the culture of Languedoc had shifted away from appreciating the power of kings, emperors and popes, and focused on the local scene, on its own particular diversity of claims and rights, respect and courtesy. While there may have never been any hidden diabolical orgies, or secret perverted teachings, the observed resistance to Church authority was

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[231] I Timothy (4:1-5) *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Edition* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

accurate. The growing conception of the region of Languedoc as a "land of heresy" is an accurate assessment of the Church's loss of standing in the region.

Likewise, the suspicions of the Good Christians, that the representatives of the Church accusing them of heresy are in fact "hirelings" and "ravening wolves in the clothes of sheep"[232] reflected the local loss of respect for the Church's claim on religious authority. The suspicion that these outsiders sought only to curry power and status in the local community by accusing the local religious people of heresy was not altogether wrong. The Church was concerned about its power in the region. It did worry about its influence with the local lords. However reasonable their behavior may have been from a local perspective, the Good Christians did resist the charges of the bishop in public. They were *de facto* heretics through this resistance, whether they saw themselves as such or not.

Both sides of the conflict entered into encounters with expectations about the nature of their opponent. Revealing the true nature of their opponents to the audience was their path to success in these types of debates (the lies, the hypocrisy of the other) This is the truth which their opponent would like to remain hidden. A century of such debates and public preaching reinforced the Church's perception of the power of heresy in the lands of the Count of Toulouse, and reinforced the heretics' position in the society as the champions of local custom and community values over the agents of external forces.

As the Church grew more and more aware of the influence of the "heretics" locally, they began to suspect not just individuals of harboring secret beliefs and practices, but communities of secretly supporting heresy. Their suspicion begins to turn

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[232] "A Debate between Catholics and Heretics", Wakefield and Evans, 1969, p.192

to the region itself, to recognize that their opponent is the culture of Languedoc, the populace regardless of rank or position. The "problem of heresy" becomes a problem of detection in a land where people pretend that there are no heretics, just "Good Men". This land, where people continually return to heresy is the problem. The crusade against the Albigensians was not against the heretics, directly. It was against the system which continually created and protected the heretics. In the eyes of the Church, the problem became the support given to heretics, the types of religiosity supported by the community as a whole.

In more and more detail the canons of the Church made clear the problem not just with heresy but with the appearance of heresy, the suggestion of it. Oaths of faithfulness are recommended, for every citizen over a certain age. Relationships were examined to determine who was interacting with whom and why. The power and willingness of the nobility were tested, to see if they could be trusted. The threat of a hidden organization of heretics set to overthrow and replace the Church, combined with the suspected "infiltration" of both ecclesiastical and noble circle with heretical sympathizers, explained the problem of Languedoc to the Church. The Church's solution to this problem was to "weed out" the heretics, remove them from society, and punish anyone who had ever supported them, and reconcile those who were willing to submit. The murder of the papal legate, Piere de Castelnau in 1208, at the hands of the Count of Toulouse was, as far as Innocent III was concerned, the final revelation that the people and nobility of Languedoc were precisely the type of lying, hypocritical, underminers of Christendom that he suspected they were. Moving up the line of authority, from count to king, Innocent III called for crusade and shifted the nature of the conflict from debate and

mission, to killing and colonization. From this period on the options available to the people of Languedoc were to recognize the power of the Church and the King of France or to fight. The imposition of external culture and religion on the people of Languedoc, meant that the public life of the Good Christians and *cortezia* was over, although they persisted, in secret, as a kind of hidden heretical organization with support from "sympathizers", a situation created by the Church's attempts to suppress "heresy".

CHAPTER SIX: RECORDS, COERCION AND DUPLICITY

This chapter deals with the period of the Crusade and the years following 1209 up to the late thirteenth century and addresses the use of secrecy in the transformed social landscape of Languedoc. The focus will be on the shift in power that allowed the Church to establish its own interpretation of events as the defining model for the interpretation of the lives of the people of Languedoc. The justification for the application of force to the problem of heresy came in the form a rhetoric of corruption and duplicity. The "heretics" of the region, the Good Christians, who were represented as the source of corruption, had to be removed before the region could be healed. The secretive nature of these "heretics", in the representations of the Church, created a situation that could only be addressed through diligent and systematic work by experts in heresy, aided and supported by the local knowledge of faithful lay people and the power and authority of the nobility. To understand the success of the Church in establishing its position as the defining one in the conflict with the "heretics" of Languedoc, we must look at how the Church established itself in the region with the power to coerce obedience; how the process of inquisition manipulated the discourse on religion through fear and secrecy; how the "heretics" dealt with being forced into hiding; and how the overall narrative about heresy serves to create the lived reality of the Good Christians of Languedoc.

Part I: Secular power and the new Southern France

The story of the crusade provides the necessary data for an analysis role of physical force in shaping social fact, and is therefore critical to the analysis of the use of

secrecy in religious conflicts. The twenty-year conflict beginning in 1209, between the nobility of Languedoc and the northern lords sent by the king of France had a dramatic impact on the course of events in the struggle for religious authority between the Good Christians and the Church.

In Chapter four, the case is made that the military defeat and 'reconciliation' of the region can be see as the Inquisitorial process writ large: collection of evidence in the twelfth century, accusation and denunciation in the early thirteenth, the confession and penance of the crusade and Inquisition. Underneath this representation of the transformation of Languedoc into southern France are the cultural and religious shifts in the region, precipitated by the threat of violence and excommunication. Elaine Graham-Leigh in her recent work on the Albigensian crusade, emphasizes the role of political and cultural power dynamic in the way that the crusade was organized and in the results. In her *The Southern French Nobility and the Albigensian Crusade* she focuses on the fate of the Trencavel family, its association with "heresy" in the record, "as case study of how their dealings with the crusade can be understood in the context of the complexities of the politics of twelfth-century Languedoc"[233] and that the nobility's behavior was affected by political considerations. Laurence Marvin, in his *Occitan War* , depicted the struggle as orginally over religious affiliation, but transforming over time into something else: "This war quickly mutated into a struggle over political control of the region, something its originator, Pope Innocent III, never intended."[234] The interpretation, in my work, of the effects of the crusade on the population of Languedoc and the situation of the Good

[233] Elaine Graham-Leigh's *The Southern French Nobility and the Albigensian Crusade* (Boydell, 2005) pp. 8-9.

[234] Laurence W Marvin *The Occitan War* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) pp. 1-4.

Christians should not be seen as an attempt to dispute Graham-Leigh's, nor Marvin's, realistic historical assertion that individuals' participation on either side of the conflict was determined by a variety of issues, beyond association with Good Christians or the Church. Although I am focused on the power of religion to shape and influence historical events, I do not mean to reduce the history of the Albigensian crusade to a purely religious conflict with black and white absolutes struggling for power.

The last chapter ended with the observation that the Church's efforts to suppress the Good Christians of Languedoc created the very underground movement that they suspected in the twelfth century. This occurrence justified the activity of the Inquisition in the thirteenth century. If the goal of the Church was to reconcile the region of Languedoc with the rest of Christendom, the demonization of the culture of *cortezia* and *paratge* that existed before the crusade, and its embodiment in the "heretics of Languedoc", was a powerful step in polarizing the local attitutes toward the Good Christians. Driven by self-preservation in the face of secular and ecclesiastical persecution, everyday people's interactions with Good Christians became something more than the *melhoramen* they had always been. The lives of the Good Men and Women were also transformed, no longer able to hold positions of public recognition, no longer able to move freely, no longer able to debate or teach, what remained was an echo of their former social positions. The religion of Languedoc was transformed under the pressure of the Church with the support of powerful secular forces interested, for their own sake, in promoting the Church's vision of Christendom.

The shift in the culture of Languedoc imposed from above is critical in the Church's strategy for demonstrating authority and social power. Where argument and

mission failed to provide compelling reasons for the populace to "abjure heresy", the use of personal, direct coercion compelled change in a different way.

As exemplars of the nature of the temporal powers, we will focus our analysis on the Counts of Toulouse throughout the period of crusade and post-crusade in Languedoc. The analysis will move from the Count of Toulouse at beginning of the crusade, Raymond VI, to Simon de Montfort, the military leader of the crusaders made Count at the Fourth Lateran council in 1215, to the last count of Toulouse, Raymond VII. These are the most powerful noblemen in the region, and their allegiances and attitudes towards religion have powerful implications for the conflict over religious authority. We have already, in Chapter Four, looked at the role that Raymond VI plays in the beginning of the crusade, but the other two personages serve to highlight the transformations of the region under French rule. The historical record paints Simon de Montfort as either a monster or saint, and the young Raymond as both national hero and collaborator with the king. These conflicting images, arising from Catholic and Languedocien camps, respectively, serve to outline the representations of temporal authority and give us a glimpse into the public construction of figures who can be said to epitomize the military conflict in the region.

So far our depiction of Raymond VI has been limited to the beginning of the Crusade, when he is accused of abetting the murder of the papal legate in 1208, and goes through a humiliating ordeal of penance to reconcile himself to the Church and salvage his honor from the crusaders.[235] Raymond's performance in the Crusade included attempting to protect his lands from the ravages of war. He was under continuous

[235] See Chapter 4.

pressure from the papal legates, who represented the Church in the crusader forces, to provide more support and demonstrate more willingness to repress heresy in his lands. Excommunicated in 1211[236], Raymond VI, then opposed the Crusaders directly and continued to struggle to preserve his place in Languedoc and to turn aside the Crusaders and the Church. Through various military actions the city and lands of Toulouse exchanged hands, with the support of the King of Aragon and his vassals, the count of Toulouse struggled on. A decisive blow was struck to Raymond VI's legitimate rule in the region in 1215, when Innocent III convened the fourth Lateran Council[237] and, as part of the proceedings, dealt with the war in Languedoc, specifically the rulership of the lands taken by Crusaders. The pope and the council decided to affirm Simon de Monfort as the rightful ruler of all of Languedoc, dispossessing Raymond VI and his son in favor of their loyal crusader and consolidating the entire region under the rule of Monfort. Raymond VI and his son were banished, and Raymond VI is described as saying: "I am completely overwhelmed that there should be a single person who could tell me that someone can legally strip me of my patrimony... and as for my son, who is ignorant of blame or sin, you have ordered that his land should be taken from him and you have agreed to his dispossession."[238] Raymond fought on, seeking to return to Toulouse, and with the aid of the counts of Comminges and Foix in September of 1217 he did, in a series of battles ending with Simon de Monfort's death in June of 1218. The Song of the

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[236] Raymond is excommunicated by the legate Arnau Amaleric for failing to meet the Church's demands to prove his obedience. The demands made of him were: dismiss all mercenaries by dawn, banish Jews and usurers, eat meat only twice a week, wear only dun-colored clothes, demolish castles, stop unjust tolls, visit the River Jordan as a pilgrim, become a Templar or Hospitaller, forbid nobles to live in towns, expel heretics. see Mark Gregory Pegg's *A Most Holy War* (Oxford University Press, 2008) p.108.

[237] For a good summary of the proceedings see Chapter 7 in Michael Costen's *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1997).

[238] Ibid., p.144.

Crusade describes Raymond VI's return to Toulouse as part religious allegory, part bloody slaughter:

> And when the Count made his entry into the city through the arched gateway, all the people ran to meet him, young and old, knights and ladies, husbands and wives, and they knelt before him, kissing his garments, his feet, legs, arms and fingers. He was acclaimed with tears of joy, for this was the return of prosperity, rich in flowers and fruit. And they said to each other,' Now Jesus Christ is with us, and the morning star, the star has regained its brilliance, because here is our lord who has been lost. *Pretz* and *Paratge*, which were in the grave, have found again their life and their strength and their health-giving capacities; our children and our children's children shall for ever be enriched.' Such zeal and valor filled their hearts that they picked up sharpened hatchets, bill hooks, stones and spears and ran through the streets chopping and slicing and slaughtering the French they found in the city, crying: 'Toulouse! The day has come when the usurper shall go, together with all his people and his wicked brood, for God defends the right, for the Count who has betrayed has, with a small force, asserted himself so strongly that he has recovered Toulouse.[239]

Although he continued to resist the forces of orthodoxy, now led by Simon's son, Raymond VI died of illness in 1222 in Toulouse at the age of sixty-six, and was placed, never buried, in the gardens of the Knight Hospitaller.[240]

Before outlining the role and significance of Raymond's son, it is necessary to return to the figure of Simon de Montfort, the rightful lord of all of Languedoc from the Fourth Lateran Council until his death in the battle of Toulouse described above. To understand the program of the Church and the sentiment of the region, it is important to see how this individual became a symbol for the cause he led. Simon's rule in Languedoc begins with that first summer of crusade in 1209 with the taking of Carcassone and his election by the legates as its new viscount. From that point on Simon leads armies of varying sizes to root out anyone resisting the Church, generally following the inspiration

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[239] Quoted in Barbara Wall's translation of Jacques Madaule's *The Albigensian Crusade* (New york: Fordham university Press, 1967) p.83

[240] Michael Costen, *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1997) p.151. Raymond VI is never interred on the grounds because he died excommunicated. His body remained in a casket above ground.

of the legate Arnauld Almaric. Chronicles like the *Historia Albigensis*, honor the man as the epitome of Christian leadership, after a paragraph complimenting Simon's physique, general character and valor, Peter des Vaux-de-Cernai continues:

> How wise the choice of the army's leaders, how sensible the acclamation of the crusaders! To have picked a man of such great faith as defender of the true faith; to have elected a man so in tune with the whole Christian world to take charge of the sacred business of Jesus Christ in the fight against the infection of heresy! How fitting it was that the host of the Lord of Hosts should be led by such a man, adorned, as I have said, with nobility of birth, integrity of character and distinction in war; how fruitful that such a man should be raised up for the defense of the Church in her peril, whose skillful protection would ensure that Christian innocence should survive unharmed and that the heretics, for all their presumptuous audacity, should not expect their hateful error to go unpunished; how splendid that one sprung from the 'Strong Mountain' should be sent by Christ, a veritable mountain, to stand by the foundering Church and defend her from the persecution of heretics.[241]

This description of Simon de Monfort, defender of the Church from the persecution of the heretics, comes after the destruction of the town of Béziers, and it is clear the the slaughter of that town's inhabitants, along with the many deaths to follow, form in the chronicler's eye, an important part of the "sacred business of Jesus Christ". The phrase "in tune with the Christian world" is also interesting, given the role Montfort plays in trying to transform the nature of Languedoc, actions that lead those who resist the invasion from the north to paint him as a monster. Simon's greatest contribution to the transformation at work, apart from killing "heretics" and replacing "abettors of heresy" with faithful northern rulers, was the creation of the Statutes of Pamiers in 1212, a set of guidelines for the rulership of his new lands. As Pegg describes it:

> Simon summoned a general council at Pamiers in November; apart from confirming him as a model Christian prince in forty-six inviolable customs, the explicit intention of the council was the transformation of the anomalous southern

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[241] Peter des Vaux-de-Cernai's "Historia Albigensis", translated by W.A. and M.D.Sibly in *The History of the Albigensian Crusade* (Boydell Press, 1998), p.57.

> landscape into the pure world of northern France around Paris. "Accordingly we, Simon, count of Leichester, lord of Montfort and by God's grace viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne and lord of Albi and the Razes," in consultation with noblemen and with the archbishop of Bordeaux, the bishops of Toulouse, Carcassonne, Agen, Perigueux, Couserans, Comminges and Bigorres, "now establish the following customs to be followed in all our lands." all "houses of heretics" were to be made into churches and given to priests (X). Anyone who allowed a heretic to reside on his land, whatever the motive, "let him for this single reason lose all his land forever (XI). No heretical believer, even if reconciled, could be a provost, *bailli*, or judge (XIV). No clothed heretic, even if reconciled, may remain in the village where he lived in perversion [etc...] Succession to inheritances amongst baron and knights, also townspeople and peasants," can no longer be fractious and partible, "but will take place according to the custom and usage of France around Paris" (XLIII). The ultimate custom, "on account of the danger to the land" banned noble widows or girls in possession of castles or castra from marrying local men for ten years without Simon's consent, although they nay marry Frenchmen if they wish.[242]

This is the clearest statement we possess of the social program at work to consolidate the lands of Languedoc in the hands of the French while transforming the culture of *paratge* into something recognizably French, like "around Paris". Mingled with the laws punishing heresy are the rules which seek to undermine a particular version of "honor" and "prestige" that had existed before the Crusade. We have already presented the eulogy composed for Simon in the Song of the Crusade, but we will return to it now to highlight the reputation of the man among those who resisted the French. The composer of the biting eulogy accuses Simon of gaining his reward in heaven by "killing men and spilling blood, causing the loss of souls, approving of murders, following evil counsel, lighting fires, ruining barons and besmirching *paratge,* by seizing lands and maintaining Pride, by stoking up wickedness and stifling good, by massacring women and slaughtering children"[243] Simon's death came suddenly, hit in the head during the

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[242] This is Pegg quoting from key elements of the record of Simon's 1212 council at Pamiers from Pegg 2008, p.122.

[243] See full eulogy in Chapter 2, page 54. see also Costen, 1997, p.148.

battle of Toulouse. His son never succeeded in holding onto the gains Simon had made in the region.

The next figure to move secular power grossly into the hands of the French and the Pope was, ironically, Raymond VII in his bid to reclaim his patrimony from Simon's son, Amaury de Monfort. Amaury's inability to maintain the lands captured by his father led to his ceding the rights to those lands to King Louis VIII, and it was threat of direct intervention by the King of France, and the suggestion of reconciliation from the Pope that led to Raymond VII's suit for peace which finally ended the crusading expeditions against Languedoc with the treaty of Meaux in 1229. The treaty stipulated that the King would restore the diocese of Toulouse, Agenais, Rouerge, Albigeois north of the Tarn river and Quercy except for Cahors, to the Count. The Count would lose his territories in eastern Languedoc, the marquisate of Provence (ceded to the Church, including Avignon, where the popes would move their residence). The Count also had to give his daughter in marriage to the King's brother, to whose family Toulouse would belong after his death, to the exclusion of any other children he might have. He also agreed to hunt down any heretics in his lands and pay a bounty of two silver marks for any brought in. He agreed to pay out several thousand marks in silver to various religious institutions and to found a university in Toulouse that he would support.

From the period of the Treaty of Meaux onward it was the Count of Toulouse, working with the Church and the King of France, who suppressed "heresy" in an attempt to prove his sincere desire to remain in power. Unlike his father, Raymond VII had no clear ties to the Good Christians, and was raised primarily outside of Languedoc during the years of turmoil surrounding the Crusades. The treaty of Meaux occured in 1229, the

letter from the Pope to the Dominicans in Toulouse is sent in 1233, the first formal "*Inquisitiones heriticae pravitatis*" is established in Languedoc under the authority of Raymond VI's son.[244]

These three secular lords, Raymond VI, Simon de Montfort, and Raymond VII, rule as Counts of Toulouse from the beginning of the thirteenth century up to the establishment of the Church's Inquisitions. They are the secular power in the region, the power required to support either the Good Christians or the Church. It is to them, to the other nobles of the region and finally to the populace, that each religious group directs its efforts. Ultimately, these men symbolize the struggle for power in the region in that each, in a different way, marks the transformation of the region's cultural and political landscape: Raymond VI as the symbol of the doomed old order struggling to survive and accommodate, Simon de Montfort as the bloody-handed imposer of foreign rule dominated by papal legates, and Raymond VII defeated inheritor of a region without a legacy, tied to the French monarchy for his legitimacy. The transformation of Languedoc into Southern France is not complete at the treaty of Meaux, the work of the Inquisition, town by town, village by village, can now proceed with the aid of local secular power.

Part II: Inquisition and the Culture of Resistance

As important as the cultural effect of the shift in power on Languedoc was, there is one final element of the crusade the should be discussed before we move onto looking at the use of secrecy by the Inquisition and the Good Christians. We have already spoken of Berger and Luckmann's prediction that religious experts, when in conflict, will rely on

[244] see Mark Gregory Pegg's *Corruption of Angels* (Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2005) p. 36.

the temporal power of the carriers of belief to settle the issue of their social standing. In other words that the victor in a religious conflict will not so much be the one with the most compelling argument, directly, but the one who manages to sway those with the most power to their side, and use that power to police the rest. We have already seen the Church's growing concern with not only heretics themselves but with the "carriers" of heresy, the abettors, the supporters of heresy. One brutal but effective method pursued in this religious conflict is, therefore, the elimination of those who harbour heretical belief.

With greater numbers, power, and, eventually, full support of the nobility, representatives of the Church, or their temporal allies, kill many Good Men and Women. These deaths not only remove potential sources of resistance from the populace, but they also provide a clear example of both the existence of heresy, and the identity of the heretics. Chapter five, focused on the pre-crusade cultural situation of Languedoc, emphasized the ambiguity and misunderstanding over the idea of who and what the Good Christians were, and presented a picture of Languedocien religiosity that challenged the Church's fear of a secret organization of Manichaean heretics. After the crusade, there was no doubt in anyone's mind who the heretics of Languedoc were, and that they opposed the Church, and that that was dangerous. The sheer number of dead Good Men and Women went a long way toward establishing the Church's position on the issue as the defining position. It is impossible to gauge the number of religious Good Men and Women who would have survived the purge that two decades of crusade would have inflicted on the communities of Languedoc, but those who did survive would have been the most stubborn, and the most secretive. From its own point of view, of course, the Church was eradicating the sowers of the seeds of "heresy". From the perspective of the

people of Languedoc, all local figures of religious knowledge and sacred power were being targeted, even while their lords and leaders were being replaced by foreign colonizers. The only evidence we have of the Good Men's response to this persecution is the evocation of the persecution of the early Church, a narrative that held some power in the minds of the populace. As Karen Sullivan points out in her *Truth and the Heretic*: "Guihelm Maury and Guihelm Belot instructed Peire, similarly, that heretics hide 'because of the lust for dominion of the Church, which persecutes them because these men observe truth and justice, just as the Apostles suffered persecution because they defended truth and justice.'"[245] The persecution by the Roman Church fit into the mold of the Good Men's biblical literalism and their vision of the apostolic life.

Regardless of the interpretation put on the activities of the Church, the effectiveness of killing the Good Men, strategically, must be recognized. Even from the point of view of the populace, if their local religious experts represented the penetration of the holy into daily life, then removing the physical presence of the Good Christians was effectively destroying the religious alternative to the Church's system. Although this activity did create resistance from those who saw the Church and its temporal allies as invaders, it also ended any ambiguity or confusion on the issue of religious authority, and dragged Languedoc out of its focus on local priorities and communal stability, by forcing the people to acknowledge the power of the Church and of the French monarchy, external powers to whom they all must answer.

The work of Inquisition, representing a local demonstration of the power of pope and king to reach into every village and town of Languedoc, is the final step in the long

[245] Sullivan, 2005, p.27.

process of reconciliation of the region into the whole of Christendom. The friar-Inquisitors represent the power of the Church of Rome, and rely on the power of local representatives of the king of France. Their work not only depended on this dual authority, it was an enactment of it in the lives of the people of Languedoc, a demonstration of the truth of the situation. The role of physical coercion in the process of inquisition was to force circumstances to reflect the theory of the Church. In the willingness to resort violence, the Church went beyond manipulating social fact (the construction of heretical identity, the transformation of inheritance and patrimony, the use of marriage and reproductive rights as aid in colonization, etc...) and forced its interpretation of events onto the physical bodies of communities, allowing the threat of physical danger to stand in for the spiritual danger of heresy. The end result was that the Good Men and Women of Languedoc had become as dangerous to their fellow villagers and townsfolk as the Church had always claimed the "heretics" were. That that danger arose from the punishments sentenced through the process of inquisition did not change the danger the idea of "heretics" represented to the people in post-Crusade Languedoc.

The secrecy used in the Inquisition process was balanced by its internal system of record keeping. The effectiveness of this strategy was to maintain the fear that allowed the whole system to operate while reinforcing the social changes that both the Church and the temporal powers desired. The rhetoric around the methods of the Inquisition was always practical, justified by the secrecy and deception of the heretics sought by the Church. Just as this construction of heresy had explained the earlier failures of the Church to garner the loyalty of the people, and had justified the violence of the crusade, the danger of secret heresy was used in the time of the Inquisition (1241 onward) to

explain the Inquisitors' practices of undermining local community loyalties and obscuring the process of inquisition from those it targeted, in order to catch the heretics in their lies and avoid giving them chances to escape justice.

The earliest record of the Inquisitorial process we have are the efforts of the Dominicans from Toulouse, two itinerant inquiries (1241-42 & 1243-44), and the larger stationary one operating out of Saint Sernin in Toulouse itself (1245-46). The change, from traveling through the villages to summoning the villagers to Toulouse occurred in response to a famous assault on the Inquisitors resting in Avignonet in 1242. Mark Gregory Pegg summarizes the rationale behind the change:

> One violent incident provoked this change: the assassination of Guilhem Arnaut and Esteve de Saint-Thibery at Avignonet by that group of *faidits* and heretical sympathizers during the night (Ascension Eve) of Thursday, 28 May 1242. The Inquisition at Saint Sernin happened in the way it did three years later, and Bernart de Caux and Jean de Saint Pierre followed certain forensic paths rather than others, because journeying through the Lauragais in the middle of the thirteenth century had become an unacceptable risk – despite the sustained pursuit of heretics by Raimon VII since 1243 and the total destruction of Montségur[246] in 1244. The murder of a cleric and an Inquisitorial courier, and the burning of the Inquisition registers they were carrying, at Caunes (near Narbonne) toward the end of 1247 would seem to lend credibility to this fear.[247]

The resistance to the Inquisition, the occurrence of violence not only against the bodies of Inquisitors and their collaborators, but against the registers of the Inquisition, is the active element of resistance, the counterpoint to the hidden movements and interactions of the remaining Good Christians. Both the 'sympathizers' and the dispossessed struggled to reinstate the old order of things. Like the assault on the courier in 1247, the attack on the Inquisitors at Avignonet combined violence against both the

[246] We will look at the destruction of Montségur in the next chapter on the end of the Cathars and their symbolic legacy, as important an event as historians of Catharism believe this to be, it has little importance to the use of secrecy in the conflict between the Church and the Good Christians. Its power is in the stories about its hidden un-recovered "treasure".

[247] Pegg, 2005, 36-37.

persons and the records, demonstrating how powerful and threatening the information gathering of the Inquisitions was understood to be by local people.

For those subjected to the process of inquisition the external secrecy of the process created the terror that motivated their compliance. The issue was not the truth of their interactions with "heretics", but rather their fear about creating the perception of being a believer in heresy. Facing an Inquisitorial court must have been a nerve-wracking event, telling the Inquisitors what they wanted to hear without knowing precisely what they already knew about you. This was the primary threat posed by the register, the accused had no idea what it contained, and it proved on a number of occasions to hide important information:

> Among the five thousand four hundred and seventy-one men and women interrogated by the two Dominicans, only seven hundred and fifty-eight had, apparently, ever confessed to a friar-Inquisitor before. Some, like Bernarta Trabolha of Saint-Paul-Cap-de-Joux, initially feigned forgetfulness about having ever spoken to previous friar-Inquisitors, but, when their old testimonies were inconveniently read back to them, they soon remembered their earlier confessions.[248]

Obviously the threat of the register is that it represents the internal transparency of the Inquisition process, that inside the institution the management of information is careful, and the records of individual appearances are important. The record was clear enough that individuals were sometime caught trying to hide their previous appearances. In short, the creation and sharing of a detailed record of relevant information among Inquisitors is a key tactic in uncovering the duplicity of the heretical populace. To undo the secrecy of the heretics a detailed record is needed, to catch them in their falsehoods.

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[248] Pegg, 2005, p.40.

The maintenance of a detailed searchable record of testimony from a variety of places in Languedoc, over several decades, is a serious achievement in information mangement.

The *Processus* is the earliest manual of Inquisition on record. This text contains guidelines put down by the two Dominicans at the request of the Pope, in 1248, during an assignment in Carcassonne. The manual also contains a reference to the other way that the register of Inquisition is important, strategically, to the success of the Church's social program in the region. The author's of the *Processus* describe the way that testimony is recorded, and it is important for our analysis, referring back, as it does, to the idea of discourse communities:

> Finally, after that which he has confessed about himself or testified about other persons on all these matters – and sometimes on others about which he was questioned, but not without good reason – has been written down, in the presence of one or both of us, with at least two other persons qualified for careful discharge of this task associated with us, he verifies everything which he caused to be recorded. In this way we authenticate the records of the Inquisition as to confessions and depositions, whether they are prepared by the notary or by another scribe.[249]

The process of reading back the witnesses' testimony and getting them to authenticate it is important, more important than it might seem, if one remembers the type of social transformation the Church is attempting. Pegg's commentary on the process will help to clarify the power of this practice:

> So, even without scribal editing, a man like Artau d'En Artigad knew what he had to say at Saint Sernin, knew, whether he believed it or not, that the good men were *heretici* for the Inquisition. How all this self-correction, this conscious relabeling a *bon ome* as a heretic, or hearing one's confession read back and recognizing that references to the *bons omes* and *bonas femnas* were sometimes reworded as *eretges* [heretics], actually affected an individual once he or she left Saint Sernin's cloister is open to speculation. However, there can be no doubt that

[249] see "A Manual for Inquisitors at Carcassonne, 1248-49" pp. 200-211 in Edward Peters' *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe: Documents in Translation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980) p.202.

> such a process, in its own small way, emphasized, for those still unsure, what constituted the two friar-Inquisitors' vision of the world.[250]

From the position of the social construction of discourse communities, the effect of this type of tutoring in the friar's worldview was not small. If every person who gave testimony before an Inquisitorial court had their statement read back to them in this fashion, and either self-edited or had their references to interactions with the Good Christians reworded as *adoratio* of *heretici*, which they then had to explicitly confirm as their own words, then the process of establishing the Church's worldview as the defining one for all the people of Languedoc was aided along with every individual sent home with this wording in their minds. Pegg gives the sum of five thousand four hundred and seventy-one men and women processed by Bernart and Jean, in an Inquisitional session that lasted only one year, when the Inquisition process was still going strong a century later. The effect of explicitly translating the words of the people of Languedoc into the idiom of the Church, and making them explicitly accept that interpretation of events as the truth, had to have had its cumulative effect in changing the discourse about religion and religious life in Languedoc.

The secrecy of the Inquisition process, the hidden contents of its registers and its information collection practices, can be juxtaposed with its ostentatious public action. The convening of the tribunal, the general sermon, the establishment of the period of grace, the citations for people to appear read in their local parishes at mass, and the marking of penitents with yellow crosses,[251] the skillful use of the public sphere makes the process a social presence in the villages of Languedoc. This public action is balanced

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[250] Pegg, 2005, p.60.

[251] for details of Bernart and Jean's process, see "A Manual for Inquisitors at Carcassonne, 1248-49" in Edward Peters' *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe: Documents in Translation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980) p.200-211.

with the obfuscation of the identities of accusers and contents of accusations made against any particular individual. Finally, the oaths of loyalty forced upon those who appear before an Inquisitor are designed to transform the processed populace into informers for the Inquisition, with penalties for those who fail to pursue heresy and support the "true faith". From the *Processus*:

> In individual as well as multiple summons, after describing the authority by which we issue them, which is on record for the region, we list in order of rank and locality the names of persons; we state the reasons for the summons; we assign safe places and the limit of delay without contempt. *To no one do we deny a legitimate defense, nor do we deviate from established legal procedure, except that we do not make public the names of witnesses, because of the decree of the Apostolic See, wisely made by Gregory [IX] and afterward renewed by our most blessed pope, Innocent [IV]*[252], as a prerogative and absolute necessity of the faith, on which point we have letters of confirmation from several cardinals. In this matter, we proceed according to the holy council of prelates, with all necessary prudence and are, as well in the case of those against whom Inquisition is made as in the case of those who are witnesses.
>
> We use this form in imposing penances and issuing condemnations: We require those who wish to return to ecclesiastical unity for that reason to abjure heresy again, and *we solemnly bind them by official affidavits to observance and defense of the faith, to the pursuit of heretics, and to active assistance in Inquisitions*, as stated above, and to acceptance and fulfillment of penance imposed at our discretion.[253] (emphasis mine)

The trouble caused by a failure to report a known heretic is demonstrated in the story of Guillem Berenger, told in Charles Molinier's *L'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France.* The story goes that Guillem had already been sentenced to wear crosses on account of his heresy, had served out his penance and removed them. On the nineteenth of October 1254, he is sentenced to put them back on (*quod resumat continuo dictas cruces cum brachiis transversalibus in omni veste*) for failing to arrest the heretic

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[252] This is vague, the rationale provided by Gregory for this policy is to prevent violent reprisal against accusers. See Albert C. Shannon "The Secrecy of Witnesses in Inquisitorial Tribunals and Contemporary Secular Criminal Trials" in *Essays in Medieval Life and Thought*, ed. John H. Mundy (New york: Columbia University Press, 1955), pp.59-69.

[253] "A Manual for Inquisitors at Carcassonne, 1248-49," Peters, 1980, pp. 202-203.

Raimond Monit, whom he saw in the public square of Limoux. "Il savait bien cependant que c'était un hérétique échappé à l'Inquisition". This failure earns him the punishment for being a dishonorable ingrate (*injunximus tanquam ingrato et indigno gracie sibi facte).*[254]

Obviously, the violence of the crusade, resentment toward the new foreign rulers, and the fear of punishment caused townsfolk and villagers to attempt to hide and cover up the things they thought would draw the ire of the Church and its temporal allies. In his *Corruption of Angels,* Pegg devotes a chapter to "Lies", which summarizes not only instances of witnesses contradicting earlier testimony in which they denied any knowledge of heresy, but also reports of attempts to threaten and silence those on their way to Saint Sernin in response to a summons. Testimonials include simple requests from *credentes* to deny any knowledge of them, communal oaths to deceive the Inquisitor (*pactum non revelando heresim*), and threats of overt violence.[255] The fear of heretics, whether fear of reprisals for informing or fear of the punishment of Inquisitors for interacting with them, is a strategic success for the "orthodox" in the conflict between the Church and the Good Men. even in defending themselves the Good Men are promoting the Church's goals.

Another form of resistance, though far different from violent reprisals like Avignonet, or the silencing of witnesses with fear, was the development of a kind of ambiguous mode of speech designed to encode participation in heresy. Karen Sullivan's book on representations of heresy in the region deals with this word-play and the

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[254] Original Latin record quoted in footnote 1 on p.321 in Charles Moliner's *L'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France* (New York: Burt Franklin 1972, originally published Paris, 1880)

[255] "Because one of these believers told him in no uncertain terms, that if he named any of them he would 'lose his head'" see Pegg, 2005, pp. 63-65.

confusion it caused: "The bond of trust between speaker and listener or, at least, between heretical speaker and orthodox listener is here seen as something that can be abused profitably in order to afford the heretic secrecy and protection from potential harm."[256] Sullivan refers to the use of the term "the Good" (or *Be* in Provençal) where sometimes 'the Good' refers to the heretics themselves, to their community of believers/supporters, and sometimes to the spiritual power that flows through the heretics.[257] In its application to secrecy, Sullivan explains,

> Even if the believers used multivalent words among themselves, as part of the jargon of their religion, it is also true that the used such terms among those of whom they were less sure, as a screening device. In their confessions, the villagers cite themselves and others as having used expressions, often based upon the root of "good" (*bonus*) or "well" (*bene*), in such an obscure manner that they are asked to specify how they understood what was being said. Azalais Azema remembers Raimonda de Luzenac's meeting her, embracing her, and telling her she loved her because her son Raimon went among the "Good People" (*bonis gentibus*) Raimonda then advised her "to be good [*bona*] and faithful, and to hold her tongue lest any misfortune occur because of her words, and not to do evil to any thing." [...] this code of "Good Men" "being" or "doing good," and "good things" which Raimonda and Azalais employed here would sound vague and meaningless to those not familiar with these terms but precise and meaningful to those familiar with them, and the believers appear to have exploited this gap in understanding.[258]

There is some evidence that the idea of "the Good" acquired a loaded significance in the speech of the terrorized supporters of heresy, particularly as a counter point to the Church's vocabulary of *adoratio, heretici, credentes,* and so on, well-known to those going through the process of inquisition. This is a difficult theory to explore, however, depending as it does on the code-users' conscious manipulation of social expectation. If applied too strongly it veers into the Inquisitorial argument made by Bernard Gui in his

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[256] Karen Sullivan, *Truth and the heretic, Crises of Knowledge in Medieval French Literature,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) p.33.
[257] Ibid., pp.33-35.
[258] Ibid., p.35.

fourteenth century *Manual of Inquisitors*: "In speech and words, they appear at first glance, to inexperienced eyes and lay people, to confess the true faith [...] but once we look more closely, we discover the truth, that everything they affirm with lies and duplicity, according to their own understanding of these things" (*omnia predicta dicant in duplicitate et falsitate secundum intellectum suum superius expressatum et declaratum*).[259] These types of arguments about the true meaning of secrecy become impossible to credit when the *lack* of evidence in the person's speech is the evidence you use to accuse them of secret-keeping. It ignores the possibility of the persistence of a community of discourse, now endangered, from before the period of the Crusade when this discussion of good people doing good things would not have been code for anything, it would have described events pretty transparently. While it is definitely true that the terms *bon omes* and *bon femnas* were multivalent in the region, and also true that the Inquisitors suspected double-speak and duplicity from even the most orthodox-sounding of the accused, it is dangerous to be too certain about the conscious use of the innocuous idea of 'goodness' as deliberate code in particular situations. Still, the idea of a preserved idiom transformed into code is too important to ignore entirely in this analysis of the heretics' resistance to the program of the Inquisition. This ambivalence, or multivalence, is the key to the mystery of the Good Christians, as frustrating to modern scholarship as it was to the Church's Inquisitions into heretical depravity.[260]

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[259] Bernard Gui's *Manual de L'Inquisiteur* trans. G. Mollat (Paris: Champion, 1926) p.16.

[260] For a more full treatment of the resistance to the Inquisition through language, see John Arnold's *Inquisition and Power: Catharism and the Confessing Subject* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001)

Part III: Muddy Waters and Mysterious Apples

These frustrations become apparent if we look at the material collected by the Inquisitorial process directly. There are hundreds of confession in the surviving records of the various Inquisitorial processes that occurred in Languedoc from the mid-thirteenth century into the early fourteenth. I will draw two examples from the records of one of the final Inquisitions into heretical depravity, from the Inquisitorial records of the bishop of Pamiers, Jacques Fournier. The first of these examples highlight the problem of the reliability of the evidence provided in this process, the second highlights the pressures put on individuals to satisfy the Inquisitor's expectations.

This first example is drawn, mainly, from the testimony given by Bernard Benet before the Bishop of Pamiers' Inquisitorial court, beginning on the 25th of march, 1321.[261] Bernard Benet is there to recant testimony he had given before the Inquisitor at Carcassonne earlier, regarding his knowledge of heresy in the town of Montaillou, and specifically of his presence at the heretication of a dying man, Guillaume Guilabert. This heretication was supposed to have taken place about twenty years before, at the very beginning of the fourteenth century. The concept of "heretication", in this instance refer to the practice of baptizing an individual into the Good Christians' movement on their deathbed, thus allowing them to avoid the rigorous life of adhering to expectations of apostolic perfection, while still receiving the absolution of past sins granted by the process of baptism. The testimony provides a good example of the Church's understanding of the process: "L'hérétique demanda alors audit Guillaume Guilabert s'il voulait être reçu par lui dans sa foi et sa secte. Guillaume répondit que oui. L'hérétique fit

[261] Jean Duvernoy (translator) *Le Registre d'Inquisition de Jacques Fournier (Eveques de Pamiers)1318-1325*, Tome II, (Mouton: Paris, La Haye, New York) p. 401

alors de nombreuses génuflexions, puis posa un livre sur sa tête et l'hérétiqua, ordonnant qu'à l'avenir il ne lui soit rien donné à manger ou à boire."[262] This description, from the witness Bernard Benet, is the heretical "last rites" that has drawn the attention of the Bishop of Pamiers' Inquisitorial process.

Bernard Benet's first appearance on the twenty-fifth of march, 1321, is to revoke his testimony about his presence at this heretical event. He claims that he was approached by the bailiff of his village, Bernard Clergue, who told him to go confess this story to the Inquisitor in Carcassone, and gave him a list of those he should say were also present. Clergue promises him a reward if he will do it, and threatens him with reprisal if he refuses.[263] The vague threats reported involve getting Benet burned. The Bishop, after hearing the story of how the witnesses original testimony was compelled, specifically asks if this current testimony is being offered freely or if it has been compelled in any way. Bernard Benet denies any further compulsion.[264] When asked why Bernard Clergue had he wanted Benet to bare false witness against these people, Benet replies that Clergue was seeking revenge against those people for evidence they had given against his brother, Pierre Clergue, the rector of the village.[265] When asked if he told anyone else about the false testimony he had given, he replies that he told the village vicar and Pierre Azema,

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[262] Ibid., p. 404 "The heretic asked Guillaume Guilabert if he wanted to be received by him into his faith and sect. Guillaume replied 'yes'. The heretic therefore made a number of genuflections and placing a book on his head, hereticated him, decreeing that from that point on he would refrain from food and drink."

[263] Ibid., p. 402.

[264] Ibid., p. 405.

[265] Ibid., p. 405.

together.[266] Benet then goes on to describe a number of other encounters with heresy, reappearing on the thirtieth of march to add to his testimony against people.

On the last day of March he makes his third appearance before the bishop, this time to revoke the first revocation he made. He retells essentially the same story he originally told to the Inquisitor of Carcassonne, the story he attributes to Bernard Clergue's inventions in his first revocation before the bishop of Pamiers, but this time it is presented as fact. When asked why he wanted to revoke it if it was true, he explains that what actually happened was that Bernard Clergue had, actually approached him to ask if he'd been present at the heretication, to which he'd replied he couldn't remember, and Bernard warned him that he should try to remember, because other witnesses had already given testimony on the subject: "Je commençais alors à réfléchir, et finalement, je fis revenir à ma mémoire comment cette hérétication avait eu lieu. [upon seeing Clergue again] , je lui racontai comment elle avait eu lieu, sauf que je ne me rappelais pas que j'avais été présent."[267] Bernard Clergue encourages him to go to the Inquisitor with this information, and promises to help him with the cost. Benet then claims that a number of people who were present at the heretication approached him and tried to bribe him into not giving this testimony, but he refuses to be swayed.[268] He then claims Bernard Clergue approached him with concerns about what he planned to do, and upon hearing that Benet was going to go either to the bishop or the Inquisitor in Carcassonne, strongly advises he go to Carcassonne, seeing that the other witnesses may have already accused him in front

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[266] Ibid., p. 405 The translator of these documents, Jean Duvernoy, includes a note here that Pierre Azema is a family relation to the bishop of Pamier before whom Benet is giving testimony. See footnote #9 of Duvernoy's text p. 412.

[267] Ibid., p.408 "I reflected on it, and in the end, the memory of the heretication returned to me [...] I told him how it was, except I hadn't remembered that I'd been there, myself"

[268] Ibid., p.409.

of the bishop of Pamiers. So he goes to Carcassonne and gives his testimony, and on his return is accosted by Pierre Azema (who appeared as a confidant in the first revocation) who claims he gave false testimony to the Inquisitor in Carcassonne about the heretication, that he cannot prove any of it happened and that bad things would happen to him because of it.[269] It is Azema who tells him to go to the bishop in Pamiers and retract his testimony before the Inquisitor of Carcassonne, and instructs him to say that Bernard Clergue forced him to say the things he did. Azema holds Benets livestock hostage, claiming he will release them to him if he revokes his testimony, and then has him imprisoned until he can be taken to Pamiers for the retraction. "Et ainsi, séduit et poussé par ce Pierre, je fis ma première déposition devant monsieur l'évêque." This is how his third appearance before the bishop ends.

He is called before the bishop a fourth time[270] to clarify whether or not he was actually present at the heretication, which has being described now twice as a fact, once as an invention, which he was sometimes not present for. He claims he was present, but he cannot answer most of the Bishops question about the details of the event, not remembering them. Questioned about his interactions with Azema, he gives a list of people present when Azema told him to go retract his testimony. His fourth appearance before the bishop ends with these clarifications. Obviously, the second retraction has muddied the waters considerably, regarding who has said what to whom and who was where when.

The next entry in the record describes Bernard Benet's attempt to escape detention in the episcopal palace of Pamiers, Mas-Saint-Antonin, and his recapture in the village of

[269] Ibid., p.409.
[270] Ibid., pp. 409-10.

Ax. There is no further testimony from him, and whatever sentence he received is not recorded. The record of Bernard Benet ends with the reading back of all of his testimony and his confirmation of its accuracy.

Bernard Benet's testimony on the heretication of Guillaume Guilabert allows us a critically important glimpse into the nature and value of the process of inquisition generally and the tensions created in the population of the regions under inquiry. As has already been mentioned a number of times, most of our information about the religious movement of the Good Christians in Languedoc comes from documents like these. Our insight into the lived reality of the villagers of the time appears primarily through the distortion lens of the threat of punishment by Church representatives. What Bernard Benet's testimony provides for us is a clear view of the problems that underlie all the evidence created by the process of inquisition. We must recognize the effects of secrecy on what is revealed in these records.

To begin with the most obvious problem, Bernard Benet was a liar. Every record of the Inquisition process that contains a revocation makes this clear, but few make it as clear as Benet's double revocation. Benet's main motivation for testifying was avoiding the consequences of not testifying. His goal was minimizing his vulnerability to the people of power in his village, Clergue and Azema, and to the powers of the bishop of Pamiers and the Inquisitor of Carcassonne. He was forced to speak up out of fear of what others might say about him, and how it would look if he said nothing. As much as possible, he claimed to forget what occurred twenty years ago, as much as possible he attempted to portray himself as the victim of competing forces. The information about heresy in his testimony must be seen in that light, and scrutinized with the utmost of

suspicion. He was a liar and telling people what he thought would minimize his own suffering, the details he provides about the habits and rites of the heretics should be seen, primarily, as the witnesses' attempts to fulfill the expectations of the bishop.

Benet's testimony also highlights the tension that exists between the bishop and the Inquisitor in Carcassonne, as these two overlapping jurisdictions are used by the people to minimize the harm they perceive in the inquiries that target them. The skillful attempt to avoid one authority by submitting to the other, indicates how thoroughly the inhabitants of the region are forced to acknowledge the Church's authority. The tension between the figure of Pierre Azema, related to the bishop, and Bernard Clergue, who is friends with the man who runs the prison in Carcassonne, is re-imagined in each revocation of Benet's story. From other testimonies in the Inquisitorial record of the bishop, including Bernard Clergue's own, interesting details arise. Guillaume Authié, who was one of the people Benet mentioned being at the heretication, reveals that he only came to Pamiers because he had heard that Bernard Clergue had suborned Benet and they were headed to Carcassonne to denounce him.[271] Raimonde Guilhou claims that Pierre Azéma taught her exactly what to say to the bishop and seeks to retract her testimony about her belief in heresy, and her denunciations of other women of her village. The record includes Pierre Azéma, who was under arrest in Carcassonne[272], being brought

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[271] Ibid., p.436.

[272] For those focused on the politics of the village of Montaillou, much of this can be read as a dispute between Clergue and Azema, in which the Church is being used. It is hard to say if the bishop and Inquisitor are also at odds, but the final image that we get of who is lying is in the witness against Clergue. There is no record of Azema appearing before the bishop, except in the one instance related above, to deny suborning a particular women. In the end, the entire story is being told by people who are admitted liars, or who are accused of trying to produce false testimony. It is difficult to feel confident about saying too much about whatever political drama may have been at work when it is all so convenient for the witnesses themselves.

forward to deny ever having instructed her to give false testimony.[273] When Bernard Clergue is himself brought before the bishop, testimony against him from Alazais Faure is provided in which she claims he instructed her to retract the testimony she had given before the bishop earlier and claim Pierre Azéma had forced her to give it, and he would get her husband out of the Carcassonne prison.[274] There are several other witnesses brought forward with stories about Clergue's attempts to get people to retract statements made against his family and friends, and to implicate his enemies. Cross referencing the claims made in separate records of the Inquisition process may give one the impression of minimizing the impact of each individual witnesses attempts to mitigate their own vulnerability to the penances of the Church, but, as we can see in the case of Benet's testimony, there remains the possibility of detailed descriptions of alleged heretical practices being given to people to use in their confessions. Bernard Clergue and Pierre Azéma both are accused of providing the stories about the heretication to the people they threaten, and as has already been mentioned, these stories say more about what will convince the inquirer than they do about what happenned at Guillaume Guilabert's bedside that night in the early fourteenth century. The process of inquisition has been active in the region of Languedoc for many decades at that point in history, and the outlines of what constitutes heretical belief and activity must have been familiar to the population of the region.

A second good example from the records of Inquisition comes in the form of a woman form a "mixed" family in the village of Montaillou. Guillemette Clergue is the daughter of Bernard Riba and Alazais Riba, and married to Pierre Clergue, brother of

[273] Ibid., p.482-485.
[274] *Ibid., p.504.*

Bernard Clergue. Her parents family is associated in the records with the Good Christians, her husband's family is more associated with denial of heresy or with denouncing people as heretics. What this means is that Guillemette claims to be under a certain amount of pressure to hide her mother and brother's actions from her husband, although since she is there before the bishop testifying about them this claim of secretiveness is dubious. The record identifies her as someone strongly suspected of having seen and heard things on the issue of heresy, of adoring heretics, of having believed the claims of heretics, and of having sent heretics things.[275] Her testimony is useful in the way she represents her interactions with Good Christians and the people who believe in them, and her attempts to satisfy the bishops questions about everything she may have seen or heard regarding heresy. She makes five appearances before the bishop, from the sixteenth of October, 1320, to the second of August, 1321. In between she is held in a nearby convent.

She describes the process of learning about the existence of the Good Christians (whom she refers to in the beginning as "bons gens" or "bon chrétiens", "hérétiques" by the end of her questioning) from her mother, after inquiring about the absence of her brother. The story is set about twenty-five years before her testimony, in the wheat fields belonging to her family. When asked where her brother has gone, her mother replies that her brother has gone with her uncle to visit a woman at nearby Chateauverdun and that this woman and her uncle were preparing to go to Barcelona to look for "bonnes gens". She then asks who these Good Men are and is informed that they are the men who are called heretics, but are actually good men, they send souls to paradise, don't touch

[275] Jean Duvernoy, trans., *Le Registre d'Inquisition de Jacques Fournier (Eveques de Pamiers)1318-1325*, Tome I, (Mouton: Paris, La Haye, New York) p. 324.

women, don't eat meat, and won't do harm to any thing. She then asks why they are called heretics if they are so good, to which her mother replies that Guillemette is an ignorant moron. Guillemette persist with questions about how these men can save people outside the power of the Church and her mother replies that it's obvious she's young and ignorant. She then asks her mother and brother not to speak of any of this to her husband, since he'd kill her if he knew she was discussing heresy.[276]

She describes a number of similar encounters, in which she asks a question about what people are up to, the reply with information about the Good Christians, and she displays some ignorance that makes them leave, or stop talking to her.[277] These situations eventually lead to her getting a bad reputation as someone who might denounce people, as demonstrated by her story about a trip to the village of Ax with her mother to visit the weaver there. Her mother tries to leave her at the weaver's house and go visit Sibille den Balle, but Guillemette follows her after a while. Her reception at the Balle house is not pleasant, with the people there accusing her mother of threatening them all by bringing her daughter with her:

> "Comment amenez-vous isi cette jeune fille, qui habite avec de mauvais gens, et a un mari qui est un méchant homme? Nous ne vous permettrons plus d'entrer ici a l'avenir". Ma mère lui répondit que ce n'était pas elle qui m'avait amenée ici, mais qu'elle m'avait laissée chez le tisserand. Un moment après, ma mère descendit vers moi, et me dit en colère que j'avais eu tort de venir dans cette maison, et que les hommes qui étaient là lui avaient fait beaucoup de reproches, disant qu'elle avait eu tort d'amener cette *enfantassa*, qui les dénoncerait à son mari, qui était de mauvaise famille, et méchant homme, qui pourrait leur arriver du mal.[278]

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[276] Ibid., pp. 324-325.

[277] With her uncle, Bernard Tavernier p. 325, with her aunt, Gaillarde Desjean, p.325, a gathering of people at her father's house on p.326, Bernard Tavernier's wife Albia, p.327, etc...

[278] Ibid, p.330.

Most of the rest of her stories involve encounters with people in her familly or with people who are looking for her family. One of these is particularly strange. She begins the anecdote with the phrase, "in the time when the heretics were abroad in the land", though she doesn't remember precisely when, her son, who was just a child, came into her house one day carrying three or four apples in his hands. She asked him where he got the apples, and he replied that they were from Mersende Marty who had brought them wrapped in a cloth for his grandmother, and that his grandmother had given them to him. The anecdote ends: "Mais je ne sais pas si cette Mersende donna ces pommes à ma mère pour qu'elle les donne aux hérétiques ou pour une autre raison."[279] As she runs out of material, her suspicions about the interactions of people with her family become more tenuous, the tone of the narrative she provides is that she is trying to mention everything that might possibly have something to do with heresy that she can think of. Her next anecdote involves her thanking a woman for giving her mother some milk, the woman's reply is that it is a good thing to help her mother's house, because her mother's house "faisaient du bien 'à tous ce qu'il avait de bien'",[280] which she interpreted as meaning the support of heresy because when she shared the story with her mother, her mother called the woman a "bonne croyante", which she took to mean a believer in heresy. Also, her mother called the local weaver, "bon et fidele"[281], and claimed she didn't need to worry about him stealing from her. This, too, she interpreted as referring to heresy. Also, one time she was returning from the water and passed by the Belot house, and saw two men wearing green, which surprised her because no one in that house had clothes of that kind,

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[279] Ibid., p.332.
[280] Ibid., p.333.
[281] Both of these on p.333.

and when she went around to take another look at them they saw her coming and hid in a room. So she thought they were heretics, as well.[282] This is the last item in her testimony. The scribe's description of the manner in which her process is brought to a close, indicates that she had been held precisely because of her family connections to people convicted of heresy, and it was felt she knew more than she said.

All the problems we discussed with our first example apply here, despite the lack of revocation, and the apparent acceptance of the veracity of her testimony by the bishop of Pamiers. The witness who tampers from the previous story is this woman's brother-in-law. In addition to that her testimony is full of things she did not speak about to people, hide from her husband, did not reveal, for the sake of protecting herself, or to protect her family. In the story about the village of Ax, her mother's friends are worried she'll denounce them to her husband, but she is denouncing them to someone far more dangerous in revealing this episode to the bishop of Pamiers. Still despite the self-betrayals and betrayals of her family contains in the testimony, she is held in the hope of learning more. Her attempt to satisfy the inquiry into her interactions with possible heretics explains perhaps the type of anecdotes her later testimony contains.

The anecdote with the apples is particularly poignant. If it is true, it is an inane memory of something that occurred when her child was quite young. She knew her mother sometimes interacted with people who believed in and supported the Good Christians, but she didn't know why this person had given her mother the apples. It was possible, therefore, that some apples intended for heretics had entered her home. It would seem there is nothing too minor to mention to the bishop of Pamiers in an Inquisitorial

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[282] Ibid., p.334.

process. It is difficult to imagine the effect that repeated appearances had, of the awareness of not having revealed enough. It is also difficult to imagine the strain of the intervening periods, held in a convent, reexamining your life looking for more to say. It is hard to imagine the point where the memory of the apples would have returned to Guillemette and seemed, in the moment, like something she must bring up next time she is questioned, just in case that is the detail that satisfies the bishop's desire to know everything she does. One imagines a state of almost paranoic exploration of the possibilities of what might have been going on around her, twenty years ago. If Karen Sullivan is correct about the Good Christians' use of the word "Good" as a kind of code that protects references to heresy, it is a code that Guillemette has broken, and throughout her testimony anything or anyone her mother refers to as "Good" gets mentioned as referring to heresy. The evidence she provides must be interpreted in light of this pressure to reveal, pressure to have seen things, to have heard things, and find information about heresy in her own memory.

These two examples from the registry of Jacques Fournier's Inquisitorial process are intended to demonstrate the nature of the information about Good Christians we have received from these documents. Secrecy and suspicion operate here primarily in the things that are never mentioned, the people who are never found, but it does not stop there. The existence of the secret compels revelations of al sorts, it motivates false testimony, throws suspicion on ambivalent actions and language, and lends credence to tenuous interpretations. Only the most naïve interpretation of this process would see it as successfully routing out some "truth about heresy". What it successfully did was compel individuals and communities into submission to the Church under the threat of

punishment. It promotes the betrayal of local community bonds, working through fear and distrust to undermine communities, and then sets itself as arbiter and conciliator.

At the end of the last chapter a reference was made to the transformation of the lives of the Good Christians from public figures who were central to the ideals of *paratge* and *cortezia,* to an underground organization with the support of sympathizers. The description was made to underline the role the Church played in creating the thing they suspected from the beginning. What went underground was the remnant of the culture of *cortezia*, forming as it did the underpinnings of the significance and power of the Good Men and Women. Although people can be hidden, relationships denied, actions covered, and even speech encoded, for the Good Men to remain recognizably what they were would be impossible without the culture of *cortezia* they embodied in the minds of the populace. The challenge of the occulted religious movement was the choice between preserving the claims on the sacred held by the Good Men and Women by virtue of lifestyle, comportment and learning, and preserving the secrecy and support that kept them alive. Failure to do either would mean the disappearance of the heretics, and the two are mutually exclusive.

The problem with maintaining both meaningfulness and secrecy for the Good Christians lies in the nature of the religiosity they represented, and the strategies adopted by the Church that had successfully transformed the culture around them, threatening them with irrelevance while simultaneously making contact with them extremely dangerous. The intense localism that gave the Good Christians their authority was destroyed by the arrival of external powers both religious and secular. The institutions of the mendicant orders, the Dominicans and Franciscans, did not only provide educated

Inquisitors devoted to the eradication of heresy. They provided an orthodox version of the poor wandering preacher, living the apostolic life in the world, an alternative that had not existed in the twelfth century. The sacramental system which powered the penances of the Church's Inquisition process, enforced by secular might, provided alternatives to the Good Christians' rituals that were not as dangerous to people's lives, social status or inheritance. The incentive for new generations to learn proper respect and loyalty to the Good Christians was simply not there.

Apart from there being little incentive to involve yourself with "heretics", the networks and habits that supported them in their secrecy were under constant assault through the work of the Church's Inquisitions, and the ability to have confidence in one's allies was undermined with every informer and turn-coat the Church used, or gave the appearance of using. Julien Thery, in his article on clericalism and the heresy of the Good Men, makes the observation that the forms of the religiosity of the Good Christians had less to do with participation in a separate religious institution, and more to do with participation in a community: "On va 'visiter' les bons hommes; le fait de manger, boire et converser en leur compagnie semble très important. Pour une bonne part, la substance de la dissidence consiste en ce commerce ordinaire, quoique transgressif, avec eux, ainsi qu'en actes de soutien à leur activité de ministres et à leur vie d'errance."[283]

At the beginning of this work, in the description of the information culture of Languedoc we spoke of the importance of the *domus* as the core element of social organization, and the links between families caused by marriage and partible inheritance.

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[283] Julien Thery's "Cléricalisme et hérésie des bon homes: l'exemple d'Albi et de l'Albigeois (1276-1329)" pp.471-508 in *L'anticléricalisme en France méridionale (milieu XIIe-début XIVe siècle)* Cahiers de Fanjeaux, no.38, (2003) pp.487-488.

Although it is tempting to see in the clandestine movements of Good Christians an underground network of carefully created safe havens and dark passages, the culture and religiosity that these men and women represented provided a ready-made network of "sympathizers" and "refuges". Complex interweavings of *cortezia* covered Languedoc in a patchwork of relatedness and social networks grounded in the *domus*, in people's homes. The Good Christians would have been able to travel from home to home, drawing on their status to receive hospitality and in return providing *melhoramen* to everyone present, through eating with Good Christians, supporting them, showing them proper respect, those who still adhered to *cortezia* drew the benefits of contact with the sacred.

Like the example of coded speech about "the Good", it is difficult to be certain the degree to which the living out of *cortezia* by Good Christians should be seen as a deliberate attempt to mask transgressive practice behind the mundane interactions of courteous people, with friends and family. These action may have been simply the way things were supposed to be done. There are records from Inquisitions of attempts to hide the Good Men while maintaining their availability to local *credentes*, and these highlight the danger of discovery, and the difficulty of 'masking' public interactions while still interacting properly with Good Men in a situation where their status as dangerous hunted men has become well known.[284] The records of the Church's Inquisitions preserve the fear of betrayal in more than just the contents of the testimonies. It has carefully created a situation in which personal safety can be purchased only through informing on one's neighbors (or better, a stranger in your village).

[284] See Sullivan, 2005, p.37, where she describes the heretics as: "occupying some in-between zone, half-outside and half- inside, half-exposed and half-concealed,"

Beyond the problem of communal trust, so effectively undermined in the threat of Inquisition, there are both environmental and social challenges associated with maintaining secrecy. The towns and villages of Languedoc are not designed for covert movement, the close proximity of villagers, whatever their loyalties may be, meant that there were practical, physical difficulties in hiding. The particular religiosity of the Good Men and the approach of the Inquisition in eliminating it, made social action the focus of heresy. Bernart and Jean's *Processus* is clear on the nature of the transgressions they identified, and as has already been mentioned, the actions that qualified as suspicious in the eyes of an Inquisitor complicated everyone's interactions with strangers. From the "Formula for the interrogatory" (quoted in full to give some sense of the care taken to cover a host of potential interactions) :

> Thereafter, the person is diligently questioned about whether they saw a heretic or a Waldensian, where and when, how often and with whom, and about others who were present; whether he listened to their preaching or exhortation and whether he gave them lodging or arranged shelter for them; whether he conducted them from place to place or otherwise consorted with them or arranged for them to be guided or escorted; whether he ate or drank with them or ate bread blessed by them; whether he gave or sent anything to them; whether he acted as their financial agent or messenger or assistant; whether he held any deposit or anything else of theirs; whether he received the Peace from their book, mouth, shoulder or elbow; whether he adored a heretic or bowed his head or genuflected and said "Bless us" before heretics or whether he was present at their baptisms or confessions; whether he was present at a Waldensian Lord's Supper, confessed his sins to them, accepted penance or learned anything from them; whether he was otherwise on familiar terms with or associated with heretics or Waldensians in any way; whether he made an agreement, heeded requests, or received gifts in return for not telling the truth about himself or others; whether he advised or persuaded anyone or caused anyone to be persuaded to do any of the foregoing; whether he knows any other man or woman to have done any of the foregoing; whether he believed in the heretics or Waldensians or their errors.[285]

[285] "A Manual for Inquisitors at Carcassonne", Peters, 1980, p.202.

Faced with this list, knowing the type of questions put to villagers, the caution of the Good Christians, their fear of discovery, would seem justifiable. Mark Gregory Pegg tells the story of Alazais d'Auri's fear at hearing of a former heretic's prison conversion, a heretic she had once seen at a friends house. Knowing he would confess everything he knew, knowing she had never reported seeing him, she fears that she would now be punished for concealing a heretic, "her life destroyed by a misplaced glance"[286]. The story is significant not only because of the terror these "conversions" and confessions caused, but because of the physical reality of the villages of Languedoc that meant that someone could be punished for a crime they could not help committing:

> "Alazais d'Auri's misery was the despair of a woman who lived in a world of inescapable intimacy with her neighbors; she simply could not help seeing, from one day to the next, what was going on in someone else's house. The walled villages of the Lauragais, resting at the top of steep sun-burnt hills, like Fanjeaux, or nestled into the sides of tame grassy slopes, like Mas-Sainte-Puelles, with all the houses radiating outward form the castle or *forcia* (fortified farm) of a local lord, and no more than a hundred meters from one end to the other, were difficult places in which to do anything unseen or unheard. [...] All houses in the Lauragais, large or small, must have had similar cavities and eyelets in their walls, apart from windows, and they clearly seem to have been, and were understood to be, aurally porous and optically explicit. Hundreds of testimonies at Sainte-Sernin confirm this deep village transparency. The Inquisition not only played upon what everyone in the Lauragais had always lived with; it now added a new intensity to this anguish through confession to a friar-Inquisitor. Raimona de Bonahac's peek into a cellar, much less offhand than her husband implied, emphasizes that no one, noble or servile, living in a large *domus* or not, could ever physically escape the burden of nearness, closeness, perpetual immediacy, that so agonized Alazias d'Auri.[287]

If the physical landscape of the community prevented long-term secrecy of movement, and if the value and power of the Good Men and Women lay in their presence

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[286] Pegg, 2005, p.67
[287] Pegg, 2005, pp.69-70.

in the community, in people's ability to interact with them, the challenges to resisting a systematic investigation of physical interactions must be seen as overwhelming.

Obviously, we have no record of the successful obfuscation of movements and actions by heretics and their supporters. The meetings and travels that were never discovered or betrayed do not make it into the records of the Inquisitions. But from the records that do exist, we know that the Church's suspicions about the existence of a secretive organization of heretics with sympathizers who had "infiltrated" every town and village of Languedoc were, by the mid-thirteenth century, realistic suspicions.

Part IV: Secrecy, Narrative, Discourse Community

To understand the role of secrecy in the religious conflict in medieval Languedoc, the power of the Church's narratives in the transformation of local culture need to be examined. By harnessing the power of their French allies, the representatives of the Church used the fear of corporeal punishment and spiritual damnation to coerce the population of Languedoc into accepting their vision of the true faith. It might seem as though the use of force would invalidate the process, make genuine obedience impossible, but it does not. Berger and Luckmann's insight into the nature and social role of Universe Maintainers (in this case, religious experts) is grounded in their conception of the dynamic nature of humans' contribution to the creation of social facts. In their chapter on Society as Objective Reality, they explain:

> An institutional world, then is experienced as an objective reality. It has a history that antedates the individual's birth and is not accessible to his biographical recollection. It was there before he was born, and it will be there after his death. This history itself, as the tradition of the existing institutions, has the character of objectivity. The individual's biography is apprehended as an episode located within the objective history of the society. The institutions, as historical and objective facticities, confront the individual as undeniable facts. The institutions

> are *there*, external to him, persistent in their reality, whether he likes it or not. He cannot wish them away. They resist his attempts to change or evade them. They have coercive power over him, both in themselves, by the sheer force of their facticity, and through the control mechanisms that are usually attached to the most important of them. [...] It is important to keep in mind that the objectivity of the institutional world, however massive it may appear to the individual, is a humanly produced, constructed objectivity. The process by which the externalized products of human activity attain the character of objectivity is objectivation. The institutional world is objectivated human activity, and so is every single institution. [...] it is important to emphasize that the relationship between man, the producer, and the social world, his product, is and remains a dialectical one. That is, man (not, of course in isolation but in his collectivities) and his social world interact with each other. The product acts back on the producer. Externalization and objectivation are moments in a continuing dialectical process.[288]

Later on they turn to the third moment in this process, internalization, by which humans are socialized with the identity, values and expectations of the culture, experienced in a taken-for-granted way as the "facts of life". Those experts who provide meaningful explanations and legitimations for the "facts of life" are Berger and Luckmann's "universe maintainers"[289]. To understand initial situation in Languedoc, the power of the Good Christians in the pre-crusade period, and the social mechanisms that the Church used, unintentionally, to create the heresy they then destroyed, we must look at the connection between the narratives of the Church, their expectations and values, and how, by imposing the consequences of their perspective on the land of Languedoc, their narratives created a social reality that conformed to their expectation.

The Church's stories about the nature of Languedoc became the reality of Languedoc, using a narrative of secrecy and duplicity to dismiss any evidence that contradicted the Church's expectations. The religious difference that was the justification for mission and debate in Languedoc, became a justification for the use of violence when

[288] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann *The Social Construction of Reality: a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York, Doubleday & Company, 1966) pp.56-57.

[289] see Chapter 2 "Society as Objective Reality", section 2 "Legitimation", subsection b. "Conceptual Machineries of Universe-Maintenance" in Berger and Luckmann, 1966.

the Church became convinced that the corruption and hypocrisy of the local people was amenable to nothing short of physical punishment. Representations of the region and its people in narratives and records of the twelfth century motivated the efforts of the Church, but failed to have any transformative effect on the region until the Church , with its allied forces, imposed itself on the region in such a way as to effect day-to-day local life. The Church used the power of the physical force possessed by its allies to link physical and social realties in such a way that their worldview became the defining one. By taking control of the consequences of particular behaviours, the Church was able to redefine them for the people of Languedoc, effectively establishing the truth and effectiveness of their system over the alternatives provided by the Good Christians.

The symbolic universe the Good Christians inhabited was the lived, daily experience of the people of Languedoc before the colonization of the region by the French crusaders. Two decades of warfare not only devastated the region physically, but it destabilized the culture and uprooted the Good Christians to the degree that the culture of *paratge* and *cortezia* could never again have the taken-for-granted quality it had in late 12th century culture in Languedoc. By redefining and criminalizing the interactions between the people of Languedoc and the embodiments of *cortezia,* while simultaneously providing alternatives to these, the Church successfully destroyed the 'dangerous heresy' it played such a significant role in creating. The next chapter will deal with the "degeneration" of the "heresy" of the Good Christians, its destruction, and the legacy of "Catharism" in the region of Languedoc more directly, but the use of secrecy by both the Church and the Good Christians, in promoting their own worldview and resisting the other, cannot be fully understood without appreciating the overall power the narrative

created by the Church. Social constructionist theory explains how these narratives are transformed into objective reality through the coercive power of social institutions, how narratives about the facts of a situation are transformed into the experienced facts of a situation. The role of secrecy and suspicion in these narratives is as important as the actual restrictions on information that were part of the Inquisitorial process, or the Good Christians' own attempts to hide in the villages and countryside of Languedoc.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DECLINE, LEGACY AND EMPTY SPACES

This chapter will address the end of the conflict between the Good Christians and the Church. Building on the social changes described in the last chapter, and the strategies employed by both groups, we will look at the ultimate successes and failures of the use of secrecy in religious conflict. This last set of historical situations, in which the defeat of the Good Christians is cemented by the Church, will allow us to draw some general conclusions about both the power and weaknesses of secrecy as a tool in religious conflict.

Three important events will be focused on to underscore the nature of the victory of the Church in Languedoc: the siege of Montségur in 1244, the new resistance to the Inquisition in the late thirteenth century, and the last burning of a Good Man, Bélibaste, in 1321. These three events have lasting symbolic impact and they signal permanent changes in the story of the conflict with which we are concerned. Montségur was an important stronghold of the resistance to the new order in the region and became a symbol of defeat that lasts even today. The burning of Bélibaste in 1321 was simply the final breath of the religiosity of the Good Christians that have a record of. The interference of the King of France, and the Franciscan friar, Bernard Délicieux with the Inquisitorial practices in Languedoc in 1292-1318 are different, perhaps more telling, signs that the conflict had changed significantly, leaving the Good Christians behind.

Part I: Montségur: refuge and treasure

The taking of Montségur by the forces of the French has acquired a symbolic significance in the story of "heresy in Languedoc", seen as the destruction of the last of the independent strongholds of the region. Situated deep in the mountains of the south, between the county of Foix and the lands of Toulouse, the castle was nearly inaccessible militarily, and its capture signaled that nowhere and nothing was beyond the reach of the French. The attack against the friar Inquisitors at Avignonet on the eve of Ascension day (forty days after Easter) in 1242, mentioned in a previous chapter, issued from Montségur, and the siege and surrender of the castle occured in what seems to be a response to this assault on the persons and records of the Inquisition.[290] The siege, and various failed assaults on the castle, lasted until February of 1243 when the besieging army finally captured and defended the barbican of the castle and set up a siege engine therein to hurl stones down into the castle itself. Approximately two hundred "heretics" were burned when Montségur surrendered.

Both of the sources referenced below, Zoe Oldenbourg's *Massacre at Montségur* and Jacques Madaule's *The Albigensian Crusade* are popular works, and biased. I use them to demonstrate the power of the symbolism of Montségur in the legacy of the Church's actions against heresy in Languedoc. The stories that follow should not be taken as the most recent historical work on Montségur. The records of events during the siege suggest two distinct escapes from the encircled castle with an undescribed 'treasure'. Zoe Oldenbourg provides us with a summary of both treasure movements, and her descriptions contain important interpretations of the lack of evidence:

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[290] For a full summary of the attack on the Inquisitors at Avignonet and its link to Montségur see Mark Gregory Pegg's *Corruption of Angels* (Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2005).

> It was after the capture of the eastern barbican that the two heretics Matheus and Peter Bonnet left the fortress, taking with them gold and silver bullion, and a great quantity of money, *pecuniam infinitam* – the treasure, in fact, which must now be safely bestowed elsewhere. Imbert de Salas afterwards revealed, during his interrogation, that these two men had a secret understanding with the enemy sentries posted by the last road out still accessible to the besieged garrison. [...] the gold and silver – doubtless a very considerable sum – was cached by the two *perfecti* in the woods on the Sabarthes mountains, till the day arrived when a safer hiding-place could be found for it. [291]

and later, on the night of the surrender:

> During the night of 16th of march Pierre-Roger had ropes let down the west face of the rock, and got four men away – the *haeretici* Amiel Aicart, his companion Hugo, another named Poitevin, and one more whose name is unrecorded, perhaps a mountain guide. When the crusaders entered Montségur these men were hidden in a cave, and thus escaped the fate of their brethren. Their task was to conceal all of the heretics' treasure that still remained in the fortress, and to mark down the cave where they had buried the money evacuated two months previously. [...] The escape plan seems to have been completely successful, since neither the four *haeretici* nor the treasure ever fell into the hands of the authorities.[292]

Oldenbourg's descriptions of these events both set up the discussion of the significance of the "heretics' treasure" in the legacy of the movement, and highlight the danger and potential of the function of secrecy in the story. The issue of secrecy is such that the author is led into in extremely dubious comment on the success of the "secret mission". There is, one imagines, no reason in the author's mind to doubt the existence of the treasure of the Cathars, despite there being no evidence of it, no reason to expect the testimonies of the survivors to be false. Without that expectation, there is no suspicion, and without suspicion, no fracture in the surface of the narrative: the secret mission must have succeeded because we have no evidence of it. When secrecy succeeds, no evidence is the only evidence. Other authors have seen inconsistencies in the story of the treasures,

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[291] see Zoe Oldenbourg's *Massacre at Montségur* translated by Peter Green (New York: Pantheon books, 1962),p.353.

[292] Ibid.., pp.361-362.

and sought to explain the need for two such expeditions with speculations on the nature of the respective treasures. Madaule provides us an example:

> One cannot help but ask oneself the exact reason for this strange operation, for the Montségur treasure was already safely stowed and those who stowed it would have been perfectly able to find it again. Are we to believe that there were two treasures, one purely material which had been hidden by the first group, the other spiritual and conserved right up to the end at Montségur, to be concealed at the last moment? Every conjecture has been made, but none supported by any real evidence. Some commentators have gone so far as to maintain that Montségur was the Montsalvat of the legend of the Grail, and that the spiritual treasure salvaged in the course of that tragic night was no less than the grail itself.[293]

From popular amateur historians like Zoe Oldenbourg and Jacques Madaule, the impact of the existence of this secret in the story may be minimal, but in the hands of the conspiracy-minded, the potential it provides for over-interpreting the existence of the two treasures can be abused. Take for example the authors of the conspiracy theory regarding Jesus' bloodline, a theory popularized in recent fiction. The source of this theory, and the Cathars' connection to it, is a book by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln: *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*.[294] In it they advance an "alternative history" theory that suggests that Jesus' family moved to southern France from Palestine and became part of the Merovingian dynasty, and that the Holy Grail was not the cup which contained the blood of Jesus, but rather the vessels that contained his blood, his descendants. The book is a fictional account of their "researches" into the idea, and over-emphasizes at every point the significance of the most superficial links between historical data, but its treatment of the issue of the treasure of the Cathars is a perfect example of the space created by the idea of the secret in the mind of a believer:

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[293] Madaule, 1967, p.116.

[294] Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln's *The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail* (London: Corgi, 1982)

> According to tradition, these four men carried with them the legendary Cathar treasure. But the Cathar treasure had been smuggled out of Montségur three months before. And how much "treasure", in any case – how much gold, silver or coin – could three or four men carry on their back, dangling from ropes on a sheer mountainside? If the four escapees were indeed carrying something, it would seem clear that they were carrying something other than material wealth.
>
> What might they have been carrying? Accoutrements of the Cathar faith perhaps – books, manuscripts, secret teachings, relics, religious objects of some kind; perhaps something which, for one reason or another, could not be permitted to fall into hostile hands.
>
> Given the tenacious adherence of the Cathars to their creed and their militant antipathy to Rome, we wondered if such knowledge or information (assuming it existed) related in some way to Christianity, perhaps to its history and origins. Was it possible, in short, that the Cathars (or at least certain Cathars) knew something – something that contributed to the frenzied fervor with which Rome sought their extermination? The priest who wrote to us spoke of "incontrovertible proof". Could such "proof" have been known to the Cathars?[295]

Although of absolutely no historical interest, the thought-process outlined about by the authors of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* is of use insofar as it demonstrates the power of suspicion to provide explanations for the seemingly mysterious. For these authors the existence of dangerous secret information about the family of Jesus explains not only the "two treasures" of Montségur, but also the overall rationale for the Church's hostility to the "heretics of the region". This tiny inconsistency, which has no obvious explanation to the conspiracy-minded, permits them to posit a secret truth that conveniently supports their theory.

Although the Church managed to capture and remove the strategic and symbolic power of "heretical strongholds" at the time, the story of Montségur is the first real hint of the contrasting levels of "survival" that the resolution of this conflict will bring. The military victory of the Church leads to a permanent change in the meaning of Montségur

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[295] Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln's *The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail* (London: Corgi, 1982) p.54-58.

in the area. Previous chapters have outlined the Church's role in creating the "heresy of Languedoc", and the ways that the stories about heresy told by the Church impacted the social reality of the region. The symbolic power of Montségur as a "haven for heroes in freedom's cause",[296] as Oldenbourg puts it, would survive the destruction of the garrison, survive the elimination of the Good Christians, and survive to this day. With it would survive the Church's own story about the "heretics' secrecy", their hidden teachings, their links to an esoteric tradition of anti-orthodoxy stretching back to the early Church, to a religion that could be recognized by the lack of explicit evidence for its existence. In creating the stories that justified both colonization and persecution, the Church created a story about secret resistance that would not fade even with the last Good Man.

Part II: Bélibaste: lineage and lifestyle

We have already discussed the numbers of deaths among the Good Christians during the first summer of crusade in 1209. We have also discussed the systematic and powerful nature of the social transformation undertaken by the Church from the mid-thirteenth to the early fourteenth centuries. We have seen evidence of loyalty to the Good Christians, the mixture of religious and cultural struggle in the identification of the "heretics' ways" with the faded culture of *cortezia* and *paratge*. So it is not difficult to imagine that the persistent work of the Church slowly eroded thecore of the movement of the Good Christians. As the years went by with Inquisitions and persecution, Good Men and Women were captured, converted or killed.The systems of support upon which they relied, the network of family obligation and hospitality that created the links upon which

[296] Oldenbourg, 1962, p.341.

they drew for their clandestine movement and predication, were sabotaged by the agents of the Church. Eventually there had to come a point in the record where there are no more Good Christians.That point comes in the autumn of 1321 in the village of Villerouge-Termenes, when Guillaume Bélibaste was burned. He was the last of the "heretics of Languedoc", his story appearing in the analysis of Jacques Fournier's Inquisitorial work in the village of Montaillou, in Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou, village occitan de 1294 a 1324*.[297] This, of course, does not mean that there were no more Good Christians, only no more record of them. For the purposes of this work that amounts to the same thing.[298]

Bélibaste's story is less important because he is the last, and more because the details of his transformation into a heretic give us an opportunity to analyze the ways that secrecy and persecution transformed the Good Christians into the Cathars of legend. With the death of the last embodied heretic, with the removal of the last of the corruption from the region of Southern France, the conflict between the Good Christians and the Church draws to a close, but the effects of the conflict linger on. Before addressing Bélibaste directly, we should first note the effects of persecution on the Good Men and Women generally, from the end of the Albigensian crusade on. By forcing the Good Christians underground, the Church dealt a fatal blow to a form of religiosity that was, from what we know of it, tied to mundane interactions. Part of the power of the beliefs and practices

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[297] Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error* translated by Barbara Bray (New York: Vintage, 1979).

[298] As this work resists exploring the contents of secrecy, and rather focuses on secrecy's social effects, the disappearance of the Good Christians from the record amounts to their total disappearance for our purposes. Stories about the persistence of the religion in some hidden fashion would be part of the impenetrable secrecy around the subject. In the record Bélibaste happens to be the last Good Christians who appears.

of the Good Christians was their recognition in the community, their status was maintained through public performance of religiosity. The need to be secretive, in the context of a transforming culture, meant that the Good Christians became symbols of the practices and beliefs of the period before the Albigensian crusade. Redefined as "heretics" by the Church, redefined as symbols of resistance to the French, the Good Christians and the *cortezia* they embodied had no place in the new southern France.[299]

There is also a shift in the broader culture of Languedoc. The erosion of trust between the villagers, the "betrayals" required by reconciliation with the Church, and the disappearance of the Good Christians in daily life (whether in hiding, prison, or through killing) meant that the process of turning the people of southern France away from their pre-crusade culture and making them accept the ways of the culture from around Paris and the religion of the Church was proceeding systematically, steadily. From the details of the register, the dwindling of the numbers of "heretics" is apparent. In his article on the state of "Catharism" in Languedoc at the beginning of the fourteenth century, Jean Duvernoy provides the important figures: from 1050 named heretics in the time of Raymond VII and the beginning of the Inquisition (1235) to 15 or 16 active in the year 1300. Duvernoy also stresses the limits on what we know:

> C'est à notre connaissance, seulment que l'ont peut ainsi dresser le constat de la disparition du catharisme. Cette connaissance ne repose que sur le fait que le dernier registre de l'Inquisition qui nous soit parvenu s'arrête à 1329. Or nous ignorons si des registres ultérieurs, pour nous disparus, ne concernaient pas des cathares, comme nous ignorons si le catharisme n'a pas survécu dans une clandestinité que l'a fait échapper aux poursuites. Nous ignorerons toujours, de même, combien de temps, pour combien de générations, a survécu le souvenir des

[299] "No more than atrophied nostalgia for the vivid and distinctive world of the good men before war. the Inquisitions into heretical depravity persecuted a heresy of pessimistic sentimentality only two decades old" see Pegg, 2008, p.187.

> brûlés, des «emmurés» ou des maison confisquées qui avaient été celle de la famille.[300]

Duvernoy's warning about the nature of our evidence is useful. The numbers, however, at least confirm the decline over the half century of Inquisition in the region, with only 15 known heretics in 1300, and the fact that Bélibaste had to be lured back into the region from Spain to be arrested, we can know that even if some unrecorded, secret Good Man outlived Bélibaste, the story of the conflict between the Church and the threat of heresy in Languedoc was coming to an end.

The story of Bélibaste comes from the testimony of the village of Montaillou, the entirety of which was arrested and processed by the Inquisitorial office of Jacques Fournier, the Bishop of Pamiers, future Pope Benedict XII. The record of his death is sparse and it is the recollections of the villagers, particularly Pierre Maury, his friend in Catalonia that give us the details of his life. The man who would become the last Good Man came from the village of Cubières, which he had had to flee after committing a murder.[301] It is interesting that Bélibaste was forced into a life of wandering and poverty before he became a Good Man. Pierre Maury's testimony is full of stories about his interactions with Bélibaste, many of them confirming the form of the Good Christians' religiosity as it survived in a small community of exiles who had fled persecution.

> The following Lent (1313?) , Pierre was presented to the little Albigensian colony of San Mateo and Morella, in the Tarragona region. This consisted of a small group of heretics from Montaillou and elsewhere who had gathered around Guillaume Bélibaste the younger. He had gratified them by becoming a minor

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[300] Jean Duvernoy's "Le catharisme en Languedoc au debut du XIVe siecle" pp.27-56 in *Effacement du Catharisme?(XIIIe-XIVe S.)* Cahiers de Fanjeaux no.20 (Toulouse: Privat, 1985) pp. 27-28.

[301] see Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error* translated by Barbara Bray (New York: Vintage, 1979) pp. 70-71: "It was not until later that he settled down as the prophet to a little Albigensian colony in Catalonia, where he exchanged the occupation of shepherd for that of a maker of baskets or carding combs."

> prophet, whom they and he himself identified with Christ or the Holy Ghost. But he was recognised only by himself and the "happy few".[302]

The Good Christian lived among them, worked and taught, and formed the core of their communal religiosity. The tales of the villagers, some of them mildly scandalous, sound like the reports of a fairly mundane kind, but mixed in are the elements of the system of *cortezia* that now existed only as a rigid set of relations among heretics.

> [Pierre Maury's cousin] was forced to admit she had given part of the spoils from the 150 sheep to the goodman Bélibaste. Pierre was so furious that one day, taking leave of Bélibaste, he called him *minudier* (miser), and omitted to give him the ritual salutation. The shepherd's lives were full of such incidents, when unscrupulous heretics like Bélibaste would use their position as *parfaits* to change a debt into a gift which they regarded as only their due.[303]

Even if Bélibaste failed, at times, to live up to the expectations the others had of him as a Good Christian, the mixture of religiosity and mundane goings-on of the small village, even the gossiping and scandal, fit essentially with the description of the nature of the Good Christian's religiosity we know from the registers, the salutations and hospitality, the courtesy demanded by the Good Man, his identification with the "Holy Spirit" or, put differently, his status as a conduit for the sacred among the believers in the village. The interesting elements are the degree to which secrecy and clandestine movement have embedded themselves into the rhetoric of the Good Christian, even living outside the reach of the Church. One of his arguments with Pierre on the issue of marriage seemed to leverage the idea that Pierre's "whoring about" is dangerous on many levels, one of which is the circumspection required of a heretic around strangers, to not reveal themselves or the community. Pierre's cousin tries to help Bélibaste marry him off with this lament: "Lord, she said, what a trouble our Pierre is to us. We cannot keep him.

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[302] Ibid., pp.93-94.
[303] Ibid., p.96.

And when he leaves us we do not know if we shall ever see him again, since he goes to places where our enemies are and where, if he were recognized, he would be taken prisoner; and then the rest of us would be destroyed."[304] In fact, one of the members of the colony is captured, and turned into an agent of the Church, who lures eight of his fellows back to Montaillou over the mountains and they are all captured, Bélibaste included.

In the end, the last of the "heretics", the last of their followers, all the physical traces of the Good Christians that can be destroyed, except for the ecclesiastical records of them, are destroyed. From the same Duvernoy article quoted above: "Le dernier 'parfait', Guillaume Bélibaste, de Cubières (Aude), fut brûlé à l'automne 1321 à Villerouge-Terménès. Les derniers croyants furent brulés à Carcassonne: Guillemette Tournier de Tarascon (Ariège) le 24 février 1325, Adam Baudet,[etc...]. Les dernières exhumations furent ordonnées à Pamiers le 16 janvier 1329; les dernières destructions de maisons à Carcassonne, le 9 septembre 1329."[305] The destruction of Good Christians, believers in them, the dead, and their homes in the cities and villages, amounts to the ruthless erasure of religious difference from the land and from communities. The destruction of the physical elements of the "heresy", down to the bodies that contained and performed it, does not, however, affect a destruction of the story of the "heretics of Languedoc", or their resistance to the war and repression of their independent culture. Although the Church could, and did, force people to participate in their symbolic universe of sacramental confession and penance, it could not eradicate the memory of the stories it itself told about the secret heresy of the region. Although the culture of *paratge*

[304] Ibid., p.100.
[305] Duvernoy, 1985, p.27.

was lost, and its system of courtliness with it, and although the lands remain directly under the power of the French from that point on, what survived the repression of the Church was the very narrative that had justified its war, justified its Inquisitions. Languedoc remains the land of the Cathars to this day, tourists visit the sites of crusade battles, monuments and mass burnings. Disembodied, the idea of these martyred "heroes in freedom's cause" and their secrets become part of the story of the Church.

Additionally, the cost of the Church's methods changed, in some people's opinion, the moral authority of the Church from that point onward. As Oldenbourg passionately puts it:

> Yet, though, thanks to the Inquisition, the papacy finally triumphed, first over Catharism, and then over numerous other heretical movements which arose during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, her victory was to cost her dear. The humiliation inflicted at Anagni did not compromise the Church in its basic dignity; it was simply one episode in that unending battle which the Church was forced to wage in order to safeguard her moral and material independence. But the repressive terrorism which the Inquisition for several centuries imposed, as a policy, on the nations of the West – this was to undermine the Church's edifice from the inside, and to bring about a terrible lowering of Christian morality and Catholic civilization.
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> Before the Albigensian Crusade and the Inquisition, bishops and abbots still raised their voices in protest against the burning of heretics, and preached compassion toward such strayed brethren. In the thirteenth century, however, Thomas Aquinas justified such *auto-da-fe* in terms that are ill-suited to any Christian. Excesses that could previously be attributed to ignorance or the brutal *mores* of the period were now given the stamp of approval, consecrated *ex cathedra theologica* by one of the greatest philosophers of Christianity. This fact is too serious to be minimized. From the thirteenth century onwards we no longer find saint or doctor in the Catholic Church bold enough to assert (as for instance St Hildegarde had done in the twelfth century) that a man who errs in religious matters is still one of God's creatures, and that to deprive him of his life is a crime. The Church which so resolutely forgot this very simple truth no longer deserved the title of "Catholic"; in this sense we may claim that heresy had dealt the Church a blow from which it never recovered.[306]

[306] Oldenbourg, 1962, pp.366-367.

Although the idea of a "secret heresy" is the central justification for the physical coercion and killings in the region, and these tactics successfully eliminate the people in question, the tactical success entails a strategic loss. The Church's enforcement of its authority, or rather the tactics it employs in that enforcement, entail an overall diminution in its authority. Put differently, the tactics used to suppress resistance provoke resistance. If we narrow our view to the singular twelfth century goal of reconciling the region of Languedoc to the rest of Christendom, the strategies and tactics were sound, if terrifying, but on a broader level the victory has Pyrrhic elements that cannot be ignored in a work on the strategic use of information.

Part III: Monarchy's aid: authority and participation

The Church's support of violence may be seen as a problem, but the actual violence was largely perpetrated by the power of the French nobility, and by the local temporal powers who derived their authority from that nobility. In the previous chapter, discussing the treaty between the king of France and the count of Toulouse, we referenced Jacques Madaule's assertion that the Church's need for temporal support put the monarchy in the position of being the ultimate victor in the region: "by depending thus on the secular arm, the Church only strengthened it."[307] This is, of course, was precisely what the Church wanted; a strong but compliant secular arm to enforce its vision of Christian society in the region. The stories about heresy from before the thirteenth century are full of devout noblemen aiding the ecclesiastical authorities and heeding their warnings.

[307] Madaule, 1967, p.95.

This chapter has so far addressed two kinds of ending in the struggle between the Church and the Good Christians, the first the capture of the last bit of heretical territory in the form of the sanctuary of Montségur, and the second in the form of the destruction of the last named Good Man. This third section however is about a different kind of change, a series of incidents that demonstrate a new form of resistance and authority in the region, opposing the Inquisition into heretical depravity.

The best summary of these incidents is found in Georgene Webber Davis', *The Inquisition at Albi 1299-1300 Text of Register and Analysis*. The problem began in Carcassonne, when accusations of heresy were made against Castel Fabri, "a friend of the Brothers Minor and buried in their cemetery"[308]. The defense of the dead man fell to one of the Franciscan brothers, Bernard Délicieux. "As a result, in the summer of 1300, Délicieux had his first unsuccessful clash with the tribunal it became his life's work to denounce."[309] Délicieux became the champion of those in Languedoc disaffected with the abuses of the Inquisitorial process, and twice lead deputations to the king of France (in 1301 and 1303). The King came, in person, in 1303, to examine the processes at work in his lands. The king was unsympathetic to the populace's requests to abolish the Church's tribunals, and that lack of sympathy caused them to make a serious mistake, attempting to enlist the aid of another monarch, the prince of Majorca. The prince's father betrays the "conspiracy" against the authority of the king of France, and the conspirators are hanged in the streets of Carcassonne as traitors. Delicieux was charged with conspiracy but put

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[308] Georgene Webber Davis, *The Inquisition at Albi: text of Register and Analysis,* (New York: Octagon, 1974), p.70.

[309] Ibid., p.70.

under the protective custody of his order, and disappears from the record until the problems with the Spiritual Franciscans in the city years later.[310]

Délicieux was not the only one to be charged with "conspiracy against the king", and fifteen of the consuls of Carcassonne were publicly hanged for treason, and a fine of 60,000 pounds levied against the town itself. The King of France was prepared to limit the Inquisitor's abuse of their power, relatively speaking, but he would not tolerate treason.

> On April 12, 1291, the king took notice of the protests of the citizens of Carcassonne and wrote the seneschal: he had received complaints that the Inquisitors were imprisoning innocent Catholics and forcing from them by torture false accusations against other persons; the whole district was stirred up; the seneschal was consequently to take reasonable precautions when complying with the orders of the Inquisitorial court to see that all arrests were justified. [...] The whole kingdom heard from Phillippe on January 3, 1296: royal officials were warned against putting anyone under restraint at the demand of a friar until they had first assured themselves that such action was warranted, and that the person directing it was properly commissioned by the pope. In addition, prisoners at the moment in durance contrary to the provisions of this ordinance were to be set at liberty.[311]

These efforts by the King culminate in the trouble with Carcassonne and the deaths of the consuls there for treason. Davis' analysis of the encounters should be noted:

> Thus ended the appeal to the king on behalf of the defendants of Albi, and significantly enough the greatest gainer in the course of events was the king himself. The struggle had served to extend his influence over both the Inquisition and the consulates of two of the towns. [...] It was not the Inquisition but the crown that finally broke the power of the "kinglet of Carcassonne" [Gui's nickname for the head consul], and he and his associates were hanged in their robes of office on the charge not of heresy, but of treason.[312]

The change in the structures of authority and resistance are clear here, in Albi and Carcassonne, the abuses of the accusations made against against "faithful Catholics"

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[310] Ibid., p.73.
[311] Ibid., p.60-61.
[312] Ibid., p.75.

generate a series of complaints to the king of France, whose response is to tighten his control over his temporal agents there. Disaffected consuls attempt to seek the aid of some other temporal power and are arrested and hanged for treason. The central popular leader, the local religious figure in the story is a Spiritual Franciscan, Délicieux. The heretics make no real appearance in this story of the resistance in the towns of fourteenth century Languedoc. The people of Languedoc attempted to mobilize the power of the nobility against the Church.

This story from the early fourteenth century highlights the transformation of the discourse around religious, cultural and communal power in the region. If Simon de Montfort, with his Statues of Pamiers in 1212, wished to reproduce the cultural and social structure of the "lands around Paris", he would be pleased to see that the local populace, in response to the abuses of an Inquisition in their town, turn to the King of France and a sympathetic friar from the order of Saint Francis. If this was not the complete abandonment of the nostalgic idea of an independent culture of *paratge,* it was, at least, a pragmatic recognition of the actual structures of authority in southern France, structures demonstrably different from before the process the region went through in the thirteenth century.

The Church's goal to eradicate heresy from the region of Languedoc, and to bring its populace back into the fold of Christendom depended on the support of faithful temporal powers. The issue of the superiority of Catholicism over the Good Christians would never have been decided through debate or mission, which had to appeal to the populace and their local interpretations of the religious life, expectations already embodied by the Good Men and Women. The only way to demonstrate the power of the

Church was through the power of her allies. The coercion required to create the threat to the people of Languedoc, a threat which obedience to the Church removed, came at the cost of reliance on the temporal power of the king of France. This reliance put the Church in a compromised position, a position which led to reforms of their institution issued by Pope Clement at the Council of Vienne in 1312:

> That Clement acted with the knowledge and approval of Philippe, if not even directly at his suggestion, cannot be doubted, and a comparison of the constitutions with the royal letters of December 8, 1301, and January 13, 1304, in particular, clearly shows their consonance with the king's recommendations. [...] Mild, not to say inadequate, as these reforms seem today, the irritation of Bernard Gui shows that the Inquisition chafed at their restrictions.[313]

The support of the temporal power of the King of France has the dual effect of forcing the people of Languedoc to cohere to his vision of proper religiosity, but it allows grants them some protection, ideally, from the abuses of the representatives of the Church.

Taking up, again, the discussion of the consequences of the Church's tactics in the region, we can see that the initial military and colonizing project of the Albigensian crusade, and the subsequent police action of the Inquisitions would not have been successful without the support of the King of France, but that that support had permanent consequences. As Jonathan Sumption put it in his *the Albigensian Crusade*: "The power of the French monarchy extended for the first time in four centuries to the Mediterranean."[314]

The critical issue, here, is less about whether it was the Pope or the King of France who benefited the most from the transformation of Languedoc into Southern

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[313] Ibid., p.65.

[314] Jonathan Sumption *The Albigensian Crusade* (Faber & Faber, 1978) p.16.

France... and more about the successful imposition of a set of new cultural, legal, linguistic and religious social realities on the communities of the region. Taking into consideration the circumstances of the beginning of the century, and contrasting them to the story of conflict in Carcassonne and Albi at the end of the century, the participation of the people in both secular and religious orthodox social structures is apparent. The difference between the social power and involvement of the King and his representatives and the problems the Pope had with the Count of Toulouse are substantial. "Heresy" appears in the story only as the false accusation against good Catholics, and the criminals in the story are traitors against the king, not secret Manichaeans.

Part IV: The Potential of Secrecy

The story of the end of the conflict between the Church and the Good Christians is also, to some extent the story of what survives of the "heretics" after their physical remains, and places are destroyed. Although the Good Christians cease to exist, the idea of heroic Cathars who resisted the power of the Church and the Medieval Manichee who practiced secret heresy both remain to this day, they became part of the story of Europe, and the story of the Church. The tactics of the Church had a lasting effect on the way it was perceived and on the thinking of those who claimed a monopoly on interpreting religious truth and goodness.

What we are particularly interested in are the ways that the stories about secret heretics both succeeded in destroying the Good Christians of Languedoc and simultaneously created a space for the idea of the Good Christians to live on. Napoleon Peyrat, in 1870, wrote his influential *Histoire des Albigeois* a work which makes the link

between periods of resistance to both Church and King, linking thirteenth century Cathars, sixteenth century Calvinists and eighteenth century Camisards together in a skein of independence and "liberty" in the region.[315]

> C'est Peyrat qui fait du vieux castrum de Montségur le symbole de la résistance, de la fidélité et du sacrifice cathares : en d'autres termes, il invente ce qui est devenu un lieu de mémoire mondialement célèbre. En revanche, Peyrat s'est refusé à s'engager dans des rêveries séparatistes : bien que pratiquant l'occitan (des lettres conservées à Toulouse, au Collège d'Occitanie, en témoignent), il écrit en français, considérant que c'est la langue de la liberté. Ce patriote que la défaite de 1870 a douloureusement marqué, salue la France républicaine, dont il estime qu'elle est l'héritière des vaincus du Moyen Age ou du XVIIe siècle. Cathares, camisards, révolutionnaires, républicains : telle est la généalogie qu'il a cherché à restaurer[316]

The idea of the Cathars, the survival the idea of them, and the diversity of interpretations about who and what they were, can be traced back to the initial accusations of secrecy leveled against the Good Christians of Languedoc by the Church they refused to recognize. By positing a hidden space in which the "truth of the heretics" existed, something far removed from their public face, the Church created a potential for interpretation that did not exist before, and did not fade when the Good Christians themselves were all killed. The utility of the idea of the heretics' secrecy and deception, at the time, was that it allowed the Church to fit them into their tradition of heresy, to find all the evils they expected in the hidden actions and unheard speech of the heretics' secret meetings, as Eckbert says in his 1167 sermon against the Cathars: "As the Lord foretold they say Christ is in closets, for they claim that the true faith of Christ and the true worship of Christ are to be found only in their meetings, which they hold in cellars, in

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[315] Peyrat, *Histoire des Albigeois: Les Albigeois et l'Inquisition*. (Paris: Lacroix-Verboeckhoven, 3 volumes. Réédition Lacour, 1996).

[316] See Patrick Cabanel and Philippe de Robert, *Cathares et Camisards. L'œuvre de Napoléon Peyrat (1809-1881)* (Montpellier, Les Presses de Languedoc, 1998) p. 263.

weavers huts, and such underground hideouts."[317] This act of interpretation, of positing a secret reality behind the facade the "heretics" exposed to the world, merely brought reality in line with the expectations the Church had of heretics, dating back to the authors of the New Testament documents.[318] This secret reality played a crucial role in the development of the process of inquisition, as it universalized suspicion, and made every member of the suspect society a potential heretic, since lack of evidence against them became a sign of their guilt. As Karen Sullivan puts it in her *Truth and the Heretic*:

> An individual accused of heresy, perhaps because he actually is a heretic, perhaps because he is falsely believed to be a heretic, or perhaps merely because someone is seeking his death. once he has been accused, every effort the man makes to defend himself of this charge can be construed as evidence against him. He denies his heresy, but heretics are well-known for such denials; he makes counter-accusations to explain why he has been accused, but heretics have been shown to attempt such diversions; he professes his Catholic faith, but every superficially orthodox word or phrase he uses can be interpreted as containing a hidden, heterodox meaning. As it is impossible to prove that one does not have a secret to someone who believes one does, it become impossible for the accused heretic to prove that he is not a heretic to authorities who believe he is legitimately charged.[319]

This idea of the secret identity of the people in Languedoc who resisted the Church was so useful, so powerful, for the Church, both strategically in dealing with the problem, and internally in explaining to ecclesiastics the existence of difference and the possibility of resistance. The revelation of the secret truth about these heretics satisfied the expectations of the Church and confirmed the correctness of their own tradition. The transformation of a secret threat into a revealed error reinforced the power of the tradition of the Church for the insider.

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[317] Moore, 1975, p.90.
[318] See I Timothy 4:1-5 in the New Testament.
[319] Sullivan, 2005, p.83.

The strategic failures of secrecy for the program of the Church consist in the survival of the idea of the "heretics" and the use of that idea against the Church. The way this situation develops, secrecy has a power that the Church cannot control. In their own time the Good Christians acquired allies of all those disaffected by the Albigensian crusade and its effects, and after that time the mystery of the secretive Cathars drew the interest of some of those looking for hidden realities behind the general history of European religious and political change, this attractive quality is grounded in the power of secrecy itself, considered apart form the actual contents of the secret. As Georg Simmel puts it in his work on knowledge and human relations: "From secrecy, which shades all that is profound and significant, grows the typical error according to which everything mysterious is something important and essential. Before the unknown, man's natural impulse to idealize and his natural fearfulness cooperate toward the same goal: to intensify the unknown through imagination, and to pay attention to it with an emphasis that is not usually accorded to patent reality."[320] in this sense, Simmel considers secrecy a kind of sociological adornment in and of itself, separate from the value of what is hidden. Secretiveness itself, when discerned, has power.

This is the mistake the Church made, they ignored the power of secrecy itself, as separate from what is being kept secret. Those who see the "Cathars" as the first Protestants, the first revolutionaries, the keepers of the grail, the inheritors of the secret gnosis, descendants of the Manicheans, Western Bogomils, etc... are using the Church's accusation of secrecy and substituting the contents the Church saw there with something

[320] see Chapter 3 "Secrecy" in Kurt H. Wolff's *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (Free Press, 1964) p.333.

that fits their tradition, their bias, their expectation. To return to the Kermode quote used above:

> What it meant and what it means are both actualizations of its hermeneutic potential, which, though never fully available, is inexhaustible. An interpreter working in this tradition cannot altogether free himself from historical and institutional constraints. He will try to avoid them, insofar as they are avoidable; but he cannot escape his own historicality, and he was trained in an institution.[321]

The suspicion of secrecy creates the "hermeneutic potential" that allows the Good Men and Women of Languedoc to be interpreted in a bewildering variety of ways.

The Grail theory mentioned earlier in the conspiracy theory of the authors of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* has a distinguished lineage going back to Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall in 1818, in his *Mysterium Baphometis Revelatum* which put forward his theory about the secrets of the Knights Templar, as bearers of both Grail and Ophic Gnosticism, and put the Cathars and Assassins in their lineage.[322] Benoist, in his *Histoire des Albigeois et des Vaudois* in 1691, "praised the wisdom of Louis XIV in revoking the Edict of Nantes six years before and expelling from his kingdom the Huguenots who were, he claimed, indeed the spiritual heirs of the Albigensians whose monstrous heresies the author was intending to expose."[323] In 1960, G. Koch in his *Frauenfrage und Ketzertum im Mittelalter* made the first speculation that women were attracted to Catharism for freedom from the Church's oppression of their gender.[324] Each of these works, grounded on one type of evidence or another, finds space for their interpretation of the Cathars in the secrecy that the Church used to explain the different kind of holiness

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[321] Kermode, 1979, p.40.
[322] see Bernard Hamilton's "The State of Research: The legacy of Charles Schmidt to the study of Christian Dualism" pp.191-214 in *the Journal of Medieval history,* Vol 24, No. 2,(1998) p.211.
[323] Ibid., p.192.
[324] Ibid., p.200.

they saw in the Good Christians. Each interpreter sees something different behind the fractured surface of the available evidence.

What survived the destruction of the Good Christians was the memory of a group who opposed the Church, and became important enough to merit the first crusade against a Christian region in Europe's history. Even those who doubt the veracity of the Church's claims about the "secrets of the Cathars", do not doubt the importance of the Church's opponent, the simple historical facts of the launching of the crusade against them, of creating the first Inquisitions to find them, marks the Good Christians as important and dangerous. The record of the Church's reaction preserves the power of the Good Christians, a power that is hidden in the day-to-day evidence and sweeping descriptions we have from Inquisitions and chronicles of the time. This memory maintains its fascination for people to the extent that it offers the trill of revelation, the potential overturn of a secret, the uncovering of what was concealed. The simple and relatively straight-forward evidence regarding the religiosity of the Good Christians is, if you believe in the secret, only the surface, only the public face of something more important, more interesting, more in line with what you might expect from a group the Church devoted itself to crushing for two centuries. Elaine Graham Leigh in her *The Southern French Nobility and the Albigensian Crusade* describes the power of this myth on the history of the region:

> [T]he romantic tradition, and in particular the notion outlined by Peyrat of a secret Cathar treasure, has also given rise to what René Nelli has dubbed the "secret history" of Languedoc and the Albigensian crusade, focusing on the mystic secrets of the Cathars. These are often connected in this tradition with common conspiracy theory material: mysterious nocturnal visitors to Montségur are supposed to have left a manuscript describing the castle and the area in Tibetan, and a Gnostic mass is said to have been celebrated at Montségur in 1940 by a

> Templar. Scholars of Catharism and the Albigensian crisade have been at pains to stress the separation between the conspiracy throries and scholarship on medieval Languedoc; René Nelli, for example, commented that the real mystery was how cultured, educated people could believe in both the real and secret Languedoc at the same time.[325]

There is no real mystery, only the power of secrecy, a history of suspicion, and the expectations we receive from our own discourse communities. That is what allows different people to believe different "hidden truths" about the Good Christians.

The endings addressed in this chapter highlight the power of the preserved memory of the Good Christians, however distorted. They also make clear the success of the Church in capturing the territory of those who resisted her, in destroying their bodies, in imposing a more trustworthy social structure on the land. This success is by no means complete. The memory of secret resistance survives. It survives because of the tactics used by the Church, tactics justified by the story the Church told about the religion of the region. The social power of these stories, these memories, survived the death of the Good Christians as a social fact. Memories retained the importance that the Church invested in destroying the "heretics of Languedoc". The secrecy that was such a critical part of the Church's explanation of the Good Christian's existence and popularity, remained just as useful to those seeking new, different explanations for these enemies of the Church.

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[325] Elaine Graham-Leigh's *The Southern French Nobility and the Albigensian Crusade* (Boydell Press, 2005)

CONCLUSION

The victory of the Church was not complete. Although the Good Christians were successfully extirpated, and the region itself was under the direct power of a powerful Christian king, the strategies and tactics employed by the orthodox had costs. One of these costs was the survival of the "heretics" in the record. That record that was used by its opponents and detractors, and those suspicious of the "standard" history for centuries to come. The power of the Church's stories about heresy, whether in the records of the twelfth century debates or in the registers of Inquisitorial trials, shaped the reality of Languedoc for these two centuries and created permanent changes for the people who lived there. Secrecy, in the stories and in the day-to-day practices of both Church and Good Christians, plays a central role in these changes. Understanding the role secrecy plays in the discourse about religious power and authority in the region is what has provided us with interpretive tools for the events of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Languedoc, and some general insights into the power of secrecy in religious conflicts.

The power of secrecy depends, of course, on the power of discourse generally, and we have provided herein a sociological theory regarding the power of discourse to shape social realities and individual experiences. In that way, we can understand individual records as products of particular discourse communities, and also appreciate the way in which these products then impact the larger community and the individuals who belong to it. Religious discourse is a special instance of the broader category of discourse, and its power is special as we have shown, when it plays the role of

maintaining narratives of ultimate consequence to those in the community. The power of secrecy in a religious conflict cannot be understood without baring these point in mind.

This context in which the audience, author and text all participate is the foundation of the recognition of of secrecy. All discourse has withheld elements, things that go unsaid. There is no way to perfectly meet the expectations of every audience member. There is no complete, transparent discourse, in which the speaker makes everything explicit and clear. So it is important to appreciate the role of interpretation in the accusation of secrecy. Given the impossibility of transparency, what matters is the audience's perception of missing expected elements, or unexpected additions, any deviation from the norms.

Deviation and difference, so central to our theory about how suspicions arise, how secrecy is detected, are also the core issues facing the Church in regard to the people of Languedoc. The interpretation of the heretics as secret agents of the devil, aping religiosity to cover their perversions, is more than just reliance on the heresiological tradition of the Church. It is the recognition of deviation from the Church's norms, from what the Church expects from a good Christian society, that allows for the interpretation of that absence as a sign of secrecy, of a hidden conspiracy seeking the damnation of Christians and the destruction of the Church. Whether the norms of the Church would have ever been recognized in Languedoc is largely irrelevant to the Church's perception of the populace as deviating from the norm. The heretics are seen as turning away from something. The history of perceiving heretics in this fashion definitely plays it role in the choice the Church makes to see the Good Christians as dangerous deviants, but it is not

simply a result of history. The choice to represent the Good Christians of Languedoc as secret Manicheans who practice depraved ritual has some strategic benefits.

The benefit enjoyed by the Church from interpreting the deviance of the Good Men as diabolical secrecy was that the defenders of the faith had ready-made refutations of the heretics' hidden beliefs, ready-made explanations for the existence of such deviance, and a preexisting justification for their actions against it. Basically, the choice to see in the Good Christians the continuation of the old problem of dualism meant that the Church never needed to deal with why, or how, a local alternative to the religiosity of the Church arose in Languedoc. In addition to this, as we have seen, the use of a theory of secrecy allowed the representatives of the Church to dismiss the legitimacy of any argument made by the Good Christians in debate or in front of a jury, even to dismiss the apparent sincerity of their religiosity as deception targeted at the foolish and ignorant. In effect, the suspicions of the Church gave it carte-blanche in interpreting the evidence it received about the Good Christians, and justified their tactics in responding to the problem of religious difference in the region.

The Good Christians and their networks of supporters do not actually adopt a strategy of secrecy, as far as can be seen, until the threat of persecution becomes a part of their daily activities. The early scene of the conflict repeatedly provides us with examples of encounter and willingness to debate. So much so that Mark Gregory Pegg has interpreted this openness as fundamental to the system of authority the people of Languedoc developed.[326] The minimal description developed in this work of the Good Christians relies on the testimony of the people of Languedoc regarding their interactions

[326] See Pegg, 2008, pp.40-41.

with the "heretics". These memories described a religiosity tied up with the distinct culture of the region, with *paratge*. The blessings, signs of respect, the public preaching, the asceticism and self-control, all of the characteristics of the Good Men and Women that are described in the registers of Inquisitorial courts point toward the importance of community relations and networks of trust and obligation. The threat of physical violence, the social program of the Church to redefine the Good Men and Women as "dangerous heretics" in the eyes of the people, leads to the transition from open debate and challenges of authority to secret meetings and clandestine movements. The tactics used by the Church create this response. In order to survive at all the Good Christians must hide. Inadvertently, the Church creates a hidden movement that closely resembles the enemy they saw from the beginning; secret meetings, hidden beliefs and practices, communities infiltrated with sympathizers. Unfortunately for the Good Men and Women, not only was total invisibility extremely difficult in the landscape of Languedoc, the nature of their religiosity demanded interaction, preaching, a public existence in which their claim on the religious could be recognized and benefited from. Unlike the Church, whose tactics matched their strategy in the region, the heretics' strategy of secrecy ran counter to the goals that maintained their identity as Good Christians. The methods of Inquisition as developed by the Church were, however, directly focused on the public signs of interaction between the people and hidden "heretics". Although it took a century, the systematic process of the Church Inquisitorial program eventually transformed the way the people of Languedoc understood their own Good Christians, and the interactions that had once been the visible signs of a unique system of courtesy and honor.

The secrecy employed by the Church to achieve its goals in the region bore the rhetoric of protection, but had the effect of terrorizing the populace. There is no explicit discussion of undermining communal trust, nor of the need to use secrecy carefully to destabilize the networks of friendship and etiquette which the Good Men and Women required to survive. What is discussed is the need for protection, protecting the Church from heresy, protecting informants from reprisal, and protecting the truth from liars. The secrecy of the Church worked to hide from the people of Languedoc what the friars knew, encouraging full disclosure of anything potentially incriminating. This process was combined with a corresponding use of publicity and internal information sharing, that allowed the Church hierarchy to maintain its results and promote an awareness, and fear, of the work it was doing. The most powerful tool of publicity the Inquisitions used came at the establishment of a particular tribunal, the summons and period of grace. The summons were public, presented by the local priest before the entire parish, and, "if no previous Inquisition has been made in that place, we will grant indulgence from imprisonment to all from that place who have not been cited by name or who have not yet earned indulgence if, within a specified time, they come voluntarily as penitents to tell the exact and full truth about themselves and about others."[327] The power of this, broadcast through the land in every parish, created suspicions among the people, and a sense of danger in the hidden contents of the registers of the Inquisition.

The process of the Inquisition was not geared toward determining guilt as one might imagine, the explicit rationale for this involves not just the fact that secret heretics might appear completely orthodox, but that the region had been so corrupted that the

[327] "A Manual for Inquisitors at Carcassonne, 1248-49", Peters, 1980, p.201.

entire populace, as far as the Church was concerned, could not help to be guilty of some interaction with heretics at some point or another. The point here, is to be able to be certain that everyone has been interrogated, everyone has gone through the process. As it says in the *Processus:* "even of those who insist they know nothing about others and have themselves committed no crime, so that if they have lied or if subsequently they commit an offense, as is often found true of a number of persons, it is on record that they have abjured and been interrogated in detail"[328] What the Church is looking for here is some clarity. It cannot prevent lying, though the keeping and sharing of records does catch out people who contradict earlier testimony on occasion, but what it can do is force everyone to go through the process, the orthodox process, of confession and reconciliation. The muddy ambiguity of the pre-crusade period, with its intense localism and complex webs of authority and etiquette, is replaced with a system of clear categories, backed by physical punishment. The power of this process to transform the discourse about religious authority and identity in the region is clear. It would be difficult to imagine any villager not being aware of the danger of interacting with the heretics of Languedoc after hearing about the process of inquisition at work, and impossible to imagine after undergoing it themselves. That change in the people's self-conception marks a clear victory in the conflict with the Good Christians, despite the clandestine survival of the "heretics" through almost a century of systematic persecution. The Good Christians were now clearly recognized as, and acting like, heretics were expected to.

The Church's tactics combined secrecy and publicity, and it might be tempting to assume that the Good Christians' tactics were similar. The records we have do, obviously,

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[328] Ibid., p.202

support the idea of clandestine activities. Once every interaction with the heretics was criminalized, the interactions all became covert. As we have seen, there is testimony of secret movements, secret meetings, ambiguous language about the "Good". It is difficult to know whether these are new things developed in response to the Church's repression of the Good Men, or whether these are the same things Good Men and Women had always done, now hidden as best as possible. As Thery put it, from mid-thirteenth century records people's interactions with the "heretics" sound like the usual travelling and visiting that went on between friends, family and business associates all the time.[329] It's the participation of the heretical Good Christians in those interactions that makes the real difference, for those brought before a tribunal.

If the practical reality of heresy was just normal social interaction, the change is entirely in its hidden-ness, contrary to the allegations against the Good Christians regarding the nature of their secret practices and beliefs. The stories of the "secrets of the heretics", told by polemicists like Rainier Sacconi,[330] go beyond the normal interactions of village life, and although the records I have presented speak of normalcy, more than once that normalcy is considered suspicious. In this work, I have limited the description of the Good Christians to what the testimony describes, and rejected most of what polemicists claimed about the heretics they called the "Cathars". We have rejected these things to the point of avoiding using the word "Cathar" when possible. How can we, if we are interested in secrecy, take the testimony of the people of Languedoc at face value? How do we know there weren't secret doctrines and practices? The issue is, of course,

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[329] Julien Thery's "Cléricalisme et hérésie des bon homes: l'exemple d'Albi et de l'Albigeois (1276-1329)" pp.471-508 in *L'anticléricalisme en France méridionale (milieu XIIe-début XIVe siècle)* Cahiers de Fanjeaux, no.38, (2003) pp.487-488.

[330] See Chapter One, p.14.

partly caution created by an awareness of the power of the tradition of heresiology in the Church. The first use of the word "Cathar" describes the basics of "Catharist" belief and practice, and explicitly references the influence of Augustine's work on the Manichaeans. The polemicists are not trust worthy, compared to the testimony of the people who lived with Good Christians. Fortunately, my work does not depend on there being a particular truth about the secrets of the heretics of Languedoc. The evidence we have against them is sufficient to accept their resistance to the Church and their participation in a religious lifestyle outside the Church's authority. Regardless of the details of their individual cosmologies, the Good Christians of Languedoc were "heretics" from the moment the Church was able to enforce its own definitions of such on the people of Languedoc.

The tactical use of secrecy by the Good Christians, not what they were hiding, is what is important. The demands of these tactics, of this secrecy, stood in opposition to their strategic goals of resisting the authority of the Church and maintaining their religious lifestyle. The eventual failure of the Good Christians to survive repression was caused by the public nature of their religiosity; their role as exemplars of *cortezia*, and their social role as conduits of the sacred for those who believed in them. These roles demanded visibility and contact that prevented the Good Christians from being completely hidden or unknown and, in the face of sustained systematic persecution, eventually their movement disappeared.

The Church's strategic use of the idea of secrecy, as successful as it was, created a permanent fascination with the heretics, however, even when the Church's story about the contents of their secrets was rejected. As the objects of the first crusade against a Christian region, object of the first sustained, increasingly systematic process of

inquisition, the brutality of the suppression, the terror of the process, all of these factors draw the attention of those suspicious of the Church, seeing in the "heretics" something more than a local form of Christianity developed outside the authority of the Church.

The speculation on the "secrets of the Cathars", the possibility of secret survivals, are all intensified by the continuing effect of the strategies the Church used to deal with the "heresy" of people of Languedoc. In different contexts, each with their own expectations, the people interested in the memory of the heretics of Languedoc use secrecy to fill out the picture in the most plausible way. "Plausibility" is a function of membership in a community of discourse. Secrecy is the perception of an empty space in which the expectations of the interpreter can be fulfilled.

The suspicion of secrecy, used strategically in religious conflict, provides the level of license it does because it dismisses everything normal or non-threatening about an opponent as deception. Just the allegation of secrecy is enough to establish a possible hidden truth, which the accused has no power to dismiss. Once suspicions are raised even the accuser cannot erase the potential they have created for others to see and speculate on alternate meanings in the evidence. The accusation is even more potent when it comes from the people in society who claim expertise in the true meaning of things, in this case religious experts. When the rhetoric of secrecy is combined with the social power of religious authority, backed by secular authorities loyal to that faith, the results of that level of self-justification can be brutal and terrifying. It is the religious context that takes a threat to social authority and transforms it into a threat of eternal damnation. The deaths of thousands of people for the crime of religious difference cannot be understood outside this struggle over Christian souls.

These general conclusions about the impact of discourse on social realities, the special power of those seen as "universe maintainers" in society, and specifically the power of suspicion and secrecy in religious disputes suggest directions for further work in the area of the sociology of religion. In different contexts, with different power dynamics and different types of religious belief, the use of secrecy will, potentially, have different effects. The application of this type of analysis to the discourse of minority religious groups or new religious movements will provide a novel interpretive focus.

In addition, this work provides an example of the caution required when approaching the study of secrecy. The difficulties, both ethical and epistemological, to responsible inquiry limit what can be said about the contents of the secrets involved, focusing instead on secrecy itself as a social strategy. The contents are absent, but the effects are available to us. Although it is doubtful that those engaged in religious conflict will take these cautions seriously, and unlikely that those interested in conspiracies will abandon their search for "what really happened", this work provides an caution to those interested in avoiding the dangers of suspicion.

Further research into the use of secrecy by religious groups, in conflict with each other or with secular authority, will help flesh out all the potential uses and mis-uses of secrecy in their particular contexts. The general caution about the level of license provided by the idea of secrecy remains, however, regardless. The loss of life caused by the Albigensian Crusade and the terror created by the Inquisition into heretical depravity are examples of secrecy's uses that should not be forgotten.

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