DAILY LIFE AMONG THE CATHARS

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BOOKS

This book offers a sort of film of the life of the Cathars of Languedoc, as it developed, from the beginning of the 13th century until 1350, in the counties of Toulouse and Foix and in the four viscounts of Trencavel: Carcassonne, Béziers, Albi and Nîmes. In these regions, which were the main scene of the famous "Crusade against the Albigensians", the existence and tragic survival of Catharism can be best captured in its historical continuity. If Catharism is part of the movement of evangelical renewal that manifested itself throughout Christendom in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it is no less true that the Perfect Ones believed in the existence of two antagonistic principles, of unequal value but equally eternal, and defended the idea that the world is the work of the Devil.

This was undoubtedly the mark that most strongly marked the mentality of the Occitan people of the 13th century and determined their daily behavior. Consequently, the daily life of the Cathar was very different from that of the "common man" of the Middle Ages, and René Nelli invites us in this book to a true discovery of the Good Men, the Perfect Ones, or "believers".

Introduction

There were Cathars in France, Catalonia, Italy, Germany and even, it seems, in England. But especially in the French Midi, from the end of the 12th century until 1209, when the Crusade was unleashed, Catharism was able to organize itself in the form of a Church and, through the great lords won to its cause, to exert a social and political influence over the whole country. At the same time, thanks to the preaching of its ministers, Catharism succeeded in slightly modifying the general spirit of the inhabitants of Languedoc and, consequently, their daily life. The moral mores it had imposed during the time of its triumph were maintained to some extent even after it became clandestine in the cities and in the rural areas and, until the beginning of the 14th century, in almost all sectors of society.

In this book you will find a sort of film of the life of the Cathars in Languedoc, as it developed, from the dawn of the 13th century until 1350, in the counties of Toulouse and Foix and in the four viscounts of the Trencavel family: Carcassonne, Béziers, Albi and Nîmes. In these regions that were, together with some peripheral cities of Provence or *Bigorre* - of which we will only speak incidentally - the main theater of the "crusade against the Albigensians", the most representative, within their historical continuity, is the existence and the tragic survival of Catharism. It would not be possible to give a faithful picture of the "perfect ones" and of the "believers" without following them sometimes in Catalonia and in Lombardy, where

had to go into exile at different times, especially after the fall of Montségur (1244).

Catharism was part of the general movement of evangelical renewal that manifested itself throughout Christendom in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Perfect Ones set themselves up as the authentic successors of the Apostles, believing that their Christianity was the only true one and that that of Rome was nothing but a diabolical deviation: they claimed to be Christians.

But the Roman Catholics refused to consider them as simple reformers, analogous, for example, to the *Waldenses*: not without reason they denounced in Catharism an evident resurgence of the ancient Manichaeism. Whether it came, in fact, from the doctrine of Manes by direct filiation or through the Paulicians deported to Thrace in the tenth century by the Byzantine emperors and then from the Bulgarian Bogomils of the tenth and eleventh centuries; whether the fundamental data were simply found from the critical examination of the texts of the Scriptures (Old Testament, Gospel of John), Catharism professes the existence of two antagonistic principles, unequal in value but *equally eternal.* Evil is a reality with which the true God must reckon.

Certainly not all Cathars believed in the eternity of the beginning of evil. There were "mitigated" dualists who, like Catholics, taught that evil had begun: an originally good angel, created by God, had invented it by committing the sin of pride out of free will. But the absolute dualists and the mitigated dualists had agreed to attribute the creation of this world to an evil demiurge, Satan or rebellious angel. Such a belief mainly frightened Christianity (for as for the other propositions, which the reader may relegate as secondary, there is not a single one that has not been equally sustained, at various times, by some doctor of the Church and taken for orthodox). The idea that *the world is of the Devil* is what has most clearly specified the mentality of the Occitan of the thirteenth century in relation to other Christians.

We have not distinguished in this work between absolute dualists and mitigated dualists. The Cathars of the Languedoc, taking into account that the

ideological boundaries err on the side of precision on this point, *they were almost all absolute dualists*. They had more or less the same rites and the same religious obligations. The Cathar morality is deduced from the evil nature of the Manifestation: the Good, the Virtue, the Salvation, consist in absolutely detaching oneself from the Matter created by the Devil, taking as a model the life of Jesus Christ descended to earth in a *spiritual body*, not so much to "sacrifice" himself, but to show man the Way of Redemption. Moreover, what was sin for the Catholics was also sin for the Cathars. Nevertheless, our heretics scandalized their time by condemning swearing, murder in all its forms, war, human justice (that of kings, lords, bishops) and even the death of animals. The principles of this morality, which could be thought to be exclusive to the saints, did not fail to exert a certain influence on the daily behavior of the Occitan people.

The concern to clearly situate daily life within the framework of the

The precise circumstances of the time obliged us to begin this book with a quick study of the southern society of the 12th and 13th centuries, preceded by a sort of examination of the soul and minds. We have preferred to include in this first chapter all that is necessary to understand the life of the Cathars, in order to speed up the "film" and not to have to return to the subject continuously. On the other hand, it was not a question of commenting on the cultured metaphysics of the Cathars, but simply of examining what stands out in the instinctive behaviors and the way of taking life and death: all the spontaneous reactions, all the more coercive for being more unconscious and "vital".

Nor will we recount here the history of the political and economic events that have taken place in the last few years.

The military events that took place in Languedoc from 1209 to 1226-1229 (Treaty of Meaux) and after that date: the Trencavel uprising in 1240, the coalition plotted in 1242 against the King of France by the Count of Toulouse, the Count of Foix, Viscount Trencavel, the King of England and the Count of La Marche. But so that the reader does not get lost in the many vicissitudes of this drama, which extends over a century and a half, we will briefly recall its course and its impact on the daily life of the people of Oc.

On the other hand, it is a fact that the daily life of the Cathar is far from coinciding with that of "any man" of the Middle Ages at the same time. If the "good men", the perfect ones, adorned their whole existence with mysticism, the believers devoted only a weak part of themselves to religious concerns. In most of their daily occupations, they were hardly distinguishable from Catholics and atheists (for they already existed in the 13th century). We will therefore speak of the dwelling only in the rather rare case in which, suitably equipped, it would facilitate, if necessary, the escape of a perfect person; we will not describe the clothes, those of the ordained, for example, except when they conform to a rule or when, because they are too luxurious, they bring down on those who wear them, ladies and gentlemen, the blow of the sumptuary laws of the Inquisition. Finally, food is of interest to us only insofar as, for the perfect, it was special and vegetarian.

The common of believers does not present any homogeneity, if we make abstraction of the general atmosphere that Catharism deployed on the whole epoch. At the risk of making this essay too analytical, we have had to study separately the nobles, the bourgeois, the peasants, the artisans and even the female world, because women in all classes of society showed a religious behavior very different from that of men. The interest that the various classes manifested for heresy is not always explained by the same causes and is expressed, in the end, by the objective evolutions and the different sacrifices in essence, which must be presented under their particular aspect.

We have therefore tried to reconstruct the religious life of some archetypes. We would have liked to do it within a complete and continuous image, but it was not possible. The *Registers of the Inquisition* have been able to provide us with numerous significant facts and revealing anecdotes, although they do not allow us to compose an absolutely exact "generic" image of the perfect and the believer. The portrait is necessarily approximate.

We have chosen, however, the images that seemed to us to present an exemplary or "clarifying" meaning, i.e., that

symbolized or summarized a good number of analogous behaviors. The plot that brought them together has been devised to fill in the gaps and explain what could not be visualized.

Naturally, we have not invented these facts. We have taken them from where they were, and they already appear in numerous books, ancient and modern. Many, however, are unpublished and have been translated directly from the Latin or Provençal original. We give, by way of bibliography, the list of texts that we have found useful and also, for readers who wish to follow the study of Catharism, the titles of the principal works dealing with its metaphysics and dogmas. An index of names situates the main characters in their time.

Part One

TRIUMPHANT CATHARISM

CHAPTER ONE

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL ASPECT OF LANGUEDOC AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 13TH CENTURY

Soul, body and spirit

In the form of instinctive behaviors, irrational reactions, moral habits, religious conceptions mark mentalities and modify them all the more profoundly as they are lived more painfully. The man of the thirteenth century was not at all like the man of today, neither in his sensibility nor, above all, in the way he placed himself, like a ghost between the world of sin and the world of salvation. Around the year 1200, a metaphysics that they did not understand, but which was imposing itself on their hearts, convinced men and women that the human being had not been created as a unity and that, between the three parts of which he was composed: soul, body and spirit, there was no substantial link. The body was an outsider belonging to the diabolical creation. It was both a nothingness and a machine. One felt installed in it as today a traveler in his car. Some, anguished by the fact of feeling imprisoned inside it - *Have pity*, says the
"Others were accommodated in his flesh as in a despicable and petty "tunic". The sins that necessarily made him commit did not concern him.

Above this material knot of determinisms, there hovered the spirit, unknown and sinless, residing in God as an eternal essence and so unattached to the soul that the latter could be completely degraded without being altered. He alone ensured man's salvation; and to be saved, in turn, the soul had to turn to him, to unite with him. Sometimes it was conceived as something impersonal, and identical for all consciences.

The individual was the soul. A soul suspended between two abysses: that of the divine Spirit and that of satanic nothingness; deprived of its highest faculties - intelligence was then part of the spirit - and practically reduced to sensitivity and affectivity, subjected to all the whims of the body, the soul was nothing but desires. From this came a versatility, an emotionality, which all historians have emphasized in the man of the Middle Ages, always subjected to excessive feelings, capable of passing from anger to clemency, from cruelty to pity, in an instant; as soon exalting himself in his soul and aspiring only to find in God the liberating death, as sinking into his body and abandoning himself to all his voluptuousness. It was chaos (the material elements were in disagreement) and "mixture", the body being capable of confusing the soul. We will have to wait until St. Thomas and the notion of substantial compound, which has no other merit than that of giving a name to the evolution or mutation undergone by the human species, for this tragic dislocation, this tearing apart of the essence, to come to an end. In the time of Catharism, the sincere believer was concerned only with his feminized soul, a kind of fallen angel, always in danger, always in anguish, always in need of saving; the lost sheep of which the Gospel speaks.

Was he more pessimistic or more optimistic than we are? Does it make any sense this question? We would fall into a bad romanticism if we would limit ourselves to represent the man of the thirteenth century as a being always gloomy and desperate. Catharism is more "optimistic" than any other religion concerning the future of the spirit, and even concerning the ultimate fate of the soul, since it too must one day be saved. It is pessimistic only in the temporal and in what concerns this material world sunk in Evil, where the bodies are the work of the devil and where the

feudal hierarchy, in itself of evil essence, is composed only of lost souls. This land is hell: even justice is unjust.

Let us add that before, man lived an average of thirty years[1]. His life was still threatened by famine, war, highway robbers, the Inquisition, incurable diseases. At the first symptom of an unknown disease, the human being went to bed, resigned himself and awaited death as animals do. This explains the practice of *endura* which, in some cases, could be almost instinctive as it is today among primitive people. For as soon as man grew old, or was in danger of death, he entered the afterlife and thought only of saving his soul. As long as he believed that Catholicism was the way of truth leading to salvation, he was faithful to it. From the moment he became convinced that the only true Christians were the perfect ones: that only they, like good doctors, can truly cure souls, he placed in their hands all his trust and all his hopes.

"God brings you to a good end!" the good men told him. Such concern about reaching a good end, the anguish of having to face reincarnation without being prepared to be reborn better obsessed most men and women of the 13th century.

Belief in reincarnation.

The importance of the belief in reincarnation, which marked, more than any other, the mentalities and behavior of the time, cannot be overemphasized. Perhaps prior to the spread of Catharism, which it survived, it was constantly betrayed, in everyday life, in response to a deep call, to uncontrolled reactions. This belief contributed to making the soul and the body less familiar: it would perhaps even have weakened the incest taboos if they had not been so deeply rooted in consciences and family ties, if good men had not maintained their relative legitimacy. Although it certainly neutralized the intersexual differences, the man having been a woman and the woman a man, they

It brought one closer to the other, annulling the inequalities postulated by male misogyny. It ruled out, on the other hand, any superiority of birth of the male who may have been a villain in another life, discrediting him morally: a soul that dwells in the body of a lord, or of an inquisitor, cannot have undertaken the path of salvation.

Towards the end of the 13th century, the belief in the eternity of the world spread more and more, even among the common people. It was part of popular wisdom. There it is, once again, one of those metaphysical propositions relating much more to the characterology of the epoch than to individual philosophical reflection and which it is surprising to see installed in the spirits as other evidences. The certainty that the two orders, the two natures coexisted, corresponds to a vision of the cosmic chains compatible, moreover, with the reincarnations, which reassures some and terrifies others. The world of voluptuousness, of carnal and material illusions will never end: the satanic universe will always be open, always tempting. And the spiritual world will always remain there, always ready to welcome the soul... "It is necessary to choose, certainly, but there is still time". As Catharism accentuates its decadence, the abyss that separates the "pure" from the simple believer becomes deeper. One hears the passionate ones declare: "If I don't get what I want from God, I will get it from the Devil! Hence sometimes arises the temptation to bet on Satan and to indulge in witchcraft. Hence also the vulgar materialism, so widespread at the end of the thirteenth century; the realm of eternity and of the pure spirit is inaccessible to us and matter, with its laws and its fatality, is sufficient unto itself. A cleric of the early years of the 14th century, Bernard Franca, echoed this premature and naive "spinozism" that had become proverbial in the Sabarthés[2]: *That which comes to us, good or bad, comes necessarily. Things cannot be other than what they are*. That is, things will go as they will go: *Aquo ira com ira!* One of the last heretics burned in the county of Foix was a determined materialist who believed only in individual survival. There is less and less belief in human freedom. Everything is referred to the grace of God, to his supreme goodness. So the eternity of the world, the denial of free will, the trust in the Supreme Being, in grace,

now constitute the three ideological foundations of both the Catharism of the simple and the Catharism of the bourgeois.

It is likely that many believers lived happily and liberated, placing their hopes both in the eternity of the world, which was to ensure their purification in a mechanical and necessary way, and in the omnipotence of God. Having weakened the notion of sin, they felt free from guilt. Others, more immersed in the invisible world, became more quickly aware of the development of their soul, feared the supernatural adventure, aspired with all their strength to reach salvation and liberation. Among the believers, the latter were the most numerous.

Languedoc society in its relations with Catharism.

In spite of the backward nature of its agriculture, the ravages caused by robbers in the fields, the *leagues* and the tolls too numerous and too heavy which, as everywhere else in the Middle Ages, hindered trade; in spite of the insecurity and the bad state of the roads, the county of Toulouse was, at the beginning of the 13th century, economically prosperous and even in a phase of expansion. Catharism had juxtaposed itself without difficulty to that feudal and bourgeois society which it had hardly been able to modify. But since it responded to the new aspirations of a part of the small ruined nobles, artisans and merchants, it seemed to anticipate a social evolution that it limited itself, in fact, to translating in mythical terms.

The clergymen intended to distribute all members of the society into three orders: the *oratores* (those who pray), the *bellatores* (those who fight), the *laboratores* (those who work). This tripartite division is not absurd, but it is too general to correspond to the real sociological situation: under the pressure of facts and circumstances, it exploded on all sides. Catharism and, more generally, heterodox thought, contributed to bring the reality of this explosion to the fore by transposing it into a moral crisis, without, however, allowing the two great

The classes present, that of the feudal lords and that of the merchants, did not understand at the outset how opposed their interests were, nor, still less, the nature of their antagonism. The men of that time, very individualistic, and who transferred their narrow selfishness to small groups, often limited their social horizon to neighborhood communities, absorbed themselves in petty quarrels opposing the burg to the city, the neighborhood to the neighborhood, the corporation to the corporation. Not having the modern notion of class, they associated in the name of sentimental, traditional and almost folkloric values, while everything divided them; and they fought furiously among themselves, when everything recommended them to combine their efforts.

However, from a pessimistic and critical vision of the physical and social world, Catharism was led to clarify, to dilate the fundamental antagonisms.

That Catharism by its nature was opposed to feudalism is clear from its myths and moral theories. It taught, for example, that in order to seduce the angels, the Devil had proposed to make them descend to this world, where each would be drunk with pride to command the other: the emperor to the king, the king to the count, the count to the baron, the husband to his wife, and where it would be permitted "with one beast to capture another". The true head of the feudal hierarchy was Satan himself, prince of this world.

The Cathar theory of reincarnations put an end to the notion of inheritance according to which the father transmitted to his son, not only his virtues, but also the "natural" right to enslave other men and to possess the land alone. The "good man" who revealed to the Countess of Toulouse that in another existence she had been a poor villager, weakened the confidence she had hitherto placed in the excellence and continuity of her race.

The feudal lords were warriors, *bellatores*. Their *ordo* formed a hierarchy of barons and knights subordinate to one another which, especially at the beginning, had no other meaning than in its relation to war and the organization of mutual defense: the lord owed protection to his vassal; the vassal owed "service" to his lord. If, by roundly condemning war, Catharism did not succeed in suppressing it - today it is still in full swing - by

At least he succeeded in discrediting their mythology which, with the help of multiple poeticizations, associating, for example, courage with generosity, Grace or Love, had overvalued it as a game and as a test of virility. Let us add to this that the dignity of the *bellatores was* based on the fact that they were united, at least in law, to "those who pray", their supreme reason for existing being to consecrate themselves to the noblest of causes, that of God, and to fight for it by participating in the crusades. But for the Cathars, war was not beautiful, just or good, and around 1250 they had the audacity to say so. Perhaps the most profound of the Occitan thinkers, Peire Cardinal, anticipated the revolutionary idea that the crusade was nothing more than a means for the clerics to exploit the warriors. As *long as a cleric ordered them to do so, he* exclaimed ironically, *the knights would go and plunder Tudela, Le Puy or Montferrant! In reality the clerics throw them into the slaughter: after having given them bread and cheese, they send them into the fray, where they end up riddled with darts*. And what remains, then, of the fable of war and heroic death? And of the legitimacy of feudal rights, when neither the inheritance, which is only that of bodies, nor the grace of God, since the true God is not the author of this unjust society, is the basis for it? In rejecting all human justice as iniquitous, both that of the manorial and ecclesiastical courts; in suggesting to replace them by a peaceful arbitration exercised by the perfect - arbitration which, in the cities and under the authority of the consuls, was beginning to be the norm in conflicts between artisans and merchants, as well as between the various sectors of the trades

- Catharism tended, ideally, to suppress one of the prerogatives of the

The only exception was at the beginning of the century, around 1200, when the only punishment that the perfects inflicted one day on a homicidal baron was to force him to enter their Orders, that is to say, to enter their Orders. Except at the beginning of the century, around 1200, when only the punishment that the Perfect Ones inflicted one day on a homicidal baron, which consisted in forcing him to join their Orders, that is, to become a saint; except perhaps at Montségur, in the years 1240-1244, the Cathars never had the power to apply this new form of justice, but their theories were known by an elite, who judged them more Christian and were inspired by them wherever they had the possibility to do so.

Finally, by prohibiting the oath, the perfects devalued it even in the eyes of simple believers. It is not that they were attacking, as is inconsiderately repeated, the foundations of civil society - the promise on faith, on honor and loyalty, respect for the word given, accompanied by sanctions against false testimony, replace very well the oath (the French Revolution, incidentally, suppressed it for a few years) - but simply those of the feudal society of their times. For the latter, which had little basis in reason, needed to establish between the contracting parties, especially in the vassalic homage, sacred bonds as ritualized as those which, by means of an oath on the Gospel, united the "b l o o d brothers", or by
"exchange of hearts", to lovers.

The great feudal lords.

The great Occitan lords were never aware that Catharism immediately - or in the long term - threatened the real foundations of their society. They never adopted in this respect (as, for example, the Bulgarian barons did with regard to the Bogomils) a frankly hostile attitude. On the contrary, Catharism immediately found among the anticlericalism of these warriors, who had long been in moral rebellion against the Church, a favorable climate for its diffusion. Indeed, they had not waited for Catharism to suggest it to them, to confiscate the proceeds of the tithes and to appropriate the goods of the abbeys.

They enjoyed, in the South, a well-established reputation as unbelievers and libertines, and it is known that William IX of Aquitaine, the first troubadour, had been excommunicated several times in the previous century for his repeated usurpations of ecclesiastical privileges.

Later, political circumstances forced them to rely on the Cathars, who were devoted followers, to defend their rights and usurpations. Even those among them who were good Catholics aligned themselves on the side of the enemies of the Church.

Rebels to the Roman order, the Occitan lords were already so with regard to marriage, which they considered as an unimportant formality. At the whim of their political interests, or abandoning themselves to their fickle mood, they repudiated their wives and took new ones, with a better income or better kinship. The Church punished them with excommunications, without ever succeeding in restoring their respect for the sworn faith. The doctrine of love, exalted by the poets, exerted then in the aristocratic environments, even more influence than Manichaeism. As it seemed to make the highest human values depend on a kind of generous instinct, innate in the hearts of the nobles, the Church quickly saw, not without reason, a resurgence of pagan naturalism, and did all it could to eradicate its progress. This "heresy" owed nothing to Catharism, but it was part of the same bold and reformist current of thought: it incited the women of the aristocracy to become more independent of marital power and discredited Roman marriage. Discredit of which, on the other hand, the husbands took more advantage than the wives.

In another aspect, no less important, his spirit of independence contravened, even more seriously, the prescriptions of the Church. This forbade them to take the Jews into their service, and above all to entrust them with functions that gave them authority over the Christians. But, until the crusade, they continued to employ them wherever they needed their competence in financial matters. In 1203, the viscount of Carcassonne had as his ball the Jew Simon. And the same was true in Toulouse and also in Catalonia and Aragon, a very Catholic country. Although its main task was to destroy Catharism and not Judaism, which enjoyed a recognized status, the crusade of 1209, by imposing the respect of the prescriptions of the legates for this purpose, took on an undeniably anti-Semitic character. The Jews of Béziers were not fooled and hastened to leave the city at the same time as their viscount. Later, under the pretext of combating usury, persecutions were organized, with pillage and destruction of houses, in Toulouse by the very Catholic "White Brotherhood". The Jews were their main victims. It is a very significant fact that Jews, Lombards and Cathars were involved in the same odious reprobation. Undoubtedly, many unfortunate

Toulouse had been ruined by the sordid usurers, but they also
How many debtors in bad faith must have taken advantage of the occasion to make honestly obtained commercial loan contracts disappear without repaying interest or capital! It is evident that the objective proposed by those too traditionalist spirits was to abolish, under the species of the condemnable usury, the legitimate conditions of the nascent capitalism, to which the Church had always been unfavorable. (The French monarchy will end, in the XIVth century, by expelling Jews and Lombards, and the trade of Narbonne will be semi-ruined).

But did the feudalists in the French South know clearly what they had to fight for, what they had to defend? Much less clear-sighted than the barons of the North, as far as the rigid principles of the feudal economy were concerned, immersed in difficult circumstances, caught between the dangers of the moment and the worries of the future, they seemed as soon to accept the rise of commerce and to profit from it, even within the aristocratic system, by opposing the anti-capitalist policy of the Church; so soon, on the contrary, they put obstacles in their way, multiplying the tolls and letting their bands, underpaid, run the roads and rob the merchants; and even here they were up against the Church. But, on this point, with its charitable concepts of Peace, of the "Truce of God", it was the Church that was right. All this shows how the feudals were far from forming a homogeneous class; the small knights did not feel at all in solidarity with the great lords, and the great ones did not agree among themselves.

Small nobles and bourgeois.

Urban institutions had considerably weakened the power of the great lords. In the maritime cities above all, but also in the commercial cities of the interior, the merchant bourgeoisie, represented by their consuls, had acquired a kind of independence, at least in the economic and financial sphere, that

directed as he pleased. This conquest of municipal liberties had associated the bourgeoisie and the petty nobility in the same effort.

No trace can be found anywhere, writes Yves Dossat, *of the antagonism that existed between them in the North of France. The nobles took their place in the consular college in Toulouse, Castelsarrasin, Moissac, Montauban; in Nîmes, four consuls out of eight were chosen by the knights.* These small nobles had neither the military power that enabled the counts and viscounts to maintain the essentials of the feudal apparatus nor, above all, their considerable resources: they were often in need. Since the small fiefs were equally divided among all the heirs, the successions ended in such a fragmentation that a large number of co-owners lived on the same lands, sometimes in the same castle, where they received in money a small part of their rents, already not very considerable. They spent all the pains in the world to compensate their daughters, to "endow" them. They never exploited their lands directly, and lived only from the censuses and the manorial rights, greatly reduced by the parceling; they were often poorer than their peasants. Between 1200 and 1250, it was not rare, in fact, to see a villager come to receive some rents on the lands of his neighbors, to buy noble lands and to have access to leisure. *Many of these new rich married the daughters of noblemen. Some managed to be recognized as such* (E. Perroy). The distance separating the rich peasant from the gentleman, and above all the rural bourgeois from the urban bourgeois, tended to diminish as money compensated for the lack of nobility, to the great detriment of aristocratic cohesion and the order of the *bellatores.*

They were still warriors. They went bankrupt on small expeditions warriors who paid by pledging their castle. But around 1240-1250, they would no longer even have the power: they would find themselves deprived of both bourgeois and feudal rents. Some, completely dispossessed by the Inquisition, were reduced to living the life of a knight errant in the countryside. It is not surprising, then, that many of them were attracted, more by circumstances than by any real class interest, by the urban bourgeoisie and, above all, by Catharism, which helped them financially in exchange for military support and which, in turn, helped them in their struggle against the Inquisition,

by employing them in his service, he encouraged their taste for risk and adventure.

Farmers, artisans, merchants and bankers.

The concept of *laboratores* or, if one prefers, "work", did not stand the test of facts any better, nor the implicit criticism to which bourgeois Catharism subjected it. For the theological-feudal system on which the traditional distinction of the three orders is based, work is, above all, the work of the earth. However, without rejecting agricultural work, Catharism always showed great aversion to feudal property. Undoubtedly, it considered the land as "satanic" since it is the evil God who makes it.
"The farmer is his coadjutor, but above all because he is the support of the feudal organization, even more satanic. For this reason he preferred to the work of the farmer that of the artisan, who merely transforms matter, and even that of the merchant or the banker, who make money bear fruit through a kind of abstract activity. While the lord, the sole owner of the land, but who does not cultivate it, lives on the backs of those who work it without owning it, the merchant subsists only by his own activity, only by his own activity, only by his own activity, only by his own activity, only by his own activity, only by his own activity.
"exploits" those who want to be so, and only obtains the service of another by paying for it. This is tantamount to saying that in the thirteenth century, where, let us understand, it was not yet a question of rising up against the very notion of "profit," the work-money equation appeared more humane and more just in bourgeois pre-capitalism than in the feudal system.

Catharism wished that everyone should live by his work and that, in the last analysis, there should be no more poor, if they were not "volunteers": the perfect ones were obliged to earn their bread, they were therefore *oratores* since they prayed and *laboratores* since they worked; on the other hand, they had a record of the deposits entrusted to them and which they made "fruitful". One guesses that for this reason they were doubly heretics for the Church, as religious reformers and as merchant clerics. (There were Catholic merchant clerics, but without sacred functions). This was enough for the bourgeois and the merchants to glimpse then in Catharism, to the

less so in political Catharism, a religion which, by associating work with prayer, ennobled its activities on the metaphysical plane. One cannot speak without anachronism of class struggle in the thirteenth century, but it should be noted that in the face of feudal power, irrational and also too unjust, a new power appeared: money, considered as the reward of free labor. Power in which participated or aspired to participate all those who lived, by state or by the effect of circumstances, on the fringes of feudalism and the Church. The money often belonged to heretics or non-Christians: much of it was in the hands of the Jews, who were forbidden any activity outside the money trade (except in Narbonne) and of the Lombards, who acted as bankers with great expertise; it was accumulated in the houses of the bourgeois, merchants and urban artisans whom the Inquisition bothered or persecuted as believers, and who, for this very reason, joined the ranks of the clandestine Cathars, became
"anti-clerical". At the same time that the Church, by its distrust of all commercial operations, was ideologically and de facto committed to the feudal order, and appeared as the irreducible enemy of the new bourgeois economy, the only one that at that time, and within this conjuncture, was progressive and liberating, Catharism, revising the Catholic notion of usury and relying on indisputable scriptural authorities as well as on the needs of expansion of big commerce, legitimized lending at interest.

Honor and Money.

The opposition between the two "powers", Honor and Money, is nowhere more clearly marked than in the difference that was made, in the Middle Ages, between the fief and the *censual*. The fief is the land that belongs to the lord and of which he gives power to his vassal, in exchange not of economic compensations, but of some obligations of military and honorific character: the armed service on horseback. It is a noble position. On the contrary the censual is a position in which the beneficiary, villain,

pays the enjoyment with a contribution in kind or in money. However, at the time when Catharism was established in Languedoc, and without a direct relationship of cause and effect between the two phenomena, the two forms of possession, the noble and the villein, tended to be confused.

The word *honor*, so characteristic of feudal mythology, designates both a fief and a census. *Already at the end of the 11th century*, specifies Y. Dossat, *a vineyard was given in "fief" under an annual census of three dinars*. The same author notes that the burdens to which the villeins were subjected in principle, sometimes fell also on the nobles and that, on the contrary, burgesses and peasants were subjected to military obligations reserved to the knights. This confusion, which tended in a certain way, to "dishonor the honor", and to honor the villain, was translated even in the costume and equipment. Rich peasants and bourgeois had not yet dared to court the ladies like the knights, but they already wore, like them, the tahalí. A more complete transformation of the forms - from noble, military, honorific to bourgeois and venal - took place in the course of the thirteenth century when the bourgeois acquired noble lands which they gave in census. They preferred, on the whole, payments in money rather than in kind, since they were more easily negotiable, as "securities". When the security of the markets allowed them to sell more regularly the products of their fields, and they could be compensated without too much effort, the tenants also preferred payment in money. Payment in kind is almost always a sign of a precarious economy. When the harvest had been bad, or the robbers had spoiled it, the payment to the owner of the fruit of his labor, apart from sometimes reducing them to hunger, seemed to the villains even more unjust.

Parallel to this - relative - gentrification of the noble part, the bond of vassalage was somewhat loosening. *In the South, more than elsewhere, the vassals had several lords that they accepted or left according to their interests* (Dossat). What was true for the great *fiefs* was also true for the modest positions. The homage was slowly desacralized, like the oath that implied it, when the *fiefs* and the *censuses* did not differ much between them. If the nobles hardly believed in the oath and did not respect it, the villeins still believed in it.

less, and as if they had taken lessons from Catharism on this point, they only put their trust in the written word: *the villains*, wrote the troubadour Peire Cardinal around 1250, *before committing themselves by oath, demand a contract.*

The *alodios* - that is to say, lands without a lord, belonging entirely to free men who owe neither tribute nor revenue - were, it has often been said, a kind of anomaly in the feudal system: in Northern France they did not exist. The spirit of feudalism requires, in fact, that the land belongs to a lord, who is its natural owner, and that access to the property be forbidden or very difficult for the villeins. For, as Paul Dognon has noted, *at the end of the 12th century, a certain amount of land, perhaps half of it, was free*. The confiscation of these lands because of heresy shows naturally that their owners were heretics, but also that the repression of heresy, which by *confiscations* enriched the lords, had a more or less deliberate will to diminish the number of the *owners of the allodium*. Alphonse of Poitiers tried to do the same as Raymond VII: to transform the *allodians* into *fiefs*, or to increase the *fiefs* by annexing *allodians* to them. However, the *allodiods* survived, and it is certain that this form of peasant property, quite similar in fact to what it is today, and the practice of written law, a deformed survival of Roman law, contributed in the 13th century to promote a class of well-to-do landowners, to whom they gave a lively feeling of freedom, security and dignity. Many of them were clandestine Cathars.

The independence and wealth of the cities.

Occitan society, from the beginning of the 12th century, showed a tendency towards urbanism. The seizure of land had long since ended; in some regions, the fields were even overpopulated, as peasants were seen to emigrate, some to Spain, others to the cities where they settled in neighborhoods (C.-M. Higounet). The cities being more secure, it was the suburban fields that were cultivated.

more. When the peasants were grouped in *salvetats*, where they enjoyed certain judicial franchises, were exempted from charges on the markets (leudes) and could exercise all the works without previous authorization, they found, in short, an urban atmosphere: some became craftsmen. Some nobles, living on the poor rents of their *fiefs*, also came to settle in the cities. They live in houses adorned by a tower or a watchtower located in the center of the city, sometimes in a street reserved for them, and constitute a sort of urban chivalry, which the bourgeoisie tends to approach.

The population of the cities increases considerably. The population of Toulouse, around 1250, is estimated at about twenty thousand inhabitants, that of Montpellier at about fifteen thousand, that of Carcassonne at about six thousand. These figures are, of course, very approximate. But it is certain that Languedoc, while retaining a sufficiently dense rural density, had, in the 13th century, an urban population *greater than that of the whole of France, with the exception of Flanders* (C.-M. Higounet).

Commercial activity constituted the essential resource of the urban economy: it granted power. In the course of the 12th century, from 1125 to 1180 or so, bourgeois and merchants were able to wrest privileges, "liberties" and customs from the lords, and above all to impose consulships on them, sometimes after minor revolutions, most of them peaceful. These bourgeois oligarchies collected taxes, had a militia, and even, in the maritime cities, as in Narbonne, independently signed trade treaties with the great Mediterranean ports. Sometimes, the cities of the interior, especially Toulouse, did not hesitate to resort to force to include neighboring cities and castles in their commercial orbit. They forced them to abolish leuvenesses and annoying tolls. This individualism of the communities was as anarchic as that of the lords, but it served less petty interests.

Around 1250-1280 the suburban peasants, the artisans of the burgh, the bourgeoisie and the nobles of the city suffered much less sensitively from the impositions of the feudal regime, which was effectively compensated for by the consular institution. In this often active and

In Toulouse, the consuls submitted to it to the extent that they believed that by supporting it they were undermining the power of the Inquisition, which threatened their security. In Toulouse, the consuls submitted to the extent that they believed that by supporting it they were undermining the power of the Inquisition which threatened their security. The same would happen in Carcassonne, in Albi, in Cordes.

It is not strange to see these bourgeois showing signs of an anti-clericalism that contact with heresy would not suffice to explain: they feared in fact that the Church, which was making a pact with the French occupiers, was advocating a diminution of their hard-won liberties, and was even an obstacle to the loan facilities they needed to extend their enterprises. The plot of the burghers of Carcassonne and Limoux, in 1304, has no other causes: they did not hesitate to offer the viscounty to the prince of Majorca, hoping from this prince what they had not been able to obtain from the king of France: the suppression of the Dominican Inquisition and the reestablishment of the episcopal Inquisition, which had always shown itself to be more liberal. Not only, in fact, did the Inquisition attack their goods and their lives, but with its rigor it also provoked - which alarmed them almost as much - the flight of labor and money.

The phenomenon is most characteristic in Narbonne, a Catholic city where the Catharism had never been implanted. The consuls were as anti-clerical as in the rest of the cities, and never ceased to manifest their ill-humor, and their opposition, to ecclesiastical authority. Other heresies besides Catharism had manifested and developed for the same reasons: spiritual, evangelical movements, so reformist as regards the defense of liberties. There was, above all in the city, a flourishing Jewish community and establishments of Lombard bankers who, even better than Catharism, and without burdening themselves with metaphysics, symbolized, as opposed to the feudal power of the archbishop and the viscount, that of the bankers and offered the bourgeoisie a reserve of capital on which they could rely for the needs of maritime trade and local traffic.

Catharism versus feudalism.

From this rapid examination of the social situation of Languedoc in the 13th century it must be concluded that if Catharism did not intend to abolish the feudal regime -The question was not in his power and was absolutely impossible at the time, but he felt at least in sympathy with all those who were trying to make it evolve. He had no difficulty in inserting himself into society as it was constituted, but he seemed to be ahead of the curve, especially those who were already beginning to function in the cities and who were questioning the Church and French domination.

In the name of the numerous bourgeois won to its doctrine, Catharism wished to develop markets, encourage textile crafts, activate the circulation of money, establish the cooperation of the lender and the (solvent) debtor, giving to the word "usury" its primitive sense of use or enjoyment of a good and, by the same token, diminish among human contacts the importance of the privileges of birth to the benefit of the advantages gained by work or the "use" of money.

But this does not mean that it was reduced to the application that the bourgeoisie made of it in its interests. What is proper to religions -even the purest ones
- when they are bearers of a hope of liberation valid for all men, is to be able, also, to be used by those of its believers who, seeing only the temporal, force them, so to speak, to reflect only that. It is clear that Catharism goes infinitely beyond the plane of capitalist and commercial claims. The world of Evil is for him feudalism, although it is also the physical evil of man and the tragic metaphysical adventure into which he has been thrown. The world of Good is the just society - the City of God - otherwise unrealizable under the satanic kingdom, but it is also, and above all, the heavenly kingdom that opens before the saved soul. By the force of things, or rather of ideas, it would be necessary for legitimate claims and emancipations to take on a religious form as a reference to the antagonism between the two
"natures". At the same time that they "suppressed certain sins of the

world", the sin of love for women, the sin of usury for merchants, the perfect lived in absolute chastity, and recognized only the Gospel of St. John.

CHAPTER II

THE PERFECT

Vocation and initiation ceremonies

Like the ancient Manichaeism, which established a great difference between the initiates and the simple adepts, Catharism did not impose the same duties on the good or perfect men, who were the ministers of the sect, as on the believers. From the moment they felt neither the strength nor the will to enter the ascetic life, the believers knew that they were condemned to continue their evolution in other bodies before they could be saved. On the contrary, those who showed the firm will to become good men, manifested less their free will than the result of a long series of purifying effects: they found that they had acquired certain merits, the proof of which was the fact of desiring ordination.

Therefore, it is not possible to determine under what particular circumstances one became perfect. Vocations could manifest themselves at any age, depending on the spiritual development of each one. The preaching and the rigorous atmosphere that the perfects brought about around them undoubtedly contributed to arouse them. Many noble women had been educated by the Perfect Ones, many young lords had had the Perfect Ones as preceptors. Perhaps the members of the Cathar church

They thought they could glimpse, by means of a kind of supernatural intuition, the adepts who had reached the necessary degree of purification.

Entry into the Cathar orders was marked by the reception of the *consolamentum*. In Occitan, *Consolament* means consolation. It is the power (*Paraclesis*) that the Holy Spirit or *Paraclete* (intercessor) brought to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, as promised by Jesus Christ. This spiritual and adult baptism, *baptisme esperital*, which presupposed faith and reflection, was very similar to the corresponding rites of the primitive Christian liturgy, but the material elements, water, anointing with oil, had been eliminated, since matter is the work of Satan. It is opposed to John's water baptism *(for, it is true, John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit) (Acts, I, 5).*

The *consolamentum*, "by which the Holy Spirit was received," made the believer a minister of the sect and conferred on him the power to transmit the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. Therefore, one should not confuse the *Consolament* of the perfect with the *Consolament* of the dying, even though they are almost identical in ceremonial. The latter simply placed the dying in the best spiritual conditions to obtain God's forgiveness for their faults, through the intercession of the faithful, and salvation.

The postulant prepared himself a long time before - for a year, sometimes even three - to receive spiritual baptism, imposing abstinence on himself: he fasted three times a week, and rigorously observed the three Lents of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. Under the moral vigilance of the Church, he was thus accustomed to mortifications: not to eat meat, to practice justice, to always speak the truth, to remain continent, to show himself strong in the face of trials. Perhaps he was obliged, as J. Duvernoy thinks, to meditate and to know the Gospel of John by heart, perhaps also to learn a trade. All this constitutes a necessary preparation for abstinence, which the ordained must then observe throughout his life.

Sunday prayer.

The time has come for the neophyte to enter the Cathar Church, not as a simple believer, but as a pastor. In principle, he must receive the Sunday prayer - that is, the permission to say it - the first degree of a kind of initiation that incorporates him, through the liturgical rite, into the Church and which is a survival, as the Reverend Father Dondaine points out, of the initiation of catechumens in the ancient Church: *The preparatory speeches to the rites, the laying on of hands, also belong to the same Christian tradition.*

The ordained (bishop, deacon or simply a proven Christian), the perfect men and women, the simple believers met in the house of one of them, if he had a large enough room, or in the hall of the castle, if the lord was also a believer, or in the community of the perfect, if there was one in the vicinity. There was no decorative luxury, no ritual illumination, except for two candles placed on the table. The assembly of the faithful, to whom the neophyte has been presented by a godfather, has given its consent to this reception within the order: it is then, as we have said, in a state of abstinence.

He appears, accompanied by his godfather and by the dean in age of the community, sometimes called the elder. The first ritual act is a general purification. Everyone washes their hands, including the believers, who may attend the ceremony. The dean, the first of the good men, after having bowed three times before the ordained, sets up before him a small circular table, a sort of wicker candlestick (the word *desc* evokes the idea of a disk, but also that of a basket). On this disc he places a white tablecloth and makes three more bows. He places on the tablecloth the book of the Gospels saying: "*Benedicite, Parcite nobis, Amen*. (Bless us, forgive us, Amen)". The exhortations were made in the Oc language, the liturgical formulas were often recited in Latin.

The neophyte also performs his *melhorier* (*or melioramentum)*[3] before the ordained, who then hands him the book of the Gospels. The "Tradition of the Book", as in the early Church, always preceded that of prayer. The postulant listens on his knees to a long admonition, of a high moral and religious level, which was left to the free choice of the ordained.

But the *Rituals* provided him with the model. He always appealed to the conscience of the believer, or rather invited him to reflect on the spiritual meaning of the rites he was performing. He quoted texts from Scripture that confirmed the truth of the Cathar doctrine.

The ordained: *You must understand, if you wish to receive this prayer, that you must repent of all your sins and forgive all men. If you do not forgive men their sins, our heavenly Father will not forgive your sins*[4]. The ordained then proceeds to a true commentary of the *Pater*, destined to clarify to the initiate its occult meaning and spiritual [5]. *Our Father who art in heaven* means: God, whom we must distinguish from the Father of the Devil, who is a liar and the father of the wicked, that is, of those who cannot absolutely benefit from divine compassion... *Our consubstantial bread*: by consubstantial bread is meant the law of Christ which has been given to all peoples.

The ordained ends by saying: *For this reason we pray to the good God who has May he give to the disciples of Jesus Christ the power to receive this holy prayer, may he also give you the grace to receive it with firmness and in honor of him and your salvation. Parcite nobis!*

Then he takes the Book again. *Do you have the firm will, he* asks the neophyte, *to receive the holy prayer and to keep it all your life with chastity, truthfulness and humility? -Yes, I have the will; pray to the Father to give me strength!* The old man kneels before the ordained and the postulant imitates him, asking forgiveness for his faults and God's help. The ordained recites the *Pater* aloud and slowly; the neophyte, kneeling, repeats it word for word; he has from now on the right to pray to the "Father." He stands up.

The ordained pronounces the ritual formula that determines the duties of the new initiate: *For God, for us, for the Church, for his Holy Order, his precepts and his holy disciples, have the power to pronounce this prayer before eating and drinking, day and night, alone or in the company of others, as is the custom in the Church of Jesus Christ. You must neither eat nor drink without having said this prayer. If you do not do so, you shall make it known to the ordained of the Church as soon as you are able, you will assume the*

penance that he imposes on you. May the true Lord God give you the grace to observe the practice of prayer in his honor and for your salvation.

The neophyte bows three times and thanks the ordained and the faithful: *Benedicite, Benedicite, Benedicite, Parcite nobis. Dominus Deus tribuat vobis bonam mercedem de illo bono quod fascistis mihi amore Dei* (May the Lord God give you a good reward for this good that you have done to me for the love of God).

The ceremony is finished. Before parting, the Christians recite the "doubles" (series of eight *Pater*) and make the ritual prostrations (*veniae*). The initiate imitates them. If he is not to be consoled that same day, he attends the service (general confession) and takes part in the "kiss of peace".

The "consolamentum" of ordination.

It is possible that in the twelfth century the *consolamentum* did not immediately follow the tradition of prayer and that a new period of testing was intercalated between the two ceremonies. However, the *ritual* perfectly admits that the *consolamentum* is given immediately afterwards. And this was to occur frequently.

The neophyte is presented again with the elder of his environment, dean of the good men, and his godfather (who could also be the elder himself).

The three - or the two - perform the *melhorier* in front of the ordained. Then, with all the Christian men and women, the prayers begin - seven Sunday prayers - so that God would listen favorably to the ordained and that he would be purified of his sins. (For the Cathars, baptism conferred by a minister in a state of sin had no effect). The ordained, therefore, confesses. The elder who is at his side, absolves him[6].

It is now up to Christians to ask the ordained for forgiveness for their faults: *Benedicite, parcite nobis*! He absolves them saying: *May the holy, just, truthful and merciful Father, who has the power in Heaven and on earth to forgive all sins, forget and forgive them.*

forgive you all your sins in this world and grant you mercy in the world to come.

When all the baptized have made the *mea culpa* and received absolution, the ordained person places before him the disk-shaped table, which has already served for the tradition of prayer, and places the book of the Gospels on the white tablecloth.

The neophyte is kneeling. Before receiving the book, he bows three times, as in the previous ceremony.

The ordained then asks him if he has the firm will to receive *spiritual baptism* and if he is willing to practice all the virtues by which one becomes a good Christian. And when he has received this commitment, he admonishes him, as in the initiation ceremony, the *Pater*, addressing his reason and his faith. *Mr. Peter*, he says to him, calling him by name, *you must be clear in your spirit that at this moment you are appearing for the second time before God, before Christ and before the Holy Spirit, since you are in the presence of the Church of God..... You must understand that you are here to receive the forgiveness of your sins, thanks to the prayers of good Christians and the imposition of hands* (The ordained man cites many readings of scriptural texts in support of the Cathar doctrine; the examples given by the two *rituals* are obviously different, but basically they agree). If the ordained is inspired by the Occitan *ritual*, he says to Peter: *By these testimonies and by many others, it is fitting that you observe the commandments of God and that you hate this world. And if you act thus to the end, we hope that your soul will obtain eternal life*.

If you follow the Latin *ritual,* you can add a brief commentary on the water baptism: Let *no one believe that because you accept to receive this baptism, you have to despise the other one* (that of the Catholics). Nevertheless, some documents attest to a renunciation (*abrenuntiatio*) of this sacrament, which the Cathars would have demanded before giving the *consolamentum. It* is probable that they considered water baptism as ineffective, but they did not always think it necessary to force the neophyte to renounce it.

The postulant will now receive forgiveness for his sins. After having made his *melhorier* himself before the ordained one, the elder goes to the

assembly of Christians: *Good Christians, we beg you for the love of God to grant to our friend here present this good that God has given you*. Peter also makes his *melhorier: Parcite nobis! For all the sins that I have been able to do or to say, or to think or to act I ask pardon to God, to the Church and to all of you*.

Christians say together: *For God's sake and for our sake and for the sake of the Church, may you be forgiven. We pray that God will forgive you*!

The elder, standing near the ordained, then speaks on behalf of Peter, who is kneeling: *I have come before you and before the Church and before your holy order to receive forgiveness and mercy for all my sins, for all that have been committed and perpetrated in me, since...* (he will specify the exact date only in the case in which the new *consolamentum* confirms the one he may have received, provisionally, in the course of a serious illness, in which he may have lost the spiritual benefit by falling back into sin). *Pray to God for me, so that He may forgive me. Benedicite. Parcite nobis*.

Peter rises, bows to the ordained and repeats exactly what the elder has said on his behalf. Then he receives forgiveness and mercy, in the name of God, of the ordained, of the Church, of his holy order, of his holy precepts and of his disciples, for all the sins he has committed and perpetrated from that date until today. *May the Lord God,* says the ordained, *forgive you and bring you to a good end!* And he answers: *Amen*! *May it be so, Lord, according to your word*!

At that moment, the exciting ceremony of the transmission of the Spirit takes place. Peter kneels and places his hands on the table, before the ordained, who places the Gospel of John on his head; and the other Christians present, members of the order, impose their right hand on him.

The ordained: *Benedicite. Parcite nobis. Amen. Fiat nobis, domine secundum verbum tuum. Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus dimittat vobis et parcat omnia peccata vestra. Adoremus Patrem et Filium et Spiritum sanctum. Adoremus Patrem et Filium et Spiritum sanctum! Holy Father,*

welcome your servant (or the servant, if it is a woman) *in your righteousness and put your grace and your Holy Spirit upon him!*

The ordained, after having pronounced this formula, the most important of all, since the Spirit is invoked upon the believer, recites the *Pater*, then five other *Pater aloud*; three *Adoremus*, *another Pater* and three other *Adoremus* (The order of these prayers was not strictly fixed: the Occitan *ritual* prescribed the *Pater*, a decade in a low voice said by the elder, three *Adoremus* pronounced by all the Christians, and finally the *Pater aloud*).

Finally, the Gospel of John is read from *In principio* to *Gratia et veritas per Jesum Christum facta est.*

And the prayers continue: three *Adoremus*, the *Pater*, the *Gratia (Gratia domini nostri Jesu Christi sit cum omnibus nobis: May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all).* Some *Parcias (Benedicite, parcite nobis),* three *Adoremus*, one *Gratia*, in a loud voice.

Peter lowers the book, bows three times, saying: *Benedicite, benedicite, benedicite. Parcite nobis*. Then he thanks the ordained and the faithful: *May the Lord God give* you *a good reward for this good that you have done me for the love of God*.

The ceremony is over. Christian men and women receive the *servicium* (penances consisting of "doubles" and *veniae*, supplications and genuflections) and give each other peace, the men kiss each other, the believers kiss each other, after the former has kissed the Book on which the perfect has previously placed his lips.

Clothing.

Before 1209, and perhaps until around 1230, the Perfect Ones wore long hair and beards. Some believers continued to call them *beards* even though they no longer wore them: this is the name the Waldensians gave to their shepherds. They never attributed to themselves the haughty appellation of perfect: the believers simply called them good Christians, good

men, friends of God. The perfect ones were good Christians or good women.

The good men were dressed in black and covered with a kind of headdress, or round hood. The perfect women also wore black, but their dress resembled that of the other women, except that they always hid their hair. It is said that the perfect ones were girded, under the armpits, over the skin, by a delicate linen thread that symbolized ordination, although it is not known for sure. At the waist they wore a leather pouch hanging, with the Gospel of St. John; sometimes also a personal pot, since they did not want to use containers that would have been used to prepare food with fat.

They always went in pairs, keeping an eye on each other and helping each other. Certain indications suggest that the perfect one and his *socius* were united by a kind of brotherhood pact. If this pact existed, it is certain that it involved neither the exchange of blood (blood was satanic) nor an oath on the Gospel (the oath was forbidden to them). There was no need for such a pact to unite their destinies: they were often arrested on the same day, judged, condemned and burned together.

When the persecution came, they dressed like everyone else, but preferably in dark blue; they shaved, wore their hair shorter, so as not to be recognized. They were pleased to wear around 1300, the hooded cloak, besides being fashionable at that time, especially in the countryside, which covered their blue tunic and if necessary their face. They avoided traveling together, and only met at night, in friendly houses.

Community life.

The perfect men and women remained, in principle, within communities, where, under the moral vigilance of the bishops, deacons and even of the elders, a sort of deans of age, not ordained, it was relatively easy for them to follow the common ceremonies and to free themselves to their pious meditations. Perfect men and women had the same duties. They had to say the *Pater* in the morning when they got up, in the evening when they went to bed,

before drinking and eating, before any important or dangerous action, for example, before crossing a bridge - in the Middle Ages, bridges, very high and often without railings, were dangerous - or before boarding a ship. The prayers corresponded to rites of beginning, of transition, of completion. During the night, they had to get up to pray, six times on average.

While fortifying their spirit with prayer, they voluntarily weakened their bodies - the work of the Evil One - with frequent bloodletting and rigorous fasting. There were three Lents in the year, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, during which they fasted three times a week, on bread and water, as well as the first and the last full week of each of these Lents. At the least fault they committed against the rule, they inflicted on themselves supplementary days of fasting. The example is cited of perfect ones who absorbed nothing but hot water in which they had boiled a nut. Meanwhile, when they exercised a heavy work or their apostolate required an exceptional physical effort, they could take a more substantial food. Normally the perfect men and women ate bread, oil, vegetables, fruits, fish and drank, moderately, very watery wine. When they were received in the house of the believers they did not disdain the well prepared dishes as long as they respected the Rule. In these meals they showed themselves in good humor and as excellent eaters.

They exercised over their words, their gestures, their actions, a control that they would never

ceased. If they had to give an opinion, they thought long and hard about it, choosing their words, never making a mistake, using stereotyped reticence so as not to expose themselves to deliberately not telling the truth or lying out of distraction: *It is possible, it is probable, God willing, God help me.* These formulas, which were abused in the Middle Ages, were constantly repeated in their conversations. As far as they could avoid it, they never lied and never got angry. The oath was absolutely forbidden to them.

The perfect men and women were obliged to maintain absolute continence. The perfect women in their "houses," from which they rarely left, were perhaps less exposed to temptations than the men; they cared for the sick in the sect's hospices and did not engage in the

preaching nor to the office of consoling. But good men, often on a journey, were liable to meet many women; they had to be careful not to brush against their skirts and never to sit in the same pew as them.

Even in the *consolamentum* of the dying, when they imposed their hands, they did not touch the head of the sick person. And we know that the kiss of peace was transmitted to the women - who then embraced each other - through the intermediary of the book on which the ordained had placed his kiss. At the time of the expansion of Catharism, moral failures seem to have been rare and almost non-existent in the perfects. Homosexuality seems to have been little widespread among them: no mention is ever made of it in the texts.

Some perfect ones, whose faults are known to us, only fell into heterosexual sin. With the persecution, the occasions of yielding to the diabolical temptation multiply: one lied, perhaps out of cowardice, another swore to avoid the stake. It was more difficult to avoid the company of women.

One of the last perfect men, Bélibaste, had a maid in his house. *Although good men*, says Guillemette Mauri, *sometimes lived with women, they never had contact with them. If they only reached out their hand to touch one of them, they would stop eating and drinking for three days and three nights. The one who lives with the monsignor (Bélibaste) prepares his food and his bed, and so that the neighbors believe that they are husband and wife, the monsignor buys meat on Sunday and Thursday which he takes home. Since he is obliged to touch the meat with his hands, he washes them three times before eating or drinking. On the other days this woman eats the same as he does. When the heretic*," he adds, "*resides permanently in one locality, they lie in separate beds far away from each other. But when they go on a journey, they pass themselves off as husband and wife in the inns. They get into the same bed, but fully clothed, so that each other can not touch their naked flesh....*

All this was perfectly natural, since it was all about cheating the inquisitor. And even the fact of lying down in the same bed could constitute for the man and for the woman, as the Beguines thought of

San Francisco, a heroic and holy trial. But also full of dangers. It always ended badly. A girl, entering by chance one day in Bélibaste's room, caught him kissing his concubine... One should not judge the virtue of the perfect ones by that of Bélibaste: such falls and the false marriages that favored them under the pretext of deceiving the Inquisition, were rare.

The perfects had to resolve many cases of conscience. Some were futile, others more serious. If they found a sum of money along the way, a lost object, should they leave it in its place or take it and go in search of its owner? Or refer them to the order? In any case, they were not to appropriate it. If by chance they stumbled upon an animal caught in a trap, they had to release it, but by doing so they caused a prejudice to the hunter... Then, although the *Ritual did* not oblige them to do so, they released the hare and deposited a coin in its place.

If a dangerous criminal attacked them, they could defend themselves, just as they could kill the viper or the wolf. But in the age of splendor of Catharism a perfect one would not have done so, for it was as serious to kill an animal with blood as a human being. And if a thief rushed upon them? The doctrine taught that killing to defend oneself was as serious as killing out of malice. Murder was forbidden in all its forms, and there were no extenuating circumstances.

In general, the perfect and the *socius* were careful never to find themselves in the event of having to defend themselves to the death.

Confession and penance.

When a perfect person committed a small infraction of the Rule, he punished himself by reciting *Paters*, making a certain number of genuflections, fasting for one or several days. Since, in principle, he had received at the same time as the *consolamentum*, not absolute impeccability, incompatible with earthly life, but true freedom, that is, the power not to sin, the slightest fault was for him serious in consequences (since committed

"freely"). As for mortal sins, perpetrated against the Spirit that dwelt in him, they were hardly forgivable.

Each month he had to attend the *servicium*, a kind of general confession made in public. This confession of venial sins took place in the presence of the bishop or the deacon; and the deacon administered the penances, the same for all, which consisted, for example, of one hundred genuflections or thirty *Pater*. But when it was a question of sins committed against the Spirit, and not only against the rule, the deacon listened to the perfect one alone, or else demanded that he do before the assembly of the perfect ones and believers

-For the latter could and had to attend the *servicium,* the personal confession of their sins. The penance imposed was very long and severe.

As long as the Cathar hierarchy was in place, and the bishops and deacons at the head of their dioceses and their communities, the carnal sin

-The most serious of all - entailed for the perfect ones the loss of the spiritual benefit of the *consolamentum*: they had to restart their entire initiation, impose painful mortifications on themselves and wait for the assembly of believers to reinstate them in their rights. If there was an inexpiable fault, they had to wait for forgiveness - which was never denied - until the moment of death. In that case, they were only consoled again by the *consolamentum* of the dying.

The case of Bélibaste, who, after having fallen into the sin of the flesh for the first time, had himself reconsolidated by his friend Raimon de Castelnau, is an exceptional case. The two perfects took excessive liberties with dogma and *ritual.* Around the year 1300, the perfect who was in "sin against the Spirit" was obliged to go to confession to the major deacon, named Raimon Izarn and residing in Sicily. There were hardly any deacons in Languedoc and Raimon Izarn was authorized to replace them all. Hence his title, little used until then. The obligation to make such a long and costly journey made reintegration difficult in itself, especially if such a long and painful penance was added.

At the time of the persecution, and under the pressure of circumstances, the sin of denunciation was considered even less forgivable than *pecatum carnale.* To denounce a perfect one to the Inquisition, if one was oneself

perfect, was to sin mortally against the Spirit with whom he had been clothed: it was to renounce the Church and renounce his salvation.
"free" sinned in nothing against the Spirit). The delation committed by a perfect could not be forgiven by the Church, which did not intercede for him, nor recommend his soul to God. There were perfects, certainly, who abandoned Catharism: Guilhem de Solier, for example, who participated in the first attempt of Inquisition organized by the legates; and some others less notorious. But it should be noted that they converted freely to Catholicism, never under the threat of the stake. They changed their convictions, but they certainly did not betray their conscience, nor the idea they had of the Truth. And the Catholics never treated them as vulgar renegades... These conversions were not, in fact, very numerous. On the whole, perfect men and women remained unshakable in their faith, gave proof of their solid virtues and of the greatest courage in the face of the executioners. Most of them were exceptional beings and saints.

Life in the world.

The active life was almost as important to the perfects as the mystical and contemplative life; it consisted above all in the apostolate and the office of consolation. As long as they were free to do so, they preached every Sunday and on feast days, at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, on themes of the Gospel or of Tradition. In the contradictory meetings that often opposed Waldensians to Cathars, and Cathars to Catholics, they intervened in support of their speakers. When the movement had to become clandestine, they preached secretly in friendly castles, in huts, in the woods, in the fields. One night, in 1303, Jacques Authier gave a sermon in Toulouse in the church of the Brothers of the Holy Cross where several Beguines of St. Francis, courageous reformers and Cathars were meeting under the cover of an apparent orthodoxy.

In the houses where they were received - and where an audience of faithful citizens always gathered - they delivered short, familiar sermons.

Bélibaste spoke one day about the traffic in indulgences: "*A cleric goes to see the Pope (a Pope is made to "feel"); in exchange for ten or twenty pounds, he receives a large sealed letter in which it is said that whoever gives a denarius or an obol will have forty days of indulgence. He goes around the world with his letter, abusing and deceiving people... If these indulgences existed, and if the days were small stones, a man who in his purse had ten denarii and gave them obol for obol to this clergyman, would have more indulgences than he could put in a huge sack...".* And then, mocking indulgences, he added: "*By God, by God, give me an obol and I will give you a thousand pardons*!". At the end of the sermon, one of the believers said to him, lowering his hood: *"Monsignor, may God preserve you! He* replied: "*May God make you a good man*!

By 1230-1240, the perfectresses were almost as numerous as the men. They had the same rights as the perfects, except that they could not become bishops or deacons. But they had a rank equivalent to that of Catholic "prioresses" when they directed communities, and analogous to that of elders, deans of age, of local churches or directors of groups of itinerant preachers.

Living in their convents, dedicated to peace and charitable activities, they were sheltered for a long time from all the storms of the century. But, from 1250 onwards, they were much more unfortunate than the men. J. Duvernoy has evoked in a recent article the sad fate of the sister of Arnaud de la Mothe, who hid with her companions in a subway shelter, near Lanta, and died of cold and excessive privations in 1234. Many others were condemned to the stake. By the end of the century, almost none remained....

Manual labor and trade.

Contrary to what the Waldensians thought, who wanted their shepherds to lead a contemplative life, the Cathars worked for a living: they did not want to be in charge of anyone. In the houses of the heretics there were many weavers. Others were engaged in basket weaving. Some

made bags, shoes or gloves. Other perfects were doctors. Almost all of them - as well as the perfect ones - were capable of giving first aid to a sick person and healing a wounded person. But above all they were attracted by commerce, which allowed them to visit the markets on their apostolic journeys: they resold haberdashery, furs, sewing needles, in short, all the goods or small objects that can be easily sold at fairs. Between 1280 and 1350, the perfects were successively engaged in the most diverse jobs, from farm laborer to tailor or money changer. They collected funds for the Church and, with scrupulous honesty, kept account of the deposits sent to them. Pierre Mauri tells of a heretic who took refuge in Spain and thus managed the sect's treasure, or rather that of the local church: there were fifteen thousand gold pieces, or more, which represented, at the time, an enormous amount... He entrusted it to his nephew who took it with him to Sicily or Lombardy. He never saw his nephew again and died alone and poor in exile.

Between 1250 and 1300, having migrated to Lombardy and other parts of Italy, the Since the majority of bishops and deacons, there were only a few perfects left in Languedoc who were responsible for administering the *consolamentum* to the dying. Thus the *consolamenta* of ordination (conferred only by bishops and deacons) no longer existed. In their absence, the perfects devoted themselves with admirable devotion to "saving souls". But it was not possible for them to become bishops or deacons if they did not go to Lombardy to receive ordination from the hands of the hierarchy in exile.

Those bishops - often of noble origin - had led in Occitania, until 1240, exactly the same life as the perfects, over whom they had no moral influence. No doubt administrative and political problems in Montsegur, especially in 1243, were added to the obligations of their offices. Undoubtedly, they also exercised a more specialized activity. The bishops proceeded to the ordinations, visited the communities of their diocese; and the deacons, as we said before, were in charge, above all, of presiding over the *servicium* or *apparelhamentum*, and of distributing penances. Their pre-eminence was purely honorary and did not entail anything but an increase of duties.

Each bishop had, in principle, an "elder son" and a "younger son" - a fairly recent institution - who served as coadjutors and a deacon. It is unclear how the deacons were appointed. There were as many as five Cathar dioceses in Occitania: Toulouse, Carcassonne, Albi, Agen, and the bishopric of Razès (created in 1226 at the Council of Pieusse). Their bishops were elected by the perfects. Perhaps in several degrees. At the death of a bishop, his youngest son ordained the eldest son as bishop; the youngest son became the eldest son and the Assembly of the faithful elected the new youngest son. But it does not seem that this form of election was widely accepted in Occitania.

The Cathars never had a pope. Perhaps due to the ties that existed between the Churches of Hungary (Dalmatia and Croatia) and the Churches of Lombardy and Languedoc, they recognized at certain times a bishop residing in Hungary as their spiritual master.

CHAPTER III

BELIEVERS

Marriage without betrothal

They constituted the great mass of men and women who, without being integrated into the order, adhered to Catharism, as a lay element, even profane and sinful. *They appeared*, says H. C. Puech (*speaking of the Manichaean "auditors") as in a kind of aura whose fragile and doubtful radiance came from the nucleus of saints to whom they were subordinate.* There is nothing to say whether they were less or more virtuous than the Catholics. Receiving the teachings of their Church, having before their eyes the example of men, listening to their preaching, they were always concerned with saving their souls, however distant final salvation might seem to them. They kept themselves from mortal sins, from theft, from homicide, certainly as much as the Catholics, but they were less rigorous with regard to the sin of the flesh. However, it is evident that their life had much less beauty and moral rigor than that of the perfect: immersed in the world of the mixture in which Good and Evil coexist, they felt unworthy of obtaining liberation at the end of this life and, condemned to purify themselves in the course of other reincarnations, they hoped that their destiny would evolve by itself. But at the moment of their death, they still had to preserve their hopes of salvation through sincere contrition and promise themselves to

themselves, committing themselves before good men, to attain a good death. Thus they were as it were in suspense and free only to repent.

The believers had often received water baptism, the Roman baptism. They were not obliged to renounce it at the moment of receiving the *consolamentum* of the dying. Often also, they had been married by a catholic priest: the marriage was not dissolved by the fact of becoming Cathars. It is known that for the Perfect Ones every carnal act indefinitely delayed salvation; but they did not impose continence on those who did not feel the desire or the power to keep it. Nor did they make any difference between legal marriage and concubinage: one and the other were permitted to simple believers. Perhaps, like the ancient Manichaeans, they even preferred concubinage to marriage, because it did not have the deceptive appearances of a sacrament, it did not subordinate the woman so much to the man, it was based on equal and shared love, and, finally, it was more likely to be sterile. The perfect accepted willingly the hospitality of "false couples" and showed them no less sympathy than they did to legitimate couples.

Up to around 1250-1260, the perfects avoided the
marriages, that is to say: to regulate, according to their law, the concubinages in fact. But when persecution had disorganized their Church, they exhorted believers desirous of contracting marriage to take as wives good Christian women, in order to avoid disagreements and indiscretions which would then have been very dangerous. For the same reasons, they advised parents who consulted them in everything, not to give their daughters only to declared believers. Marriage, as the Cathars and most of the southern heretics conceived it, was not sacramental and should only be based on love, consent and reciprocal fidelity. For Pierre Clergue of Montaillou, marriage is perfectly fulfilled from the moment each of the contracting parties has pledged his faith to the other: *The blessing given by the Roman Church*, he adds, *is nothing but a worthless ceremony, invented by her to cover up sin, since husbands and wives fornicated without shame and without confession*. The way in which Bélibaste married the

The following is an idea of what marriage could have been like, on record, if Catharism had had time to organize civil society: *Representatives of the Christian community go to meet the perfect one and say to him. "- Monsignor. One of our believers, Peter, wants to marry Guillemette, one of our believers". "Does it please you?".*
"Surely it would be good if it were so," then says the perfect one with the usual reticence, "if it pleases God also." Then Pierre and Guillemette appear before him. "Will you both be united in love?"
-Yes," they reply. "Do you pledge fidelity to each other, do you pledge to care for each other in sickness and in health?" "Yes." "Kiss each other. You are married."

We do not know what made Jean Guiraud say that *reciprocal fidelity between spouses no longer exists in the (Catholic) Christian who becomes a believer. On the* contrary, it was strictly demanded, and it seems to us that it was more likely to be observed in a marriage freely consented and where only a love without pressure was expressed, than in the Roman marriage, often too much interested and venal, and moreover, for the exclusively male advantage. It is exact, however, that the perfects could dissolve the marriages when they judged that divorce was necessary. And, naturally, if one of the spouses became perfect, he or she had to separate immediately from the other, detaching him or her from his or her promise of fidelity. It is possible that certain believers abused the facility that Catharism gave them to break their marital ties for religious reasons, as did the great Catholic lords, who repudiated their wives for no valid reason and without being authorized by their religion.

The notion of sin.

The Cathars taught that carnal sins were all equal and that, consequently, it was not much more serious, in good logic, to have sexual relations with his mother or with his sister, or with any other woman. This was a consequence of the doctrine of the reincarnations which suppressed

all degrees of kinship between souls. But this theory - which is often taken as a contradiction in terms - did not authorize the believer to commit incest, just as in the Stoic theory - according to which it is as criminal to kill a rooster as to kill his father - the philosopher was not authorized to kill his father. It has been said that the Cathars allowed believers to sleep with their mothers for eighteen dinars (six because she had conceived them, six because she had given birth to them, six because she had nourished them), and with their sisters for six denarii. It is an abominable calumny, and doubly absurd: if incest is not a sin, it has no need to be forgiven with money; and the Cathars never admitted that forgiveness could have a price. In fact, they are always seen to show more horror for incest than for any other sin. According to a usual habit of very southern thinking, they carried the theory to the extreme in order to reduce it immediately to its just proportions in reality: a heretic who has just declared, according to dogma, that all carnal sins are equal, adds that it is more "shameful" to do the act with his mother or his sister than with any other woman. And he claims to limit himself to the customs of the Sabarthes, his country, which orders to respect even his first cousin; for the second cousin, as the proverb says, "(A cosina segonda tot lo li li afonsa!). (*A cosina segonda tot lo li li afonsa!*). As for the attitude of believers - and especially women believers - on the question of procreation, it is difficult to define it. The dogma itself is ambiguous on this point. It is evident that births chain new souls to the earth and perpetuate the reign of the devil. A perfect one exclaims: "Pray God that there may be no more infants and that all souls may at last be saved, and the kingdom of evil abolished". But this is nothing more than an understandable wish of the metaphysician. On the other hand, the Perfect Ones taught that, until the carnal appetite was extinguished, reincarnations would be necessary to purify the fallen souls. It is therefore necessary to consider as very exceptional the admonition that a perfect one day addresses to a pregnant woman (the wife of a certain Guillaume Viguier): "Wretched woman! You are carrying a devil in your womb". These unfortunate words were the cause of *Madame* Viguier's refusal to convert to Catharism....

In any case, Languedoc is not seen to have been depopulated in the 12th and 13th centuries but, to a certain extent, as a result of the wars and the

persecution. The poets of the Middle Ages, it is true, absolutely ignore children: the author of the *Flemish* novel is careful to specify that his heroine has none; the ladies of the troubadours never speak of theirs. This does not mean that they were systematically rejected, but that their fragile life was not given much importance: many died small, and were of no interest to the perfect as souls to be saved. Around 1300, some believers advised parents who had had invalid or very sick children to give them the *consolamentum* and let them die as soon as possible, in a kind of *endurance*, so that they could come to God. But mothers never consented - it was also contrary to the spirit of true Catharism to offer the *consolamentum* to children - and continued to breastfeed them even when they knew that this life would not last for many days.

Contraception.

Contraceptive practices were always widespread in the Middle Ages under different forms: mechanical, chemical and magical. Mugwort (ergot) and a large number of herbs provided by the sorcerer were used. The general movement of women's emancipation, which is glimpsed in the thirteenth century in indirect relation to Catharism, certainly increased, in many of them, the temptation to get rid also of having children when they did not want them.

The priest of Montaillou, both Cathar and Catholic, had at his disposal a magic contraceptive, whose efficacy we cannot guarantee, but which brought him great success with his parishioners. Béatrice de Planissoles, who used it several times, describes it as follows: *The priest was carrying something rolled up and tied inside a linen cloth, the thickness and length of an ounce or the phalanx of my little finger, to which he had tied a cord that he passed around my neck. It was, apparently, a plant. He would run it down my breasts to my lower abdomen. Every time he wanted to have me, he would place it in this spot and leave it until he was done. When he got up, he would take it off my neck. If on the same night he wanted to possess me*

several times, he would say to me. -Where is the plant? I would find it by pulling on the thread hanging from my neck. I would take it and put it back in my lower abdomen, always passing the thread through my breasts... One day I told her to give me the plant. He answered me that he would keep it very well, since I would hurry, not being afraid of getting pregnant, to give it to other men.

No doubt Béatrice, married and the mother of many children, was glad that her illicit love affairs bore no more fruit.

Believers and perfect at the table.

The believers could eat and drink whatever they wanted. Sometimes the perfects brought them meat and game that had been offered to them and that they could not use. In 1231, some believers from Avignonet went to "worship" with the Perfect Ones in passing and received from them a hare, which they cooked and ate with a good appetite. In those days, the peasants consumed very little meat, often salted or preserved, and it should not have been a great inconvenience for them to have to deprive themselves of it on the day they invited the Perfect Ones to their table. Often, out of respect for them, the meal was vegetarian or composed almost solely of fish and fruit. But it was also in their honor that the food was taken care of. For some perfects were as sybaritic as the priests of the Roman Church and, as the *Nouvelle de l'Hérétique* says, *"fish is as good as meat; good wine perfumed with cloves is as good as wine from a barrel; sifted bread is as good as a convent loaf"*. The *empastatz* - or fish cakes - were highly appreciated. They are mentioned in the *Nouvelle de l'Hérétique* and in the *Records of the Inquisition*, -they were trout or other fish, preserved boiled; or else fried and wrapped -empanadas- in a kind of fritter paste. The sauces were lean sauces. The water in which the fish had been boiled was served as soup. Before the Crusade, the perfects, lodging with poor peasants or artisans, felt it their duty, as we have said, to bring victuals. Sometimes they even had to pay for their own food. But when the persecution came, the believers had to support the perfect ones, giving them some alms, since they could not work full time. Certainly the daily life of the

The believers were more imbued with charity and religious zeal at the beginning of the fourteenth century than at the beginning of the thirteenth, for the very reason of the dangers that the duty of hospitality caused them to run, and the sacrifices it imposed on them, when they were poor.

Faith, superstition and anticlericalism.

Believers belonged to all classes of society, exercised all jobs, even those that seemed by nature incompatible with Cathar morals. In 1282, Pierre Maurel was a butcher in Salsigne - despite the fact that Catharism forbade the killing of animals. He made a pact of *agreement*, without abandoning his profession. It was enough, after having received the *consolamentum* of the dying, that he undertook not to kill any more animals. A certain Raimon de Lara, from Saint-Martin-la-Lande, continued to be a butcher. This did not prevent him from being faithful to the perfect and offering them jugs of good wine. There were believers among the nobles, the bourgeois and the peasants, the artisans and even among the Catholic priests. We will see them live later in their respective environments. For the moment, we will limit ourselves to describing the daily behaviors common to all of them.

The simple believers did not have the right to say *Pater*. Not being yet good Christians, they could not call God: *Our Father*. But they had at their disposal substitute prayers. "How shall we pray?" one of them asked a good man. You will say this prayer, he replied: *May the Lord God who guided the kings Melchior, Gaspar and Balthasar, when they went to worship him in the East, guide me as he guided them*. They could also say the *Benedicite* (Bless us, forgive us. Amen), and a great number of prayers; some that have been preserved in the popular tradition constituted small dogmatic summaries, sufficient to clarify their faith. They did not name Our Father and only asked Him for the "knowledge of the Good": *Holy Father of the good spirits, true God... give us to know what you know and to love what you love.* Contrary to what has sometimes been said, believers prayed as often as Catholics, if not more often than Catholics.

more than them; in the morning when getting up, at night when going to bed, in all the painful or dangerous circumstances of life, especially for "the good death", and sometimes in a way as superstitious as that of the peasants of the Ariège, at the end of the last century.

They retained above all from the teaching of the good men rules of practical morality, myths, apologues. To better convince themselves that the soul was independent of the body, they repeated to each other, in the evenings, the edifying story of the traveler who had fallen asleep, while his companion watched him. From the mouth of the sleeping man came a lizard that crossed the stream on a small branch, sank into the head of the donkey that was there, circled a few times and returned again to the mouth of the traveler, who, waking up at once, explained his dream to the other: he had crossed the water over a bridge, visited a palace... "I have seen your spirit in the form of a lizard," said his companion. It has crossed the river, circled over the head of the donkey..., returned to you through the mouth". The story of the "lost iron" illustrated the theory of metempsychosis: a good man who had been a horse in another existence, lost a horseshoe one night in a rocky terrain. Transformed into a man and passing by with his *socius*, he told him: "That is where I lost one of my horseshoes, while I was a horse". They looked for it and found it. To these tales, considered today as folklore, were naturally added superstitions, which the Cathars did not always approve of.

In addition, among the less cultivated believers, anticlericalism
It adopted an imaginative and stereotyped form, where a puerile rationalism took free course, especially with regard to the Eucharist:
"Even if the body of Jesus Christ were more enormous than the Bugarach - or any other mountain - since the priests eat of it there should be nothing left", or else the host is compared to a slice of radish (which the witches used in effect as a host). One goes to mass to laugh at the words, the gestures of the priest. At the passing of the Holy Sacrament, they do not kneel and laugh. And if a procession of clergymen passes by, they are compared to a line of caterpillars... Anyway, before 1209, the Occitan villages were also as anticlerical as they were at different times in modern history.

But nevertheless, the sincere piety of the believers and the seriousness of their moral concerns cannot be minimized. The humble, as well as the rich, were passionate about metaphysical talks. It was not uncommon to see a simple shepherd, a poor farm laborer, ask questions that would have puzzled many theologians. Faced with natural disasters, social injustices, persecution, their personal misfortunes, they thought and meditated. One good man saw how a wolf devoured his mother and could not believe that the good God had created wolves. Another holds to strict rationalism: he refuses to admit that Jesus Christ is in the host because it is "impossible". He thinks that the soul does not exist, since he has never seen it leave the body. To convince these unbelievers, the perfect ones explained the apologist of the donkey's head or others of the same kind.

At night, in all the villages, in the lost hamlets and by the light of a candle or, in winter, of the hearth flames, colloquies were organized, in which the women had their share. While during the day everyone worked, toiling in the fields or in the workshop, at night the spiritual life, and the other world, regained influence over their souls. The priest's proclamation was criticized. They commented on everything that had been said by the last good men who were passing through, and they waited for them until their next return. A woman of the village had learned from them that the world is nothing but a "nothingness"; and another, still young, had retained from their lessons that the pleasures of the earth are nothing but a satanic illusion, and that they engender death... In these solitudes, during the long idleness that the summer granted them, the shepherds, under the stars, formed small groups, fervent and fanatical; the perfect ones sometimes went to sit by their fire.

The duties of a believer.

The believers were only obliged to outward signs of respect for the perfect one. When he appeared, they "adored" him (in the liturgical sense, not in the theological one): before him they made the *melioramentum*. They knelt down, bowed deeply three times, until they kissed the ground, saying, at each time, "I am the perfect one.

reverence, the *Benedicite*, in Latin or in Romance, and this ritual phrase: *Good Christians, give us God's blessing and yours. Pray to God for us so that He may keep us from a bad death and lead us to a good end in the hands of faithful Christians*. And the man responded to each of the three inclinations: *Receive God's blessing and ours. May God bless you, and may he rescue your soul from an evil death and lead you to a good end*.

For many of the believers, this worship was only the equivalent of a respectful greeting. However, none of them could forget that it was addressed to the Holy Spirit with whom the perfect one was clothed. None of them could treat lightly the commitment they were thus making to achieve a good end. And when the perfect ones were numerous and often on preaching tours, almost daily the believers renewed this promise, contained in the *melioramentum*.

It is necessary to represent in the fields those emotional scenes that were repeated in the most unforeseen circumstances. At the fountain of Gaja, Helis de Mazerolles meets the perfect Raimon de Montoti and his *socius*. He immediately gets down on his knees and "worships" him. At the threshold of the door, a whole peasant family falls on their knees (*Give us a blessing*!) before the two good men, who ask for hospitality. An emotional painting that would have undoubtedly tempted Greuze's brush.

There were great ladies so convinced of the importance of the *melioramentum* that they could not spend a day without "adoring" the Spirit in the person of the perfect one. Fizas, mother of the knight Bernard de Saint-Michel, had to follow to Rome the Countess Eléonore, wife of Raymond VI, of whom she was lady-in-waiting. She took with her some heretics provided by P. de Castlar, her squire. Each time she went to the chapel of the apostolic palace to attend the pope's mass, she was accompanied by a Cathar deacon, disguised as a pilgrim and, during the ceremony - perhaps the most solemn moment, says Jean Guiraud - Fizas adored the heretic, thus renewing, before the head of Catholicism himself, his denial of the Roman Church and his profession of the Cathar faith.

It is proven here that the influence of the Roman Church on the believers was stronger than what has been said. In spite of being outside the

she, was a constant in all circumstances.

All the Cathar ceremonies, the *servicium*, the *consolamentum*, were public (for the members of the sect). They always ended with the kiss of peace: the perfect one kissed one of the believers or, sometimes all of them, then the men kissed each other. It was a kiss on both cheeks and then on the mouth. The believers did the same to each other, but as we have said above, after the kiss of the perfect one had been transmitted to them through the book. This kiss of peace - transmission of the breath - was the symbol of the "soul" bonds that united the believers to the order of the Perfect Ones, and of the cohesion, totally spiritual, of the Christian community. The blessing of the bread had a similar value and meaning.

When the Perfect Ones attended a meal of believers, they proceeded, before eating, to the blessing or consecration of the bread, which differed from the Eucharistic ceremony of the first times of Christianity in which only the bread was blessed and not the wine. For the Cathars, this ritual part of the banquet was not separated from the other, as it was, by the way, quite late in primitive Christianity.

The elder - or the oldest of the perfect ones if there were several - would take a napkin from which he would place a corner over his left shoulder, and hold the bread in his left hand wrapped with the napkin. He would recite the Pater, then say another Pater in a low voice. After which he would cut the bread into slices, with his right hand he would place the first slice before him and then serve the others in an order of eldership. This blessed bread was consumed; that which was not eaten was kept with religious respect (according to J. Duvernoy). After this ritual blessing of the bread, associated, as can be seen, with the Sunday prayer, the diners continued the meal.

The daily life of the believers was also punctuated by small ceremonies that put them in almost permanent contact with their shepherds. The believers took advantage of these meetings, which followed meals, to consult the good men on all important matters: the marriage of a daughter, or a dispute with a neighbor. The perfect ones were often taken as arbitrators for the solution of all kinds of disputes.

The believers did not have to bring their differences before the manor court: their decisions were generally accepted. The number of good medical men may have been exaggerated. But they all watched over the health of their faithful, if only to be aware of the exact moment, convenient to give them the *consolamentum*. The believers also saw the perfect ones at the Sunday sermons, which they could not miss without a valid reason, or at the contradictory meetings which, before 1209, often opposed Cathars and Catholics. These conferences organized by the lord, in the castle or in a place that belonged to him, were, in principle, reserved to theologians, nobles and bourgeois. But sometimes the people attended. The results, proclaimed by the referees, were impatiently awaited and passionately commented.

The "consolamentum" of the dying.

Throughout his life, the Church kept the believer in the preoccupation of an eternal future. When his death approached, he took care to fulfill all the promises he had made. We have seen that, by the *melioramentum*, he had formulated the desire to be led to a good end, that is, to be able to receive consolation. But when he was even more distressed because of the state of sin in which he had lived, he wanted to be sure that, whatever happened, he would be given the *consolamentum* at the last moment. So he would make the *convenensa*: this was called a
The "convention", a kind of pact, by which he committed himself to ask for the *consolamentum*, and the Church not to refuse him, even if he was not in a position to speak and, therefore, to say the *Pater*. Until the hour of his death the *convenensa* imposed no other duties on the believer than to venerate the good men and to renew at the same time the *melioramentum*, his promise and the validity of the covenant. The *convenensa* gained importance especially in times of war and persecution - mainly during the siege of Montségur - where it often happened that the believer, seriously wounded, had no use of speech or knowledge; he was even consoled *in extremis*, executing the "convention". For a long time

For a long time, the perfects did not commit themselves, except in exceptional cases, to enter into the *convention*, which contravened the Rule. But, from 1240, they easily granted to the believers this precious guarantee. Thus it was that Raimon de Saint-Martin made a promise to Jourdain de Péreille to console him, whatever his physical condition.

The *consolamentum* of the dying - or of the "clinicians" - did not differ much, as far as the rites were concerned, from the *consolamentum* of the perfect. It did not procure automatic health, magically, but it was attributed the "good end", the forgiveness of sins and the reunion of soul and spirit....

The perfect are obliged to go to the bedside of the sick believer who sends for them. First of all, he asks him if he is in good standing with the Church, if he has paid his debts to the Church, if he has repaired all the wrongs of which the Church could accuse him. He must pay his debts and repair his damages. But when he is unable to pay, he is not taken into account and is not rejected.

Before 1209, when the perfects, in their communities, had a lot of time, they proceeded to the religious instruction of the sick person, if, naturally, his state allowed it: they taught him "abstinence" and the customs of the Church. "*Do you promise*," they asked him, "to *keep your heart and your goods, such as you have and will have in the future, according to the will of the Church and of God, and always, from now on, and as long as it is in your power, at the service of Christians and Christian men and women? "I promise,*" replied the believer. Abstinence was then imposed on him (obligation never to lie, never to swear, etc.) *"We impose this abstinence on you so that you may receive it from God, from us and from the Church, and so that you may observe it as long as you live. If you observe it as you should, with the other prescriptions that you have to follow, we hope that your soul will obtain eternal life". "I receive it*," said the believer.
- "*of God, of* you *and of the Church"*.

Often this first part of the ceremony was abbreviated if the sick person was too weak, and they went directly to the tradition of prayer: a shirt and tights were put on, since in principle they should be dressed to receive the *consolamentum*, and if possible they were seated. His hands were washed - or washed.

A white sheet is spread before him, on the bed; and on this sheet the book of the Gospels is placed. When the ordained has said once the *Benedicite* and three times: *Adoremus Patrem, Filium et Spiritum sanctum*, the sick person receives the book (tradition of the book) and listens to the admonition much less long than in the baptism of the perfect, sometimes even reduced to a few words, which are addressed to him, according to the Rule. His consent, formulated, is always required: the perfect one asks him if he has for ever the firm intention to keep the promise he has made in the *convenensa* or, simply, in the *melioramentum*, and to observe it, as it is agreed. He says "yes". Christians make him confirm his commitment.

Then they read the prayer to him, and he follows it (aloud, if he can): *This is the prayer that Jesus Christ has brought into this world. Do not eat or drink without first saying it...* The believer responds: *I receive it from God, from you and from the Church*. At these words the good men greet him as *one greets a woman*.

This last rite is very mysterious. Since the salutation is the same whether the dying person is a man or a woman, it has no relation to the physical sex: it is the soul that is saluted. But why do they greet it as "a woman" after the tradition of prayer and as a "man" after receiving the *consolamentum*? Perhaps the perfects assimilated to a woman, and greeted with deep reverence, the soul that was not yet "married" to her spirit but was going to be; and, on the contrary, with a less marked inclination - as one greets an equal - the new being that she was forming by uniting herself to her spirit.

The good men immerse themselves in their prayers: double and *veniae*. Then they place the book before the sick person. The latter pronounces three *Adoremus*, takes the book again, listens to a brief admonition in which he is asked if he wants to receive the *consolamentum*, if he is determined to observe the Rule. The Christians, for their part, demand confirmation of their promise. The ordained man has picked up the book again. The sick person bows and says: *For all the sins I have committed, said or thought, I ask forgiveness from God, the Church and all of you*. From that moment on, everything happens as in the baptism of the perfect. The Christians give him absolution. *By*

God, for us and for the Church, may your sins be forgiven. We pray God to forgive them.

The perfect one rests the book on his head and all impose their hands on him. And after the usual *Benedicites*, *Adoremus*, *Parcite*, comes the invocation to the Spirit of God, so noble and so beautiful. *Holy Father, welcome your servant in your Justice and send upon him your Grace and your Holy Spirit*.

The believer gives thanks. All then bow to him, *as one greets a man*.

This *consolamentum* of the dying lasted for a long time. The believers generally wanted it to be administered according to the exact ritual. But, in certain cases of urgency, the rites had to be simplified. They were reduced to the quick tradition of the prayer - indispensable since the sick person had to say the *Pater before* eating and drinking -, to the imposition of hands and to the formula of invocation to the Divine Spirit. Except in the *consolamentum* provided for by the *convenensa*, where the sick - or the wounded
- dispensed from all ritual formalities, Christians always demanded from the believer - this is a specific feature of Catharism - the renewal of his promise and his express desire to receive consolation.

Since good men as a rule only gave the *consolamentum* to those who were going to die, most of the consoled did not survive. They went to the other world in the hope of being saved "by the prayers and intercession of Christians". Death, for them, was a kind of grace, since, in the short time they had left to live, they *could no* longer *sin gravely*.

If they still lived a few days, they remained under the moral dependence of the perfect one who watched that they did not take any food or drink without having said the *Pater*. It is possible that some Cathars, in the impossibility of saying this prayer before eating or drinking, would have preferred to let themselves die of starvation rather than sin. But, as we have explained elsewhere, the Perfect Ones never encouraged them to "commit suicide". And we do not see what can be reproached to these fervent Christians who, according to the testimony of
R. Sacconi, *no longer able to pray, asked those who served them to stop feeding them*. Since this total fasting, called *endura*, was called a

The "persecuted Catharism" is a subject that we will have to discuss at length at the end of the thirteenth century.

If the sick person, against all odds, was cured, the *consolamentum* that had received, it expired. It corresponded, in fact, only to a "state of perfection" due to circumstances, and not to a state of acquired holiness, durable and put to the test of temptations. The believer should, therefore, if he wished - since he did not force himself in any way, his will
- to present himself again before the Order, to be admitted by it, to undergo again a long abstinence and to receive, if he showed himself worthy, the ordinary *consolamentum.*

It was customary for the person being consoled to bequeath a sum of money to the Church or, if he was poor, his bed, his clothes. The heirs were obliged to acquire these legacies, on pain of not being able to be consoled themselves at the time of their death.

After death.

Most religions set the time required for the soul to leave the body at three or four days. During these four days, the perfect ones did not abandon the deceased and prayed for him, in the style of the Tibetan priests to whom it is attributed, due to a visionary gift, to see the journey of the soul and guide it.

A superstition that lasted until the 17th century ordered the removal of a tile from the roof so that the soul could escape more quickly; this custom probably dates back to the Cathar period. The Perfect Ones in no way approved of these practices, but since their religion went into decline, many of the magical traditions were added to the Cathar customs: owls scream over the house to announce that death is near, a supernatural light bathes the chamber of the dying person to whom the *consolamentum has* just been given.

It was in the spirit of Catharism not to attach much importance to the mortal remains. It was not honored much: the bodies created by the Devil are doomed to nothingness and will not be resurrected. However, the tradition that

The desire to be protected from being sullied and from the reach of animals has always been stronger than dogmas. The Cathars had, before the Crusade, cemeteries for themselves, different from the Catholic cemeteries, in Montesquieu, in Puylaurens and undoubtedly in other places. While they were free to deposit their dead wherever they wished - as the priests did not always have the right to deny them burial "in Christian soil" - they chose rather the cemeteries of "heretics".

In Puylaurens, before the arrival of the Crusaders, *Peitavi de Sorèze was buried in the Cathar cemetery, in the presence of almost all the knights and ladies of the castle* (Y. Dossat). No religious ceremony accompanied the burial. The perfects did not attend, as they did not believe in the efficacy of prayers for the dead. This did not prevent the relatives and friends of the deceased from expressing their grief, even if it seemed unjustified from a dogmatic point of view; but they avoided spectacular despair - the tearing out of hair - of which the Middle Ages give us many examples.

After the conquest of Languedoc by Simon de Montfort, it seems that the Cathars preferred to bury their dead in consecrated ground (catholic) and therefore pretended to be good Catholics. But if the deceased was known to be a heretic or a heresy fautor, the chaplain forbade his burial. This was what happened in 1210 to the knight Raimon Cot, of the diocese of Carcassonne, whose burial took place at night, clandestinely, by torchlight, in the cemetery of the heretics. Naturally, these cemeteries, which had been considered preferable to the others, before 1209, now had an infamous character. They wanted the dead to be buried like everyone else. This explains why in a later period, in the county of Foix and elsewhere, Cathars, who had not remained clandestine, even to the grave, did their utmost to have their dead buried in Catholic cemeteries. This is demonstrated by the number of posthumous processes, followed by exhumations, initiated by the Inquisition. The families tried, by all means, to avoid these exhumations intolerable to the deceased even through the corruption of the balls. All the more so than the discovery of a postumous heretic.

The company's actions were punishable by criminal and financial penalties against his family and heirs.

The perfects, more logical, recommended to their faithful not to take care of his body. Yves Dossat cites the case of a perfect whose remains, in 1234, were sent to a fisherman to be thrown into the Tarn. Many of them were buried, like the Protestants of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, in a secret place, in a garden, in the cellars of the house. They were wrapped in a linen cloth, which the believers had the honor to offer. In Montségur, they were deposited in caves, as in prehistoric times, or in chasms.
F. Niel has highlighted some examples of inhumations in wooden coffins.

Before 1209, the tombs of believers were adorned with symbols of Catharism, both in Catholic and heretical cemeteries. But these emblems must have been removed very soon by the families themselves, or by the care of the Inquisition. At the time when the Roman Church had heretics exhumed, it is clear that the faithful had no interest in marking their graves with traces of a heterodox character. On the isolated graves there were neither ornaments nor names, and as the Cathar cemeteries of which we know approximately their location, at Montesquieu (in Lauragais), at Puylaurens, at Lordat, at Labarthe (near Belflou, Aude) have never been explored, we are poorly informed about the funerary customs of the believers: we should be able to make a repertory of the furnishings of their tombs, if they ever existed.

In any case, the discoidal, Greek cross or Toulouse cross stelae, which are found in considerable numbers in the old cemeteries of the Aude and neighboring departments, cannot, with some exceptions, be attributed to Catharism. They correspond to a type of funerary monument, well known in many regions of Europe, which has been used in Occitania, both by Catholics and heretics. Only a few anthropomorphic crosses representing Christ, with arms and legs apart, like a living man, discovered on the site of heretical or Catholic cemeteries, abandoned long before the Crusade, can pass for Cathars.

The rarity of the discoveries of skeletons in places that the Cathars frequented a lot, however, undoubtedly comes from the fact that the dead were buried naked or with a cloth: no wooden or stone chest protected them from the animals and the hoe blows of the peasants scattered them. For this reason, it would also be rash to attribute to the Cathars the small objects: lead or clay pentagrams, yews (also in lead) decorated with a Greek cross, which are often found in Montségur.

The presence of these pious objects (?) is not required at all by Catharism, a rather abstract religion and enemy of superstition. But the cult of the dead survives all prohibitions. And it is probable that the last Cathars, perhaps even those of the great epoch, yielded to the very understandable temptation to place a medal or a Greek cross next to the corpse. The lead yews perhaps designated the bodies of those who had received the *consolamentum* of the dying.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN

Great ladies and rich bourgeois women

The bourgeois woman of the 13th century, in her healthy and airy town house, lived more comfortably than the lord's wife in the large square tower of her village castle. The vaulted room on the first floor where the workshop was located, the second floor, where the bedrooms were, the large frescoed hall, illuminated by twin windows, separated by small columns, or, further on by large windows, separated by stone transoms, still have a lot of charm today. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine how the castle of Cabaret could worthily accommodate, around 1209, the mundane existence of Loba de Pennautier, and the brilliant festivities of Christmas and Easter, of which the troubadours have left us the story. True luxury was, then, bourgeois. Those elegant ladies whom Matfre Ermengau saw passing by, *trailing behind them the long tails of their rich cloaks*, and who, he says, *never had enough cloaks, garnachas*[7], gonelas[8], *beautiful sable and squirrel skins, and cendales*[9]*; never enough fine shirts or shoes*, we know them well: they are the women of the merchants of Béziers, of Toulouse, of Montpellier. The noble ladies could not compete with them in pomp, and many in the monotony, proud of their courtly life, always sighed for the ever-diverse spectacle that the street offered.

where they never had the pleasure of walking freely like those bourgeois women, who *showed their breasts to increase the number of their admirers.*

They never considered themselves sufficiently washed, nor painted, nor made up; nor that their hair was artfully arranged, nor blond or curly enough. The cleanliness of the women of the Middle Ages has been much extolled, and yet we think that the Castilian women took neither showers nor baths, except in summer in the rivers. The month of May was the month of love, of outdoor games in the orchards of living waters. But, ordinarily, they had in their fortresses only a small cistern, which was soon exhausted. Since their heavy clothes concealed their entire bodies, they washed their faces, arms and necks: that was enough. *Do not wear your nails so long that they can hide dirt*, Amanieu de Seseas taught them. *Take care of your face with more care than the rest, for it is what is most looked at*.

They bleached their teeth every morning. And they wore excessive make-up. And this, no doubt, in the presence of their husbands or their suitors, since there is not a single southern castle of the 13th century where a female boudoir can be imagined, and, in the conjugal chamber, which was a sort of common room where the husband received his squires and his friends, they were not alone for a long time. Therefore, the troubadours recommended them in vain, following Ovid, not to be seen grooming themselves. The monk of Montaudon pretends, with his usual malevolence, that they used so much paint that there was not enough left to color the statues of the saints. They put rouge on their cheeks, blue under their eyes, saffron or white on their cheeks. Saffron, narcissus, sarcocola, borage, milk of asses, milk of beans, silver powder: they mixed all this and made their make-ups. God knows what other ingredients they resorted to beautify and conceal their wrinkles! These make-ups or beauty milks were also astringents that tightened the skin, contracted the tissues. And they provoked - which has always seemed rather contradictory to us - a little incontinence of urine and a lot of lasciviousness. But the monk of Montaudon, who explains these details, undoubtedly wanted to slander the perfumers.

The truth is that they were very pretty, when they were not overly made up. The troubadours never fail to praise those who kept their personal and natural complexion and considered themselves too young to be unattractive. Their husbands and their lovers, it is true, put them down a bit: they had lice and grew them because "it was a symptom of good health". At night, on the high terraces, their "ladies" tenderly deloused them talking about love: this is what we read at least from the pens of the scribes of the Inquisition. It is not possible that some louse did not pass from one scalp to another. Let us thank poetry for having always shown us the women of the past in their purity of young flowers.

Life in the castle.

In the castle, everyone crowded into the thick-walled, but relatively small and poorly lit rooms. The noblewoman slept with her husband in one of the upper rooms of the keep. Close by, in the same room sometimes, and separated from the couple by a simple curtain, the maidens slept two by two or three by three in the same bed, especially in winter when it was very cold in the tower. Since only a spiral staircase connected the floors - since the tower was a kind of high-rise house - all day long there was a comings and goings of men through the narrow corridor. Everything was open, whoever wanted to enter could do so. When the husband was hunting, or on a journey, or at war, the lady's safety was only assured by the presence at her side of her maidservants. In her castle, where she was often the only desirable woman in the midst of so many warriors, she became the object of covetousness, whether brutal or respectful. At any moment the daring quartermaster, the devious chaplain, or the cunning troubadour could emerge. Everywhere there were beds to fall into. A noblewoman tells the inquisitors how she was taken by force by a guest in her own castle: her husband had gone for a walk around her stables. She said nothing, for husbands of that time imagined that women took pleasure in being raped, and hers would have blamed her for being raped. Once again, it is the gentleman who stealthily climbs down from his

floor, finds the door open, lies down under the lady's bed and enters it as soon as she puts out the candle: "What is it?". "Shut up, for God's sake, I adore you!". "How can I shut up, you ruffian!". And the lady begins to shout, to wake her maidens: "There is a man in my bed!".

The variegation of those vaulted rooms, the incredible promiscuity that reigned in the towers, explain why it was possible, and very frequent, the charming erotic scenes that the troubadours managed to make everyone believe that they were rituals and
"courteous". Peire Vidal one day finds his lady asleep and steals a kiss; she does not even wake up, believing that he is her husband. Another troubadour hides and spies for a long time on the mistress of the castle in his shirt playing at being a knight with a sword that had been left on the bed and which he wielded gently.

When the lady wanted to grant a suitor the supreme - and platonic - reward of two or three years of patience, and finally reveal to him her naked beauty, nothing was easier: she invited him to attend her bedtime. He would help her to undress, to take off her shoes. Did she want to grant him more, the "proof" of love, for example? It was necessary to wait until there were fewer people in the castle and to find a somewhat secluded place. She liked to play with fire, but at the first disrespect, she would alert the maids. If the game pleased her, everything happened at night, listening to the maids.

Troubadours, lovers and husbands.

The very ideal rules of courtesy, spread by the troubadours, to please them, did not respond in any way to the virtuous demand of these ladies, but to a very legitimate claim of their sex: they did not want to be forced neither by their husbands nor by hasty and brutal lovers. Their pride consented to everything as long as it was with delicacy. The poems are full of stolen kisses that irritate the lady when the thief is lowly. She then reminds them, in spite of the polite rules, that he is only a lout; that if her husband were less foolish, she would go and explain it to him.

everything. "But how could she prevent the noble baron from pinching her on the narrow staircase, since the first time the King of France saw Flamenca, he caressed her breast before the whole world, and before her husband! To tell the truth, the Castilian women denied nothing to the great lords, and it was admitted, among the courtly circles, that by frequenting barons more powerful than their husbands, they were dishonored. Many of them were disgraced around 1209: it was difficult for them to resist the audacity of those daring knights, their *parage*[10], their ricor[11] and above all to their sumptuous gifts.

At the beginning of the 13th century, shortly before the crusade, one of the most famous ladies of the region of Carcassonne, Loba de Pennautier, wife of Jourdain de Cabaret - who had separated from her but had taken her back under pressure from the Church - was probably a Cathar believer, judging by the opinions professed by her husband, her husband's friends and the troubadours she received in her house. She had divided her heart into three parts and her husband had the right only to her body: the time she did not spend in fulfilling her duties as wife, mother and mistress of her house, the noble barons, the troubadours and the perfect ones shared it.

The noble barons were Pierre-Roger de Mirepoix, Bertran de Saissac, Aimeric de Montréal and many others, all Cathars. He abandoned himself to them with the most realistic passion, as long as they kept their manners and showed themselves "generous". For chivalrous generosity then had two meanings for men, but only one for women. The Count of Foix
-the "red-haired count"- who was the richest, also happened to be the most loved. It is said that he had a bastard by her: Loup de Foix.

The troubadours were content to celebrate the graces of their ladies and exalted themselves platonically contemplating them. They were in charge of procuring them princely lovers as much as possible: they were high-flying procurers. Raimon de Miraval thus spent his life celebrating the beauty of the noble ladies of the viscounty: Loba, Azelai's de Boissezon, in order to attract to them the young viscount of Béziers, the count of Toulouse, the king of Aragon.

They rewarded the troubadours by giving them parsimoniously - at that time it was they who gave the gifts to the poets - some of the

gifts they had received; making them beneficiaries also of some small erotic favors, on the occasion of which they were freely satisfied in their need for delectation, attentions and caresses; they indulged in the pleasure of leading the game, of humiliating, in short, through the person of these shy and devoted chichisbeos since they were of low extraction, the other men: their friends and their gentlemen lovers who, under the mask of courtesy, treated them little more or less than they did their horses.

But if the troubadour threatened to abandon the lady to "serve" another, if he threatened to "assert" a hated rival, then the tone changed: it was necessary to keep him at any price. A kiss was granted, and more if he demanded it. One day Loba calls Miraval to her chamber: *Miraval*, - she said to him through her tears - *if I have been considered far from here or right here, if I have had a reputation for beauty and courtesy, it is to you that I owe it. I know: I have not granted you what you wanted. Do not think that another passion has prevented me from doing so* (she lies shamelessly). *I was waiting for more favorable circumstances, the time to seem more beloved to you, so that your pleasure would be more precious. It has been more than two years and five months* (the ladies had registered the waits they imposed on love) *that I have restrained you by giving you a kiss. But now I see that you do not think of abandoning me and that you do not believe a single word of the calumnies to which I am subjected by men and women who hate me. Since you defend me so well against them all, I renounce for you all other love* (here he lies even more shamelessly). *I give myself entirely to your discretion* (this was the consecrated formula). *I give you my body and my heart, so that you may dispose of them as you please. I beg you: continue to defend me to the utmost!* Miraval, very happy, the chronicler adds, received the gift and obtained from Loba what he wanted.

However, let us not exaggerate with respect to the amorous freedom of these Let us not judge them only by the example of Loba. Even in the time of Raimon de Miraval, and despite the bad reputation earned by the jealous, there were fierce husbands who were not afraid of ridicule and had their lovers' heads cut off. The most fearful ones, then, were content to receive, according to the rite, the lyrical tributes of their

troubadours, and they did not yield as easily as Loba to the advances of the overly prodigal barons. The troubadours themselves sometimes called them -In cutting terms, respect for "pure" love, which excluded venality. *The one who gives the most will go first*, writes Raimon de Miraval maliciously about Azelai's de Boissezon... *Ah, false coin, you let yourselves be so easily cracked that one does not dare to wait for the blow behind*! They had to show themselves sensitive to these criticisms of the poets. On the other hand, the small stately courts, often quite distant from each other, did not gather a numerous worldly attendance, except on the calends of each month, certain times of the year, at Christmas, Easter, in April and in May. The troubadours did not stay long in the castles, since their task was to make known from afar the beauty they wanted to honor. In fact, the noble ladies had less occasion to sin than the bourgeois. Most of the time, they were bored spinning wool or taking care of their children. Perhaps then their hearts and spirits would be open to the sermons of the good men who came to visit them when the troubadours were gone.

Courtly love and Catharism.

What is strange, to tell the truth, in the daily life of the Castilian women of the thirteenth century, like those of the bourgeoisie of Toulouse or Albi, who lived almost as nobly, is that love, more or less idealized, and Catharism were so easily combined. Women thought only of love and worldly things. For them it was an obligation to be "polite".
How, since they were believers, did they reconcile the follies that the poets put into their heads with the serious sermons of good men, the *entendensa d'amor* with the *entendensa del Ben*? The troubadours repeated to them, to flatter their "narcissism", that God had been pleased to mold their beautiful bodies himself; but the Cathars told them that they had shared the beauty of the devil, which was only corruption, and not that of God who purifies desire.

While they were young, and at that time they were not young for long, they were as little interested in Catharism as they were in Catholicism. Almost all had been married by a Catholic father and, according to the custom of the hidalgos, they heard mass on Sundays. For them, the Roman ceremony, celebrated by a rector often won to Catholicism, and the Sunday sermon of the perfect, were the same thing. The romanceros have often described to us the exit of the church, on feast days; the picturesque parade of ladies and gentlemen talking about love or deeds, before going to the feast. On the occasion of the Cathar sermon, there was the same worldly animation. The perfect, the perfect, the widows, the old women, put, of course, an austere note, but apart from the cheerful groups of the young lords and the beautiful ladies, who exchanged tender and futile words in a low voice. After a *consolamentum* or a servicium-which they had attended with boredom-more than one must have said to herself that the time for taking the habit would come too soon.

At present, membership in the sect eliminated them from the last scruples they might have had about love. In this respect, the good men did not raise severe objections. They lived in sin since they were married. Could they abandon their husbands to become perfect, since they did not feel the mystical vocation? What could they do then but abandon themselves to the charms of courtly love? Every carnal act is adultery, said the Cathars, but concubinage is better than marriage and spiritual love is better than physical love. Since they were not very philosophical, they gladly assimilated the discredit cast by the troubadours on marriage, incompatible with courtly love, to which good men attributed every carnal act, incompatible with salvation.

In principle, courtly love only united hearts, but in real life it served as a pretext for the most licentious passion. If it is indisputable that the thirteenth century created the notion of "cordial" love, and if it is likely to have given rise to exceptional lovers, it is clear that most were content to love as they could. Considering moreover that loving became a kind of moral obligation: if one did not love, one was not a lover.

"virtuous". The monk of Montaudon recounts that in the days *when the Count of Toulouse lived, one of his knights, the noble Ugonet, was caught*

with the wife of another in the city of Montpellier and led to the presence of the count by the bourgeois; interrogated in this respect, he confessed everything. Then the count said to him: "How could you have compromised my honor and yours? The knight replied, "Sire, what I have done is done by all your knights, all your squires."

The emancipation of women.

These are constants of human nature that have hardly changed over the ages. The new social phenomenon is that, for the first time, two doctrines - "love" and Catharism - tended to liberate women by neutralizing the notion of carnal sin. Love is not sin, but virtue, said the troubadours. It is always sin, said the Cathars, but not for simple believers. Women will take advantage of this double teaching to claim the right to love as they please. *Every lady, even the most honest*, affirms the Countess of Dia, *can love if she loves*. And from then on they see love understood in this way as a means of asserting their independence in the face of male *potestas.* They play at free love "to act like men" and to take kindly revenge with some for the jealous tyranny of others.

The *Records of the Inquisition* show us women who, after having been subjected to the brutalities of the rogues, were not very prudish and were determined to follow only their own interests and fantasies. Béatrice de Planissoles no longer resists the men who please her. Another young woman, Grazida, whom the priest of her village had deflowered when she was thirteen, and who then married her to a good man named Pierre Lisier, has no notion of the sin of love. Her words echo those of the Countess de Dia, just as the thought of a shepherdess responds to that of a woman of letters. "*Giving yourself to a priest before you were married*," the Inquisitor asks her, *"and then already being married, did you think you were sinning?" "Since at this time it pleased me, and it pleased this priest*," she replied, "I *did not believe, and I do not believe still, that it was a sin. But today, since this does not please me, if I were to have sexual intercourse*

with him I would think I sinned". And he adds: "*Although the carnal union of man and woman does not please God, I do not believe that I have committed sin, if it is pleasing to one and to the other*".

One of the merits of G. Koch's book (*Frauenfrage und Ketzertum*) is to have shown that libertinism constituted for women of the 13th century, in the same way as asceticism, but in the opposite direction, an unconscious protest against the social order, which humiliated them, and above all against unequal marriage, in favor of men. They had no choice, if they wanted to assert their autonomy, but between the path opened by the troubadours: total valorization of amorous freedom, combined with the idea that love is not a sin, and the path advised by good men: asceticism and perfection.

The misfortune of the female condition was largely due to the unjust and authoritarian character of Roman marriage (as it existed in fact, and which theoretically, if it rejected the equality of the sexes, also required reciprocal love) and to the insecurity to which women were condemned in marriage (incidentally, against the will of Rome) and also outside it. The greatest ladies were not spared. Raymond V (1148-1194) kept a real harem and fidelity was not his forte. He treated his wife, Constance of France, as the last of his servants. One day she wrote to the king her brother (Louis VII): *I fled from the palace and took refuge in the house of a knight. I no longer had anything to eat or how to pay my servants. The count has no respect for me and gives me nothing of his wealth for my subsistence*.

When for any reason, most often political, the lords wanted to get rid of their ladies, they pursued them, mistreated them, made their lives impossible until they left. Bertrand de Comminges had already repudiated two wives when he married Marie de Montpellier. He wanted to expel her in turn. The pope threatened him with excommunication; he pretended to give in, but soon after he forced the unfortunate woman to return home, and never took her back. Raymond VI (1194-1222) married five women in succession. He probably forced the second, Beatrice, sister of Roger II, Viscount of Béziers, to ask for the *consolamentum*. One comes to suspect that these princes made use of Catharism to solve their

marital problems. Raimon-Roger de Foix "authorized" his wife Philippa to separate from him to take the investiture: she took refuge in Dun, where she surrounded herself with a small court of perfect men and women. Was her decision totally free? Seeing that the count often went to see her in Dun, and that, on the other hand, he had attended the *consolamentum* of his sister Sclarmunda, and moreover his other sister was a Waldensian, let us not slander him too much. Other barons pretended, on the contrary, to be good Catholics in order to separate themselves indignantly from their heretical wives. The result was the same: they were repudiated. We also admit without effort that many of these ladies were happy to see their unfaithful and violent husbands leave them.

For single women, noble, bourgeois or villainous, there was only one refuge: the convent.

Above all, the widows sought in the Cathar convents a refuge, security and the attentions to which they were entitled. The wars may have contributed (according to G. Koch) to increase the number of widows, since most of them were exposed to many dangers due to the fact that they had few resources. The same thing happened with the daughters of nobles who only received from the paternal succession, when they had many brothers, an insignificant part and sometimes sick, or invalids, they only found the social environment corresponding to their rank in the communities, where sometimes they became prioresses. The same phenomenon occurred in the 14th century in Provence, where life was equally hard for isolated and unsupported women. Widows, young women determined to keep celibacy, bourgeois women, ladies of high rank, entered the "beateries" affiliated to the Order of St. Francis, to escape social servitude.

The lot of the women of the village was even more unfortunate. The workers were very poorly paid: the spinners, for example, employed in weaving companies, were subjected to such unpleasant and humiliating living conditions that they preferred, if they found themselves without husbands and without other resources, to enter the Cathar workshops attached to the convents, where they were treated humanely, with the equality required by the

Christian charity, and where they lived by the work of their hands, without being exploited by anyone.

Certainly, there were some Catholic convents where they could have found almost the same advantages. Saint Dominic, who founded precisely the convent of Prouille to give equivalent asylum to repentant Cathars, knew this well. But women chose the Cathar Order, for as long as it was maintained, because it ensured the equality of the sexes and attenuated the unjust character of patriarchal supremacy. Certainly, misogyny had not completely disappeared from Catharism: some Cathars held that, for women, the last reincarnation of the soul had to be in the body of a man; others, that Adam's angel was from a higher heaven than Eve's angel. But these beliefs were far from being general and the dogma taught not only that souls, asexual, were equal, but even that reincarnations changed men into women as well as women into men.

On the level of social activity, women had above all the feeling of not being treated as inferiors or minors. This is what they all aspired to, without being very conscious of it, even in Northern France (the Countess of Montfort sometimes attended the councils of war supported by her husband!). Their communities were subject to the authority of the bishops and deacons, but this authority was only moral, without obligations or imposed disciplines, and was exercised equally on the men. The perfect women could not ascend to the highest degree of the hierarchy, the bishopric and the diaconate, but they had the same rights as the perfect and could confer the *consolamentum.* Believers bowed before them and "worshipped" them; they were indwelt by the Spirit, as were good men. They even had the right to preach, until the middle of the 13th century, but they never made much use of it, since their role consisted rather in educating young women of good families, caring for the sick and growing their small crafts.

From the court of Love to martyrdom.

The erotic doctrine of the troubadours had only liberated the Lady and not femininity. Love" was still forbidden to the villains and merchants. And it was only a dream for the peasant girl and the weaver's wife.

On the contrary, Catharism effectively brought together the noblewoman, the bourgeois, the shepherdess, the artisan's wife, within their communities, where they pursued together, in the hope of suppressing metaphysical evil, the struggle against misery, sickness, physical and social evils. Not only did they feel equal before men, but they also considered themselves equal among themselves. Therefore, it was more Catharism than Provençal Love that taught them that they had in common interests of "sex", which heresy still translated in terms of religious dualism. What they had to fight, the inequalities and the sufferings, all that was the "*Evil-on-earth*". But the principle of Evil could only be overcome by asceticism and personal sacrifice: women's demands had therefore, in the 13th century, only a religious and mystical aspect.

We will not remember the admirable virtues of which the women, the perfect and the believers, gave proof between 1209 and 1250. Who would recognize in these martyrs the smiling Castilian women of the time of the *Joi*? Whether or not their mysticism was based on claims of class or sex matters little. They demonstrated with their sacrifice that the Spirit transcends all its material conditioning.

In 1300, two Castilian women from the county of Foix, Alesta de Châteauverdun, and Serena, widow of Arnaud de Châteauverdun, were summoned to appear before the inquisitor: they knew they were heretics and were condemned to the stake. They decided not to appear and to flee. After having spent a long time in front of their make-up pots, painting themselves with saffron and blue under their eyes, to give themselves a Moorish appearance, they decided to leave the castle. One of them had a child she wanted to kiss before leaving. The child smiles at her from his little bed. She turns to him. The child laughs and holds out his arms: his eyes are full of tears and he comes back again... Finally, he orders the wet nurse to take him away. And she joins her companion without looking back.

The story does not say how they made the journey. Had they hired horses or mules? Had they taken a farmer's or a merchant's cart? It

It is certain that they arrived in Toulouse and stayed in an inn. The mistress immediately suspected that they were heretics: the incentive of the bonus offered to the informers sharpened her clairvoyance. "I have to go to town for some errands," she told them. Here are two live chickens. If you will prepare them, you will do me a favor and eat first." When the landlady returned the chickens were still alive. "If you kill them, we will prepare them," said the two ladies, "but we don't have the courage to kill them ourselves. The landlady did not say a word: she went out and returned with two agents of the Inquisition whom she had already warned. The two women simply said to her, "Give us, if you please, some water, so that we can wash our faces; we do not want to come before God painted like this."

Admirable ladies of Châteauverdun! In all of antiquity, we have never known such a frank and "natural" trait of feminine heroism!

I would have killed the chickens," said Béatrice de Planissoles to whom the story was told. Freedom - answered the perfect one - is in the impossibility of doing evil: they could have wanted to kill the chickens, but they could not".

CHAPTER V

GREAT LORDS AND SMALL GENTLEMEN

Carefree, luxury and poetry

It was necessary, in the Middle Ages, for a lord to be always cheerful and carefree: sadness was for villains, worries for merchants. "Be always complacent and kind," the poets advised him. At the time of his death (1127), the Duke of Aquitaine, William IX, boasted of having always known "Joy and cheerfulness". This notion of *Joi* (Joy or Play?) which corresponded, for the troubadours, to an amorous and mystical exaltation, was reduced, in the barons, to an affectation of nonchalance. As the queen of France says in *Flamenca*'s novel. *It is convenient that the greatest sorrow be of Love*. With the help of southern good humor, they took a playful aspect, before the ladies, and joked when they were among men: this was called the *gab*. On his way to Avignon, in the middle of the war of reconquest, Raymond VII (1222-1229), the "Young Count" rides with the troubadour Guide Cavaillon and some other knights. What do they talk about: "Of *wealth*, weapons, love and gifts". This same Raymond, summoned one day in Carcassonne, leaves his people at the gates of the city, then returns to them, with a terrified air, and explains that the bishop has put him in the state of

of arrest. Everyone escapes. *Come back, he shouts, come back, it was a joke!*

His father, Raymond VI, was in the habit of laughing at everything, himself and others. Once, he was waiting for some gentlemen who, perhaps with the same nonchalance, had forgotten the time of the appointment. "It is well seen that it is the Devil who has made this world," he muttered, "nothing comes when it is needed. To his chaplain, with whom he played chess, he said one night: "The God of Moses, in whom you believe, will not make you win. As for me, I prefer that he does not favor me". Just as when the bishop of Toulouse entered his palace: "Will you," he proposed, "let us go together to the good man's sermon?".

Perhaps those feudal lords were bored out of their minds. Most of their games were excessive, as was their will to distract themselves "at any price": prodigality was their passion. In 1174 in Beaucaire, Raymond V, Count of Toulouse, gave one hundred thousand salaries to Raimon d'Agout, to be distributed among ten thousand knights. A rich lord wanted to do better: he had twenty of his horses burned before his guests. Since wax was then very expensive, the great luxury was to cook the meat in the flame. Towards the end of the 12th century, generosity certainly became less sterile: troubadours, minstrels and women took ample advantage of it. Raymond VI intended to prove that a great lord can never be ruined. To Raimon de Maraval, with whom he was strongly united - they called each other by a woman's name: Audiart - he gave, as before to other troubadours, horses, costumes and everything he needed. Most of the barons did the same, according to their means. It would have been bad form not to offer a troubadour anything, even a bad horse, a worn cloak. It would have been even worse to offer nothing to the ladies who were beautiful, proud, but often poor.

Love, poetized, was their main concern. A count of Toulouse, a count of Foix, were able to rhyme a *cobla* (song). Music and poetry communicated to the most ignorant a certain refinement of spirit, and they appreciated as good connoisseurs the troubadour evenings, which were, then, the only spectacles that could be seen.

Sometimes, they met, without the women, to talk about them in a more relaxed way, as they did at their hunters' dinners. But ordinarily, and especially after the end of the twelfth century, the ladies attended the meals and the talks that followed them. They took an active part in the conversation, which almost always dealt with love affairs, thus becoming more conventional and more polite. After the meal, which lasted a long time, if the men were not playing dice or chess in the large room, they conversed with them, in pairs or in groups, in a freer manner in substance, but also ceremonious in form. The young ladies were courted less than the ladies. Everyone expressed themselves very well, in an affected and precious way. The troubadours then sang their poems and commented on their riddles: *Of the female body, which part is better, the lower or the upper? Which one would you choose?* Or: *A lady looks at a man with love, shakes a little the hand of another, squeezes, laughing, the foot of a third, which one is the beloved?* Sometimes the troubadours imagined interludes that caused unforeseen events in the beautiful summer nights. Peire Vidal dared, one day, to dress up in a wolf skin in honor of Loba de Pennautier, and made himself hunted by the dogs on the mountain of Cabaret. The peasants and the dogs entered so thoroughly into the game that the unfortunate poet did not come off very well. They took him to the castle covered with wounds and Loba took care of him affectionately. Everyone celebrated this madness, and even her husband, Jourdain de Cabaret. Among the guests that night were Pierre Roger de Mirepoix, who was to receive the *consolamentum* at Fanjeaux, and Aimeric de Montréal who would be hanged years later by Simon de Montfort....

Life in these remote castles was not without charm for the lords and poets who only passed by. They arrived at nightfall and left at dawn. The counts - and even the kings - did not mind going up to these eagles' nests, where beautiful young women they only knew from the praise they had received from the troubadours, always seemed to be waiting for them...

War and love.

Leisure gives birth to love. The knights had managed to complicate it so much that it gave color to their whole life. They loved in spirit and loved in body. To play, they lent themselves, but only to a certain extent, to the subtleties of "courtesy", persuading themselves that they were capable of loving more "finely" than the vulgar. Love was only platonic for the lady to whom it was imposed by her social rank. But a count of Toulouse or Foix often disposed of the women of his vassals, a bit like a fief, less abusively, however, than the duke of Aquitaine who, in the previous century, married his mistresses to his knights, keeping the usufruct for himself: against this the troubadours protested in the name of courtly morality and of the humble lovers. Only one mythology could make sense: the one that idealized war for love and love for bravery. The young squire who fought for "the love of his lady" ended up being more daring.

Everyone, big and small, adored war or its image: hunting and tournaments, but less than the barons of the North of France. Before 1209, the knights pledged their castles to play a little war. After 1209, the real war finished ruining them. They never ceased, then as adventurers in need, to take part in all the uprisings of the princes against the king and the Church, nor to organize themselves armed expeditions from Montségur.

Among the great feudal lords - in whose armies they were enrolled - the most courageous, the most brilliant, were undoubtedly the Counts of Foix: Raimon-Roger (1188-1223) and Roger-Bernard II (1223-1241) and, in his youth, Raymond VII of Toulouse. Sometimes they were cruel, especially Raimon-Roger de Foix, when times were no longer for softness. When Raymond VI, after having captured his brother Baldwin, who had betrayed him, ordered his death, the Count of Foix and Bernard de Portella offered to hang him with their own hands.

The great lords and Catharism.

It does not seem that Catharism was of much interest to these barons: the Viscounts of Carcassonne, the Viscount of Béarn, the Count of Armagnac, the Count of Comminges and, of course, the Counts of Toulouse and Foix, all fought, more or less, against Simon de Montfort, and later against the French monarchy and the Church, but without adhering to heresy: they only defended their rights. Perhaps Raymond VI, excommunicated very early because of the violence he exercised against churches and monasteries, then relieved of excommunication for the first time by Innocent III in 1198, remained a believer. But, like almost all feudalists, who at the end were seen, lying on their funeral beds, dressed in the habit of any monastic order, he had himself received, shortly before his death, as a brother of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. Since he was excommunicated, the commander had his body thrown into an abandoned garden where, when his bones were later scattered, only his skull was found. His son, better Catholic or worse Cathar, had soon become convinced that *no one was powerful enough, except the Church, to overthrow Toulouse*. Throughout his life, he will be seen to pursue, at the same time as the struggle against French domination, the pious project of having his father buried in sacred ground. The same ambiguity, the same double game, the same prudence is found in the Counts of Foix. At the Lateran Council (1215), Raymond-Roger protested his affection for the Roman Church: "I went, I gave myself and offered myself to the abbey of Boulbonne, where I was very well received, where all my ancestors were donated and buried". It is possible, however, that Roger-Bernard II, his son, had been secretly initiated into the Cathar Order. As Viscount of Castelbon, he had certain differences with the Church. But the Church, also pursuing political aims, never believed too much in the heresy of the great lords. It was always less fearful of the great lords than of the small unarmed knights. In 1241, Roger-Bernard was declared "reconciled".

Skeptical, epicurean, perhaps a bit pagan like their older ancestors, the counts believed only in war and politics. Hence they did not hesitate, at the whim of their interests and circumstances, to have the Pope's messenger killed, or the inquisitors of Avignonet, as well as to seize, at Montségur or elsewhere, perfect innocents whom they had them burned without remorse, simply to prove their obedience to the Church. These princes really belonged to the Prince of this world.

Gentlemen.

The same was not true of the small knights - sometimes even bastards of great lords - who always showed a sincere affection for Catharism. Loup de Foix was a believer: one day he declared to the knight of Orsans that "the perfect were good and that one should not go to seek salvation outside of them". The ties that often bound them to heresy were family ties. One of them once said to Foulque, bishop of Toulouse: "We see that you have good reasons to oppose the perfecti, but we cannot expel them: we have been educated with them, we count among them relatives and we see that they live honestly". Aimeric de Montréal's mother, Blanche de Laurac, once a widow, ran a "house of perfects" in Laurac. Arnaud de Mazerolles, Aimeric's brother, had as his wife a notorious heretic, Hélis, granddaughter of Guillem de Durfort, lord of Fanjeaux, poet and believer. All the small nobility of Cabardès, Lauragais, Carcassés, was also, on the eve of the crusade, involved in heresy.

Meetings presided over by good men, often also
The nobles, for the knights, were as many occasions to make contact with their neighbors or their lords. Around 1200, the deacon Raimon Bertrand preached every day in the women's convent where Mabille, daughter of Blanche de Laurac, was staying; around 1204, Bernard-Othon de Niort, Blanche's grandson, was living at his grandmother's house: he attended the ceremonies and met Aimeric de Montréal, his uncle, Bertrand de Saissac, and even the

Count of Foix. In Montréal, in 1206, Arnaud Guiraud and Bernard Coldefi preached in the "heretics' houses" of the city. One of these houses was run by Fabrisse de Mazerolles, wife of Bernard de Villeneuve, and sister-in-law of Hélis. There she received all the local cavalry, the Durfort and the Montréal.

Guilhem de Durfort, in a *sirvent* in which he praised his friend Gui Cap-de-Porc, left us an idealized portrait of the Cathar knight of that time. He does not differ much from the catholic knight: he has, like him, the cult of the values of *parage* - without having, on the other hand, the means to show himself generous and prodigal - and that of love, the source of all virtues. At the most, one could highlight in this poem a praise of poverty or rather a contempt for riches, which resent a little the Cathar influence. Perhaps also a certain rationalization of love: *May the fire of love*, says the poet, *not oppress or consume this kind and sincere man, but in a reasonable measure*. But one finds the same concept of "pure" love that perfects the pro man, if he controls it.

Undoubtedly, the reality was very different. The knight was as unconscious as the high-ranking baron, also driven to repudiate his wife and change his mistress. Raimon de Miraval separated from his wife, Gaudairenca, under the pretext that "it was enough with a poet at home": she wrote "dances". The Church, which years before had imposed on Jourdain de Cabaret to take back his wife Loba, did not now have the means to oppose these repudiations. When Gaudairenca learned of her husband's will, she sent for Guillaume Brémon, who was her lover, and Raimon de Miraval gave her to him. "He took her and took her for his wife". Not only does the Catholic clergy not appear in this affair, but it is likely that it was a Cathar minister, who married Brémon and Gaudairenca, by simple mutual consent.

These nobles did not always act very logically in their lives. Until 1209, when double-dealing did not force them to do so, they made donations and bequests to Catholic churches, while bowing to good men and confiscating tithes. Some went in the morning to Catholic mass and in the evening to the Cathar sermon. Dogma did not interest them much. We know of only one example of seigniorial arbitration in matters of religion: at the beginning of the century, some perfects asked Bertran de

Saissac if they should give the *consolamentum* to a sick person who could not speak. He replied that, for this time, it should be given, but that from now on no one would receive it if he could not pray the *Pater* (the *convenensa was* not yet in use).

The hidalgos were often anti-clerical. If there was a priest in the village, they kept a close eye on him, especially if he was of relaxed habits. Raimon and Pierre de Rouvenac killed the local parish priest one day, because he had led their mother astray. They went in penance to see the pope, but the whole family was no less anti-Roman: one finds knights of Rouvenac among the defenders of Montségur. One of them, Bernard de Rouvenac, was even a poet and from 1240 to 1280 he did not cease in his inflamed *sirventés to* call the southern lords to combat and revenge. The small nobles only served Catharism with arms, or when they were troubadours, with the call to arms.

They remembered God and their salvation only when they stood before the perfect ones and performed the *melioramentum* before them. Like most believers, they were only truly religious at the hour of their death, when they received the *consolamentum*.

The period of tolerance: Catholics, Cathars and Waldensians.

Until 1209, however, they all put their greatest effort in organizing contradictory conferences between Cathars and *Waldensians*, Cathars and Catholics. The only reason for this attitude was to put some variety in their daily life and to look for more novelties than the troubadours' recitals. We are poorly informed about the conferences of this genre that existed at the beginning of the century. Peter II, king of Aragon, presided over one, in 1204, in Carcassonne, which put the Cathar bishop Bernard de Simorre and the perfects in dispute with the legates Pierre de Castelnau and Friar Raoul. It seems that there were thirteen Catholics against thirteen Cathars. We do not know the decision of the arbitrators who, probably, given the time and place, gave the Cathars the upper hand.

These contradictory meetings speak in favor of the spirit of tolerance of the southerners. Whether the majority were Catholic or heretical, everything was

The proceedings were conducted in the strictest order, without obstruction. The arbitrators were appointed by the assembly, and were the ones who gave the reason to one party or the other.

In 1206, St. Dominic met in Servian the perfect Thierry of Nevers, a former canon converted to Catharism. The conference had been decided by the lord of the village, won by heresy. The debate must have been passionate, given the extraordinary personalities of both adversaries. Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay explains that the listeners, convinced by the eloquence of St. Dominic, would have gladly expelled the heretics, but that the lord prevented them from doing so. We do not have, it is true, the Cathar version of the incident.

A more famous conference was the one that took place in 1207, in Pamiers, in the hall of the castle that the Count of Foix had put at the disposal of the speakers. There were St. Dominic, Foulque, bishop of Toulouse, the bishop of Osma, Navarre, bishop of Saint-Liziers, some *Waldensians* and several Cathars. The sister of the Count of Foix, Esclarmonde, attended the debates. When she wanted to intervene and say something, she attracted the misogynist reprimand of Friar Esteban de la Misericorde, who admonished her: "Madam, go spin with your distaff; it is not your place to speak in an assembly like this one". The conference of Pamiers was a success for the Catholics, since the referee, Arnaud de Crampagnac, a secular cleric, rather favorable to the *Waldensians*, denied the reason to his co-religionists and even converted to Catholicism, at the same time that Durand of Osea and a rather important group of "Poor of Lyon" did.

Fanjeaux's contradictory conference became part of the legend. Let us imagine the hall of the castle of Guillem de Durfort - today it is a Dominican convent - full of numerous barons and ladies. Guillem, surrounded by the councilors of Fanjeaux, presides over the session. The adversaries, according to the custom, have summarized their arguments in *libelli*. Guilhabert de Castres and Saint Dominic defend their faith, each in his own style, one more dialectical, the other more vehement. The referees impose silence as soon as the slightest murmur rises in the hall; but the listeners are courteous. And since they have arrived at the casuistry of love, they listen to these two mystics speak of another Love which is the same as Love itself.

for all, and which nevertheless divides them. They judge like connoisseurs, less interested however in the ideas than in the way they are presented.

Neither of the two is able to convince the other. The arbitrators are unable to designate the winner. They decide to refer to the judgment of God and to throw the Cathar libel and the Catholic libel into the fire, which glows in the fireplace. God will prevent the Book of Truth from burning. Then, before Saint Dominic praying, before the dismayed perfects, God performed the miracle that Fra Angelico had made famous throughout Christendom: the Cathar book was quickly consumed, the Catholic book emerged intact from the flames three times, and the last time it hit a beam of the ceiling that was burned by a fire, no doubt immaterial (it can still be seen in the church of Fanjeaux).

It is probable that the conference was more favorable to the Cathars than the catholic tradition explains. The recourse, imaginary or real, to the ordeal of fire, hides if not a failure of Saint Dominic, at least a sort of draw... But the Cathar report has not been preserved.

The lords and ladies who, in 1207, had attended this memorable meeting must have remembered, not without melancholy, some years later, the happy days when, in their castles, confrontations of this kind took on such a peaceful air that they had the appearance of stories taken from the *Golden Legend*... St. Dominic, tirelessly traveling the countryside of Carcassonne and Fanjeaux, raised the dust from the roads. It was the time when the converted Waldensian "ensandalés" were seen, going in pairs, penetrating the villages at nightfall and preaching to the peasants who flocked under the elm tree. But the spiritual crusade had failed: the Cathars placed their own clergy everywhere and responded to these preachings with a more effective propaganda.

CHAPTER VI

THE BURGERS

Wealth and power of the cities

The bourgeoisie of Languedoc, rich and powerful, had succeeded in the previous century in conquering liberties and privileges - in Moissac, for example, since 1130 - and above all in imposing on their lords, most often peacefully, consular institutions: in Béziers in 1131, in Toulouse in 1144-1173. These consulates emanated from the bourgeoisie and not from the "people", and their task was to reduce the difficulties of all kinds that the demands of the lords opposed to trade. It was the time when the seigniorial agents arrested merchants on their way and opened their bundles up to three times in the same city to make them pay the leude. If freedom was reduced, at that time, to the freedom to trade, it took, however, by the force of things, a political character: the consuls, defending the bourgeois from the arbitrariness of the lords, guaranteed to all citizens some essential rights and, as a rule, their personal safety. They encouraged the creation of leagues - or *amicansas* - whose action went beyond the framework of purely commercial interests and succeeded in bringing about greater justice in social relations. Thus it was that in Narbonne, in the 13th century, an *amicansa* of this style, a kind of syndicate, was constituted, whose members promised each other help and

They swore to defend the rights of the city and the town, *so that justice would be done equally to the rich and the poor*. A certain progress in moral conscience is thus noted, which extends to all domains: Narbonne, for example, was the first maritime city to proclaim the principle of protection for shipwrecked persons.

The "bourgeois gentry".

The bourgeois of the thirteenth century are either merchants who are getting rich or capitalists who, having made their fortune, make other merchants work for them.

Since the Church forbids them to borrow money at interest, many try to to become lords: they exchange the gold in their coffers for real estate, noble or plebeian; they own houses in the city and properties in the suburban area. When they cannot buy the land *they buy the profit and interpose themselves between the tenant and the lord* (H. Richardot). Thus they become *domini* providing themselves with a low but secure interest. Throughout the beginning of the century, they also made use of their wealth, earned through trade, to provide themselves with the same kind of life as the small lords who, not exploiting their lands directly, had no other income than the census and the manorial rights. The only innovation of the nascent capitalism is that the "feudal" profits began to be traded and circulated as our securities.

Often these burghers yielded to the temptation to live exactly like the nobles, from whom, before the crusade of 1209, they were practically indistinguishable. Sword or dagger bearers, dressed as sumptuously as knights, they spent their time in hunting or in worldly gatherings. According to the troubadour Arnaut de Marevil, they *knew the domney*, that is, the art of courting ladies according to the laws of love. They had, indeed, the opportunity to court them in verse - for they were sometimes poets - and the means to ruin themselves for them just like the prodigal barons. But these "gentile bourgeois-men" who abandoned mercantilism and whose resources were of weak constitution, devoured

quickly its capital. Matfre Ermengau describes in this way, around 1280, the survivors of this first Occitan bourgeoisie which the crusade had punished as severely as the nobility, and which now seemed to be in full decadence: *These idle bourgeois*, we are talking about those of Béziers, enriched by the wine trade, *proud of their large estates that allow them to live off their incomes without doing anything else, they spend all day sitting around or else they go hunting in the countryside... They are only capable of ruin: idleness leads them to sin and to the precipice, the faster the more they are fond of women* (the domney had become for them something very realistic); *they are on their way down the slope. And they rage with envy when they see the merchants making their way....*

Moneylenders and loan sharks.

Matfre Ermengau is right: in 1250, the real bourgeois are the active merchants. Raimon de Cornet, at the beginning of the 14th century, only knew, as the bourgeois, these businessmen who make money from everything and even from their own money, and are very careful not to count on the meager profits of land and *fiefs.* If they acquire them, it is out of a trace of vanity or because prudence advises them "not to put all their eggs in one basket". They have no desire to play the great lord; they let the poets despise their mercantilism and let the ladies laugh at them:
"It's ridiculous, isn't it, to talk about love on a Sunday, when you've been running the store all week." More humble and more economizing than their ancestors, they accumulate riches (beautiful clothes, furs, furniture, chests, crockery) but hide them, or only show them inside their sumptuous palaces; they even accept that the consuls - whom they elect - limit by sumptuary laws the luxurious clothing of their women:
"It would be clumsy - they say - to indispose the unfortunate nobles who borrow to be our customers". These merchants who make a hundred percent profit - it is true that trade then entailed enormous risks -, who *sell an egg for twice as much*, as they say, and who sell it *for twice as much.*

Raimon de Cornet, they also practice usury: *they drink the poor. Every day they take a little of his goods, until the moment when they say to him. Everything is mine, the trunk and the branch*. They are those who, after having made a loan (*manleu*) to the ruined noblemen who still feel like going to war, end up accepting their castle in mortgage. How could they increase their fortune if it were not for the usury that the Church condemns but of which the canons take advantage? (*Canorgue... per prestar a renou)*[12], says Peire Cardenal.

However, from 1250 to 1280, within the bourgeoisie of the great commercial cities, and especially in the port cities, a kind of evolution towards generosity was observed. More educated, more moral perhaps, many of these great speculators dreamed of reconciling their mercantile activity with a more liberal existence. The taste of freedom ennobles them. To seize the hut of a poor farmer, after having reduced him to misery by usury, no longer appeals to them, it seems to them unworthy of them. What they want is to be able to invest their profits in honest commercial or "nautical" loans and in the last case, if they need an increase of capital to carry out a big business, to be able to lend at a normal rate without being bothered by the laws that repress usury. However, the Church did not make any difference between *lending* at twenty percent and *renou* at one hundred percent, between the loan of commerce[13]which is a form of cooperation, and usury, which is a form of theft: how could they not become, at the moment when the nobles themselves took up arms against the Church, fierce anticlericals, Cathars, without knowing it? They wanted to renounce - at least those who were good Christians - the *renou*, but never the *loan*, which was the very condition of what was beginning to be the great commerce; being the clearest of their activity to take loans and lend.

Shipowners and traders.

The bourgeois of whom we speak lives nobly in his mansion. He has merchants travel for him to whom he lends money or pays. While these

While the merchants are always on horseback on the roads, exposed to the annoyances of the lords and the harassment of *robbers*, or, on their ships, to the danger of the sea, the bourgeois only leaves the city at certain times of the year to visit the main commercial centers, the markets of Barcelona, the fairs of Champagne, Beaucaire or Saint-Gilles, making contact with foreign merchants. The rest of the time, he manages, without leaving his office, his nuncios and his clerks, receives orders, supervises shipments, waits for visitors...

In the ports: Narbonne, Saint-Gilles, Montpellier, the most considerable fortunes are amassed and the consulates have more power and freedom. The bourgeois of Narbonne trafficked in everything: they bought in Alexandria linen, cotton, luxury fabrics, silks, indigo; there they sold wax, saffron from Catalonia, wines and linen. One sees accumulated in the docks of the ports all the products of the country and of the interior: honey, oil, wine, wheat, which are exported far away; in Narbonne, the local linen, very reputable, and those of the factories of the interior, which are sent to Italy. Any spice can be stocked: saffron, cinnamon, pepper, sunflower, seine, candied ginger. The abbot of Saint-Gilles one day sent the king an assortment of spices very rare at that time: sumac, three pounds of cinnamon, cardamom, a pound of sunflower, nutmeg, Celtic spikenard and cubeba. Also in these ports in Narbonne, in Montpellier, one gets incense, powdered sugar and sugar of piles; hides, skins - those imported and those exported: lamb, rabbit, squirrel, marten, weasel, cat, fox; silk and cendal; metals, gold, copper, tin, brass; woods, masts of ships, beams; animals: horses, mules from Roussillon, goats... There were even Saracen slaves and slaves that did not cost very expensive: fifteen pounds; a quarter of a horse, half of a mule.

Naturally, the cities of the hinterland, Carcassonne, Béziers, Albi, Nimes, Toulouse, benefit from the maritime contribution; the resellers there prosper; and the textile industry, the wine trade make the fortune of the bourgeois and merchants. Such a business movement gives to some "patrician" families an influence to which nothing opposes: they dominate the city. In 1244, a certain Ramon Seraller, from Narbonne, is engaged in trade.

of grain in Piazza di Genova. His heirs will eventually have open benches and offices. The Doria of Genoa were apparently originally from Narbonne, while Foulque, bishop of Toulouse, was the son of wealthy Genoese merchants established in Marseilles. Certain pacts linked the Occitan ports to each other. Friendship treaties linked them to the Italian ports: Genoa, Pisa. In Narbonne, the bourgeois were powerful enough to impose their policy and to conclude a commercial treaty with Genoa in 1166. Saint-Gilles had established similar relations with Genoa, Pisa and Sicily. In Narbonne, in front of the Viscounts' palace, the vast and proud portico of the "Place des Borzés" stood as a symbol of bourgeois domination, where the rich speculators met to discuss their business or to learn about the course of their merchandise. It was the "stock exchange" of Narbonne. In almost every commercial city there was also a "stock exchange", where the bourgeois spent long hours discussing, sometimes in the company of heretics, who brought them fresh news from Lombardy....

The influence of Catharism.

The relationship between commerce and heresy was not only theoretical. Cathars and bourgeois frequented the same markets, the same fairs. For pleasure or to escape the persecutions of the Inquisition, the believers were also engaged in trade and were in frequent contact with merchants. Even when they were not permeable to their propaganda, the bourgeois were flattered to see how their mercantile activity received the approval of the most refined Christianity. The commercial honesty of the Cathars admired them, as well as their accounting knowledge. But above all, to the new ideas that were in the air, concerning the free use of money, the Cathars, at the chance of conversations held in the square, brought the confirmation of scriptural authorities. This is perhaps why the bourgeois of Toulouse, Marseilles and Avignon were never able to consider the Cathar merchants as

enemies; even less, when the war forced them to remain faithful to their legitimate count. And we know with what courage, with what abnegation, with what ferocity at times, they fought for Raymond VII. It was always so, even in very Catholic cities like Narbonne where, in 1212, Simon de Montfort had only managed to recruit three hundred men, w h o moreover refused to fight and returned to their homes. So it was until the end: in 1275, the viscount of Narbonne, pushed by the bourgeoisie, tried to place the city under the protectorate of the king of Castile; in 1304, the bourgeoisie of Carcassonne offered the viscountcy to Ferdinand, son of the king of Majorca.

And it is that the burghers of Carcassonne, of Narbonne, of Toulouse, as much in 1230 as in 1280, did not accept neither the tyranny of the Inquisition nor the official doctrine of the Church in matters of *lending* and *renou*. They did not believe they were sinning by selling money. Catharism had contributed to make them understand that there is a "moral" difference between usury, as practiced by certain Jews, certain Lombards and certain Catholics, and the lending of trade that

The Cathar propaganda recalled scriptural texts that soothed the conscience of the bourgeois: "Give to him who asks of you and do not refuse him who *borrows from you"*. The Cathar propaganda recalled scriptural texts that soothed the conscience of the bourgeois: "*Give to him who asks you and do not refuse him who asks you to borrow*"; and especially the verses of the Gospel of Matthew, where the father of a family reproaches his servant for *not having deposited his money in the hands of bankers to obtain at least their interest, since he does not have the ability to use it in commerce* (Matthew XXV, 27). Perhaps in Narbonne, the bourgeois had also heard of the law of the Jews that forbade them to lend at interest to their fellow citizens without fortune, but not to those who had wealth. The Cathars must at least have brought to their attention a famous text in which Saint John Chrysostom makes the same distinction as them with respect to the two "usuries": *if you have placed a sum of money with interest at the hands of a solvent man, you will doubtless prefer to leave your son a good income, so well secured, than not to leave him the money in a chest with the trouble of placing it himself.*

The believers set a good example: an Occitan Cathar, Pierre de Bauville, lent in Italy, in order to help him, one hundred imperial pounds to another Cathar in exile, who soon earned two hundred, returned fifty

pounds of

interest and finds himself with fifty pounds available for new purchases. No one believed at this time that it was more dishonest to cede money to the one who knew how to make it bear fruit, than to resell a commodity at a 100 percent profit ("the egg sold at double", of which Raimon de Cornet speaks). Even if the rate of interest is found to be excessive, it must be recognized that it is in relation to the profit and that, in any case, taking into account the risks that merchants ran, especially at sea, there would only be winners in this operation. An enterprising young merchant, if he was not very unlucky, could easily repay the sum borrowed and the interest.

A rich bourgeois of Narbonne, long addicted, if not to Catharism, at least to the new economic system, entrusts a sailor or a clever merchant with a fund in money or goods and instructs him to convert it, by exchange or by sale, into other goods and to do the same on the product, by successive negotiations, at each of the stages that the ship will travel and with a share of interest and often with a common profit. An excellent example of a fruitful cooperation in which, if the ship was not seized by pirates or engulfed by a storm, it enriched the merchant merchant. *It turned out*, as noted
C. Port, *an ordinary fund, unknown to the merchant himself, which often came to him at the hour of his ruin.*

The bourgeois capitalists and the Cathars against the Church and the Inquisition.

The Church, whose doctrine went against the very notion of profit, apart from the feudal "profit", and which was hostile to financial operations of this kind, could never prevent merchants from practicing them, especially within the maritime trade, but it certainly hindered the legitimate investments of small businesses and simple people. An artisan from Toulouse had saved three hundred pounds. He wanted to rent a modest house. The owner of the house, who was a believer, said to him: "My friend, I would gladly let you have this house, but I know that you have three hundred pounds that are of no use to you. I will take it, if you like, as a loan, and you will

you will withdraw an interest that will pay your rent. In this way, you will be well housed without having to pay anything. Think it over and give me an answer as soon as possible". The artisan, who was a Catholic, went to consult the priest of his town, who told him that the projected contract contained clear usury and that he should refuse to sign it.

At the time when the Inquisition confiscated their properties, the Cathars had no need of castles, houses or land: they only wanted liquid money that would allow them to meet the expenses of their Church, to support the Perfect Ones, and to distribute relief to the poor, the sick, the prisoners, the exiles: in short, money that was directly usable and exportable. If they made their "deposits" bear fruit, it was never for themselves. In a recent article, a historian of Catharism still speaks of "usury" and its "victims". Nowhere does it appear that the
Cathar "usury" produced victims. The Catholic doctors of the 13th century did not reproach the perfects for ruining their believers; they would rather reproach them for enriching them, for suppressing the "poor", so necessary for the glory of God. In the *Nouvelle de l'Hérétique* (Catholic pamphlet), the perfect Sicard de Figueiras, invented for the needs of the cause, declares: *I have many rich friends, filled with everything. None of them has stopped until he has entrusted me with all the money he possesses. Of their assets, of these deposits (comandas) I am amply provided for. And I am of the opinion that all our believers have a good capital*. With this they wanted to make believe that Catharism had enriched them all.

The perfects returning from Lombardy disguised as merchants
they were bringing goods. Here is one who arrives in Pexiora with his bundles. He proposes to one Jean Pagès to sell him thirty thousand needles for six pounds of Melgueil[14]. Pagès buys them, but he cannot pay this sum all at once. It matters little. He asks the Cathar deacon to serve as guarantor. A new example of an economic deal, of a religious nature here, where the new times were going to normalize and regularize the use.

It is not impossible that the bourgeoisie - rather indelicate at the beginning of the century: creditors forgot to pay interest or kept in their possession the proofs of debts paid - had learned from Catharism that the system could not function without scrupulous honesty. It is known

that the perfect ones had registered the amounts given in deposit and those that they lent. One day a heretic saw a certain Raimon take some pounds out of his purse and give them to a certain Didier. It was money that had been entrusted to him on deposit by Didier's father, and of which no one remembered. We find in the *records of the Inquisition*, numerous examples of this probity, which is also very well explained, since the lenders were "spirituals" fearful of sin. But the novelty is precisely this concluded alliance between commerce and heresy, from which commerce was *absolved*. Let us add - and this is enough to clear the Cathars of any accusation of usury - that they forgave interest to those who could not pay it, asking them only to be faithful to the sect. The only recourse they used, in any case, against bad faith debtors was to deny them the *consolamentum*. And they never refused it to believers who really lacked any recourse.

The bourgeoisie of the 1260s and 1280s found themselves exact and objectively in the same conditions as the Cathars. When the judges of the Inquisition, the bishop, the king, had not enriched themselves with their spoils, they did not know where to keep the little money they had left, and even less how to convert it into rents. It was no longer a question for them of seizing the peasant's land at a low price, nor of practicing *barter usury* as in the times when the usurers of Cahors, the Salvanhic, lent Simon de Montfort the money necessary to finance the crusade, and he had to give them the fruits of their plunder: cloth, wine, wheat, all the booty taken at Lavaur. What they demanded was simply the suppression of all restrictions against commercial freedom on the part of the lords, and against the trade of money by the Roman Church. It is not strange that they joined, in great numbers, the clandestine Cathar party, and that they conspired against the Inquisition and against the king, until the king himself had given them, in part, satisfaction. It is very significant that Philip the Fair's ordinance of 1311 authorizes the creditor to demand, in addition to the capital owed, a compensatory interest on the loan. With this, the king legalized trade loans. The interest was four dineros per month or four sueldos per year, for one pound. It came to be twenty per cent per annum, which was reduced, it is true, to fifteen per cent in

the period of the Champagne fairs, precisely to allow merchants to make large purchases.

Undoubtedly, as long as feudalism subsists, the bourgeois will be tempted to place their money in the seigneuries *as well.* This will last until 1789. But, more and more, they will use money as an independent power and not only as a pretext to play the "gentleman bourgeois". This will naturally have the effect of accentuating the de facto antagonism which essentially opposes bourgeois values to feudal values.

Freedom of trade.

By condemning sordid usury, the Church was charitable; and by prohibiting and discouraging commercial loans, it went against the direction of the economic movement. Catharism intervened precisely at the time when the first manifestations of capitalism appeared: the first bill of exchange (February 15, 1200, drawn in Marseilles), the first companies by shares[15], the first attempts to transform the

"Circumstances wanted him to test, for his own needs, the new economy that was being announced.

Therefore, it is useless to wonder, as certain neo-Marxists do, if the exploiting usurers were Catholic bourgeois and their "victims" Cathars... if the shareholders of the mills of the Bazacle (Toulouse) were Catholics, exploiters, and the consumers, exploited Cathars. This does not make any sense. The sordid usurers, whether they were Jews, Lombards or Catholics, were bad people, but it was certainly not about these bourgeois. Christian charity, Cathar morality, the interests of the mercantile bourgeoisie and the evolution of the general economy now postulated a new order in which commercial freedom was to appear as the *testimony of all freedoms.* The lenders were Cathars or bourgeois affiliated to Catharism, the shareholders of the Bazacle must have been, and perhaps they were. But this did not make them exploiters: on the contrary, it was the feudal order at that time.

time the one that oppressed. And, naturally, many good Catholics were, in this sense, as Cathar as the Cathars. Feudal rights already appeared as iniquitous or *unjustified*, especially tithes, since the Cathars said "it is not God who instituted them, nor who ordered to excommunicate those who refused to pay them". In the 14th century, the peasants always managed to defraud the payer: "Each one steals a little or a lot of the tithe every year: by doing so, he recovers his seed". But no one stands up against the principle of commercial profit.

As for the bourgeoisie, it was freed from its guilt complex. Perhaps thanks to Catharism.

CHAPTER VII

THE ARTISANS

Diversity of Languedoc industries at the beginning of the 13th century

It is often difficult, in the Middle Ages, to distinguish craftsmen from free workers and merchants. The craftsman works with his hands and, in principle, sells directly what he has made. He has a store in his house, on the first floor; but sometimes, even while working at home, he also delivers his product to a merchant; and in this case he is nothing more than a hired hand.

The Eastern Crusades and the development of maritime trade had multiplied the number of craftsmen in the ports and inland towns. The wine trade fed a flourishing cooperage industry; and in the ports, shipowners, organized in corporations, as well as manufacturers of ship masts, oars and sails, made an easy living. In the Toulouse region, the milling industry used floating mills, later mills built on dams, and employed a salaried staff, as did the mills in the city, which did not belong entirely to the lord. Leather craftsmen, glove makers, bag, belt and strap makers, generally worked on their own, as did tailors and milliners. The seamstresses were not always simple workers in the service of their master. Some waited at home

to their clients. Many persecuted Cathar ladies had to follow the example of Berthe, the heroine of *Girart de Roussillon*'s novel, whom the poet shows us cutting a soldier's suit with the cloth he has brought her, while her husband, the count, works as a charcoal burner and earns seven dinars a day.

We are at a time when businesses run by the bourgeoisie are developing, but it is the stores of artisans, shoemakers, apothecaries, hairdressers, carpenters and masons - the latter being rather what today would be called small entrepreneurs - which, being more numerous, give certain streets of the city their commercial liveliness.

The great industry was the cloth industry: the wool of Languedoc was considered excellent, and fabrics were made from it in many places, in Narbonne, in Béziers, in Nimes, in Uzés, in Beaucaire. In the region of Carcassonne alone, in the 13th century, there were nine towns and fifty-two villages dedicated to the manufacture of these fabrics. They were sold at fairs and markets. Narbonne exported them. At the same time, there was an important number of dyers. These workers, with red nails, of which it seems that women did not want to hear about, used vermilion (or kermes) and pastel (indigo), products of the country, but also the gill of Aleppo or Alexandria (black); the brasil (pink), the alum and the gualda (yellow) that were imported from Genoa, Pisa, Catalonia. If one imagines the multitude of these weaving and dyeing workshops - the dyers sometimes worked in their own homes - it can be admitted that most of the Languedoc craftsmen were busy in the textile industry, in dyeing or in the luxury industries that were attached to them: making dresses for men and women in silk or purple cloth, adorned with taffeta and furs, fine shirting, lace and fur. When Béziers was sacked in 1209, the *raiders* seized these magnificent clothes, which were the main luxury of the time, especially in the "palaces" of the bourgeoisie.

The office of St. Paul.

At the time of the crusade, weaving seems to have been an individual job, either because the artisans worked for a merchant or because they were merchants themselves. The craftsman bought the raw material, the wool from the country, and wove at home, as the Andorrans still do, with their rather primitive hand frames, with the help of his whole family. Nothing prevented him from being a nomad if he wanted to be one, and to travel from country to country. Such a weaver, persecuted by the Inquisition, sells his wares and arrives in Catalonia, where he manufactures others. It is likely that Catharism was introduced in Andorra, where the Counts of Foix favored the installation of these outlawed artisans or workers. Indeed, there has always been a sort of affinity between weaving and heresy. Not only in Languedoc but also in Champagne and Germany where "weaver" ended up being synonymous with Cathar and heretic. Perhaps the Cathars remembered that St. Paul had earned his living by weaving canvases. Perhaps they were simply attracted by the meditative tranquility attributed to this occupation, since there are still modern mystics who spin wool. In fact, many weavers were believers, some of them perfect.

Wherever they were established, the believers helped the heretics by providing them with raw materials. Those of Fanjeaux brought them wool, hemp and even linen from Alexandria (cotton), which the merchants then sold at a high price. Guillelma Lombard, before being converted to Catholicism by Saint Dominic, supplied the Cathar weavers of the community of Fanjeaux. While in the other works it is not certain that the owners would have had the same beliefs as their workers, everything leads us to believe that, on the contrary, the owners of the weaving workshops were generally Cathars or sympathizers of Catharism. Many *domus hereticorum* had become a sort of community workshop, where believers felt at home, either because the master was a believer, or even perfect, or because he gave his business to the community to provide the necessary income for the subsistence of its members; or, finally, because the perfect had set up a workshop themselves. In 1233, five perfects gathered in Hautpoul to exercise this trade: an informant declares that he had built them shives to crush hemp, in a forest where they were hiding. But in the

At the same time, a weaving workshop was quietly operating in Cordes, which turned out to be a real "House of heretics" under the Cathar direction and drawing all its resources from the work of the brothers. The artisans were instructed in the practice of this trade, but also in the truths of their faith. The "House" received apprentices, who could also become perfect. This is why the weaver's shuttle, which appears on certain funerary monuments, perhaps represents the Cathar faith, the initiation to the sect being symbolized, as in Freemasonry, by a working tool.

Since the Cathars were very scrupulous in matters of retribution, especially with regard to their believers, it may be thought that the poor workers were less exploited by them than by the rest.

The women's workshops, directed by a perfect or a proven believer, attracted many women workers. Fed and housed in the convent, they worked freely, they were certainly happier than the poor spinners of Champagne who, almost at the same time, lamented their misery. We are poorly informed about the way work was organized in the women's convents, but it is certain that the textile industry was favored. We see a wealthy believer, Bertrand de la Mothe, of Montauban, freeing his workers one day to build frames for weaving in a house of perfects.

For a living, the perfect ones did not devote themselves entirely to weaving, but also to the manufacture of weaving tools. Bélibaste, who in the course of his wandering life had practiced many trades - he had been a shepherd, a basket maker - finally made weaver's combs. It is probable that when a perfect one dedicated himself to a work of this style, he easily found in the weavers friends of the sect an outlet for his production. At the same time, he had the opportunity to spread his doctrines among them and to reaffirm his faith. These weavers, these workers in the annexed or collateral industries represented in Languedoc, in the twelfth century, a closed and secret environment, in which heresy could proliferate freely; a miniature society in which the ideal of Catharism - each one living by his work and each one working and praying - was quite accurately realized.

In these early years of the 13th century, when Catharism was both aristocratic and popular, these artisans played a preponderant role in its development, but then it was the drapers who, as the bourgeois of 1260-1280 became more attracted to political Catharism, reaffirmed it by the influence they had in the cities and by the relations they established with the exiled Cathars.

Social and economic role of artisans.

In the second half of the century, the artisans had organized themselves into guilds in order to defend their rights in conflicts between guilds. By grouping together, they exerted some pressure on the consulates. However, they were weakly represented in them. It was not until 1272, at Narbonne, that the outgoing consuls drew twelve names at random from a list of eighteen, including twelve burgesses and *six tradesmen.* Those chosen, together with the outgoing consuls, elect the new consuls. The rule was that there should be among the consuls two men of trade. In Nice, out of sixty-eight consuls, twelve were peasants or craftsmen: in Marseilles, six were heads of guilds. But in Toulouse, the consulship was always recruited from among the upper bourgeoisie and, on the whole, the influence of the artisans was never in relation to their number, nor to the importance of their social and economic role.

However, some of them were earning a lot of money and appeared to be petty bourgeois. What Raimon de Cornet writes about them at the end of the 13th century should not be taken literally: *They are so clever at making a profit that they are capable of falsifying their works; they sell with skill and raise the price so high that they obtain large profits* (long leftovers). It should be noted that most of them sold the product of their work directly and were basically merchants.

In Carcassonne, Albi, Cordes and in many other cities, the cloth merchants, grouped in a powerful confraternity, were supporters of Catharism. Around 1280, certain acts of heresy were taking place in the

drapers' markets in Carcassonne. Certainly not all the craftsmen were Cathars. The guilds were often in conflict, and it was enough for the weavers to be Cathars for the tanners, for example, to be Catholics. And how exactly to determine the beliefs of a whole category of artisan-merchants who, having as clients the rich bourgeoisie and the nobles - in love, as we have already said, with the luxury of clothing - undoubtedly reflected the ideas of the time?
How can we know to what extent the craftsmen who prepared in Toulouse the beautiful manorial furs: otter, sable, ermine, who made coats, were heretics? They were, as were glovers, tailors and goldsmiths when the bourgeoisie itself was. It can be assumed that when the Inquisition set out, around 1238, to fight against the fondness for
"the beautiful wardrobe" all the artisans who lived on bourgeois and stately luxury joined the enemies of the Roman Church.

Due to the lack of precise documentation, we cannot determine the religious proportion of the crafts. While the weavers, the cloth makers, the dyers (?) seem to have been on the whole favorable to Catharism, for the rest of the trades we are limited to hypotheses and isolated cases not susceptible to generalization. What do we know about the masons, the blacksmiths or the carpenters? There is no doubt that the Perfect Ones visited all the craftsmen and that there were believers in every guild and trade: this is all we can say.

In 1245, shortly after the fall of Montségur, the inhabitants of Limoux, wishing to benefit from the pacification measures taken by Innocent III in favor of the heretics who confessed their faults, but on the other hand, having little confidence in the generosity of the inquisitors, addressed their confession to the pope, having it transmitted by the prior of Prouille and two notables. The procuration was signed by one hundred and fifty-six men, one hundred and six from Limoux itself and fifty from the surrounding villages... Among them were twenty-six artisans, a wood carrier (by water), five weavers, a tanner, five blacksmiths, a leather bag maker, a blank tanner, a hairdresser, two tailors, a butcher, two cloth dressers, a draper.

We will be careful not to interpret the results of this "survey". Let us rather note, once again, how difficult it is to establish the true social rank of these characters. The wood transporter - who floated the wood to Narbonne or down the Aude - despite being a manual worker, could be a small bourgeois if the wood belonged to him (Narbonne bought these timbers at a high price and turned them into ship's masts and oars). The manufacturer of leather bags is a merchant; in the same way that a shoemaker is a merchant if he does not limit himself to repairing shoes but to making and selling them. The same is true of the sieve-maker....

It is possible to advance the hypothesis that, around 1209, the artisans - especially the weavers - seduced by Catharism were rather poor, while around 1260, they were rather rich and little different from the merchants and petty bourgeois. From 1280 onwards, on the contrary, we find a predominance of rural artisans, mixed with peasants. Of all, they are the least known. These artisans, isolated, and suffering more from the influence of the civic community than that of their guild, undoubtedly reflected the spirit of the peasantry. The blacksmith who built agricultural implements was a Cathar when his whole village was one. Like the carpenter or the cheesemaker - a barely specialized peasant who sold his production to the villain as well as to the lord - they were farmers as well as craftsmen.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FARMERS

Life in the countryside

The peasant of the 13th century in Languedoc is either a tenant to whom the master has granted the enjoyment of a piece of land of which he retains ownership, in exchange for a census in kind or in money, plus the payment of feudal duties; or he is a landlord, that is to say a free man, who has no owner to whom to pay homage and who can be considered, therefore, as a landed bourgeois. At the end of the century there were practically no serfs, men *of corps et de caselage* bound to the lord by hereditary title. Except when war ravaged the country, neither the one nor the other was too miserable. The peasants' houses, built in adobe or wood, depending on the region, generally had only one floor, the *Solier*; this is where the perfect ones would take refuge when persecution came. Numerous outbuildings: the stable, the stables, the farm, the corrals, the dovecotes, frame a fairly large courtyard and from where it is possible to pass into the countryside without being seen. The kitchen (*foganha*), almost always on the first floor, is the center of family life; a corridor separates it from the stable. Less frequently it is located on the second floor and communicates with a room divided into rooms by wooden partitions. The weak partitions and the poorly fitted floors made it possible to hear what was said in the rooms.

neighboring rooms. This forced the peasants to speak quietly when they had reason to be suspicious.

There were naturally many poor villagers who owned only a wooden hut. As they could not leave the manor without abandoning all their possessions, they were forced to "sneak away", taking their dismantled houses, beams, rafters and doors with them in a cart. But from 1260 to 1280 there were already many well-to-do tenants who had comfortable furniture, beds, tables, cupboards, chests and benches and who dressed and fed themselves more or less like the small bourgeois of the towns. Legumes are almost always the basis of their diet, but on Sundays they eat fresh or salted meat and river fish. On feast days they slaughter a rooster or a lamb. Many of these farmers have accumulated a small capital. Some are even rich and enjoy a more real well-being than that of a needy gentleman.

Superstition and magic.

In the period from about 1200 to 1250, Catharism does not seem to have attracted many peasants. They were poorly educated and devoted little time to meditation. Contemporaries saw in them nothing but defects. They are considered unscrupulous, liars, thieves and swindlers. They are those who move the boundaries of property, those *who delimit the reserves dishonestly*, says Peire Cardenal. *They falsely declare the census lands* (do they pass off as censuses what are alodios?). Catholics and even Peire Cardenal, a Christian reformist, are annoyed to see them working on Sundays and holidays. St. Dominic had to perform a miracle to confuse the reapers of Montreal who were quietly binding their sheaves on St. John's Day: the ears of corn were covered with blood... These peasants certainly did not love St. John the Baptist, whom the Cathars considered a demon; but the same ardor at work, the same contempt for feast days, is observed in other countries where there were no heretics. On the other hand, they were more superstitious than the Cathars.

Believe in spells, exclaims Peire Cardenal: *crezon faitilhas!*

Indeed, they indulged in the most archaic superstitions. They observed the forbidden days, taking care not to work on such an ill-fated day, or even if the omens had been unfavorable; retracing their steps if a weasel had crossed their path. They did not marry, did not sow, did not cut wood except on the new moon. When someone died, they kept some of their hair and nails "to keep the fortune in the house". Within the framework of their domestic life, they practiced, for selfish purposes, operations of imitative and contagious magic: women made their husbands absorb their menstrual blood so that they would be faithful to them; mothers enchanted their sons-in-law so that they would obey their daughters. Everyone feared sorcerers, evil spells, omens of misfortune or death: the screaming cat, the hooting owl... We know well that these beliefs were shared, then, by many nobles, bourgeois and even clergymen. But the perfect ones rejected them, as did the advanced thinkers of the time and most of the troubadours. On the other hand, when they were believers, the peasants tended to this same credulity, to transform into magical rites the ceremonies, however so pure and so abstract, of Catharism. For this reason, perhaps, the good men always preferred the city to the countryside. When they will be forced to take refuge in the forests, the perfect ones will become doctors, they will open small workshops, the perfect ones will extract and carve marble, they will fulfill arduous tasks, rather than work in the fields. However, given that agricultural work was more likely to be carried out by women, one sees perfects exceptionally employed for mowing or pulling weeds. Around 1220, in Villepinte, a certain Barnard Authier employs many perfects to dry the wheat: they make them sleep on the threshing floor.

The penetration of Catharism in the countryside.

On the whole, the Cathars did not want to own land, because it was easily confiscated and because they were obliged to change their location frequently.

to exercise their apostolate and avoid being searched by the Inquisition. The farms were traceable.

However, they frequented the peasants, indoctrinated them and tried to modify their mentality. They advised them, for example, to treat animals with gentleness. The Languedocians are even now quite cruel to animals. Were they less so in the 13th century? Women were undoubtedly more sensitive than their husbands: Guillemette, seeing a believer, who was doing the mission of perfect, viciously beat his donkey, could not contain her indignation: "He calls himself a *receiver* of souls, and he martyrs animals! It is not impossible that the example given by the Perfect Ones may have somewhat moved them. A heretic who is taken to prison, through the streets of Limoux, weeps when he sees how the slaughterers slaughter the calves near the slaughterhouse of the city. He wept for the fate of all those people who sinned mortally - and lost their lives.
- killing living beings, animals.

As far as can be judged, they were, essentially, very charitable to men; and they surrounded the perfect persecuted with care. They gave them shelter, they hid them, they fed them, they made them escape, guiding them through the forest, not without running a thousand dangers themselves. The poorest are seen giving them vegetables, oil, wine, fish fried with flour, or even clothes, raw materials to exercise their artisan activity. Donations in money are not strange and are surprising for their importance. Perhaps they applied more strictly than the other believers the Cathar principle that
"If it is necessary to do good to everyone, it is necessary to do it above all to the members of the sect". A very natural principle in times of misfortune and to which the peasant mentality is very well suited. A woman who was later imprisoned in Carcassonne with a certain Raimon sells wheat in the market of Tarascon. She recognizes one of her buyers as Arnaud, Raimon's son. She quickly measures his wheat, but takes good care to add a quart to it. Another peasant who happened to be there said to her: "Why don't you measure me too? The good woman replies, "*A totas gens fai lo ben, majoramen a n'aquels de la fe*[16]." "Is it that my faith is not as good as Arnaud's?". "We already understand each other",

she replies. And Arnaud specifies: "No, your faith is not as good as ours".

Although they have been accused of rudeness, some of these peasants show themselves to be of a refined delicacy. One of them, to whose house the perfect ones want to go to supper, tells them that there are too many children in the house, and takes them to the house of one of his friends, where their presence will be kept secret, and where they will not be disturbed by shouting and crying.

These small proprietors, these bourgeois farmers, these tenant farmers were, for the most part, industrious and virtuous. Catharism, which, whatever may be said, never wished to dissolve the family, found in their homes a climate of purity which did not reign to the same degree among the nobles and the bourgeois. Not having the means to keep concubines, they were generally faithful to their wives, who, often finer and more intelligent than themselves, took care of the house and the agricultural work, with the untiring devotion of true Christians.

In the second half of the 13th century, the peasants became more affluent, more educated. This evolution was noticed by their contemporaries. *The villains*, writes Peire Cardinal, *who were not used to having sense, except to work the land, today have become skilled, wise and shrewd; before committing themselves by oath, they demand a contract...* Out of a legitimate feeling of self-defense, they become distrustful and shysters and, henceforth, a certain critical spirit will guide them in the defense of their interests.

Tithes and peasant anticlericalism.

When the peasant had paid the receipts owed for the censuses, the feudal duties, fulfilled the days of service, paid the right of alber gue[17], the rights on the oven, the winepress, the seigniorial mill, he was certainly not ruined: he had a certain amount left over. But the tithes that he had become accustomed to not paying - or to paying the lord, which, curiously enough, made him less indignant - constituted for him an overburden that he considered intolerable. The anti-clericalism was such that the tithes

were certainly more unpopular than the carvings. It is true that the bishops had taken advantage of the victory of the Church to increase them or to create new ones. It is what did, for example, the bishop Fournier of Pamiers, installing the *carnalages* (tithes on meat animals). These tithes provoked the exasperation of the peasants. Those of Sabarthés were excommunicated, at the beginning of the 14th century, for having refused to pay them. Between the Assumption and the Nativity of the Virgin, at the time when the tithes were collected from the Church, the peasants provoked each other, some taking the matter on the good side and joking, as the southerners often do, others abandoning themselves to comments that would cause them to be summoned by the bishop the next day. An unorthodox village priest one day said to one of his parishioners:
"After all, my friend, excommunication does not skin us alive!" and he had added: "It is not found in Scripture that God has ever excommunicated anyone. It is the clerics who have invented these stories to better dominate the people." The peasant kept this advice well, and some time later, leaving his house, he saw the priest of Quié, Raimon Frézat, caught up with him, took a few steps with him on the road to Tarascon and asked him: "Can you tell me, Father, where in the Scriptures has it been found that God himself has excommunicated anyone or has ordered their excommunication? The priest, embarrassed, answered nothing.

Another farmer, also excommunicated on account of *camalages*
-He finds the door of the church closed one Sunday. He is told that it is closed because the excommunicated are not allowed to enter. He went melancholically to the cemetery adjoining the church, sat on the stone where the laurel branches were blessed on Palm Sunday, and met other excommunicants, as distraught as he was: "We build the churches," he told them, "we buy everything necessary to decorate them! The churches are ours, and they expel us from them!

It was not always the Cathars who spoke this way, but also reformist Christians or honest people who simply regretted the past... and freedom. "Let's go to church," says a peasant. Raimon de

Laburat replied: "What for? They won't let us in... Ah! I wish that the church were demolished, that the masses were celebrated in the open air, on a stone and that all of us Christians could attend the service of God as he instituted it... They would not prevent us from hearing it... If only the clergy would fight so fiercely against the Saracens and to avenge the death of Christ, with the same determination that they demand from us the tithes and the first fruits of the *carnalages*... they would leave us in peace and would not demand anything from us".

The people took sides with the peasants. A shoemaker, Pierre Guilhem, raises the tone of the debate or "politicizes" it: he is a patriot. "Never, he says, neither our grandfathers, nor our fathers, in the Sabarthés, paid tithes. If the good Count Raimon were still alive, he would not tolerate this abuse; he would protect us from the clerics." And since it is objected to him that the clerics are always useful for something, giving the sacraments, for example, he replies: "If there were neither baptism, nor penance, nor confession of sins, there would be many more people saved. Ten thousand souls are lost in Sabarthes because of the clerics".

Evolution of the peasants' mentality.

Sometimes one finds, in these poor peasants, such firmness of thought that one wonders if they were not obeying a Cathar slogan, if they were not repeating the formulae of the *libels*. Peire Cardinal was widely read in the county of Foix. He was the first to compare the inquisitors to big wolves (*lobasses*) and spread a thousand satires that circulated among the people against them. He had written in one of his *sirventes*. "If you excommunicate without reason," he addressed the bishop, "I think you punish yourself. It is not fitting that the people should be angry with you, except in so far as reason permits (*mas tan com razón consen*)." And elsewhere, *"You who set up forced contributions (toltas)* and carvings, and who ruin and torment your people, do you not think that you are in sin?" Everything leads us to believe that educated people were in charge of explaining Peire Cardenal to the ignorant.

One is surprised by the clarity with which the peasants became aware, around 1300, of the unjust nature of the burdens that weighed on them. Catharism is the expression of their revolution. Undoubtedly the Catharism of the huts is, moreover, denaturalized. When it is not inclined to the magical search for salvation, it is transformed into a desperate Satanism. The *Sabbaths* have their faithful. But it also corresponds to an evident progress of the critical spirit; to the first form, accessible to the people, of free examination.

The last Catharism will be that of the peasants. The same resistance that in principle they had opposed to the perfects, by traditionalism, they now oppose to the Roman Church. These mystical shepherds, who, come winter, abandon the pastures of the Razès to gain the high Catalan plateaus, are not unworthy of the last perfect men and women who here or there are still fleeing from the Inquisition. They always expect from them the salvation of their souls, and from the Spirit, the definitive liberation.

The distribution of Catharism in the Languedocian society.

In the absence of sufficiently exact and numerous data, it is not possible to establish precise statistics on the distribution of believers by social classes, a distribution that must have varied greatly according to the countries or the epochs. Charles Molinier has written, not without reason, that "from 1200 to 1250, all classes contributed to the recruitment of the sect", which is true, and renders obsolete, by the way, the materialistic interpretations of a simplifying type, so fashionable today. The Cathars are bourgeois, nobles, artisans and peasants. The distribution by classes only corresponds, according to the "polls" that constitute the historical surveys, to the same laws of chance. In the second period, which goes from 1250 to 1300, it always includes nobles, bourgeois, artisans and peasants. In the third (1300-1350) the impoverishment of Catharism in men does not allow to risk even an approximate distribution. The phenomena of survival obey particular sociological laws, which have to take into account the isolation of the communities, the backward character of their economy, the psychology, the

often very conservative and retrograde, of its members. In this last period there are still nobles, bourgeois, artisans and peasants, but they are isolated individuals, cases in which sociological generalizations do not make a dent. It seems, however, that in the years 1209-1250 there was a predominance of nobles; in the years 1250-1300, a predominance of rich bourgeois, bankers, industrialists, men of law, small landowners, assimilable to the bourgeois; in the last period (1300-1350), a majority of workers in the cities and workers in the countryside. But, let us repeat, in none of these epochs is there ever a lack of representatives of the other classes.

Moreover, it is not useless to point out, and this complicates matters even more, that Catharism was "politicized" in very different ways according to the periods under consideration: it served the interests of the nobility, large and small, from 1209 to 1250, without alienating, however, the sympathies of the bourgeoisie, nor those of the "people". From 1250 to 1300, his ideals coincided in part with those of the bourgeoisie, and then the nobility tended to separate from him. From 1300 to 1350, years in which it is in full decline, it has no more political or social significance, except insofar as, by developing the progress of naive materialism the critical spirit of the poorer classes, and by giving sorcery a magical form to the brute or imaginary liberation of the instincts, it continues to translate into religious terms the desire of the humble to improve somewhat their conditions of life and to break the society that oppresses them, raising the order of Good against the order of Evil.

All these points of view, which are necessary for the understanding of the spirit of the

Catharism, are obviously subject to revision. It would still be necessary to distinguish men from women within the classes. In the first period, noblewomen are certainly more affected by Catharism than their husbands, and certainly in a more authentically religious way. In the second, bourgeois women play a much darker role. The men conspire, hatch political plots, but they do not judge it very prudent to let their wives in on the secret. "It's none of their business," they say. Finally, in the last phase of Catharism, the peasant women seem to be more addicted to the

good men, more charitable and perhaps more directly engaged in clandestine religion than the peasants.

In short, we almost agree with J. Duvernoy who, after long and meticulous research, comes to the conclusion that Catharism is more aristocratic and bourgeois than "popular" (however, there are only eighteen percent of perfects among the nobles), and more urban than rural. The number of believers had reached in the region of Toulouse and in the Lauragais, from thirty to forty percent of the population. The number of believers between 1209 and 1244 in certain rural localities would have been "abnormally low".

Part Two

CATHARISM PERSECUTED

CHAPTER ONE

THE INQUISITION

The beginning of the crusade against the "Albigensians".

In the course of the military operations led by Simon de Montfort, many Cathars were slaughtered, without even the consideration of judging them. However, it was the pope's legates who chose them, to the extent that the task of
"choose their own": they handed over to the temporal power, that is to say to Simon de Montfort and his lieutenants, the heretics who refused to abjure. In 1210, after the capture of Minerva, the legate Arnaud Amaury declared to Simon de Montfort: "Although I desire the death of the enemies of Christ, I dare not, being a monk and a priest, condemn them to death". He hoped that the knights would see to it: but Simon never wanted to act without his opinion. The crusaders were indignant at seeing good men left to choose between abjuration or the stake. "Their conversion will not be sincere," they said, "the moment they are set free, they will return to heresy!". "Reassure yourselves," replied the legate, "very few will be those who convert!". Indeed, those perfect ones, numbering one hundred and forty, did not even deign to listen to the preaching dedicated to them, heading of their own free will towards the stake: *our men did not even have to push them*, writes Pierre des Vaux-de-

Cernay, *threw themselves voluntarily into the flames*. The perfect women, grouped in the convent, also complied, without a single complaint, with the Roman exhortation, refusing to abjure and showing the same courage as the men, except for three of them who, it seems, obtained pardon.

Simon de Montfort, like most men of his time, often changed his mood. He went to Minerva, to present himself in person to ask his conversion to the perfect ones; in Termes he behaved with a troubadour-like gallantry: he did not take from the ladies, who had fled in the dark night, and whom his soldiers seized in the middle of the field, neither a *pougeoise* (currency of the region of Le Puy), nor money (*Song of the Crusade*). Although he usually gave free rein to his violent and cruel temperament. In the Cassés, in 1211, he burned alive the sixty perfects he found in the castle who did not want to abjure. This torture greatly shocked the mentalities although it was neither more nor less detestable than other crimes of fanaticism: in the sixteenth century, Montaigne still cites it with real indignation. In Lavaur, Lady Guiraude, so well educated, as the *Song of the Crusade* says, that *no one ever left her house without her taking care to have fed him to satiety*, was thrown into a well where she was crushed under the stones. *It was a disgrace*," cried the poet, "*a disgrace and a crime! Other ladies were saved*," says Pierre Belperron, "*by a kind and courteous Frenchman*. Meritorious fact, because the nudity of the women at the stake excited to a high degree the lasciviousness and sadistic instincts of the soldiers: some of those heretics were young and beautiful: *E mota hela eretja ins lo foc jitada*[18]..., as the poet says melancholically.

All the perfects of Lavaur - four hundred, according to the *Song of the Crusade* - were burned. They rushed into the flames exhorting each other. We can ask - along with Pierre Belperron from whom we take these reflections - *how the Crusaders recognized the heretics. A capitulation could foresee that the perfect ones would be surrendered. But Lavaur was taken by assault. It can be assumed that the entire population was arrested and that, under threat of reprisals, they were induced to discover the heretics, or that the bishops present proceeded with the local clergy to a summary scrutiny*. The informers and traitors did not

were undoubtedly missing. But the simplest thing to do, since all believers were suspected and almost the entire population was believers, was to consider as Cathars all those who wanted to be Cathars, that is to say, all those who did not abjure. In such circumstances, on the other hand, a miscarriage of justice should not worry too much the conscience of crusaders and legates. These summary executions went hand in hand with the horror of war, but it is only fair to attribute responsibility to the legates and bishops rather than to the knights and soldiers. It was the Inquisition of the legates who pointed out to the fury of the crusaders the unfortunate heretics, who had perhaps been saved in the assaults and in the combats.

The Santo Domingo action.

Saint Dominic, while preaching against the Cathars in the region of Fanjeaux, also acted as a delegate or representative of the legates. In this capacity, between 1205 and 1215, he reconciled several heretics from Mas-Saintes-Puelles, Fanjeaux, Villeneuve-la-Comptal, Bram, Saissac, who received canonical penances and absolutions from him. From that time onwards, penitents, before receiving letters of reconciliation or certificates of good Catholicity, were obliged to make long pilgrimages, to endure flagellation in front of the church, during mass, and to exhibit for several years two crosses sewn on their vestments, one on their chest and the other on their back. A converted Cathar had to abstain during his whole life from eating meat, eggs or milk products, with the exception of Christmas, Easter or Pentecost, when he was recommended to eat such foods *as proof that he had renounced his past errors and so that penance would not be confused with the abstinence he had maintained during the time when he was still in heresy*. Was it not necessary to tenaciously maintain a difference between Roman asceticism and Cathar asceticism? In the same way, they ordered him to keep an absolute chastity: let us admit that a sincere Cathar could have easily complied with such obligations, if they had not been accompanied by

of many others that are more inhuman and less compatible with true spirituality....

It is not a question of blaming Saint Dominic for all the excesses that the Inquisition may have committed in the 13th and 14th centuries: he died in 1221, and it was not until 1232 that the Dominicans were entrusted with its organization. It is an unquestionable fact that during the whole period in which Languedoc remained practically subject to the Cathar lords or protectors of heresy, the task of the Dominicans was only preaching and involved nothing but risks and dangers. However, later, when the crusade triumphed and Simon de Montfort became the master of Fanjeaux, it could not be denied that, by rejecting a heretic, St. Dominic brought him to the attention of the temporal power, thus compromising his life and his goods.

The Episcopal Inquisition.

From the treaty of Meaux[19] of April 12, 1229, by which the Count of Toulouse undertook to seize declared heretics on his own, to have them searched for their bailiwicks and even to give a reward (two silver marks for two years, then, Inquisitorial searches represented a serious threat to the daily life of the inhabitants of Languedoc, especially in the counties of Toulouse and Foix and in the former viscounts of Trencavel (subject to royal power). The Inquisition was at first entrusted to the bishops. Two councils, that of Narbonne in 1227 and that of Toulouse in 1229, had ordered archbishops, bishops and clerics to set up inquisitorial commissions, composed of a priest and several laymen. These commissions had broad powers and naturally the right of searches: they could visit houses, farms and cellars at any time of the day or night, and ask the lords to explore the forests and wild places where the outlaws were hiding. Thus it was that Raymond VII had to accompany the bishop of Toulouse, Raymond de Fauga, on a night hunt for heretics in the forest of Antioche, near Castelnaudary. There were seventeen of t h e m , men and women.

among whom was Pacan, former lord of Labécéde, who had become a *faidit*. The count, who wanted to show that he respected the agreements made at the treaty of Meaux, had them burned alive in Toulouse. As a general rule, heretics arrested by the commission were handed over to the bishop, who referred them to the secular branch - the lord of the place - who executed the sentence.

The episcopal Inquisition seems to have been relatively moderate, or negligent, at the time of the repression. It did not yet have at its disposal the perfected police apparatus that the Dominicans later put in place. Often the bishops, of Occitan origin, felt more inclined to protect their compatriots than to persecute them. The first bishop of Pamiers, Bernard Saisset, who claimed to be related to the Count of Toulouse, secretly favored the heretics. Bertrand de Taix, an old enemy of the Church and of the French domination, one day told Guillaume-Bernard de Luzeonac about one of the interviews he had with this bishop: "He asked me whom I hated more, the French or the clerics. I answered: "The clergymen, because they are the ones who called the French to our country. Without them they would never have arrived here." The bishop, for his part, detested the French more than the clergy, and conspired against the royal power. In the end he was deposed and imprisoned.

Bishops and Dominicans.

In 1232, Gregory IX entrusted to the "Friars Preachers" - or Dominicans - the entire office of the Inquisition. The Dominicans had the reputation of being the only ones capable of giving maximum effectiveness to the inquisitorial action. However, because of their drastic nature, in 1237 the pope attached to them some Franciscan friars so *that* - as the *History of Languedoc* says - *the rigor of some would be tempered by the gentleness of others.* The bishops, so proud of their authority, felt offended in their rights. On the other hand, they also had reason to fear those implacable inquisitors who reproached them for being too accessible, because of their ties with the Occitan aristocracy, to family interests or to the interests of the bishops' families.

of caste. However, rules were established that considered their susceptibility: the inquisitors did not in principle exercise their duty without the consent of the bishops. In fact, as J. Duvernoy says, *the inquisitors only met with the bishops or their representatives at the moment of pronouncing the sentence or the general sermon*. This was not the case when the bishop - Jacques Fournier, for example, in Pamiers - was active and incorruptible throughout. This bishop played in the repression of heresy in his diocese a much more important role than his deputy, the Dominican Gaillard de Pomies, who represented the Inquisition of Carcassonne. On occasion, the bishop was a Dominican, like Raymond de Fauga, former prior provincial of the Dominicans of Toulouse.

Soon freed from any episcopal jurisdiction, the inquisitors enjoyed absolute independence: while in office they could not be excommunicated or suspended without a special mandate from the pope. In case of conflict with the bishop, it was they who always decided in the last instance. On the other hand, the right to give absolution to heretics who abjured belonged entirely to them.

They quickly set in motion a police machine unlike anything they had ever known before. They had the right of inspection in everything, in the bourgeois palaces as in the castles, and even in the churches where some heretics would have been able to enjoy some ancient right of asylum. They were reimbursed for their expenses by the seigniorial or royal treasury, by the goods seized from the heretics and by the proceeds of fines. In 1323, in Carcassonne, on the occasion of a heresy lawsuit that led the guilty to the torture of the stake, the bishops of Castres and Mirepoix, the abbots of Villelongue, Montolieu, Saint-Polycarpe, summoned by the inquisitor, and the inquisitor in person, were paid fifty pounds and five salaries; and the judges and the ex officio counselor at the sermon, with nine pounds and ten sueldos ("for food and drink"), all sums given by the royal treasurer. The inquisitors repaid the workers, the sergeants they employed in their service: the sergeants, delegates between the town and the city, "to go, attend and return", received a salary of twelve dineros each: there were sixteen of them. The gravediggers in charge of exhuming three corpses condemned posthumously, and buried in the cloister of

The Franciscans received fifteen sueldos and five dineros, and the stonecutters who opened a grave in hard work received two sueldos and three dineros.

We will also add that the bishops and parish priests were obliged to assist them in any circumstance and even, at times, to help them financially. The magistrates, the bailiffs, the bailiffs, the prevostes and, in general, all the civil officials, had to give them help if they required it. Finally, the inquisitors often had a personal guard and numerous special agents charged with protecting them and discovering heretics.

The inquisitor and his power.

The inquisitor, whether he resided in the city or was there on a visit, was lodged in a room of the episcopal palace, like Bishop Fournier, in Pamiers, or in the house of the preaching brothers, or in the special dwelling granted by the king or by a lord: for example, in Carcassonne, in the palace of Mirepoix, which communicated with one of the towers of the wall. In principle, the inquisitor personally conducted the investigation and interrogations, and pronounced the sentence alone; but he was assisted by one or more Dominicans who were his advisors and witnesses to the regularity of the judicial proceedings. In Pamiers, the Dominican Gaillard de Pomies was both representative of the Inquisition of Carcassonne and "lieutenant" of the bishop.

The inquisitors often moved with their tribunal. Thus we see Brother Pierre Sellan and Brother Guillaume Arnaud, from Toulouse, moving to Cahors, to Moissac; Brother Arnaud Catalan and Brother Guillaume Pelhisson to Albi, etc.

The arrival of the Inquisition in a town was an event that
It certainly interrupted the monotony of daily life, reminding all its inhabitants of how hard times were and how precarious their security was proving to be. Everyone trembled - Catholics and heretics, the good people and the cowards - for their liberty, their property and their lives were at stake, a

through a well-documented denunciation. As soon as he settled in the city, the inquisitor would ask the priests to gather the Catholics together -
They were all - to give them a sermon. He then granted the heretics a "week of grace", or more, to unveil themselves. Many of them, terrified by the threat of the stake, confessed spontaneously. They were given relatively light punishments, or were absolved on the spot, if the inquisitor had previously promised to absolve them without further ado. But they had to commit themselves to denounce other Cathars, believers and perfect. What the inquisitors wanted most of all was to find the first link in the chain. Two testimonies of this type were sufficient, in principle, for the indictment of a suspect. In reality, the denunciation of only one would call into question his freedom and existence. The interrogation of the witnesses was carried out in their presence alone and could involve undesirable persons. The names of the informers were kept secret (in order to avoid reprisals from their victims).

A police system.

In addition, the Inquisition had a real secret police under its command, the *exploratores*, specialists in spying, surprising conversations, searching for fugitives in the forests and caves, with the help of dogs trained for this type of hunting. In a *Nouvelle* - the work of a Catholic propagandist and, for this reason, somewhat suspicious - a heretic, Sicard de Figueiras, converted by the Dominican Izam, appears to be eager to enter the service of the Inquisition, whether out of neophyte fervor or self-interest: *I will have them all hanged*," he said (referring to his former co-religionists), "*by my squires, who will know the roads and the shortcuts, the cliffs and the caves, the passages and the paths as well as the hiding places where they hide their money*. The occasional informers, who received an important reward, were numerous: they soon became professionals. The most fearsome species was that of the plundered Cathars, or that of the heirs stripped of

their inheritance for heresy, who entered the service of the Inquisition with the hope and also the assurance that they would recover their property and finally be definitively absolved.

The capture of the last perfect one, Bélibaste, by the traitor Arnaud Sicre serves as a valid example of one of these large-scale operations organized by the Inquisition of Pamiers at the beginning of the 14th century. Arnaud Sicre belonged to a Cathar family that had been persecuted and plundered. Eager to recover his fortune, he had assured Bishop Jacques Fournier that he would find Bélibaste, who was taking refuge in San Mateo (diocese of Tortosa), gain his trust and take him, under any pretext, to the diocese of Pamiers or to one of the towns of Catalonia belonging to the Count of Foix, Viscount of Castelbon and Lord of Tirvia (in the province of Lérida), and therefore subject to the inquisitorial jurisdiction. The bishop gave Arnaud Sicre all the money he wanted, giving him the permission to behave everywhere as a heretic, without, however, communing with his errors either in body or in spirit.

The story of Bélibaste's arrest.

Arnaud Sicre's story is a true detective novel in which there is no lack of picaresque episodes and dramatic vicissitudes. The traitor organized the affair with diabolical skill, making prodigies of hypocrisy and baseness. Pierre Mauri and Bélibaste, like his companions, did not entirely trust him because he pretended to know nothing about Catharism; one evening they decided to give him the truth serum: they incited him to drink. But he did not fall into the trap.

I had observed," I said, "*that Pierre Mauri was secretly mixing two kinds of wine to make me drunk. I pretended to be drunk, and, at the end of dinner, I collapsed at the table. Pierre Mauri led me to my bed; then I made as if I wanted to urinate on the pillow. He pulled me out of bed and dragged me out into the street. There we were alone and he whispered to me.*
"Arnaud, do you want us to drive the heretic to Sabarthés?

We would earn fifty or a hundred pounds tornesas, with which we could live honorably; that wicked man says nothing but barbarities". I replied: "Oh, Pierre, you want to betray the monsignor! I would never have believed you capable of such a thing: so you want to sell him? I will not let you!". Then I went grumbling back to my bed, pretending to be drunk out of my mind. Then Pierre Mauri took off my shoes, undressed me, and covered me with the blanket; I was still pretending to sleep. Believing me asleep, Pierre Mauri and Bélibaste spoke freely: Pierre Mauri told what he had said to him, in what way he had answered him, even while drunk; and he added: "We can have confidence in him, he will not betray us".

The next morning, Pierre Mauri asked me: "How did you spend the night? "Well," I answered, "we drank good wine". "What were we talking about?" I answered that I did not remember. "And who put you to bed, undressed you, and took off your shoes?" "I, pardiez," I answered. And the heretic said, "Oh, my good friend, you were in no condition to do so."

In the face of such perfidy - which he tells the bishop so naturally - we regret that the God of the Cathars did not have enough power to fulminate Sicre at once. Poor Bélibaste, who did not usually inspire either admiration or sympathy, finally came out of the hardships that awaited him. He was certainly not the son of God, as he liked to call himself, but Arnaud Sicre was undoubtedly Judas....

We were walking along when two magpies flew at each other in a duel, landed in a tree and then crossed the road. Bélibaste had sat down, tired and disheartened because of this bad omen. I told him to get up and walk. He replied that he was tired.

"Arnaud, Arnaud, God grant that you may lead me to a good place!". I said to him: "I lead you to a good place", and I added: "If I wanted to denounce you, I could do it here as anywhere else". He answered me: "If my Father claims me, if he wants me, may his will be done". He got up and we arrived in Agramunt. Then, from there, we went to Tragó, from Tragó to Castelbon and from Castelbon to Tirvia. On the way, Bélibaste spoke to me incessantly of his heretical chimeras. Arrived at Tirvia I made him stop.

The bishop and the inquisitors of Carcassonne gave absolution to Arnaud Sicre, restoring him to all his rights. He received letters of religiosity from the same bishops and inquisitors, sealed by them. *For these reasons, we, bishop and inquisitor aforesaid, putting as witnesses those present, entirely absolve and dispense the said Arnaud of all that he has been able with the said heretic (Bélibaste) or other fugitives for heresy, to do, say or perform for the said cause, without believing it and without adhesion, and we say that the said Arnaud, by the capture of the said heretic obtained by his search, has merited, from us and from our successors, the grace and special favors, in testimony and in support of which we have granted him the present letters on which our seals appear. At Carcassonne, the 14th day of January, in the year of our Lord 1321.*

Interrogation of suspects.

The inquisitor orders to appear before him, with benevolence, because he must not show hatred, the one or the one suspected of heresy. Sometimes, he interrogates him without first making him take an oath. He wants in this way to make him tell the truth, avoiding him to swear falsely. The suspect, who does not know exactly what is expected of him, can reveal unexpected things. This game of chance is part of the inquisitor's plans. And so it was that Jacques Fournier, investigating the witch Gaillarde Cuq, was led to examine the case of Béatrice de la Gleize, daughter of Philippe de Planissoles, who revealed that the priest of Montaillou and his brother Bernard, former dance of the Count of Foix, had long been heretics. The inquisitor sent the suspect home, let him reflect for a few days, and summoned him again to testify, this time under oath. If the summoned person did not appear, a warrant for his arrest was immediately sent to all the officers of justice. Béatrice de Planissoles, noble lady of the county of Foix, is interrogated, without taking an oath, on July 26, 1320, by Bishop Fournier and summoned on July 29 to testify under oath: in the meantime, she was on probation. But she did not appear on the day of the summons. She was

arrested on August 1, at Mas-Saintes-Puelles, by the sergeants of the Inquisition. In a matter of five days, the unfortunate woman had passed from the position of suspect to that of heretic, thus aggravating her case.

The more or less suspicious persons who were called to testify underwent the same procedure. For the mere fact of having been in contact with heretics, one was considered, *a priori*, as a *heresy perpetrator*. If he did not attend, without a valid excuse, he was considered presumed guilty.

It may be surprising that the Inquisition, in any case so terrible, did not use preventive detention more often and had left the culprit, between two appointments, the material time to prepare his escape. Escape was all the easier because the summons was often set for a date quite far away. Exceptionally, it happened that persons suspected of heresy had a period of one month to answer the summons to appear. But if they did not appear, they were *ipso facto* condemned as heretics, *even if there was no proof against them*. These were usually rich or bourgeois nobles whose property would have been confiscated if they had not appeared. In general, the time limits were much shorter and the inquisitor took precautions: He either forbade the suspect, during the eight days of reflection he granted him, to leave the city limits, or he kept him in his palace, where he left him free to come and go, as in a prison. If he had sufficient reason to believe that the latter was plotting an escape, he did not hesitate to imprison him.

The suspect was subjected to lengthy interrogation, sometimes several, under oath. Bishop Fournier always interrogated personally. Other inquisitors had their deputies take down the first statements, wait until the end of the interrogation and pass judgment. Geoffroy d'Ablis, who had the reputation of being intractable, and he certainly was, was nevertheless easy to deceive or prone to be tender when he was in a good mood. He did not know the language of Oc too well, and he left to his lieutenants the task of dealing with the annoying details of the investigation by limiting himself to acquitting or condemning according to a strict and very rigid formalism which redeemed the guilty ones - or the clever ones - provided with false favorable testimonies, and burdened the poor people slandered by false imputed testimonies. At the beginning of the 14th century, the Cathars in the area around

Bélibaste, who had everything to fear from the fervor and perspicacity of Jacques Fournier, happily recalled his passage through the Inquisition of Carcassonne and the way in which one of his friends had deceived Geoffroy d'Ablis. At the end of a dinner that had brought together the perfect Bélibaste, Arnaud Sicre (the traitor who betrayed him), Pierre Mauri, a hardened Cathar, and his wife Raymonde, Bélibaste made Condors, Raymonde's sister, tell, to brighten up the meeting, how his interrogation had taken place. "*When I found myself in the presence of Geoffroy d'Ablis*," she said, "I *immediately confessed to him some details concerning heresy, with my most candid expression, playing the fool. The inquisitor listened to my confession benevolently, patting me on the shoulder to get me to contribute. I then grabbed his knees begging him to have mercy on me. He asked me to calm down, not to be afraid, that no harm would come to me. He kept his word and soon after he released me. I had not revealed to him half of the events in which I had participated, nor of what I knew about the other believers. If only I had told him everything,*
How many people would have known suffering!". This story, -adds the *Register of the Inquisition-, made everyone laugh.* All of them would later be arrested by Bishop Fournier.

Incarceration at the "Wall".

A shrewd and knowledgeable inquisitor would soon guess if the accused had lied, if he had not told everything he knew, or if he had knowingly distorted the reality of the facts. In this case he would have him imprisoned in the *Wall* (Inquisition prison) to frighten him and later interrogate him again. In the meantime, he had heard, separately, the witnesses and the informers, without ever confronting them with the accused, for, as the *Encyclopaedia* says*: The accused must not be confronted with the informer, and there will be no informer who is not heard. The accused is obliged to be his own informer and confess to crimes attributed to him, of which he is often ignorant.*

People who were "walled in" between two interrogations were not treated, in principle, as those whom a definitive trial condemned to life imprisonment. But since they were imprisoned precisely to force them to confess the whole truth, we are inclined to believe that they were tortured to that end. And we do not exclude the fact that some of the interrogations at the *Wall*, which did not involve the presence of the inquisitor, were preceded by torture. Of course, neither the bishop nor the inquisitor ever forgot to ask the prisoners if they had been victims of ill-treatment, if their confessions had been provoked by the fear of torture. But this proves nothing: if the inquisitors tortured their victims, they did not say so, and it is known that in other European countries where torture was certainly used, the accused had to ratify again his statements "freely", that is to say under the threat of being tortured again, if he gave the impression of retracting. It seems, however, that torture was rarely used in Occitania: it is never mentioned in the surviving *records of the Inquisition.*

Some prison guards could - unbeknownst to the prison warden Inquisitor - to give free rein to the sadistic instincts that often develop in those who have the power to terrorize others. But the inquisitors were careful to ensure that such abuses did not occur, especially when it was a question of simple suspects, interned on a temporary and probationary basis. In the *Allemans* - the Wall of the Inquisition in Pamiers - as well as in the *Wall* of Carcassonne, men and women lived separately. Men among themselves and women among themselves could converse relatively freely. Suspects, simply under surveillance, occasionally enjoyed freedom of movement inside the *Wall*, and men and women mingled. Together they hatched escape plans, real conspiracies. The guards were in charge of delivering the food and clothes that the prisoners' relatives and friends brought them.

Dialogue of the deaf.

The interrogations were conducted according to a model established in advance and almost invariable, quite objective, in short, but too rigid, referring only to the "facts" and ignoring the intentions. The accused is asked if he has seen heretics, if he has spoken to them, if he has received them in his house, if he has gone to their house, if he has attended their preaching, if he has "adored" them, if he has eaten bread blessed by them, if he has made a *covenant* with their Church, if he has taken part in a *consolamentum*. Being obliged to reveal the name of all the persons he had ever met or simply seen in a Cathar ceremony, the declaration of a single believer implies the arrest of many others, and often even of the perfect ones.

The inquisitors have little interest in delving into the meaning of the doctrines to which they refer. They are possessed by their own dogmatic infallibility and brimming with contempt for all heterodox chimeras. In general they do not possess any philosophical curiosity... Some, however, ask about something out of program.
-imprevisible in the form- that show a certain metaphysical yearning, or the desire to better understand the heresy. Thus, Jacques Fournier asks Béatrice de la Gleize one day if she has not heard that the Devil was called Ylé (*hylé*, matter, in Greek). The lady replied that she had not: she did not understand Greek, and neither did the good men she met. The fact was not unimportant since, depending on whether Satan is interpreted as a material being or a spiritual being, Cathar ditheism changes radically in meaning. On another occasion, the bishop discovered in Pierre Mauri an indisputable contradiction: this uneducated pastor had just declared that all diabolical work was "transitory", that the demons and the spirits of evil would cease to exist at the end of time and would merge into nothingness... But then he declared that the demons would remain locked up in hell, their kingdom, eternally. How is this possible? Pierre Mauri naively answers that he had not asked himself this question before. And Jacques Fournier does not insist. Perhaps that night, in his bed, he would think of the way in which the Cathars resolve the contradiction, arriving at the conclusion that the wrong principle can be eternal as a factor of corruption, and nevertheless

transient in its undefined manifestations, which do not cease to be temporary, different, multiform and always reborn, like the chaotic matter on which they rest. Letting the mind wander, we can imagine that an inquisitor might have hesitated in the face of the profound arguments of a good man. What an exciting subject for a historical novel! But the heretics of the late thirteenth century were lousy philosophers, and a great distance separated their concepts from those of the Catholics. Jacques Fournier is more at ease with the Waldensians and the Jews, with whom he never disdains discussion.

The heretics lacked lawyers, even defenders. The Councils of Valence (1248) and Albi (1254) forbade their presence in support of the accused, considering them by nature capable of "delaying the progress of the lawsuit". Any "defender" was considered as a *heresy fautor*. When, exceptionally, a lawyer appeared, his role was limited to advising the suspect to testify. The essential thing was that the Cathar should declare and abjure. The inquisitors did not differentiate between those who had *nothing* to declare and those who did not *want to* declare. The confession and the obligatory abjuration ended the debate. However, nothing prevented a suspected heretic from secretly consulting, either before being summoned or between the summons and the appearance, a lawyer he trusted. The doctor of law Guillaume Garric, of Carcassonne, honorable if ever there was one, considered it his duty to give good advice to believers who asked for it clandestinely. He had the reputation of being a friend of Catharism and in fact he was, which is why he was severely punished.

After having confronted statements and testimonies and having taken, if necessary, the

The Inquisitor finally pronounced the sentence. He pronounced it alone and without the possibility of any kind of appeal. A notary carefully noted down the sentence, as well as the declarations, the testimonies, the abjuration. The reading of the sentence was the occasion of a religious solemnity: it took place on a Sunday, in the presence of the magistrates and all the clergy; the bishop of the place was summoned for this occasion in case the inquisitor was not, as well as the bishops and priests of the neighborhood, whose travel expenses were deducted from the seized goods of the heretics. This solemnity was

called a *public sermon or auto de fe*. It always attracted large crowds of townspeople.

The reign of terror.

It is difficult to assess impartially the magnitude of the abuses, the excesses, the unquestionable injustices committed by the Inquisition; but what is certain is that it was hated by the population in all the countries where it was established. In some regions, however, and at certain times, it had shown itself relatively moderate. In the county of Foix, for example, before the arrival of Jacques Fournier, few bonfires were lit. Under Jacques Fournier, reputed to be sensible and equitable (within the framework, of course, of the institution which we have a duty to reprove as such), we see that death sentences were much less frequent than imprisonment or lighter penalties. But elsewhere, the repression of heresy often took such a cruel and inhuman form that it revolted the people against the Church, when they wanted nothing more than to live in peace with it. In confronting indifferently against all, it seemed to want to rage against the vanquished. It is not surprising that the southerners swore to them a tenacious hatred for two centuries, the same, moreover, as that which they felt for the French who had allowed the establishment of their courts there. Perhaps they would have resigned themselves, in the long run, to seeing the perfect ones go to the stake. Those holy men were not very numerous, least of all at the end of the thirteenth century, and it was clear that they had once and for all made the sacrifice of their lives. But the mistake of the Inquisition was to establish a general terror from which no one - Catholic or Cathar - was sure to escape; it imposed terrible threats on all classes of society, so that the good people felt much more helpless than the cowards and traitors; it left no one in peace. Undoubtedly, the daily life of an inhabitant of Languedoc around 1230 did not take place in the midst of continuous alarms, but it can be argued that at that time no one, neither in Toulouse, nor in Pamiers, nor in the remotest

Languedocian people, he could go a whole week without, in one way or another, the Inquisition not being present in his mind.

To reestablish Catholic order, preventive measures had to be taken in the first place, requiring the entire population to show outward respect for the Church, forcing the rebels to make themselves known. The Inquisition was not absent. Mass began to be obligatory, both for the lords and for the people. The priests took note of those who did not go, punishing them with a fine of twelve dineros (six of which went to the Church and six to the lord of the place). Those who did not receive communion three times a year were suspect. Sometimes children were asked (at fifteen years of age for boys, at twelve for girls), to abjure once and for all the heresies and to commit themselves under oath to be faithful to the Church, so that every heretic was transformed into a kind of relapse. This oath, which Schmidt describes as absurd, was not really so, since according to the Councils of Toulouse (1229), Béziers (1246) and Albi (1254), it had to be renewed every year and was therefore required of adults.

The following preventive measures should also be taken into account among others The Council of Toulouse of 1229, the prohibition to discuss points of the Catholic faith on pain of excommunication, and that this measure greatly annoyed the southerners who liked to talk about religion and metaphysics. Books written in the Occitan language, translations of the Bible in Occitan, were forbidden. The disappearance of all Cathar theological works - except for two treatises of which only one has come down to us in the form, incomplete, of refuted quotations - is easy to explain, since whoever possessed them was obliged to hand them over to his bishop within eight days. The books were burned. (On different occasions, even the *Talmud* was confiscated, even though the Jews then enjoyed a recognized status).) Only the *Psalms*, the *Breviary*, the *Books of Hours...* remained in the hands of the faithful.

All these preventive and general measures proved inoperative. The believers and even, to a certain extent, the perfect ones, adopted the external behavior of Catholics. There were no more heretics! As for the forbidden books, the believers continued to read them, even though

carefully hidden, as well as magic grimoires (they can still be found today in secret niches, when old walls are demolished).

Punishments.

Repression was never exercised in a positive way except on individuals who pleaded guilty, or who were unmasked by spies or informers. The penalties that the Inquisition imposed on them were proportional to the crime or "crime" committed, and impregnated with a relative leniency when the accused had confessed of his own free will. Those guilty of heresy, the suspected, the simple believers were generally condemned to harsh penances, long, but temporary. They had to wear the signs of infamy: two yellow crosses sewn on their garments, one on the chest, the second on the back. The double cross signaled an aggravation of guilt. They were under the active surveillance of the parish priests, who every Sunday, between the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel, whipped them with branches. Often they were imposed pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela, an annual visit to the churches of Toulouse, or even the obligation to go to fight the Saracens in the Holy Land. (This last penance was suppressed when they realized that they were filling the Holy Land with heretics). Finally, they could be imprisoned for several years: they were subjected to a more humane regime than the one that awaited the "walled ones" for life. In Carcassonne, the temporary prisoners could be visited by their wives and, exceptionally, obtain permission to leave. Their sentences, moreover, could be commuted.

A few examples, taken from reality, will give an idea of the way in which in which these penalties were distributed. Bernard d'Ortel, of Ravat, professes a grave error: he does not believe in the resurrection of the bodies after the Last Judgment: he is condemned to five years in prison. Walled in on August 12, 1324, his arrest was commuted in exchange for carrying the crosses on January 16, 1329. Guillemette Benet, d'Ornolac, is guilty of vulgar materialism: at the time of the grape harvest, she falls from a wall injuring her nose: blood gushes out. A girl from the neighborhood comes to her aid and helps her to

get up. "The soul, the soul," Guillemette tells him, "what is it if not blood?". On another occasion, to her greater misfortune, she describes her idea better: while her son, of a young age, is dying, she watches him. Nothing comes out of his mouth but a breath that is soon extinguished. "If I saw something come out of the mouth at the moment of death, I would believe that the soul is something else, but since only air comes out, I believe that the soul is nothing, or rather it is, as long as men and animals live, blood." Guillemette had, on the existence of the soul, more or less the same concepts as Claude Bernard, although six centuries before him. This inexperienced materialist was condemned to the *Wall* on March 8, 1321, but her sentence was commuted to the carrying of double crosses on January 16, 1329.

These punishments, given the spirit of the times and that of the Inquisition, are not really excessive. There are more iniquitous ones. For having said that "in Lombardy no one does any harm to heretics". Pierre Lafont, of Vaychis, wielded double crosses and made several pilgrimages (July 5, 1322). A certain Raimon de l'Aire, of Tignac, believes, like Guillemette, that the soul is nothing but blood. His materialism is however more cultured: he does not believe that Christ is the fruit of a supernatural birth, and also professes a reasoned anticlericalism. He was condemned to the *Wall* on July 5, 1322. Unbelievers who refused to pay tithes were considered especially suspect. The bishop called the bad contributors heretics. As J. Duvernoy shows us, Pierre Lafont was suspected of resisting the payment of tithes, which contributed more to his condemnation than his words about Lombardy. Jean Jaufré, of Tignac, was perhaps a believer, but his refusal to pay tithes brought him a sentence to the *Wall* (July 5, 1322); and Arnaud Tesseyre was condemned to life imprisonment, although the latter had also made public his contempt for excommunication. All these bad payers were severely punished: Raimond de Laburat, of Quié: *Wall* (June 19, 1323), Pierre Guillaume, the elder, of Unac: *Wall* (January 16, 1329).

In short, the bishop is rather indulgent towards materialism.
naive: the sins of the flesh (when they are not committed by a heretic); harsh, though "just" (according to the spirit of the Inquisition) towards the

declared believers; very hard towards the opponents of the tithes. A good demonstration that, while defending the rights of the Church, he also wanted to maintain the feudal economic order. He raged against the Cathars, as the Byzantines did against the Bogomils, who were much more opposed to feudalism than the Albigensians.

Heresy, a source of profit for the Church of Rome.

The heretic is guilty of anathema and is excommunicated. A gloomy atmosphere hangs over the village when all the bells toll and the church candles are extinguished: it is the moment when the sentence is read. Hearing, instead of the placid *Angelus* - so loved by Millet and Salvador Dalí - the bells tolling in the twilight, to the *greater glory of God and in hatred of heresy,* the peasants cross themselves and tremble. One of their own has been separated from the community. The priest, perhaps to avoid attempts at corruption, can no longer accept alms or offerings from the heretic, not even as penance; he will deny him burial in the consecrated cemeteries.

In addition to the religious penalties, there were civil penalties, even more severe. The property of heretics was confiscated, both movable and immovable. In fact, land was appropriated and houses were demolished. Not only those of the believers, but also the adjoining house, in case a perfect one had entered it; also the one that had been arrested, even if the good faith of its owner had been deceived, and he was the best of the Catholics (he had to pay, in addition, a fine of fifty pounds). These measures, uselessly vexatious, plunged the families into consternation. The courage and dedication of those small landowners of Languedoc or the county of Foix who, by sheltering in their homes the good men who were persecuted, risked losing their freedom and their meager possessions, is admirable. It is also understandable that less generous souls bitterly reproached Pierre Authier, one of the last Cathar ministers, for having brought disgrace to the country with his preaching.

In case the priest of a village was secretly a Cathar - it sometimes happened - the village could be partially destroyed if he did not prevent it, since almost all its inhabitants were infected by the heresy. Thus, in the village of Montaillou, near Prades, numerous houses were demolished, after their inhabitants were summoned by the bishop and most of them were accused. The contents of the houses were auctioned for the benefit of the Church, as well as the demolition materials. It was forbidden to rebuild on the same site, which was to be used only as a garbage dump.
Whoever dares to violate this provision, by building in these places, cultivating them or closing them, will be a cause of anathema!

Also confiscated were the noble lands, the noble rights, the goods of the knights deeply committed to heresy. Part of what was confiscated was used, as we have seen, for the maintenance of prisoners, for the construction of *Walls*, for the retribution of Inquisition personnel; the rest was given to the bishop, to the local church; in the lands subject to the authority of the king, the Treasury discounted its part; in those that were not, the manorial Treasury discounted it. This explains why high barons, initially favorable to the Cathar cause, but who later managed to escape excommunication and plundering, did not mind the increase in confiscations, the proceeds of which increased their incomes. Such confiscations were called *encours*.

Finally, let us remember that heretics, even after the excommunication was lifted, could not hold any public office, nor vote in consular elections. They could not in any case testify, except if it was to testify against a heretic. Their wills were considered null and void; they would never be able to bequeath, nor to receive any inheritance. In some regions, physicians were forbidden to treat them. Neither reconciliation, nor abjuration, nor even the fulfillment of the penance imposed - except in some regions where the lord turned a blind eye - could erase the "infamy" and restore to the heretic the full exercise of his civil rights.

Abjurations.

Some perfect ones converted spontaneously, without having been forced, to Catholicism. A cruel penance was inflicted on them, but sometimes they were absolved because of the remarkable service they rendered to the Church by this act. Guillaume Pelhisson tells how Raimon Gros, belonging to a Cathar family of the Lauragais, *went one day, on April 2, 1237, devoutly and humbly, converted to the true faith spontaneously, without having been summoned or summoned, to the house of the Dominicans in Toulouse, in order to carry out in everything the will of the friars. Bro Bonsolas, deputy and substitute of Father Prior Pierre Sellan, who had gone to Montauban to carry out the Inquisition, immediately reconciled him and received him as a convert.*

The inquisitors were more indulgent with these last-minute converts, because they revealed better data. The confession of this Raimon Gros was so extensive that the friars spent several days writing it. It provoked other confessions, and the inquisitorial task in Toulouse was greatly facilitated. *From what they heard, the friars were filled with jubilation, and the partisans of heresy were terrified at the discovery of the extent of their iniquities.* Raimon Gros declared "honestly" what he knew about the heretics and their friends, entirely and in order. *Which could not have been done*," adds Guillaume Pelhisson, "*without the help of divine Providence*.

It also happened - but very rarely - that some perfects arrested by the Inquisition renounced Catharism. In this case, they undertook, under oath, to defend the Church with all their strength, and their excommunication was pardoned: they were reconciled. But most of the time they were condemned to perpetuity and it seems that they were not tortured. It is difficult to know whether these reconciled heretics went to the *strict Wall (strictus)*: it was a very narrow room, lacking air, where, with their hands and feet tied, they received insufficient food; or to the *very strict Wall (strictissimus)* which was no more, as it is said, than the *very strict Wall (strictissimus).*

P. Belperron, that the antechamber of the tomb; or to the *broad Wall (largus),* where their movements were freer.

It seems that they were locked up in special cells, separated from the other "criminals", such as the relapsos or fugitives, who gave themselves up and asked for reconciliation and who, for this fact, were punished with *immuratio* for life. (The relapsos taken prisoner were usually burned, as were the perfects who refused to abjure).

The irreducible.

Most of the perfect ones -almost all of them, to the greater honor of Catharism- did not confess, did not take an oath, did not abjure. Nothing could be expected of them. They had separated themselves from the Church and from heaven. The Council of Verona (1184) had decreed that heretics who refused to convert would be handed over to secular justice. Let us remember that secular justice did not question them, did not judge them: it only punished them. And the perfect were punished with death; the secular power did nothing more than execute the sentence. Justice, royal or lordly, had no more responsibility for the death of good men than did the executioner and his assistant. The perfect were burned at the stake. This type of torture disturbed the thoughts terribly, but it was neither more nor less cruel than others. It was said, in Cathar circles, that "it did not hurt" and that God made the body of those who had spent their whole life despising him insensible to pain.

The heretics, of whom it had been ignored in life that they were, were dug up and burned. Sometimes the heirs who had not been dispossessed of their entire inheritance also suffered a penance, or else paid a heavy fine. When it could be proved that one of them had knowingly buried a heretic in the church cemetery, he was excommunicated. *To be absolved*," says Schmidt, "*they had to exhume the corpse with their own hands, throwing it away from the blessed ground*. We have not found any examples in the texts. But it is certain

that in Occitania the place previously occupied by a heretic should never again serve as a burial place: it was defiled.

In principle, the condemnation of a heretic marked his descendants, including his grandchildren, with ecclesiastical and civil incapacity. That is to say, they could not receive any office or any type of ecclesiastical benefit, nor be dignitaries, nor have functions in the State or in the city (Council of Béziers, 1234). In reality, it was difficult to carry out such a prescription: the memory of men is short. Examples are known of grandsons of heretics who held important positions in the kingdom and who perhaps, secretly, defending the interests of the monarchy, exercised against the papacy *patriarchal* reprisals.

CHAPTER II

THE CATHARS IN HIDING

The consequences of the Meaux Treaty

The entry of Catharism into clandestinity must be placed in 1229, the year of the Treaty of Meaux, when the Count of Toulouse, Raymond VII, promised to be faithful in the future to the king and to the Church, and to fight against the heretics, *without sparing his vassals, his relatives, his friends.* For the first time, the Cathars could no longer count on the support, nor, in principle, on the benevolence of their legitimate lord. The double game would henceforth mark their daily life: the heretics were condemned to pretend to be Catholics; the Catholics were condemned to prove that they were not Cathars.

In every age, many sincere believers thought that they could adhere to Catharism without leaving the Roman Church. A village priest, secretly converted to moral dualism, could, in good faith, spiritually celebrate the Mass representing Christ, not as really present in the host, but as incarnated and suffering in all beings of this world, just like the *Christus patibilis* of ancient Manichaeism. Many priests and bishops were guilty only of an excess of spirituality. Let us admit that some of them were simoniacs without any dignity, who would have had to be eliminated from Christianity by the pope, just as Catharism itself would have done if it had

triumphed. The abbot of Fos, for example, on whom Innocent III opened an investigation, spent his time hunting like a local lord, was also passionate about trials, *and committed acts that were best kept quiet so as not to offend the dignity of the clergy.* But Bernard-Raimon de Roquefort, bishop of Carcassonne, deposed in 1211, had inherited from his mother, a convicted Cathar, virtues worthy of early Christianity. Guillaume de Roquessels, bishop of Béziers, deposed in 1205, had shown himself to be a true disciple of Christ by refusing to persecute the heretics of his diocese. And one could only reproach Bernard de la Barthe, archbishop of Auch, also expelled from his see in 1214, for his gentleness and tolerance. He was a good anticlerical Christian (happy times when anticlericals were clerics!). The sentiments that he would later express in verse - he was also a troubadour - on the occasion of the signing of the Treaty of Meaux, are those of a humanist who does not separate Christian values from those of the civilization he loved so much:

> *A good peace is good for me if it is lasting.*
> *But if it is imposed, it no longer pleases*
> *me:*
> *More harm than good is born from shameful pacts...*

At the beginning of the Crusade, as in the final period of Catharism, we find more or less the same number of abbots, religious and priests won over to heresy. Had the persecution not existed, one would have seen many more embrace Cathar esotericism, just like those clerics who in the 18th century entered Freemasonry without abandoning their Catholic faith. The Church has been much more fierce with this kind of "spirituals" than with unworthy priests. Of course, those were not yet the times of tolerance and conciliation.

Peaceful coexistence.

The confrontation of heterodox ideas with Roman theology, the growing influence of "French" culture, against which Occitan thought was reacting, were issues that favored, although filling with

confusion of thoughts, the philosophical syncretism inherited from the Middle Ages, which did not help to clarify the notion of sin. How could honest and religious people admit that God reproved the holy men of Catharism, and on the other hand welcomed in his paradise criminals confessed on the eve of their death? Jean Guiraud, and more recently Yves Dossat, published lists of names of ecclesiastics guilty of heresy. The lists are extremely eloquent, and lead one to believe that there were as many Catholics in heresy as there were heretics in Catholicism. The abbot of Montolieu and many of his monks, the parish priests of Villegly, of Ilhes, of Pradelles, of Pennautier, of Villemoustaussou, of Aragon attended, in 1280-1285, the ceremonies presided over by the perfect Pagès; they received the *consolamentum* or promised to receive it at the hour of their death. Also the deacons and priests of the chapter of Carcassonne believed that they had an additional possibility of salvation by receiving the blessing of a good man. We will not call them stupid or ignorant or even cowardly - their interest in Catharism proves at least that they were eager for metaphysics - but they would have been in less danger if they had only been good Catholics and left heresy aside. Their concern was undoubtedly of a mystical order. The movement of ideas that had taken place in the thirteenth century had blurred the boundaries between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. The belief in the eternity of the world, for example, was confused for those good recipients of philosophy with the idea that the world had always existed in divine Wisdom, as Origen would have believed. They were perfectly aware that many condemned Cathar propositions had also been upheld by Catholicism at different times in its history: for example, let us cite that of "man cannot be saved through faith alone". Let us add that Catholic asceticism did not differ from Cathar asceticism: the latter could be commonly represented by a set of additional mortifications that the monk imposed on himself personally. It is understandable that some abbots - and also some religious - imposed heterodox penances on themselves without their brothers even being aware of it.

The ideal realm, where all beliefs were reconciled, was hermeticism. Catholic priests practiced magic, astrology, geomancy, "symbolism". That the worst of them used their science for selfish and reprehensible purposes should not surprise us. When a woman felt in love, she would accuse the priest of having demonized her, happy not to have to look for another explanation for the fact: How else to resist the Devil? She calmed her conscience by accusing the devilish seducer. And so it was that the Carmelite Pierre Ricord, idol of the ladies of Pamiers in the 14th century, was judged and imprisoned... But the most worthy clergymen collected secrets of greater spirituality. It is said that the chaplain of Amaury de Montfort had been initiated in Catharism; we do not believe it, but it is possible that in his compilation of magical thoughts he had highlighted some dualistic proposition, so valuable in his eyes for having enlightened him what he had not understood until then with his obscure Catholicism. There is no doubt that for some spirits of the Middle Ages, the *consolamentum* was considered, by its nature -apart from the opinion held of Catharism-, as an excellent means to obtain salvation. Therefore, it was added to the Catholic sacraments, since two precautions are worth more than one.

The "double game".

The Occitans of the end of the 13th century became accustomed to the double game without keeping in mind in their spirits the magical syncretism - or hermeticism - that dispensed them from all hypocrisy. It was only a matter of fleeing from spies. And given the characteristic southern ingenuity, one only sinned by inadvertence. It was necessary to make the sign of the cross and it was said with the hand on the forehead: *aici lo front*; to the chin: *aici la barba*; pointing to one ear and then the other: *Aici una aurelha e aici l'autra*. The good men themselves made the necessary Roman gestures. The perfect Raimon de Castelnau received last rites from a Catholic priest. When the latter asked him about the articles of faith, he replied, "I believe in everything that good Christians believe" and made a false confession, telling anything. In his

Bélibaste, armed with a hyssop, sprinkled everyone with holy water:
"A few drops of rain," he said; "the more you get wet when you travel!". When Arnaud Sicre asked him one day if he believed that the host was the body of the Lord, he answered: "Of course not! I go to church to make believe that I am a Catholic," he added, "and anyway, you can pray to the heavenly Father here as well as anywhere else".

The priest of Montaillou, Pierre Clergue, a convert to Catharism, is the perfect - and absolute - image of the clandestine Cathar. (In fact, he was also the image of the bad Cathar.) He was undoubtedly a very cultured man, capable of delicate feelings, but with a lust without limits. He was undoubtedly a very cultured man, capable of delicate feelings, but of a lust without limits. His conduct was certainly no worse than that of many priests of his time, who considered it useless to take on the airs of a heretic in order to conquer women, or to convince them to murder the troublesome husband, as did the chaplain of Rieux-en-Val. But to his passion for love he added a taste for sacrilege: during Lent, Béatrice de Planissoles went to the church of Montaillou, where Pierre Clergue was waiting for confessions behind the altar of the Virgin. *As soon as I knelt before him*," Béatrice tells us, "I *was so happy.*
-He began to embrace me, telling me that there was no woman in the world whom he loved as much as me... Surprised and indignant, I left without confessing...

Béatrice's fear was because she had been told *that a woman who gives herself to a priest never sees the face of God*. It was said that the concubines of the priests were transformed at their death into mares that the Devil rode. They were called "the Devil's mares". However, this did not prevent parish priests from finding compliant companions and even, in countries where nicolaism[20] was tolerated, from securing for them a legal status that likened them to legitimate wives. *I would rather give myself to four men than to a priest*, declared Béatrice.

However, Pierre Clergue was able to dissuade her, and soon after, on Christmas Eve, he became her lover. *How can you commit such a great sin on such a sacred night*? she asked him. *What does the night matter, when the sin is the same*, replied Pierre Clergue. Y

The next morning he observed that he was celebrating Mass without having been absolved, since there was no other priest.

He took the sacrilege to paroxysm when he begged Béatrice to meet him at the church of St. Peter de Prades, where he had prepared a bed: *How can we do this in the church of St. Peter*?

-And what harm are we doing to St. Peter, madam?

All the uncertainties, the contradictions of the century had, so to speak, upset the man. Was he a materialist, an epicurean, a skeptic? After so much meditating on the coexistence of the two principles, had he chosen the worst, had he only believed in Catharism that which favored his passions? In any case, he thought that he was not a vulgar libertine. He was even capable of feeling true love and tenderness. Long after his affair with Béatrice, he went to visit her in Varilhes. She was seriously ill. Sitting on the edge of the bed, he gently took her hand and asked her how she was. *He brought my daughter out* - spoke Béatrice - *and asked me if my soul was at peace. I replied that I was hesitant to go to confession for fear of having to reveal all the un-Catholic things we had practiced together. He begged me not to be afraid since God knew my sin and that he alone had the power to absolve me; and that in any case I did not need to confess since I would soon be cured*. With these words. Pierre Clergue said goodbye to the woman he had loved so much. He never saw her again, and yet a short time later he sent her a loaf of sugar - a rare delicacy at that time - and an engraved glass....

The priest of Montaillou had succeeded, for several years, in having his people to embrace the Cathar law. Since he played the role of an agent of the Inquisition, he would sometimes reply to the bishop that there were only good Catholics in his village, and at other times, if they pressed him too hard, he would denounce the few Catholics of the place as heretics. A remarkable fact that would not have obscured too much the absurd farce and the black humor that in his eyes seemed to him that satanic world, if he had not used his Roman power to get rid of his personal enemies. He had imprisoned in the *Wall* of Carcassonne a certain Pierre Maurs and his brother Guillaume. As soon as he was released, Guillaume, mad with rage, went to meet the priest and told him

He said: *"If you do not kill me first, I will kill you: between us, from now on, it will be war to the death". "Do you think*," said Pons Clergue, the priest's father, as good a Catholic or as bad a Cathar as his son, "*that you can defy the Church and our lord the king of France?"*. Guillaume and Pierre Maurs later tried to have the priest assassinated by a Catalan whom they had bribed. But they did not succeed.

This singular character was in the end a victim of women. They made these masterpieces that were his double games fail. One of them spoke too much. Pierre Clergue was arrested and died in prison at the end of the year 1321. His brother Bernard Clergue, former ball of the Count of Foix, was condemned to the *strict Wall*, with shackles on his hands and feet, on bread and water, on August 13, 1324.

Life in Toulouse in the middle of the 13th century.

By 1240 or 1245, a merchant who had not seen Toulouse for many years would have been surprised at the changes that had taken place in twenty years. The city was largely renovated. Some knights, some burghers had left it; other knights, as well as peasants and artisans had settled there. As in most of the cities of Occitania, the nobles had suffered considerably from the crusade. The towers of their mansions had been destroyed; they were condemned to exile: this was one of the conditions imposed on Raymond VI in 1209 by the legate Milon. Some wandered in the countryside, others hid in the cities where they lived poorly. The count's court was certainly composed of notorious anticlericals: knights and troubadours, and until 1249 the popular and bourgeois resistance was stimulated by the feelings of revenge that everyone felt towards Raymond VII. The uneasiness or the terror that the Inquisition made weigh on everyone put a bad mood in the daily life of the troubadour as in that of the great lady, in that of the believer as in that of the good Catholic who had remained faithful to his counts.

The consuls and the bourgeoisie, while in no way adhering to the heresy, were nevertheless, for the most part, enemies of French and clerical domination. Some quarters - the market district, for example - where the population was mixed and largely composed of immigrants, gave the impression of being more Cathar than the old city itself. In reality, only the type of opposition varied according to the neighborhood: sometimes it took a more popular, more open form; sometimes it was more bourgeois, more secret and possibly more effective. But everywhere clerics and Frenchmen were abhorred, even if the concrete system of French administration was not yet in place and would not be until the death of Raymond VII in 1249.

If we believe Guillaume Pelhisson, inquisitor and chronicler, the Catholics lived in insecurity because of the *complicity existing between the rich bourgeoisie, the knights and agents of the count, with heresy.* However, there were many Catholics in Toulouse. There was even a "white confraternity" named after the white cross that its members wore on their breasts - created by Bishop Foulque, in the time of Simon de Montfort - and which was somewhat aggressive, especially towards Jews and bankers. Naturally, a "black brotherhood" was soon formed in opposition, and the two "secret" societies often came to quarrel. Quarrels in the neighborhoods poisoned these fratricidal struggles. It is difficult to find out who had the "majority", as we would say today. Perhaps it was the Catholics. But many of them had a bad conscience and even though they were opponents of Catharism, they feared being taken for traitors if they did not take the side of their count. And it is also true that others, who had been expelled as supporters of the French, or who had emigrated to avoid the burdens of the siege, and whose property had been seized by the consuls, had to make a pact with the invader out of a desire for revenge. Were they really numerous? As a whole, the gentry and the Consulate were hostile to the Inquisition.

In the bourgeois mansions, in the stores of the populous neighborhoods, it is held secret meetings. They would meet there to celebrate a *consolamentum*, to listen to the preaching of a good man or a wandering deacon. At that time, Toulouse was a city half a century old.

peasant house, which opened onto the countryside, surrounded by gardens. A perfect man could live outside the walls and come to the city in disguise. Some churches were practically abandoned and empty at night: there were the Blessed of St. Francis, who refused any kind of individual or communal property, living as vagabonds. The Cathars mingled in their ranks and sometimes preached before these revolutionaries of God.

Encouraging prophecies began to circulate about the end of the papacy. It was said that the emperor would "water his horses at the altar of St. Peter's"; the news spread with astonishing rapidity. It was expected, as announced by a servant of Uc de Saint-Circ, that around 1240-1243 Emperor Frederick II would come to liberate the county of Toulouse and avenge Béziers and Carcassonne.

Humor and anticlericalism.

It is very likely that secret offices collected and disseminated the pamphlets of the Cathar party. The troubadours, Peire Cardinal and Montanhagol, playing the role of our present-day journalists, amplified them and gave them literary form. Catholics and Cathars fought a battle of words and terrible calumnies that the troubadour - of superior spirit - easily won. Peire Cardinal made famous throughout Europe - with the help of Bocaccio, however - the excellent story of that city doctor who married the niece of the bishop of Toulouse, and who had the joy of becoming a father two months after the ceremony; or the writing composed against the "beatas" of Prouille, of which he affirmed that *some bore fruit after a long time of sterility*. His satires against the Inquisition reached as far as the mountains of the county of Foix:

> *Clergymen pretend to be*
> *shepherds and are nothing but*
> *murderers*
> *under his airs of sanctity...*

In the bourgeois houses, the young ladies and gentlemen laughed out loud - despite the gravity of the moment- reading the poem where he ridicules the passion for good wine and the good delicacy of the Dominicans: *After dinner*, he writes, they *do not keep silent, they argue about wine, which is the best... They have established a court to judge the trials and they accuse of valdense anyone who tries to dissuade them... They want to know everyone's secrets to better inspire fear.* It was undoubtedly Peire Cardinal who invented the best themes of anticlerical humor. *If I were a husband, I would be in a great panic to see a man without tights sitting next to my wife, for he and they wear skirts of equal width and fat with live fire burns quickly*.

It was he who propagated the figure of the Dominican lover of good wine, of good food, libertine... and bad Christian. *They are*, he said, *thieves, traitors, keeping what is theirs and taking what is mine, keeping the alms of the poor... Unjust, cruel and mercantile inquisitors: if you have committed a dishonest act, you will find absolution in exchange of*
"For a coin they will shelter the usurers, so rapacious are they, but they will never shelter the poor worker, nor visit him, nor welcome him.....
But if it were powerful...! Never has anticlericalism taken such vehemence to denounce the preachers' thirst for dominion: *The world will be theirs, whether by robbery or by gift received, indulgence agreed upon or hypocritical promise, absolution or excommunication, preaching or full-fledged siege with war machines; in any case, the world will be theirs with God or with the Devil....*

The sumptuary laws of the Inquisition.

In 1240, many Toulousans thought like Peire Cardinal and repeated his terrible satires, there is no doubt about it; especially in the noble and bourgeois milieus, and in the count's court, who, deprived of the old "pride of caste" replaced by a skepticism tinged with libertinism, were only by chance united to the Cathar resistance. These worldly people, so little fond of philosophy, expressed their epicureanism through passion.

of the beautiful clothes with which generosity and prodigality towards themselves was naturally conjugated in the rich.

The women were splendidly attired. Fringes of gold, pearls, precious stones - of magical virtues - shone on their silk dresses trimmed with gold; gold glittered on all the pieces of their clothing. On their heads, they wore golden veils or diadems. On their waistbands, golden belts. The tunics and skirts of open cut appeared joined by brooches of rhinestones, and the sash, widely low-cut according to the Catalan fashion, opened at every step, revealing blouses generously embroidered with precious stones, gold and silver, which barely hid their charms, for although loaded as they were with ribbons, bows, braided cord belts and bags, and in spite of their coats and tunics, *they found a way to go low-cut, showing their breasts and all they could of their flesh* (of their *carunhadas*, as the indelicate and misogynist poet Matfre Ermengau says).

The fashion for sumptuous furs, Siberian squirrel, cibelin, had been transmitted from the great lords to the bourgeoisie, who obtained them at high prices. Around 1230, they wore white garments, lined with white lambskin, trimmed at the edges with black squirrel fur. They wore silk shoes ornamented with rosettes, shirts and breeches of Reims cloth, with subtle seams of fine thread; silk sashes gathered to the right size and silk shoes embroidered with flowers, ornamented with multicolored rosettes.

Then, around 1236 or 1237, the Inquisition took care to proscribe the luxury of clothing, no doubt based on a stipulation of 1209 that imposed on Raymond VI the duty of not dressing, neither he nor his vassals, with expensive fabrics, but only with coarse brown cloaks *(mas capes grossas brunas), which last longer*, the poet adds humorously. It seems that this clause was not followed very strictly; but it could be used to cast suspicion on people who were too well dressed to be defamed.

The result of these measures was the revolt of the entire merchant population against the inquisitors. The prodigality of the great lords, the gifts they gave to their mistresses, the beautiful attire they wore

men and women gave life to tailors, seamstresses and jewelers. Moreover, the usurers also made their profit, for it was fashionable to get into debt and ruin oneself. And when the troubadours received splendid rewards, the minstrels received their share, and all these people happily spent their money in the taverns of Toulouse.

We do not believe that the inquisitors forced the ladies to dress with "brown cloaks." But the consuls had the skirts closed, the bodices tightly fastened and the collars raised. At that time the troubadour Montanhagol undertook a real "press campaign". He was skillful enough to give the economic crisis of the moment, for which the inquisitors were chiefly responsible, the dimensions of an ideological debate. For he had understood that the Church's aim in attacking luxury and "generosity" was also to discredit Love.

-This heresy of the frivolous, which, without being confused with Catharism, was considered by the inquisitors to be the cause of the dissolution of morality and the propagation of heresy. He found in Peire Cardinal a true ally who, however, lost no occasion to reproach the Dominicans for *their soft tunics woven with English wool, their light and wide habits, of ostentatious cloaks, made of camelote in summer and thick in winter, with light shoes, with French soles even in cold weather, of fine Marseilles leather and solidly tied with mastery, for to tie one's shoes with negligence, is it not foolishness?*

Montanhagol's arguments were brimming with common sense: *If a lady does nothing worse than dress in beautiful attire, she will not for this reason alone lose God and his love... And because they wear black attire, or a white habit, they will not conquer heaven if they do nothing better....*

The criticism of the consuls, the animosity of the population and the pamphlets of Montanhagol prevented the inquisitors from going too far down this path of virtue. Around 1242-1250, Montanhagol himself tells us, the Inquisition abandoned its rigor and once again tolerated beautiful attire. *I see a certain progress*, says the poet, *a refinement in what concerns the clothes, the ornaments, the external appearance: a tendency towards good taste*.

This observation is significant: it is the latent proof that from 1237 to 1242 or 1250, the crisis had existed in Toulouse: people were badly dressed. The trade suffered from the wars of 1240 and 1242. Mortgages and commercial credits were not frequent because of the persecution of the bankers, considered usurers. But in 1250 life was reborn. The fashions came from France. The Inquisition could not continue to regentrate them, for how to contain the women? It is true that they had to close their necklines -cels *that are now fenduts were closed at all*- and to renounce to the skirts open on the sides that already gave them the elegant style of the Directory. But the ladies of Toulouse, with the *band* or baberol that covered their ears (Flamenca has to untie hers at mass, in order to hear the words of love that the young clergyman whispers to her), with their closed and too wide dresses, were more charming than ever, in spite of the inquisitors who nevertheless, according to Montanhagol, *knew how to appreciate the beautiful.* Evoking them at this moment, we think of the radiant apparition that Guido Cavalcanti contemplated in 1300 in the church of La Daurade: he thought he saw a heretic - or the symbol of heresy bound - because she also wore the tightly laced dress, *accordellata estretta*, of our beautiful Cathar women. *Amor*, he says, *called her Mandetta*.

Popular agitation.

The tyranny of the inquisitors, and not only their sumptuary laws, was unbearable to all, and above all very dangerous. The relationship between them and the population began to deteriorate. At any occasion, the consuls would manifest their bad mood against the friars and the bourgeois, humiliated by the political defeat, began to challenge them. *The heretics and their supporters*, writes Guillaume Pelhisson, *took as a weapon of defense against the Catholics the effort and the cunning... And so these heretics damaged more Toulouse and the whole region at that time than in times of war. Which filled with dismay the preacher brothers (Dominicans) and the Catholics.*

Daily life at that time was full of comic and tragic incidents that happened every moment in the street. Some Frenchmen were beginning to arrive in Toulouse: Parisian professors, in charge of introducing the study of theology, the teaching of the faith and the liberal arts. The heretics, or simply the angry ones, approached them, confusing them, replying to their theories, making fun of them, of their accent, of their unusual arguments formulated in French or in bad Occitan.

But it was always the Dominicans against whom they raged. One fine day, one of them preached in public, asserting "that there were heretics in the city, and that they were organizing meetings". It was enough for the people to riot and demonstrate, showing indignant Catholic sentiments: "How, us heretics?". The consuls immediately summoned the prior to the common house, ordering him to tell the friars never again to preach in this way since something bad might happen to them if they said again that there were heretics in Toulouse, since it was quite clear that there were none.

But the Cathars were not always successful in such matters. An argument broke out one day between Bernard Poitevin and a brooch maker, Bernard de Soler. The tent echoed with their shouts: "Dirty heretic!" said Poitevin to Bernard de Soler, who was undoubtedly a heretic. The heretic denounced him to the consuls: insults, defamation. Taken before the council, under the shouts and threats of the population, Poitevin was condemned to a three-year exile, to a fine for the benefit of Bernard de Soler, to repair the insult, and another for the benefit of the community and the consuls. He was then made to swear that he had slandered his adversary, reputed to be an honest man and a good Catholic.

Poor Poitevin begged the consuls for an extension and obtained it. He runs to the friars who advise him to appeal to the bishop, declaring that they will defend him with all their might. Both parties then appeared before Bishop Raimon. The heretic was accompanied by a crowd of bourgeois, notaries, lawyers, who clamored against Poitevin. But the inquisitors frightened everyone and the popular and consular support could do nothing in favor of Bernard de Soler. The brothers Pierre Sellan and

Guillaume Arnaud, inquisitors, strongly defended Poitevin and the outside support was frightened; everyone dispersed and Bernard de Soler had to flee to Lombardy.

What is surprising in Toulouse is the continuous availability of these bourgeois, these shopkeepers, these men of law, these craftsmen of the periphery, half rural, half citizens. They are always ready to demonstrate, even at the risk of disappearing around the corner, if the threat worsens. For many years, the consuls, who had sufficiently strong power to counteract or hinder to some extent the repressive action of the inquisitors, encouraged these popular uprisings.

Many Toulousians were not resigned to not being free in their city, nor to restraining their words or carrying on the double game like the prudent burghers, or even the consuls, who were so devout, who attended with apparent fervor all religious acts and who founded houses of charity.

Jean Tisseyre, from the suburbs, is summoned by the inquisitors; he does not hold back and harangues the population: "Gentlemen, listen to me: I am not a heretic. I am married and I make love to my wife. I have children and I eat meat. I lie, I deny; therefore, I am a good Christian. Do not believe a word the friars say, that I do not believe in God. They will reproach you too, do not be afraid, because these damned inquisitors want to eliminate the good people and take the city away from our good lord, the count".

The crowd gathered there first laughs out loud (it is true, as Tisseyre humorously points out, that at that time it was in one's interest to be a liar, to disown, to expose one's sex life: it was preferable to pass for a Catholic full of sins - which were then confessed - than to expose oneself to be judged too mystical by a haggard appearance); the crowd is indignant, the count's name is applauded. Nevertheless, the trial continues, testimonies are collected, and Tisseyre does not avoid being condemned. The people, seeing that the veguer is leading him to the stake, gather and protest. Shortly after, the whole town rose up against the religious: "Accuse of heretics the people who have women and sleep with them!

The most curious thing about this story is that Tisseyre, being of a jovial and joking mood, became sincerely and heroically a Cathar. He was locked up in the same prison as other heretics from Lavaur. Those heretics revived his faith and tried to convert him. They succeeded and gave him the *consolamentum*. Then, before the bishop, the consuls, the veguer and the burghers of the heretic party, he proclaims that he believes everything that the heretics believe, and that from now on he will remain faithful to his beliefs until the end. The bishop tries in vain to dissuade him: Tisseyre refuses and is burned alive with the others.

Incidents of this kind occurred almost every day. New spectacles gathered the curious. Toulouse was a city of pilgrimages. Many bearers of yellow crosses came from all regions of Occitania to the church of St. Saturnin to do their penance. They were surrounded, they were asked questions, forming noisy groups. Sometimes, they were forced to come to the city as crusaders. They were repentant Cathars who were going to be taken to the Holy Land to atone for their sins or to fulfill the imposed penance. They had an innocent appearance, but most of them thought only of taking revenge on the one who had denounced them, of conspiring against the Church and of spreading their dualistic beliefs as far as Palestine.

The desire for liberation.

The Inquisition committed a thousand excesses that only served to fuel popular unrest in Toulouse and in the other great cities of Languedoc. The armed uprising of Trencavel in 1240, the coalition of 1242 against the king had been passionately commented. Hope had been reborn and was slow to disappear. In 1242, when the allies have signed peace with the King of France, the English have already been defeated, and the King of Aragon has not even moved, the Toulouse Montanhagol still puts all his confidence in the courage of Count Raymond; and the Toulouse bourgeoisie agrees with him. In 1246, Provence had become French; Montanhagol firmly believed that James I, King of Aragon, would ally himself with Raymond in order to

expel the French. It is clear that Raymond VII searched until his death for a way to annul the clauses of the Treaty of Meaux, either through a marriage, or by a last fortunate effort: he had shared this hope with his subjects.

This explains the extent of the southern resistance, especially in the big cities, and also the audacity of some pamphlets. Montanhagol's pamphlets against the Inquisition were still the most scathing, as well as being very clever. The poet now tries to oppose Catholicism to Catholicism, taking the beautiful phrase that St. Bernard had pronounced in 1144 before the crowd that led a heretic to the torture; *I approve of the fervor, but I do not advise imitating the fact, because through persuasion and not force we must bring men to the faith. Instead of killing or banishing heretics, it would be necessary to bring them to reason, not with weapons, but with appropriate arguments to drive away their errors and lead them to the true faith.*

Montanhagol here plagiarizes St. Bernard: *It is not that I dislike the Inquisition*, he says: *I like that error is persecuted and that through persuasive words, without hatred, misguided heretics are led to the faith...* But soon the satire takes back its rights: *They* (the preachers) *want nothing and yet they go away taking everything, without worrying about the damage they cause to one or the other. Sirventés, he runs to tell the valiant Count of Tolosa not to forget what the clerics have done to him and to beware of them from now on*. This *Sirventès* must be dated 1233-1234, a time when the spirit of the people was very agitated in Languedoc and Toulouse against the Inquisition.

The rebellion of the consuls.

In 1235, the patience of the populations of several Languedocian cities, including Toulouse itself, had reached its limit when they saw that trials had been brought against dead people, followed by exhumations. For this reason, the consuls requested the intervention of Raymond VII to induce the friar preachers to abandon such practices. A

which they refused. They were joined by a Franciscan, Etienne de Saint-Thibery. *No doubt it was supposed*, writes Jean Guiraud, *that the mercy of a disciple of St. Francis would moderate the Inquisition*. It was not so: posthumous trials and sentences against the living multiplied.

In response, the consuls did everything possible to encourage evasions. Many suspects were able to flee and reach Montségur. Guillaume Arnaud then wanted to strike the decisive blow: he summoned bourgeois, clergymen, most of them great personalities, accusing them of heresy and accomplices of these escapes. There were twelve of them, including Morand le Vieux, a former consul, Arnaud Gui, also a former consul, a knight, a doctor, several notables.

The extraordinary rebellion then began: they all refused to appear and threatened the first person who tried to "summon" them. With the approval of the Count, the consuls ordered Guillaume Arnaud, obstinate in his desire to persecute them, to put an end to all inquisition or leave the city. *Then*, according to Guillaume Pelhisson, *the consuls and their accomplices provoked an uprising, stormed the convent, expelled the friar inquisitor from his convent and from the city, but not before mistreating him.*

The entire community followed him in procession to the foot of the bridge of La Daurade, on the other side of the Garonne River. There, the consuls declared to him that if he decided to leave the Inquisition, he could stay in the city like the other friars. If not, they ordered him, in their name and in the name of the count, to leave the city and the territory of the county immediately.

Guillaume Arnaud left for Carcassonne, which then belonged to the king. From there, he excommunicated the consuls as heretics and guilty of heresy; at the same time, he ordered the priests of Toulouse and the prior of Saint-Etienne to summon the consuls to appear before him to be interrogated about their faith and their schemes. The consuls immediately had the priest and the prior who had summoned them arrested and detained them in the town hall for part of the night. Later, they expelled them from Toulouse threatening with death whoever dared to bring them a new summons.

These extremely bold measures taken by the consuls were also applied to the bishop and the canons of San Saturnino. It was forbidden

supply them. The bishop had to leave the city himself.

However, the preachers stayed. The prior called them together at the sound of the bell, asking them if they were willing to die for the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ. After having confessed and commended their souls to God, four brothers accepted the dangerous mission of carrying the citations. When they arrived at Morand's house, his sons reviled them and kicked them out, even threatening them with their daggers. They would probably have been wounded, if it had not been for a good Catholic bourgeois, Pierre de Coursa, who held them back.

The consuls then decided to expel all the friars from the city. "It is preferable," they said, "to expel them than to kill them. The friars - about forty of them - were eating when the consuls arrived accompanied by a crowd of heretics. Without letting them finish their supper, the consuls made them open the doors and notified the prior, on behalf of the count and in the name of the city, that they should leave together with all those of the convent, or else they would be expelled by force. The prior, wielding the cross and the reliquary, as well as the friars, refused to evacuate the convent and sat down. They then seized the prior from behind and expelled him from the cloister. Two friars, lying on the floor and refusing to move, had to be taken outside by the feet and head.

The prior and Bishop Raimon du Fauga went to Rome to notify Gregory IX of the attitude of the consuls and the count. The pope, who had also received reports from the bishops of the South and from his legate, the archbishop of Vienne, sent Raymond VII a severe letter, where he reproached him for his actions and those of the consuls. At the same time, and this was more serious, the pope wrote to the king of France Louis IX to urge Raymond VII to comply with the treaty of Meaux, which imposed on him the obligation to extirpate heresy from his States.

While in Carcassonne the inquisitor was conducting the trial of the consuls and condemning them without even hearing them, on November 11, 1235, Raymond VII, as usual, was frightened and gave in. He allowed the bishop to return to Toulouse, as well as the friar preachers. However, he sent a letter to Louis IX, where he skillfully begged him to ask the pope to annul the powers of the inquisitors, ceding them either to the

Franciscans), as well as the bishops. Consequently, the archbishop of Vienne, legate, asked the Inquisition to be more lenient, and the prerogatives of the bishops were increased. But, in fact, nothing changed but, through an elegant fiction, the Inquisition maintained its functions "with the consent and by the will of the Count of Toulouse".

Posthumous trials.

The exhumations always attracted the curious and irritated the honest citizens. When in Toulouse, in 1237, the perfect Raimon Gros abjured his heresy, his revelations allowed the friars to identify as Cathars numerous bourgeois and nobles - men and women - who had been buried in the cemetery of the city. *Their bodies and bones*, writes Guillaume Pelhisson, *were dragged through the city to the sound of trumpets. Their names were proclaimed, preceded by the warning: Qui atal fara, atal perira: He who does so, so shall he die! They were all burned in a spionade, in honor of God, the Holy Virgin, their mother, and Saint Dominic*.

So it was in all the cities of Languedoc; these macabre exhibitions continued until the heresy had completely disappeared. No protest had the force to moderate such abuse. In Cahors, Pierre Sellan and Guillaume Arnaud thus condemned some deceased, who were dragged through the city and burned. Everywhere, touching scenes took place: here, a son steals in the cemetery the body of his father; there, the body of Humbert de Castelnau disappears mysteriously. Sometimes, the fact happened in Carcassonne around 1270, the skeleton, which had been dispersed, could not be found: then, pieces of firewood were put in sacks, carried on reeds through the city according to the usual rite, and then burned.

Naturally, it sometimes happened that the person whose tomb was desecrated in this way would have been a true heretic. A certain Galvanne - "great archimandrite" (?) of the Waldensians - died in Toulouse. *Maître* Roland was

He made a sermon, summoned the friars, the clergymen and some witnesses. They went to the house where Galvanne had died, destroyed it completely, turned it into a garbage dump, and then proceeded to exhume the body in the cemetery of the Villeneuve gate, where he had been buried. They led him in great procession to the Pré-Carbonel where they burned him, always *in honor of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Saint Dominic and the Roman Catholic Church, our mother.* This was in 1231.

The consuls had tried in vain, in some cities, to update ancient documents from before the crusade that forbade bringing heresy trials against the dead. But, naturally, the Inquisition did not take this into account.

There was no other way out for the relatives of the dead, moved by a pious fervor towards them, but to hide the bodies, to steal them from the cemetery, or to clear the deceased of all accusations by bribing the vegueres or simply the undertaker. Sometimes it was the crowd, indignant, who opposed the exhumation. In Albi, in 1234, the inquisitor Arnaud Catalan had ordered to dig up the skeleton of a heretic named Jussière. The dance, with great courage, opposed to it. The monk summoned several priests, went to the cemetery and there, picking up his habit and with the help of a shovel, set out to open the grave with his own hands. The people, furious, let out their indignation: they expelled the inquisitor, beating him with cries of "Death to the traitor!", and were about to throw him into the river Tarn, when the dance managed to rescue him. He left the city, but not before having excommunicated its inhabitants....

One fine day, Master Roland of Cremona, finding out that Pierre Donat had been buried in the cloister of Saint Saturnin, wearing his surplice, went there with the friars and the clerics. The body was dug up and thrown into the flames. It is surprising the number of Catholic priests, who were later recognized as heretics, buried in the cemeteries of the cloisters. This suggests that the relative strength of Catharism stemmed in large part from the fact that in the eyes of many clerics, Catharism was considered an esoteric spiritualism, reserved for an elite.

In the county of Foix, in the 14th century, it was possible to come to an agreement with the count's procurator. Pierre d'En Ugol claimed to have felt great shame at the thought that the body of his mother Mabille could have been dug up and burned. The agreement he made with the procurator cost him a great deal of pepper: spices were already given to the judges, or the equivalent of these rare products, in money.

Noble ladies were also victims of this phobia of digging up the dead. In November 1269, the friars Pierre de Cadreyta and Guillaume de Colonico, inquisitors of Catalonia, pronounced a sentence according to which the Countess Ermesinda, heiress of the viscounty of Castelbon, and wife of Roger-Bernard II, Count of Foix - who seems indeed to have been a Cathar - *had protected and defended heretics, to whom she had given asylum....* The judges ordered that if her remains could be recognized, they should be exhumed and taken away from the cemetery of the faithful.

And so corpses continued to be burned everywhere for most of the 14th century.

For the living, a precarious and secret existence.

From 1237 to 1244, the year in which the fall of Montségur dismantled the administrative systems of the sect, Catharism managed, in short, to survive in hiding. In the midst of great dangers, the faithful, while counting on the intermittent and often ineffective protection of the county court and the consuls, as well as the moral support of a large part of the population, managed to live daily in the atmosphere of their faith. No doubt everyone was suspicious of everyone but, by means of infinite precautions, the believer could perform all his religious duties and die in the hands of good men, a fact that was of vital importance to him. Whether in the city or in the country, it was always possible to receive the *consolamentum*. In the cities, such as Toulouse, Albi, or Carcassonne, it was necessary to call on the "nuncio", who knew where the perfects were hiding, to go and look for them. The clandestine nature of the

things. In the past, when the perfect ones had freedom of action, they chose the opportune moment: when the sick person's life was coming to an end so as to avoid the danger of relapsing into sin, but in a state nevertheless sufficiently conscious to be able to recite the *Pater*. We imagine that since the perfect ones encountered so many obstacles in their way, they would always arrive too late or even too early.

Yves Dossat cites two very characteristic cases, that of Roger Isarn, brother of Hélis de Mazerolles, to whom Guilhabert de Castres could not give the *consolamentum* in Fanjeaux in 1223, and that of Lady Brunissende who, being ill in Beauteville, around 1244, could not obtain *consolation*, because her condition no longer allowed her to speak. The *nuncius* did what he could. In Toulouse, it is very likely that some perfects lived in the city, totally ignored by the Inquisition. Others hid during the day in the countryside and did not penetrate into the city until nightfall, when they had been warned.

Perhaps the practice of the *convenensa*, known as early as 1238, was related, as Y. Dossat, with the fact of the difficulty existing at that time to bring the perfect ones to the required place. This "pact" had been made in order to be able to receive the *consolamentum on the* sole condition of being alive, even if one was not in a state to recite the *Pater*.

In some cases, the believer was taken to Montségur or arrived there by his own means, if he was willing, to receive the *consolamentum* and wait there for death. But the journey was long and dangerous.

In Toulouse, as indeed everywhere else, the spy who warned the inquisitor early enough to interrupt the ceremony was to be feared. In this case, perfects and *nuncius* would flee, sometimes without time to warn the sick person of the danger that was approaching, assuming that he was in a state to understand what was happening to him.

On April 4, 1235, the (Dominican) bishop of Toulouse, Raimon de Fauga, was notified that a noble lady had received the *consolamentum* in a house located near the friars' convent, in the street of the Dry Elm, today Romiguières street. This *great matron* was the mother-in-law of a certain Peytavi Borsier, *nuncius* and *questor*, that is to say financial agent of the heretics.

in Toulouse. The bishop and the prior were about to eat: they were washing their hands. They rushed to the lady's home, where they found her ill with a serious malignant fever. They said to her: "Madam, it is the bishop who is coming to see you". And, without even leaving time to warn her, the bishop and the prior burst into the room. Sitting on the edge of her bed, the bishop began to speak to her of contempt for the baseness of this world. She was expecting a visit from the Cathar bishop, so his words did not surprise her, and she answered him as she would have answered a good man. With much trickery, the bishop took from her confidences that were totally heretical.
"In the state in which you find yourselves," he said to her, "I imagine that you are no longer too much concerned with the miseries of this world, and that consequently you will not dare to lie. I exhort you, therefore, to be inflexible in your beliefs. You must not, for fear of death, confess any other belief than that in which you firmly and heartily believe." "Monsignor," she replied, "you must not, for fear of death, confess any other belief than that which you firmly and heartily believe.
-I believe in what I have already told you, and I will not change my faith at this moment, when so little life is left to me." "Are you then a heretic? You must know that it is the faith of heretics that you have confessed to me. Abandon at once your errors, wretched woman, and believe what the Roman Catholic Church believes. I am your bishop, the bishop of Toulouse, and in the Catholic faith I will, I command you to believe." Long he continued to admonish her, exhorting her before the people there present, but in vain. The lady was obstinate in her heresy. Then the bishop called the veguer and before Catholic witnesses, condemned her. The vicar ordered her to be immediately taken, in her bed, to the Pré-au-Comte, where the sergeants, according to the writings, were *happy to burn her.*

Then the friars and the bishop returned to their refectory, where they ate with satisfaction the supper that awaited them and that this affair had interrupted, giving thanks to God and to St. Dominic. This imprudent confession of the lady entailed the arrest of Peytavi, her son-in-law, and that of Bernard Auderic, of Dremil, who was Peytavi's *socius.* Their arrests compromised many Toulouse bourgeois, thus increasing their alarm.

The whistleblower.

Spies and informers were everywhere, watching everything. The Toulousans had to measure their words, which was a great effort given their outspoken nature. Often traitors were also agents provocateurs: they wreaked havoc in the city as well as in the countryside. A craftsman, returning from his work, witnesses in the village square a very animated discussion, where the shouting of the women dominates: they are skinning a neighbor whose husband is a cuckold. The bad inspiration of the craftsman pushes him to intervene and since his thoughts are expressed only through proverbs, he ventures this one:

> *Tostemps es e tostemps sera.*
> *Qu'om ab autrui molher jaira*[21].

The phrase is then repeated to the bishop: "Monsignor, you believe in the eternity of the world; you said: 'we will always see'". It is possible that this Arnaud de Savinhan, a stonecutter by trade, had truly - and naively - believed in the eternity of the world; he also had a clear reputation as an anticlerical. But if he had kept quiet that day, he would not have been condemned to the *Wall*.

Around 1320, it could be dangerous to have chimeras in your head, to have ghosts among your friends and to proclaim it everywhere. When Arnaud Gélis, called Bouteiller, former sacristan of the cathedral church of Pamiers, had been drinking, he took himself for the "messenger of the souls": the dead appeared to him entrusting him with errands for the living. The deceased canon asked for masses, the deceased bourgeois woman asked for the new veil that her heirs had exchanged for a worn-out one before putting her in the coffin, and another scrupulous deceased was concerned about a small debt that he had not been able to pay off.

Bishop Fournier had Arnaud Gélis arrested and questioned him with curiosity. This charlatan, who says that the dead do their penance on this earth by running through the fields at night and entering churches, is perhaps a heretic without knowing it. Does he not profess, like the Cathars, that Christ, on the day of Judgment, will save all Christians, no matter how bad they have been, and even the Jews?

Arnaud Gélis owed his salvation to his reputation as a drinker and perhaps also to the nickname of Bouteiller, known in this world and in the other. "In their nocturnal strolls," he confided to the bishop, "the dead have a weakness for sneaking into the dwellings of the rich bourgeois: there they go to the cellars and choose the best bottles. Sometimes they do me the honor of accepting me at their side. As they only drink on purpose, I am the one who empties their glasses".

We do not know the sentence. The bishop must have amused himself and sent Bouteiller to meet his drunken ghosts; and knowing that truth is sometimes hidden in wine, but never heresy, he no doubt only ordered him a short pilgrimage to the nearest shrine.

Peire Vidal, from Foix, meets one fine day on the road from Tarascon to Ax a village priest and a clergyman, who continue the march with him. The clergyman asks him point-blank and as if to start a conversation:
"My friend, do you think it is a mortal sin to know a woman whose husband one is not?". Peire Vidal answers simply: "If the woman is a prostitute and they have previously agreed on the price by mutual consent, I do not think the man sins with this act". "He's a bad boy!", says the clergyman to the priest. And the two run to denounce him to Bishop Fournier, who, in such a circumstance, was almost as lenient as Peire Vidal had been with the sins of the flesh: he condemned him to simple crosses, which he absolved him a year later.

Cathar solidarity and the organization of the resistance.

The Cathar "party" tried to defend itself against traitors and spies, sometimes spontaneously, sometimes by planning their actions. The shopkeepers, the artisans, the women of the village were always ready to intervene to save any victim of the preachers. Also, the villains in the deserted countryside. These were times of denunciation, but, on the other hand, an admirable solidarity between the persecuted and the victims was developing in all social strata. It happened one day in Toulouse that the veguer and the abbot of San Saturnino arrested a believer who was very well considered in his

neighborhood. At the moment of taking him away, there was a commotion and a certain Esquivet, helped by the artisans of the neighborhood, snatched the wretched man out of the hands of the soldiers.

On Good Friday in the year 1235, many heretics came to tell on themselves. Others were forced to speak. Arnaud Domenge, threatened with death by the veguer, denounced ten heretics in exchange for promising him their freedom: they were ten perfects or believers taking refuge in the castle of Cassés, that castle of sinister memory where Simon de Montfort had already had sixty perfects burned in 1211. Seven of the unfortunates were arrested. But three of them managed to escape, with the help of the surrounding peasants who came to their rescue.

The women were more fervent and skillful than anyone else. The women of Roquefort (near Sorèze) saw, one evening, a sergeant of the abbey who was leading to Sorèze two believers he had arrested, Raymonde Autière and his companion. Immediately, they armed themselves with sticks and sticks, beat the sergeant and released the two heretics. The sergeant ran to the abbey and told the abbot what had happened. The abbot returns to Roquefort with his sergeant, gathers the women and harasses them with questions. And here the story seems to come out of a fable, as Y. Dossat, who translated what happened next: *They replied that the sergeant had not arrested two perfect women, but two married women of the castle whom he had foolishly taken for two heretics. They pointed to two of them as if they were the ones who had been arrested. Evidently, the sergeant did not recognize them and maintained his point of view. But since he was unable to provide any evidence, he was not believed and was taken in derision. It is hard to believe*, Dossat adds, *that the abbot swallowed this deception*. Was he also something of a Cathar?

The " heretic party" had set up a clandestine organization
It was responsible for obtaining funds that would be used for the interests of the sect; perhaps another of its objectives was also to protect and help the accused to escape, if necessary by inciting liberation riots. This organization, it seems, supported by the perfects, undoubtedly benefited from the support and complicity of the consuls and many barons of the county court. How else to understand, if not for the existence of a real network of counter-espionage, that so many traitors were discovered and

executed, when the inquisitors jealously guarded the secrecy of the declarations and denunciations? Arnaud Domenge, who had cowardly betrayed the ten heretics of Cassés, was killed one night in his bed, in his house in Aigrefeuille. For their part, the Cathars tried to frighten the terrorists. A certain Guilhem Jean had proposed to the Dominicans of Pamiers to make Pierre Authier fall into their hands. How were the friends of the perfect one informed of such a conspiracy? Two of them surprised the informer in the middle of the night, took him to the mountains and threw him over a precipice. There is talk of agents of the Inquisition who dared not leave the friars' house or the convents where they had taken refuge. It goes without saying that these games and double games, these denunciations and false denunciations created to hinder the work of the inquisitors (good Catholics were denounced!), complicated dangerously the life of the believer. Woe to him who had a beautiful wife or a store so well stocked as to make the competitor die of envy!

In the event that the believers were not very fervent and were friends of the *In the case of the nuncii*, men of trust of the perfects who were in constant contact with them, visiting them secretly and, if they were unable to do so, finding ways to remind them of their duties, they could undoubtedly free themselves from most of their obligations to the sect. It is unimaginable that some abductions of perfects happened opportunely, being torn from the hands of the sergeants, certain "spontaneous" rebellions, had not been meticulously prepared: sure people framed the demonstrators and these had been undoubtedly
"summoned".

The sect had at its disposal *ductors*, faithful believers who knew the shortcuts, and took care to guide the good men through the countryside. In 1253, these *ductors* enabled Pierre Delprat to escape from the sergeants of the ball of Saint-Rome. *They made him escape through the breach of a wall of an adjoining house, hiding him until nightfall in a vineyard* (according to Y. Dossat). If these guides fell into the hands of the Inquisition, or if they themselves betrayed, then it was a real catastrophe: the list of shelters, of posts, of friendly houses should have been reduced to a list of the most important ones.

to be rebuilt again. In the case of Pierre Authier, if he managed to escape the Inquisition for such a long time, it was because he had at his disposal everywhere in the county of Foix, safe places whose owners, the *receivers*, were convinced Christians. In some villages all the peasants were also *receivers*.

At dusk, the arrival of the good men is expected. Everyone is gathered in the kitchen, the *foganha*; silence and murmuring. Suddenly there is a knock at the door and the woman goes to open it. It's the *ductor*, who asks in a low voice if there is anyone indiscreet. If they are all trustworthy, he introduces the perfect ones. Often they introduce themselves unannounced: they know the country well. They have crossed the village in darkness, with a quick step, their heads covered with the hood. The door closes behind them, hastily. Reverences, *melhorier*[22], women's pouty gestures guarding their skirts, covering their hair. The perfects take off their cloaks, revealing their tunics of dark blue cloth. They are made to sit near the fire, on the bench with back - also the salt closet - which is the place of honor. The colloquy immediately takes on a familiar character, each one asking questions about what interests him. (In these poor huts, free examination was practiced in a natural and spontaneous way). Then one of the good men preached, commenting on scenes from the Gospel, the story of Martha and Mary, for the women, or some dualistic myth.

Sometimes, neighbors who have *the understanding of the ben*[23]have been forewarned well in advance so that they can go and listen to the sermon. Again there is a knock at the door. Who can it be, given that all the friends are already there? It is a neighbor who has not been invited, but who has noticed that "something is going on". We have to open the door. She is immediately given the fire she says she has come for. But it was enough to make her aware of the presence of the two good men, sitting motionless on their bench, like statues, barely lit by the flames of the fireplace. It is useless to try to lie to him. They are good people," says the peasant woman, "good Christians: they live holy lives, and they never touch a woman. They alone have the power to save souls". She is made to promise not to say anything, not even to her husband. If she shows any sympathy for the sect, she is not hesitated to ask her - perhaps also to compromise her and

She will bring them oil, wheat and fish cake... She will bring them oil, wheat and fish cakes... All right: he will bring them oil, wheat and fish cake....

The more prudent believers only received the perfect ones in the outbuildings of the farm: the hayloft or the dovecote. At the first alarm, they would sneak out at night. Some of them had cellars or silos, where the perfect ones could hide for the duration of the unwelcome visit of a charlatan or a neighbor suspected of selling out to the inquisitors. There were trap doors leading to subway passages, closets concealing secret rooms, huge chests where they could be locked up. The safety of the perfects was probably greater in the countryside than in the city, except in Toulouse, in certain populous neighborhoods, on the island of Tounis, for example, or in Bazacle, where they could easily find refuge among the artisans and gardeners. The bourgeois palaces could only offer them, as temporary shelters, their large vaulted cellars, which in certain cities communicated with each other and made it possible to reach a distant house or the sewers.

When a believer thought that the time had come to ask for the *consolamentum*, he warned the perfect one, as we have said, through the *ductor* or the *nuncius*. The ceremony was held at night, away from prying eyes, in the sick person's room or in a secluded room, lit by a candle (at least one was needed next to the Gospel of John). At that time, the perfects spent less time comforting the dying and the rites were generally brief. If there was no security in the city, the *consolamentum* took place anywhere, in the countryside, behind a fence, or in one of those stone huts, so numerous in Languedoc. As before the persecution, the relatives gave to the sect the inheritance left to them by the deceased, adding their personal offering: money, clothes or food.

Religious antagonism in families.

It sometimes happened that families were divided by religious quarrels. This increased the difficulty of the clandestine practice of Catharism. A husband could be fearful of a chattering wife fanaticized by the clerics, or she of her husband. A young woman with a changeable mood, severely punished, could be a terrible danger to her parents: she threatened them with conversion to Catholicism. In the villages of the county of Foix, when they were preparing to receive the good men, the mother was very careful to keep the servant and her own daughter away if they were not absolutely addicted to the sect. They were sent to guard the flock, or to fetch water from the spring. A young woman explains that the Perfect Ones often stopped at her mother Bruna's house. One day, coming down from the second floor, she saw one in the living room on the first floor, whose features she could not distinguish. Her mother said to her angrily, "You were spying on us, weren't you, silly, and listening to us!". She sent her to fetch turnips.

Similar scenes must have been frequent and sometimes dramatic.
In a town in Catalonia where some believers had gathered before a perfect emigrant, a woman by the name of Ermesinda had a daughter, Joanna, who was believed to be possessed by the devil. And she was, since she was a good Catholic! It was impossible to speak of Catharism in her presence. As soon as the good man appeared, she shouted at him: "I'm going to split your head open with an axe! One day when his mother was ill: "Why don't you call your bishop?". He told her insolently, "He will cure her!". And he repeated to her that if they returned to Montaillou (Ariège), he would go and denounce her to the inquisitor, and also to the others. In his mother's own house, he dared to say to Bélibaste: "If you take yourselves for the son of God, where are your miracles?". The heretic simply replied, "My daughter, if I do you no harm, why do you do it to me?"

Joan became the plague, and the Cathar community had to consider getting rid of her. The perfects of the golden age would never have advised, nor allowed, a murder; but circumstances had changed: they did not authorize the believers to kill, but they let them do it.
"The weeds must be pulled out of the field," said Bélibaste, or: "If brambles grow in front of the door of your house, you must cut them down or

burn them. The believers interpreted those kinds of parables half-heartedly. The perfect took responsibility for these sins.

The mother prepared to add hellebore seeds to the huge plate of cooked cabbage that Joan was about to eat. But its limey nature meant that the poison had no effect on her. "We will have to kill her with a gun, or precipitate her from a rock," said her two cousins, who were in charge of the execution. But Guillemette, Jeanne's aunt, dissuaded them: "Be careful. He has more strength than the two of you put together, and if he smells anything, he will kill you." Finally, Pierre Mauri and another believer were appointed to assassinate her: while one would speak to her, the other would pierce her with a lance blow. But, on second thought, they feared they would be discovered and arrested for murder. "It is better, they said, to poison her with realgar (arsenic sulfide)." It is to be believed that this virago, capable of facing two armed men, had been created by the devil - and the devil protected her - for when Pierre Mauri wanted to acquire realgar, claiming it was to cure his donkeys, the apothecary refused to give it to him.
"Bring your beasts here," he said, "I myself will apply to them the
remedy. One of the conspirators, incapable of committing a sin, had secretly warned the pharmacist. And so it was that Joan escaped death.

Similar conflicts also existed - although less frequent - between husbands and wives. For this reason, the good men made sure that the young men took members of the sect as wives. In case of disagreement, spouses divorced. The perfect ones hastened to pronounce the dissolution of the marriage, before the hatred took extreme proportions.

The "help boxes".

Apart from the disagreements that could arise in some households, the majority of the Cathar families, united by the same religious faith, seem to have willingly faced the multiple obligations that sometimes fell on them, sometimes considerable. The sect had *questors*,

The poorest peasants always found something to give, and the women, who were responsible for feeding everyone, were no less generous. The poorest peasants always found something to give and the women, who were responsible for feeding everyone, were not the least generous. The *questores* also received the sum of voluntary contributions of money: *talhas* and *collectas*. If the word *collecta* evokes freely consented donations, the word *talhas suggests a* kind of tax. We do not believe that the Cathars wanted, nor could they have received a real tax from their followers. But evoking their sense of duty and the feeling of solidarity that united them as members of the "persecuted" Church, they succeeded in obtaining the agreement of all to establish a fixed contribution, proportional to their resources, and no doubt without great difficulty, since the believers also benefited from it.

If bad luck were to befall him, the believer could effectively to ask for recourse to the financial organism of the sect. In the case where the Inquisition threatened to exhume the mother of a perfect person, the first reaction of a son was to try to corrupt the dance; the latter, in some regions, and especially in the county of Foix, was more easily corruptible because he was also an enemy of the French; this required a sum of money that the believer did not always possess: he borrowed it, if possible, from the treasurer of the local community. False testimonies, which often served to accuse an enemy, were also used as a means of defense, although they also had to be paid. After an exhumation established by posthumous judgment, or for the mere fact of having given hospitality to a perfect one, the believer feared to see his house destroyed. The procurator of the Count of Foix - in 1310 - soon settled things, by means of the species: fifteen pounds tornesas. If the believer did not possess this sum, he could borrow it from the *questor*. In principle, the houses condemned to be destroyed could not be bought back, but the bribed judges consented to fictitious sales: the neighbors agreed among themselves to buy them at public auction, at least the land if they could not afford the houses. The aristocratic solidarity was even more effective: the goods seized from the knights were acquired

by the local bourgeoisie and later returned to their owners. But in some cases it was the Cathar treasury that made funds available to these nobles so that they could buy their domains through intermediaries.

There came a time when neither the perfect nor the highly committed believers were safe anywhere except in Montségur. They could not even hide in Catholic convents: a believer who had taken the habits in the abbey of Belleperche was condemned and, in order not to be arrested, had to flee to Lombardy. The atmosphere had become so unbreathable that many believers were considering expatriation. It seems that the sect offered money to exempted emigrants, especially to the perfect ones, as well as financed organized marches.

Without the help of a secret organization, capable of providing *drivers*, interns, escorts y foresee posts y shelters, how thesimple peasants, or even small lords who had never left their villages (they let themselves be caught in the inn or in the street, when they went alone from Pamiers to Toulouse), would have been able to undertake such long and dangerous journeys? There was a surprising circulation of funds throughout Occitania for the time, even if the monetary volume tended to increase at the end of the 13th century, as did the prices. *At the time of the emigration*, writes Dossat, *it was necessary to send large sums a Lombardy. Three hundred sueldo of gold were previously transported from Lavaur to Roquevidal in a sack made of two sewn rags. The transmission of sixty-five gold money from Lavaur to Prades, near Saint-Paul-Cap-de-Joux, in a small sack, aroused the curiosity of Bernard de Montesquieu, for this son of a knight had never seen gold coins; he even took a gold coin in his hand*. Poverty of the Occitan nobility! What a contrast with the capitalism, so proud even then and so sure of itself, of the Cathars and bourgeois who did not believe more than in gold, because it migrates with the migrants!

Partly thanks to this circulation of Cathar gold during the decade between the establishment of the Inquisition and the fall of Montségur, the believers had the impression that they were not totally disarmed in the face of repression. While the Perfect Ones, from the height of their inviolate mountain, led the Occitan resistance, many were the ones who, from the height of their inviolate mountain, led the resistance in Occitania.

who, among the faithful, in exchange for a daily struggle, shuffling the cards, punishing the traitors, responding to violence with violence, corrupting the corrupters, were able to save their lives without losing their souls.

CHAPTER III

LIFE IN MONTSÉGUR

The Cathar origins of Montségur

At the beginning of the 13th century, around 1202 or 1203 or perhaps earlier, some "Christians" had settled on the mountain of Montségur, at an altitude of twelve hundred and seven meters, to lead a contemplative life there. Perhaps this choice had been determined by ancient traditions related to the crag: one could observe from there the shapeless ruins of a rectangular tower, built on a work before it. A cistern, set into the mountainside two hundred meters west of a tower, supplied water to the small community. In 1203, Forneria, a declared heretic, mother of a knight of Mirepoix, had a house there. Her son Arnaud-Roger brought her supplies of bread, wine and fish, as there was no village in the vicinity. The present village was created much later, when the area had already been transformed into a kind of market. The mountain must have had some prestige because Forneria, who could have retired, with the goods she possessed, to the women's convent of Lavelanet, preferred to go to meet her companions and some perfects. They practiced evangelical poverty in common, in the midst of trees of small height even though

and very close to the sky, in houses that in reality were nothing more than cells of wood and stone.

Around 1209, Auda of Fanjeaux also lived in one of these huts, where her son Isarn-Bernard sometimes visited her. This noble lady had received the *consolamentum* in Fanjeaux, from the hands of Guilhabert de Castres, at the same time as Esclarmonde de Foix, Fays de Durfort and Raymonde de Saint-Michel. These perfect women, wives who had separated from their husbands while wearing the habit, and some widows, found material and spiritual security in the Cathar community and could usefully use their last strength. Some did not stay the whole year in Montségur, but simply went to visit their friends. And so it was that in 1211, Hélis de Mazerolles, her sister Fays and two other ladies went up to the castle, met Guilhabert de Castres there, and met him in Montségur.
"worshipped" in the "House of Heretics". Sicard de Durfort's mother also resided there in 1214, together with her son.

The fortress: religious capital and refuge.

In 1204, this community, which was originally mainly female, grew considerably, so that Raimon de Mirepoix, Raimon Blasquo and the Cathar clergy judged it necessary to ask Raimon de Péreille, lord of the Roque d'Olmès and Péreille, to rebuild the castle of Montségur. At the time, it was a question of providing a more comfortable refuge for the community, ensuring greater protection against a possible attack by bandits or robbers. Raimon de Péreille hesitated, but eventually accepted. On the site of the ruined tower, there was a new and secure castle, without costing him too much, since the Cathar Church took charge of all or part of the reconstruction work.

The work lasted from 1204-1205 to 1209-1211, without the mountain seeing those cenobites disappear. The large rectangular tower was restored and transformed into a keep; the small cistern -or well- located on the western slope proved to be insufficient, unhealthy and exposed to destruction in case of siege, which is why a new one was built.

cistern that occupied, unusually, almost half of the great primitive hall. A walled enclosure was then built, in the form of an irregular pentagon, without towers, without ornaments, without barbicans, without cornices other than those that were necessary, at threatened points, to support the machicolations. The castle had two gates; one, to the north, gave access to the small village of the perfectas, and the other, to the south, was the entrance to the castle. The Cathar village, installed on the terrace, between the wall of the enclosure and the abyss, protected by palisades, was, so to speak, clinging to the castle, so that the southern gate was like an inner door. A fort, located two or three hundred meters to the east, completed the defense of the complex made up of the Cathar village and the castle, adding to its prestige.

Inside, the courtyard of the castle was partly occupied by the premises belonging to the sect, or used as a warehouse, leaving free in the center a small courtyard and a kind of corridor or street that went from one door to another. Before the siege of 1244, this courtyard was part of the town, since it had to be crossed to leave it. The large gate, through which one still enters the enclosure today, opened onto a mountain road, which at that time was better preserved. It was a high gate protected by a crenellated wall whose cornices are still visible. The old peasants of Montségur remember having seen, in front of this gate, a concavity in the ground and traces of an escarpment, and claim that there was a *ditch*, a wide and deep moat, protecting only the entrance to the castle. The existence of this moat, which had to be crossed over a movable bridge, cannot be ruled out.

A barbican of stone and wood protected the road. Undoubtedly, the sick and provisions of all kinds could be transported with the help of mules to the gate of that barbican, perhaps even to the castle. It is true that some perfects arrived on horseback, but we do not know where they left their mounts.

In 1232, Guilhabert de Castres asked to meet Raimon de Péreille. The interview took place in Pas-de-la-Porte (between Saverdun and Auterive). Raimon de Péreille was accompanied by numerous knights and armed sergeants; Guilhabert de Castres had gathered about thirty perfects, including Bernard de la Mothe, Jean Cambiator,

Hugues de la Bacone, Trent. An escort of faithful knights, among whom was Pierre de Mazerolles, ensured the protection of the perfect ones. They all went to the castle of Massabrac, where they spent the night. Guilhabert de Castres was cold: they lit a fire for him. At dawn, Raimon de Péreille and his knights led the good men to Montségur, where it is probable that Raimon de Péreille did not yet have his usual residence, even if his wife remained already in the mountains. Guilhabert de Castres then begged Raimon de Péreille to receive the Cathars in the castle, so that his Church would thus have a central headquarters, a sort of capital, from where he could send his missionaries, propagate his apostolate and ensure the defense of the persecuted. Raimon de Péreille was reluctant for a long time: he sought the advice of his knights, the lords of Châteauverdun, Lavelanet and Mayreville, well aware of the dangers that the matter could bring them, but also considering that the power of the sect would contribute, when the time came, to protect them, and finally agreed. In fact, a short time later they were excommunicated: Raimon de Péreille, his wife Corba, his brother Arnaud-Roger and his son-in-law Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix, who would soon assume the military command of the castle.

From that moment on, Montségur's character changed completely. Already is not only the asylum of a handful of perfect men and women, but the religious capital of Catharism, the mother house from which the apostolate, the essential mission of the sect, was to shine throughout the Languedoc region; the

Finally, there was a "safe place" where the believers could meet the perfect ones at any time, to advise them, to comfort them, to give them *consolamentum*. The religious establishments were enlarged: there was an *inn for the good men*, which the inquisitors called the "House of the Heretics", where the Perfect Ones lived in community and, next to it, a convent for women, where they had their meals together. These convents undoubtedly already existed in 1204 or 1205: it was a group of juxtaposed huts. But larger dwellings were installed in 1231. One can still see today, under the keep, the remains of a large room, with stairs carved into the rock, which may have served as a refectory or a meeting room.

It seems that the dwelling of Guilhabert de Castres was adjacent to the "house of the perfect".

A mysterious world.

It is impossible to match in a satisfactory way for the mind the information provided by the texts with the current state of those places. There were in Montségur, up to two or three hundred perfects (in 1244, two hundred at least were burned). The garrison, knights and mercenaries, must not have been less than one hundred and fifty men, to which had to be added the families and personnel, although reduced, of the lords. The imagination does not succeed in locating all these people, without admitting the hypothesis that in the thirteenth century, there existed in the mountains and nearby valleys, either in the place called *Camp de la Gleisa* or on the site of the present village, numerous houses firmly built, which the Inquisition would have destroyed in 1244.

The keep, relatively small, could only hold a few rooms.
Raimon de Péreille, Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix and his family, as well as some ladies and gentlemen of their entourage. Corba, wife of Raimon de Péreille, probably lived with Marquise de Lantar, her mother, and Esclarmonde, her crippled daughter, in the convent of the perfect ones, outside the castle. But Philippa, wife of Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix, who had with her their infant son Esquieu, a wet nurse, a maid, and the
"servant" of her husband, she was to share the upper room of the tower with her sister Arpais de Ravat, the wife of Arnaud-Roger de Mirepoix, Cecilia, and Azalais de Massabrac. The men undoubtedly occupied the first floor. Roquefère, Pierre-Rogier's natural son, and a surgeon were also staying in a corner of this room. The promiscuity must have been annoying. If we imagine that to fetch water from the cistern we had to cross the room; that the tower, headquarters of the military command, was full, at certain hours, of messengers and sergeants-at-arms, we can get an idea of the prevailing hubbub.

Some knights and sergeants had brought with them their legitimate wives or their concubines. They were never very numerous. They were supposed to be in the barracks that surrounded the castle courtyard. Perhaps all together, in a common dormitory? Or in individual rooms where their husbands or mistresses met them?

At Montségur, everyone lived with few comforts. The lower room of the tower, cold in winter because of the proximity of the cistern, was rather unhealthy. The upper room, where the ladies were crowded together, was more airy and had a large fireplace. At night, there was no light other than that provided by the candles: the perfects brought the wax to Pierre-Rogier to make them.

The huts where the perfect ones resided, mostly carved in the rock, were covered by a single sloping roof supported by stone or wooden walls. They were also very narrow and without any window, and air and light only entered through the door (the hinges and iron fittings have often been found in the ruins). In winter, the huts were heated with simple fires lit between two stones, as in the Neolithic period, or with braziers, as in Roman times. The smoke came out through a hole in the roof or through the door. The furniture consisted of a bed, a trunk, where the perfect ones kept their books and clothes, and a stool. A shelf hewn out of the rock contained a basin, a pot, an oil lamp made of clay.

Where then were the convents, the hospice, the schools mentioned in some texts? These places have left no trace: perhaps they were of very modest dimensions. If at Montségur the life of each perfect, or rather of each two perfects in their cell, is easily imaginable, it is difficult to locate, on the other hand, according to the archaeological remains, the rooms where the common meals, the ceremonies, the conferences took place. We have even come to believe that, given the circumstances and the nature of the place, they were forced to live each to himself, each one preparing his own food, and that in reality the community was only ideological and neighborhood. The convents were the huts that communicated with each other; the hospice, the group of huts where each group of perfects took care of their sick. As for the school, it could be anywhere. It does not seem, moreover, that there were

many young people in Montségur, and the girls, few in number, lived with their mothers.

In the summer, it is true, the ceremonies could take place outdoors, somewhere uncovered, in front of the magnificent horizons.

Very little is said about children in Montségur. We find only Pierre-Rogier's son, Esquieu, and that of Bérenger de Lavelanet, who was ten years old when he was interrogated after the capitulation. Everything suggests that pregnant women were immediately evacuated, sent to their castles or to safe places in nearby farms. The people of the Perfect Ones were mostly composed of old men and women.

As for the men-at-arms, they probably lived in the castle's storehouses or in wooden barracks. When it was their turn to stand guard, they slept right there on the walls, wrapped in their cloaks.

The castle courtyard must have had a lively and picturesque appearance. The women were stewing in the open air, near the grocery store that can still be seen leaning against the inside of the east wall. The smell of roasting meat, which the wind carried, must not have been to the liking of the perfects, as well as the neighborhood formed by those gentlemen, rude and carnal, whom the women or mistresses had not wanted to give up. They undoubtedly preferred their stone cells, hidden in the silent vegetation, to that sample of the satanic world that was the castle, with its shouting, its rages, its passions.

Religious, diplomatic and military contacts with the outside world.

However, Montségur was not always such a crowded village: its population must have been floating and highly variable. At certain times, only the oldest male and female perfects and a small corps of knights on guard remained in the castle. The rest - perfects and knights - were on mission. The bishops had wanted it that way. Bertran Marti, resident in Montségur since 1238, was always wandering in the mountains and valleys. In 1240, he was found with the knights of Gaja and Laurac, to whom

breathes encouragement. Later, he shut himself up in the besieged Montreal from where he was able to escape. Until his death, which occurred at the stake in 1244, he continued to do the same as in 1233, when he traveled through villages and castles of the Lauragais, from Mas-Saintes-Puelles to Fanjeaux. Guilhabert de Castres, who was also initially a resident of Montségur, where he owned a house, showed the same apostolic zeal. He goes to acquire new forces to the holy mountain to leave immediately for new missions. In 1233, he *consoled* a knight of Hautpoul, then went to Montreal and Dourne, in the region of Sault, where for a time he was the guest of the lords of Niort; in 1237, he visited Saint-Félix-de-Caraman. In 1237, he visited Saint-Félix-de-Caraman. He traveled in every direction of his ideal diocese, which, thanks to his tireless activity and the fervor of his faithful, became a true diocese. He did not cease his pilgrimages until 1237. He was already very old and did not leave the fortress where, in 1241, he still gave the *consolamentum* to Arnaud Dejean. He undoubtedly died shortly before the siege of 1244, since he does not appear, at least under the name of Bertran Marti, among the victims of the bonfire of Montségur.

Between two episcopal tours, the perfects dedicated themselves to reorganizing the sect. Shortly after having obtained from Raimon de Péreille the cession of Montségur, Guilhabert ordains Trent as bishop of Agenais, with Vigoros de la Bacone as eldest son. He institutes Jean Cambiator as eldest son of Toulouse, with Bernard Bonafous as deacon. The meetings held at Montségur, given the number and quality of the perfects who attended them, resembled synods. It is not possible to speak exactly about the size of the organization that was created there, but, since it controlled points far away from the castle, we can believe that it covered the general administration of the whole Occitan Catharism.

The diplomatic activity of Montségur was very considerable from 1230 to 1244. Through numerous and faithful emissaries, everything that was happening in Languedoc was known. The uprising of Trencavel in 1240 did not take the Cathar knights by surprise: they hoped that the viscount would reach Montségur and that, from there, he would be able to secure their union with the Count of Foix. Relations with the Count of Toulouse were never interrupted, even when his attitude, dictated by circumstances, could seem ambiguous or hostile. In 1241, Raymond VII gave

ordered his troops to advance towards Montségur and lay siege to it. But everyone in the fortress knew that at the same time he was preparing to confront the King of France, leading a fearsome coalition that, if it had been better managed, could have meant the end of French domination in Languedoc. His attitude in 1233 was apparently even more incomprehensible when, on his orders, Mancipe de Gaillac, one of his bailiffs from the castle of Fanjeaux, who was also suspected of heresy, had arrived at Montségur - where he was very well received - accompanied by some sergeants, and seized, without any difficulty, Jean Cambiator and three perfects. These, taken to Toulouse, had been burned alive. What does it matter! The bishops and knights understood everything and forgave everything. Their only concern was to know, at all times, "where the affairs of the Count of Toulouse were and if they were still well". Undoubtedly at the Count's instigation, the expedition against the inquisitors of Avignonet and many others of which we have no precise knowledge were organized from the fortress. This supposes permanent relations between the count's court and the castle, either with the perfects directly or at least with their military chiefs.

Montségur sent emissaries everywhere and, in t u r n, he received them from everywhere. Numerous Catalan knights stayed there on several occasions. Some perfects, who lived in Castelbon in 1244, were in constant contact with Montségur. The Cathars returning from Lombardy were also received there, bringing news from the emigrated Cathar milieus, as well as from the heretical Churches of Italy. One day, a perfect one sent Bertran Marti a letter from the Cathar bishop of Cremona. In it, the bishop praised the profound peace in which his Church found itself, seeming to want to invite him to take refuge there in case the affairs of the sect should go awry. In fact, one of Bertran Marti's successors followed this wise advice and governed as best he could the Church of Toulouse from Cremona and Piacenza, where he took refuge from 1244 to 1272 or so. We do not know to what extent the *ductors* in charge of bringing the Cathars to Lombardy were already under the control of Montségur. The first attempt at a network was probably made before 1244.

The sect and the Cathar treasury must have, from that time on, helped important and particularly threatened ministers to leave for Italy.

The news circulated quickly, precisely because many believers went to Lombardy and returned spontaneously or by order. The anti-Roman poems of the troubadours who had taken refuge at the court of Frederick II were read (around 1241-1242 an intervention of the Germanic emperor in favor of Raymond VII, his ally at that time, was believed to be imminent). They were outraged by a Francophile *servant* of Uc de Saint-Circ; on the other hand, the virulent satire of Guilhem Figueira, against Rome, was applauded. The good news alternated, it is true, with the bad, plunging them as soon in hope as in discouragement. Raymond VII tried to encourage the knights by propagating, during the siege of 1244, "false good news"...

Until the moment they were besieged, the inhabitants of Montségur never felt isolated. Powerful fortresses still remained, the castles of the lords of Niort, the square of Quéribus. It was believed that the Count of Foix was ready to resume the fight. The powerful Bernard of Alion did not hesitate to give them his help. They went freely out of Montségur; the perfects attended meals where the benediction of bread was given, in Camon and other places, and visited the communities of the region. Each neighboring village meant a refuge. Even during the siege, while the small fort in the east was in the hands of the Cathars, it was possible to enter and leave the enclosure, at night, with relative ease: Montségur remained wide open to space and to the future...

Subsistence problems.

However, the bishops and the perfects had to worry about the supply of the square, which did not always find its food nearby. In 1235, the winter was very harsh and the wheat had suffered frosts throughout the region, so the perfects knew difficult days. Two believing knights brought the news to Bernard Oth de Niort, that
"they had seen several perfect ones, at Montségur, dying almost of starvation".

A collection was immediately made in the dioceses of Carcassonne and Toulouse, and sixty barrels of wheat were obtained. The group of knights of Laurac offered ten barrels. Bernard Oth de Niort alone donated as many. With the vigilance of Guilhabert de Castres and Bertran Marti, the famine was not repeated. Food arrived from friendly villages: Villeneuve d'Olmès, Massabrac, Montferrier. The presence of so many consumers in the mountains attracted merchants, who sometimes came from far away. Not having in principle the right to sell to heretics, the deal was made at the foot of the mountain and the merchants pretended to ignore the category to which their buyers belonged. Others, more fervent, went up to the castle where they *worshipped* the perfect ones, those customers who paid so well. Donations came from everywhere: special agents went to fetch them directly when the donors could not bring them themselves. In general, it was wheat, which the perfects crushed in their huts with the help of small millstones, as well as legumes of all kinds, beans, chickpeas, cabbages, lentils, mushrooms, and fruits, figs, pears, grapes, walnuts, hazelnuts, and also oil, honey, cakes, fresh fish or in brine, fish cakes and wine. The arrival of the merchants, the return of the collecting agents produced on the slopes of the mountain a continuous movement, tinged with a certain optimism.

It was also necessary to think about storing provisions for the garrison and the community, in anticipation of a siege that seemed imminent. For the perfects, the main provisions were wheat and legumes, fish and oil. Each of them received a certain amount of grain that he kept in a silo dug under his hut (one can still find, sometimes, on the terraces of Montségur, caches of charred wheat). There were also, in the castle, storehouses where wheat and vegetables were kept for the needs of the community; and, in the ossuary at the back of the courtyard, provisions of salted meat were piled up for the knights and soldiers.

From 1242, everyone in Montségur worked relentlessly to increase the food reserves. Donkeys carried sacks of wheat and barrels of wine up to the barbican; knights and perfects helped to unload the beasts, carrying the sacks and bales on their backs.

Traditions that are still alive, and older than those invented by Napoleon Peyrat, tell of these fabulous carts: in many villages of the region, the "road that leads to Montségur" is still shown.

The treasure of Montségur.

The Cathars were often forced to buy through intermediaries and to pay favors. It was therefore necessary for the sect's treasury to be well supplied. It was fed by donations, by bequests, by deliveries. Many believers gave to the perfect ones sums of money, vases of great value, silver objects. Others, who had already lost their houses and their lands, and who were tormented by the thought of losing also the small goods that remained to them, entrusted them to the *questors* of Montségur. These deposits were always made on a long-term basis, but the Cathars returned them exactly when they were claimed, and without any interest. The sect reserved only the right to make them pay back at its discretion, for the benefit of the Good. If the heirs of a believer did not hand over the inheritance he had bequeathed to the perfect before his death, they were separated from the Church, unless they had really impoverished themselves. A heretic of the family of Niort had bequeathed fifty sous of Melgueil to the perfecti, after having received the *consolamentum* from them. His brother, Oth de Niort, who had, however, done marked favors to Catharism, was unable or unwilling to give them to them. Shortly thereafter, having been wounded, he asked to receive the *consolamentum*. Guilhabert de Castres first demanded that he hand over to him the sum that the Church had lent him as well as the donation of his brother. The total sum was twelve hundred Melgueil salaries. This was in 1232, at the time when Guilhabert was a deacon at Fanjeaux. Some believers, ruined by seizures, made conditional bequests, payable only in case their heirs recovered their fortune. And so it was that Raimon de Congost, after having received the *consolamentum* at Montségur, bequeathed to the deacon Tavernier one hundred Melgueil salaries, subject to his heirs recovering the goods seized from his family.

The perfectos did not like to travel with money, nor did they like to receive it. The funds were collected by the *questores or depositarii* who kept them with them until they could remit them to the treasury.

The details of how the Cathars made their deposits bear fruit are not well known. At different times, they placed large sums in the houses of Toulouse or Italian bankers and, it seems, they also lent money, sometimes with interest, to the knights. But, most of the time, they waived this interest in exchange for the armed aid they expected from them. Great ladies, such as Hélis de Mazerolles, who often borrowed money from the treasury of the women's convents they managed, never failed to pay it back. In the 1240s, when war threatened, when the sect had to face enormous immediate expenses and times were not favorable to commercial investments, the perfects made, by mounting the defense of the castle of Montségur, their most profitable "investment".

The expenses of the sect were really big. Sometimes, it was necessary to pay for the release of a perfect. When he was only a deacon, Bertran Marti was arrested one day in Fanjeaux with three of his perfects. The wife of a certain Fournier, in whose house they had been imprisoned, ran to see a merchant friend of the Cathars, who immediately gave her seven silver basins. Continuing his collection, he ended up collecting one hundred Toulouse salaries, which were used to pay the ransom for the ransom of the Perfect Ones. But not always the generosity of the believers manifested itself so spontaneously and, sometimes, it was the sect that had to pay the expenses, paying a whole staff: *nuncii*, passers-by, *questors*, spies, emissaries in charge of dangerous missions. These agents were undoubtedly disinterested, but the perfects believed it was right to compensate those who were in grave danger, especially when they sheltered them.

Not being a very safe country, the perfects were sometimes escorted by the knights of Montségur, from whom they hired horses or mules. For each of these missions they were given an indemnity, for they never required a favor without first rewarding it. Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix was paid one hundred sueldos each time he escorted a perfect man; the

barber-surgeon of Montségur received five each time he bled Guilhabert de Castres.

The perfect ones never carried weapons, did not fight, did not shed blood. In their service, apart from the volunteer knights, they had mercenaries and highwaymen. At the height of the siege of 1244, it was reported with joy in the castle that Bernard d'Alion and Arnaud de Son had been able to recruit twenty-five mercenaries for five hundred Melgueil salaries. (In reality, these elite soldiers, under the command of Corbairo, a Catalan group leader, were never able to enter the square). The knights, most of them without resources, were practically maintained by the sect as well. At the beginning of Lent 1243, shortly before the capitulation, Bertrán Marti distributed oil, pepper and salt to all the men of the garrison. The tailors made doublets to dress them. A needy gentleman received gloves, a hat; another, a tunic, a *gardacor*. Normally, the mercenaries received a salary in cash: four hundred Toulouse salaries were divided between Raimon de Saint-Martin, head of a mercenary troop, and Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix. Each sergeant-at-arms received five Toulouse salaries (these were the arrears of his salary). Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix was also salaried for his function as condotiero. Bertran Marti gave him oil and salt, invited him to his table, paid for his clothes; he offered him, shortly before the fall of the fortress, a green blanket from Persia; he even brought him the wax necessary to make candles. The Cathar Church entrusted him with the necessary distribution to feed his knights (when the surrender came, Pierre-Rogier took with him the considerable wealth he had gathered in the service of the heresy, together with the booty resulting from his expeditions). The Church also paid the necessary expenses for the armament. Around 1240, when the victory of Trencavel was expected, weapons were manufactured in Montségur: spears, bows; others came from abroad. The engineer Arnaud de Vilar stayed four days in the castle to prepare the ballistae at the time of the siege of the Count of Toulouse. During the siege of 1244, another engineer entered the square to build a war machine capable of destroying the one that the bishop of Albi had managed to install two hundred meters from the castle.

Relations between perfects and knights or sergeants-at-arms were correct, but distant. The perfects would have preferred to live in peace, and were often impatient with the quarrels that arose between these warriors. Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix, in spite of the respect he showed outwardly to the perfects, kept in the depths of his soul his aristocratic pride. The Church appreciated his favors, which were paid to him, but when the bishops wanted to talk to him, they summoned him to their house. The Cathar community maintained the most unavoidable relations with the soldiery. Knights and mercenaries listened to the sermons of the bishops in the courtyard of the castle; as for the rest, they lived as they pleased; they were only considered true "believers", that is, for the perfect, souls to save, when they received from them, being wounded or dying, the *consolamentum*, in fulfillment of the *convenensa.*

Religious life.

In spite of the incessant turmoil that reigned on the mountain, the Perfect Ones continued to lead, between the castle and the abyss, their life of meditation and prayer. The meals they took, sometimes in common, bread, wine, nuts and fruit, were preceded by the *blessing of the bread*, more solemn in Montségur than anywhere else. Every Sunday, the sermons of Bertran Marti or Guilhabert de Castres were a great success, attracting the believers of the region, passing visitors and even merchants. On the eve of a dangerous expedition, the bishop addressed especially the knights, stimulating their faith, exhorting their courage. Every month the *apparelhamentum or servicium* took place. The deacon or the bishop gathered the perfect men and women, received their confession in public, then their private confession if necessary, and administered penances. The knights, the sergeants-at-arms, their wives or their mistresses could also confess, or at least attend the ceremony, and the "kiss of peace" that closed it. Some of these *apparelhements* took, in Montségur, a particular importance, for example the one that preceded the night of Christmas. For the perfect ones who did not inhabit "the mountain", it was a

to attend the ceremony in large numbers. In 1242, Catalan Cathars arrived from Tallemporaria and stayed in the castle for about fifteen days. The meals, taken in common, were then very animated, because each one told the events of his distant country; they spoke of the living and also of the dead, of those who were in exile in Catalonia or in Lombardy, but also of temporal and supernatural hopes.

The perfect ones often received, in their huts, when they had it in property, or in the house of the sect, their children, or their believing friends. All of them would first of all make the three genuflections of the *melhorier* before them, - then the son would give free rein to his emotion at finding himself again before his mother; the old lady, to the pleasure of seeing her childhood friend again and to the pleasure of evoking with her the memories that preceded her taking the habit.

There were some girls in Montségur who did not want to be separated from their mothers. They were perfect or aspiring. It also happened that one of them, not very enthusiastic about the mystical life, fell in love with a gentleman, known during the sermon. She married him, without, of course, ceasing to be a believer.

The perfects never forgot that, as important as the mystical and contemplative life was, they also had the duty to act, and that their mission consisted essentially in preaching and "consoling" souls. At Montségur, according to the rule, it was certainly the bishops or the deacons who conferred the *consolamentum d'ordination*, but they also sometimes conferred that of the deceased. One can even think that the immense prestige that the castle enjoyed for the believers was due in great part to the fact that the rule, the rites and the ceremonies were maintained there in all their exactitude and rigor.

The believers knew that at Montségur they would find fervent and pure ministers (the *consolamentum* given by a perfect one in a state of sin was not effective) who would console them at the right moment and after having imposed on them the long spiritual preparation required by the *ritual.* The perfect ones were quite numerous, and they had the necessary time to devote to this task, without having to fear the sudden irruption

of the henchmen of the Inquisition. It is understandable that so many good Christians wanted to die in Montségur for this reason. If the physical state of the sick person allowed it (they took care of his body as well as his soul), the Perfect Ones taught him the Cathar doctrine and especially abstinence for a long time. And they *consoled* him only at the last moment, so that he could not relapse into sin. If it is true that the places keep something of the subtle energies that manifested themselves in its corners, Montségur must radiate spiritual light, for what is certain, whether one believes in the value of Catharism or not, is that many men and women died there truly *consoled*, that is to say, with the certainty of having conquered the darkness.

Nothing was more exciting than the arrival at the castle, at dawn, of those sick people who had traveled all night, carried in bunks, or on the backs of mules or horses; they had feared, more than death itself, not to see the sun appear over the mountain. Many, indeed, died on the way. Peire Guilhem de Fogars, from the Roque d'Olmès, who could no longer speak, had to stop at Montferrier, very close to Montségur. He died there, in the arms of the two good men who accompanied him, with his eyes fixed on the Château de la Consolation.

At Montségur, ordination, that is, the *consolamentum* of the perfect, was also conferred on men and women worthy of it. But they had to be previously prepared: Marquise de Lantar, related to barons who had always served Catharism faithfully, had retired very young to Montségur; she was undoubtedly, together with Forneria, the most veteran of the community; however, she only received the habits in 1234, when she was already very old, in the house of Bertrán Marti, in the presence of her daughter, Corba de Péreille, of Arpáis, wife of the knight Guiraud de Ravat, and of her granddaughter.

The perfect men and women were obliged, according to the rule, to devote part of their time to material work to earn their living; it was easy for them to fill the little leisure time that their religious occupations left them. In Montségur, almost all professions, all trades were present. Some good men cultivated the arid fields on the sunny slopes of the mountain. Some perfect women sometimes went fishing for trout in the

torrent coming down from Saint-Barthélemy. Others baked bread (Guillelma d'En Marti had been a baker), others cooked; some fetched water from the cistern, washed the community's clothes, others spun wool, sewed their own clothes, those of the perfects and those of the garrison. They bought wool from merchants, when the donations of raw material were not enough.

In Montségur there were masons, carpenters, gunsmiths, smelters and even a miller. We do not know, for lack of information, how the offices and the accounting services were organized. But what is certain is that it was easy to find educated people among the perfects, some of whom were women of experience and great culture. Several of them had directed convents: Esclarmonde, mother of the knight Hugues de Festa, established in the mountains since 1229, had long been superior of a community of women at Fanjeaux.

Knights and mercenaries.

Compared to the perfect, knights and mercenaries were a very different world. Carefree and optimistic, inactivity would have been boring for them. Most of them had lost all their possessions, and had no other asylum than the fortress. Some, few in number, had kept their mansions in Sault, and went to Montségur only for a period of service, out of loyalty, out of devotion to the Count of Toulouse, or because they had contracted obligations with the sect. They were housed and fed, and could also keep the spoils of war. The question of Avignonet represented for them only a good opportunity to appropriate the spoils. Without questioning the sincerity of their adherence to Catharism, often admirable, one can nevertheless believe that Montségur represented for them political independence and a materialization of their desire for revenge.

Like the perfect ones, they were always on the road. Montségur looked like the legendary castle of King Arthur, where they were no more

than two or three idle knights, lazily waiting for the adventure, the others having already left for the salvation of a widow or an orphan. Sometimes, it was necessary to escort a bishop or a group of perfects, protecting them, defending them from bandits. Other times, to oppose by force the arrest of a believer faithful to the sect. Sometimes they were sent to clandestinely reinforce the villages where the inquisitor had proclaimed a "time of grace": the Cathars feared the effect of these measures because the traitors, who benefited from them, betrayed many people. In the territory of the county of Toulouse, the bailiffs, patriots and believers, were energetically careful to discourage eventual denouncers. During the Lent of 1240, the Inquisition had proclaimed, in Conques, a "week of grace", during which the heretics, who *presented themselves spontaneously and denounced another, would be absolved in exchange for light canonical penances*. Montauriol's ball immediately rallied the population: "Beware that no one dares to denounce a single one of our friends to the Inquisition: I will instantly arrest the traitor, seize his property and condemn him to death! But, sometimes, it was not superfluous for a small contingent of knights from Montségur to come to support the fervor of the believers and, in some cases, to press even the dance.

The punitive expeditions and the Avignonet affair.

Montségur organized defensive and punitive actions against the traitors and against the Inquisition, striking back blow by blow, answering terror with terrorism. In 1241, Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix went to lock himself in the castle of Roquefeuil, which Trencavel had momentarily liberated, and which was then besieged by the governor of Carcassonne. Pierre-Rogier's head was put at a price, but he managed to escape and reach Montségur. Other expeditions, less important, were undoubtedly organized, although history has kept no memory of them. The most famous is the affair of Avignonet, which ended with the killing of the inquisitor Guillaume Arnaud and his entire court. Guillaume Arnaud had

The killing was decided by Raymond VII and his friend Raimon d'Alfar, dance of Avignonet: the knights of Montségur were charged with executing him, a role they gladly accepted. The slaughter was decided by Raymond VII and his friend Raimon d'Alfar, dance of Avignonet: the knights of Montségur were charged to execute it, a function they accepted willingly. Counting on the complicity of the burghers of Avignonet, who opened the gates of the city, Raimon d'Alfar made the inquisitors fall into a well-prepared trap: the knights of Montségur, who had traveled all night, surprised the inquisitors in the house where Raimon d'Alfar had lodged them, and there they killed them. The booty was very poor. One took a box of ginger, another a horse; the latter a candelabrum belonging to Raimon l'Escrivan, former troubadour and archdeacon of the legate; the former a book which he soon sold for forty Toulousian salaries; the latter seized a tunic... Pierre-Rogier had been guided only by the hatred he had long felt for Guillaume Arnaud. When he met with the conspirators after the affair, he immediately asked one of them:
"Arnaud, where is the cup? -It broke. Why didn't you pick up the
pieces? I would have put them together in a circle of gold, and in this cup I would have drunk wine all my life". That cup was the skull of Friar Guillaume Arnaud.

It does not seem that the Cathar clergy participated directly in this slaughter, which their morals certainly reprobated, but neither did they prevent it. In fact,
could he have done it? These were the affairs of the Count of Toulouse; and, while the perfect would doubtless have condemned the particularly cruel circumstances in which the murder was perpetrated, they could not feel much pity for the fate of the inquisitors, themselves murderers, who, *having struck with the sword, must die by the sword.*

Bertran Marti had surely attended the talk that Raimon d'Alfar's envoy had with Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix, in Montségur, shortly after the terrible expedition. The bishop was between two waters: on the one hand, his conscience of perfection, on the other, the reason of State; the slaughter of the inquisitors would be the sign of the insurrection of Raymond VII against the king of France. Liberation seemed very near,

but he also knew that if the count's affairs failed, it would mean, this time, the end of Montségur. And it seems that for these reasons he demanded that Pierre-Rogier not participate personally in the slaughter. Indeed, it is very surprising that the leader of the expedition kept his distance, that he did not himself kill Guillaume Arnaud, for whom he felt an immense hatred, and that he did not collect his share of the booty... In 1244, at the time of the capitulation, the Roman Church let Pierre-Rogier go without disturbing him. He knew well that at this juncture, the *faidits* knights had done nothing more than execute the orders of the Count of Toulouse.

The world in miniature.

From 1230 to 1244, in Montségur alone, Catharism formed, according to its own laws, a society, small, but similar to the true one, that of the "Mixture", where Good is juxtaposed to Evil. If Bertran Marti sometimes climbed to the terrace of the keep, he could contemplate from there, at his feet, the small village of the perfect, silent and immersed in prayers, and, in the courtyard of the castle, the soldiers' camps, the women's barracks, echoing with shouts, songs and all the echoes of human passions.

The knights, those who were believers and especially those who were not, led the same life as the Catholic knights against whom they fought. They ate meat, when they had it; game, when the hunt had been good; most of the time they ate cheese with bread; and, entirely exposed to a brutal life, whose counterpart was warrior heroism, they closed their hearts neither to fury, nor to pride, nor to lust. They all recognized the authority of the Cathar clergy, bowing deeply to the step of a bishop or a perfect, but, feeling incapable of imitating their purity, they let themselves be carried away by the passions and emotions of the moment. The quarrels that often arose between the two military chiefs, the old Raimon de Péreille and Pierre-Rogier, his son-in-law, had caused great concern to Guilhabert de Castres: they continued to cause it to Bertran Marti. The causes are unknown

of this disagreement. Perhaps it was a question of interests, inheritance, distribution; or rather, it was the innate pride of these feudal lords: each one wanted to be the only one to govern. The Cathar law imposed, in these cases, recourse to arbitration, and the circumstances demanded more than ever concord: the bishops easily managed to re-establish peace between the son-in-law and the father-in-law; but we know from the texts that their reconciliation was only provisional and a façade.

Only the wives of Raimon de Péreille, of Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix and of some gentlemen of his kinship or of his entourage, were legitimate wives, the union having been effected, it seems, by a Catholic priest (Corba, the wife of Raimon de Péreille, who had taken the habit, did not live with her husband). But in Montségur, Roman marriage no longer had any significance or legality. Some knights and sergeants-at-arms had brought with them their concubines, which the scribes of the Inquisition call *amasiae* (mistresses). The perfects of Montségur naturally made no distinction between concubines and married women under the Roman regime. However, it is possible that they proceeded to "registered" marriages according to their rite, that is to say, under simple mutual consent and promise of reciprocal fidelity. Perhaps these are
"wives" whom the inquisitors call *amasiae-uxores* (lovers-wives). It is curious, however, that the terms they use to designate them accentuate love-passion. We understand this to mean, either that the *uxores* were like the *amasiae*, or that the *amasiae* were like the *uxores*; or else women *loved from the heart*, like the ladies of the troubadours, and at the same time *ladies from the heart* and wives. These *amasiae* had not renounced the pleasure of the flesh, but we can believe that they had an exalted idea of love, since they had not hesitated to follow their "lover-husbands" in dangers and adversities. It is therefore perhaps at Montségur that, for the first and last time, the amorous passion that only the troubadours had adored in the ideal image they called *fin'amors* was socially realized and exalted. As often happens, perhaps it is the dangerous life that ignited in the hearts of many of them an increase of ardor and carnal passion. Or perhaps most of them were carried away, on the contrary, by the mystical contagion and the madness of heroism and

of sacrifice that seized men and women, especially during the last days of the siege, wanting, as their lovers did, to die with a
"Bruna de la Roque d'Olmès followed the fate of her lover Arnaud Domerc, sergeant-at-arms, and was burned, as was Guilhelma, wife of Arnaud Aicart.

Montségur during the siege.

The siege of which we will not give an account here began in the spring of 1243. Daily life went on in Montségur more or less as we have described it, until the day when some highlanders, in the service of the Catholic army, succeeded in seizing the small building in the east that defended the Cathar village and the castle, which took place, according to F. Niel, in January 1244. Communications with the exterior continued, supplies continued to arrive, as well as arms and reinforcements. Not only were the roads of the abyss open, but the men of Camon (one of the neighboring villages), who were among the besiegers, let the emissaries from Montségur come and go. One day, the deacon Matheus even brought with him two sergeants-at-arms carrying crossbows and
iron "hats". Bonfires lit in the mountains informed Montségur about the intentions, more ambiguous than ever, of the Count of Toulouse, and about the success or failure of some secret enterprise. The count was giving Pierre-Rogier the order to hold out until Easter... In the meantime, an attempt would be made to form a small contingent of mercenaries. The engineer Bertran de la Baccalaria was undoubtedly sent by Raymond VII, not to build a crossbow, but to urge the garrison to resist even more. At the same time, the emissaries of the count were spreading the news that the Emperor Frederick II was going to arrive at the head of his army to liberate Montségur...

The capture of the east tower and the invasion of the Cathar people provoked the retreat of more than two hundred people to the castle courtyard. Daily life was then nothing more than a succession of hellish days. The war machine of the bishop of Albi, installed at the time

near the east tower, threw huge stone balls over the castle that destroyed the light roofs of the barracks, collapsed the terrace of the tower, tore off the battlements, shattered the walls. Falling in the narrow courtyard where the refugees were piled up, the projectiles made victims each time, interrupting the *consolamenta*, finishing off the wounded who were being healed, killing the women who surrounded them, all amidst screams of pain and the roar of the collapsing roofs.

The women, forgetting the differences of rank and class, were nothing but "Christians". The perfect one, the wife of the lord, the mistress of the sergeant-at-arms, mixed together, their clothes torn, bloodied, they devoted themselves like saints to the care of the wounded, or like she-devils, to serve the war machines, amidst the dust that arose from the collapses... To the half-destroyed barracks of Azalais de Massabrac is taken the sergeant-at-arms Arnaud de Vensa, horribly disfigured. Here, the daughter of Béranger de Lavelanet tries to revive Raimon de Saint-Martin who has fainted. Corba, the perfect one, together with her daughters Philippa and Arpais, hold Guilhem de Lisie, to whom Bertran Marti is going to give the *consolamentum*, under an eave that still remains standing. Screams of rage, howls of dying, and roaring orders! And the screeching of the poor crossbow, on the platform of torn battlements, which still tries to respond, throwing stones, to the huge projectiles that the giant machine of the bishop of Albi throws without respite.

In any corner of the courtyard, the perfect men and women administered the *consolamentum* to horribly mutilated gentlemen, to half-crushed women. Almost all had previously made the pact of *convenensa*, and it was no longer a matter of consoling according to the *ritual*. The souls were raised under the laying on of hands, and the door of the castle was but that of eternity. The women quickly asked for the *convenensa*, running then to serve the siege crossbows, or to extract a wounded person from the rubble, exposing themselves at every moment to be hit by a projectile.

The surrender and holocaust of the Cathars.

According to Fernand Niel, on March 1 or 2, 1244, there were negotiations for the surrender. A sort of Last Judgment took place. On one side, those who had decided to die were grouped together: all the perfect men and women, in number of two hundred, to which must have been added the last-minute converts. On the other side, those who did not want to die, either out of fear or because they did not feel like facing Eternity. On the side of those condemned to death, a true explosion of generosity broke out; they distributed everything they possessed: wheat, clothes, money to those who were going to survive. Marquise de Lantar donated her clothes to her granddaughter Philippa de Mirepoix. Bertran Marti gave twenty salaries of Melgueil to Imbert de Salas and, in addition, salt, oil, pepper. Another gave to a friend what he had left: some tights, some shoes... Raimonde de Cuq, who was rich, offered a chest full of wheat to Guilhem Adhémar.

Shortly before the surrender, four heretics in the habit came to give Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix a blanket full of money. Until the end, the Cathar Church would be punctual in fulfilling its commitments, and judged that Pierre-Rogier had served it well. Before walking towards death, Bishop Bertran Marti left Imbert Salas a message for his brother, Raimon Marti: it was a sum of forty Toulouse salaries that Montségur owed to the community of Fanjeaux, and from which he would receive, he said, precise instructions.

On the same day that the perfect ones were going to be burned, Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix called Amiel Aicart, Hugo, and two other heretics (according to several testimonies), hiding them in a subway, apparently a gallery of about ten meters, contemporary of the primitive tower, whose entrance was concealed under the cistern. The four men went to the rock wall where they let themselves slip through the ropes. They carried with them what remained of the treasure of Montségur; but their main mission was to find the place where Pierre Bonnet and Matheus had hidden the most important part of this treasure, which months before they had evacuated and hidden in a forest, some say, or in a cave of Sabarthés, others say, and to take it to a safe place.

Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix, after having secured the treasure, left the fortress together with his wife Philippa, his son Esquieu, the wet nurse of

The latter, his surgeon, Arnaud Roquier, his relatives and friends: Arnaud-Roger de Mirepoix, Raimonde Ravat and their wives. Raimon de Péreille also left freely with them; Philippa and her sister Arpais de Ravat, embraced for the last time their mother Corba, who wanted to die with the perfect ones, and Raimonde de Cuq, with whom she had long shared the hut.

Then, the two hundred perfect men and women went to the bonfires. Among them were Marquise de Lantar, her daughter Corba de Péreille and her granddaughter, Esclarmonde de Péreille....

CHAPTER IV

CONSULAR AND BOURGEOIS REACTIONS

The politicization of religious conflict

After the fall of Montségur, Catharism was transformed, in the cities, into a sort of political party that included bourgeois, men of law, Catholic priests, nobles and, often, most of the consuls. The anticlericalism of the bourgeoisie dated back to the beginning of the 13th century although, in the years 1280-1300, it reasserted itself more strongly as it had to be covered up. It undoubtedly stemmed from a deaf opposition to the theories of the Roman Church in financial matters, but also from a certain local patriotism which then confused in the same hatred the Inquisition and the French; it is clear that before the progress of the critical spirit, the Inquisition appeared unjustifiable not only in its excesses, but in its own principles. Many honest people - among whom were some members of the Roman clergy - refused to admit that Marquise de Lantar or Corba de Péreille, whose lives had always been pure and courageous, were condemned to eternal damnation, while some Catholics, unfaithful to the true Christian teaching, would have won Heaven by the mere fact of submitting to the will of the pope. Faith in the salvific virtues of the *consolamentum* continued to be extremely

It was alive in all social strata; for many it was more effective than the Roman sacraments.

Carcassonne, a mysterious city, was even more so at the time of bourgeois Catharism. Its gloomy mansions, which sheltered in their cellars on the eve of the Revolution of 1789, the secret of Masonic initiations, already served, in 1280-1290, as meeting places for the Perfect Ones and the believers: the dying were consoled there. The perfect Pagès and his *socius* Coste, exercised their ministry in the Cabardès; often, when night fell, they were required in Carcassonne. Then, in the narrow and dark street, the door of the notable would open to let them in, closing immediately.

They would sometimes go down to the house of the notary Agasse or even to the house of Master Pelet, who was a kind of art bookbinder. The *nuncius* was to inform him of the date set for the ceremony; given the circumstances and the dangers to which everyone was exposed, the ceremony was not scheduled until the last moment. One fine day, while he was in Mr. Agasse's office to pick up a manuscript that the latter had commissioned him to bind, Pelet saw two perfects enter and said to him: "The ones you were waiting for have arrived". Pelet followed them upstairs, where he was *consoled* in the presence of Agasse.

Conversions among the Roman clergy and among the French.

Jean Guiraud, in his *History of the Inquisition*, where he was able to evoke all the picturesque of this last phase of clandestine Catharism in Carcassonne, points out that those who took part in it were almost all important bourgeois: *Blazy, the clergyman, Paul Floris, the notary, Pierre Gary, the butcher... In 1274, the perfect Pagès is asked to go to Carcassonne as soon as he can. He arrives there "circa noctem"* (always at nightfall), *at the house of the bourgeois Bernard-Raimon Sabatier. He is introduced into the room of the dying man; the windows remain closed; under the light of the candles, he distinguishes Sabatier's relatives, a clergyman of Bagnoles, a shoemaker, some women. They all bow three times to him and the*

ceremony begins, as moving as ever: "Bernard-Raimon, do you have the will to receive the holy baptism of Jesus Christ?".

A priest, belonging to a bourgeois family of Carcassonne, Raimon Gayraud, parish priest of Roquefère, fell ill at the home of his brother in the city, Pierre Gayraud, neighbor of the notary Maître Amat; he wished to speak with a certain Bernart Fabre, from La Tourette, who was a "nuncius hereticorum". The latter immediately went up to his room. When the priest's relations returned to his bedside, after having dined in town at the house of a certain Escot, they found Fabre still there; scarcely had they begun to converse, when the priest's servant brought in the two perfects, whom the sick man welcomed. "Bene veneritis vos!". The
The "consolamentum" then took place in the presence of Bernart Fabre, the brother of the "consoled" and his "nuncius", Chatbert, a merchant, Raimon Amat, the notary Pons Amat and his intern, B. de Pomas....

These bourgeois - jurists, merchants, notaries - often met on the occasion of these *consolamenta*, which they felt it their duty to attend. At that of the notary Pierre Marsendi, there were his colleague Master Amat, a clergyman from Trèbes, Pierre Hugues, a cloth manufacturer, Raymond de Cazilhac, a merchant from Carcassonne, Pierre de Pieuse. They urged each other to defend their faith; they conspired. Catharism still exerted an extraordinary ascendancy in the hearts and minds of these often highly cultivated bourgeois. The perfect Pagès spread his doctrine through the Cabardès, neighboring vicariate of Carcassonne, with as much success as in the city itself. In the years 1269-1284, he led to the Cathar faith not only the nobles, but also the lady of Sallèles-Cabardès (in 1281), the Castilian of Quier-tinhos (one of the "towers" of Cabaret), the lady of Villegly, the widow of a lord of Sallèles, Lady Jordana, daughter of Jourdain de Saissac and wife of Girard de Capendu; and also, more surprisingly, the royal castellans, undoubtedly "French", of the castle of Cabaret: Egidius de Buires, Pierre de Breuil. It was not only the lawyers, doctors of law, notaries, royal officials of Carcassonne and Cabardès who attended his preaching and asked for the *consolamentum*, but there were also numerous Catholic priests: the parish priest of

Villegly, Pierre Albert, priest of Carcassonne; the parish priest of Ilhes, a deacon, the vicar of Caunes, an archpriest, the parish priests of Pennautier, Villardonnel, Villemoustaussou, the abbot of Montolieu and a monk of his abbey, Sans Morlane, archdeacon of Carcassonne... Catharism seemed to be reborn stronger than ever in bourgeois circles.

The Carcassonne conspiracy.

The inquisitors had also set out to register the entire bourgeoisie of Carcassonne. The registers, kept in leather envelopes in a tower of the *Cité* that communicated with the "House of the Inquisition" were, as Jean Guiraud rightly says, *a scarecrow for all those who made a pact with heresy: it kept them awake at night*.

One day in 1285, the consuls Guillaume Serra, Bernard Lucii and Arnaud Isarn summoned a believer they knew well, Arnaud Matha, to the house of the diocesan official Guillaume Brunet. A large number of people had gathered there: Guillaume Garric, lawyer and secret advisor of the Cathars, jurists, a banker, Raimon Esteve, and Arnaud Morlane, former ball of the Count of Foix: the whole heretic party. The officer took the floor: "This is, gentlemen, the reason for our meeting. You know that the Inquisition keeps the testimonies of witnesses in heresy trials brought against our believers. Almost all of us are on their lists. We must find a way to get hold of these records. I thought that Arnaud Matha could provide us with the means". Indeed, a certain Lagarrigue, heretic, relapsed, former perfect, had left the sect, because of *one of those sudden changes*, according to Jean Guiraud, *so frequent in the Middle Ages, as much in heretics as in Catholics*, and had become the man of confidence of the inquisitor of Carcassonne. Arnaud Matha was his relative and friend: the assembly entrusted him with the mission of corrupting Lagarrigue and bringing him back to his old faith. But Lagarrigue refused. During the weeks that followed, there was not a day in which he was not called upon to go to the consuls' house, or that Matha let out a sermon to him; but it was in vain. "Why so much determination to

To seize the records?" asked Lagarrigue. "To destroy them!" the consuls replied. Finally, at a last meeting, in the presence of the principal burghers and Sans Morlane, archdeacon of Carcassonne, Lagarrigue finally allowed himself to be convinced and, in exchange for a hundred pounds, promised to take care of the matter. "I will never be able to obtain these records," he pleaded, "without the notary of the Inquisition - whose name he would not give - also entering into the conspiracy. I need, therefore, another hundred pounds, which I will give him when he delivers them to me." There was no other choice but to commit himself to deliver the two hundred pounds to Master Alègre, who would deliver them in due course to Lagarrigue.

Having achieved this promise, the officer and Bernard Lucii introduced two perfects into the room: "Gentlemen, here are the two good men for whom we are all working". *Then they all knelt down, saying: "Benedicite", and made their "melioramentum". Then Matha and the other conspirators withdrew, except for the officer, Master Arnaud and Sans Morlane.*

It was not only a question of burning the archives of the Inquisition, but of putting into action a much wider plan of defense, which the jurists of the Cathar party, Pierre Aragon, Guillaume Roger, Guillaume Brunet, notary of the court of the official, and Raymond Sans, notary of the royal court of the city, had prepared in detail with the collaboration of the perfect Pagès and Sans Morlane: *From now on the inquisitors were to be resisted by bringing against them a whole series of appeals in the courts of Rome, one for each known fact, and another great and general one for all. All those who had made confidences to the inquisitors were to be met and induced to revoke them according to the law and the required forms. For this, two jurists were appointed: Pierre d'Aragon and Guillaume Roger* (Declaration of Lagarrigue, quoted by Jean Guiraud).

The matter of the records was still in progress. Unfortunately, the notary who was to deliver them to the conspirators had left on a trip with Inquisitor Pierre Galand. A junior agent who could not read, assisted by Bernard Agasse, had to be called in to guide him. On the occasion of a meeting at the house of Master Arnaud Matha, which was attended by the perfect Guillaume Pagès, Guillaume Brunet, officer of Carcassonne, Jourdain Ferrol,

officer of the Razès, Sans Morlane and his brother Arnaud, Sans Morlane said to Agasse: "Master Bernard, a person will give us the records of the Inquisition of this country; but he cannot read, and it will be necessary for you to choose them yourself and bring them to us." "I will gladly do so," replied Agasse. The faithful Agasse had no time to intervene. The conspiracy failed. It is supposed that Lagarrigue, who as a relapse feared being condemned to death, denounced the conspiracy to the inquisitors Jean Galand and Vigorous. However, this failure did not discourage the consuls. The repression did not reach the real leaders of the anticlerical opposition, and the bourgeois continued the struggle in the juridical field, avoiding more than ever to link their claims to the defense of heresy.

The influence of Catharism on Catholic priests.

The conspirators were all believers, but a very characteristic fact of the new bourgeois Catharism of 1280 is that this conspiracy was hatched by a perfect, Guillaume Pagès, assisted by a great Catholic archdeacon, Sans Morlane. In reality, it was the two Morlane who directed the whole affair. They belonged to a wealthy and highly regarded family, who had long lived around the Trencavel and the Counts of Foix, whom they held in high regard. Arnaud Morlane was consul of Carcassonne and parish priest of Pennautier. He had a mansion in Carcassonne and another in Pennautier, where he lodged two priests who assisted him: Bertran de Camon and Guilhem. He represented, perhaps even more than his brother, those Catholics in favor of free examination who at the end of the 13th century believed in God, but not in the doctrines of Rome. One Christmas Eve, talking about the Eucharist with his chaplain Camon, the latter was hypothesizing about the way in which the transformation of the host into the body of the Lord takes place at the Consecration, when Morlane mysteriously declared to him: "There are books which, if read, would make the laity lose faith. And if they understood them as some members of the clergy and myself do, they would not believe, like the Jews and the Saracens, some things that pass for truth". Arnaud Morlane was already a kind of Calvinist, who reserved the right to refuse from the

Catholicism, as well as Catharism, that which seemed to him contrary to reason or to his metaphysical system. He only had faith in the *consolamentum*: believing himself mortally ill, he had it administered in his presbytery.

Sans Morlane, for his part, was a canon of the cathedral of Saint-Nazaire and, since the death of Bishop Gauthier, administrator of the diocese, with the other archdeacon, Guillaume de Castillon. He was a great character to whom the double game was perfect, due to the position he occupied in the hierarchy. The inquisitor Jean Galand had denounced him to Pope Honorius IV (1285-1287) in extremely violent terms, accusing him of having induced not only his father to heresy, but also many others; of having favored heretics and of having done the impossible to gain the confidence of a relative of the Inquisition and to obtain from him, in exchange for money, the delivery of the attestations of the Holy Office. *If his ends were not achieved*, the inquisitor added, *his intentions could be proven by numerous and regular declarations....*

But Jean Galand did not succeed in discrediting Sans Morlane in the eyes of the pope, who replied to the inquisitor that the judicial proceedings were irregular and that the whole process had to be started all over again, adding to the report a real critical information on the veracity of the witnesses. Honorius IV died on April 3, 1287. The new Pope Nicholas IV (1288-1292), not only did not undertake any trial against Sans Morlane, but also showered him with favors, even though he was the son and grandson of heretics and a heresy perpetrator: he gave him permission to combine, together with the curates of Puichéric, those of -sine *cura*- Belvianes and Cavirac. Sans Morlane was also irreproachably orthodox. In 1297 he helped the Carmelites to build their church (which still exists) and in 1305 he donated three hundred pounds for the restoration of the Augustinian church. He died on August 23, 1311. You can see in the chapel of Saint Anne in the church of Saint Nazarius in Carcassonne, the tombstone of this unique character, who was one of the last Cathars and the first Catholic.
"Protestant" but "Protestant".

The "walled" of Carcassonne and the "Appeal" of the consuls.

At that time, the consuls of Carcassonne had gone on the offensive, the principle of which had been arranged at the meeting held at the house of Arnaud Matha. The notary Barthélemy Vézian, who had taken part in the conspiracy against the Inquisition, was charged with writing an *Appeal to the pope*. The city was already on the verge of revolt. The consuls, skilfully anticipating our political customs, went from house to house to collect signatures and thus give this appeal the character of a plebiscite. It is probable that they collected a large number of votes, perhaps a "majority". The people were then invited to gather in the cloister of the preachers' convent where the Inquisition resided and, *in the presence of Jean Galand, the appeal was read by Vézian, which added great effervescence to the existing animosity against the inquisitor and the Dominicans* (According to Mahul and Jean Guiraud).

The text of the *Appeal*, of extreme boldness, is also of a high level of thought. It honors the consuls of Carcassonne, whose revolutionary firmness was undoubtedly inflamed by the support of the entire population. Allow us to quote long passages from Monsignor Vidal and Jean Guiraud. In addition to a violent requisition against Jean Galand, the text offers a perspective, perhaps somewhat obscure, but certainly accurate on the w h o l e , of the daily life of the people of Carcassonne.
"enmurados".

All summons was suppressed. Citizens of noble and Catholic origin, on whom no suspicion of heresy weighs, are abruptly imprisoned, and in the "terrible and very serious" cells of the Inquisition they are told, shortly before inciting them to confession, what the judge wants to make them declare. If they are spared torture, it is because they have been convinced by promising to soften their "penance" at the time of their condemnation. The essential thing is that they speak; let them accuse themselves! Let them accuse others, those who are suspected or anyone! False testimony is a lesser evil and most prefer to condemn their neighbor,

perhaps "condemning" themselves, rather than continuing in the hands of "perverse beings" who torment them...

There is a kind of gradation in the tortures inflicted... Some languish in redoubts where the light of day cannot enter, nor can the air from outside penetrate. Others, laden with chains, and fastened by fetters to the icy floor of hovels so narrow that they can only fit crouching, and where their humiliation is increased by the innumerable filth. The sustenance, distributed with parsimony, the "bread of suffering and displeasure" which is given them, at very rare intervals, only prevents these wretches from starving to death.

The most obstinate are subjected to the torture of the rack, and those who do not lose their lives by enduring such torment often cannot avoid mutilation. In this prison, there is nothing but continuous groans, cries of pain, desperate complaints and gnashing of teeth. It takes superhuman courage to resist this barbaric regime for long, and one prefers to free oneself by confessing, whatever happens....

The relatives of some unfortunate person believed to be dead because of heresy are frustrated of the right and the consolation of avenging his memory. Those of Guillaume Marti, deceived by official summons from the inquisitor, presented themselves, at the appointed hour, to defend the deceased. Jean Galand welcomed them with the terrible expression of a ferocious beast (cum mala et leonina facie), *frightened them with threats and dismissed them by taking good note of their names. No one dared to comment on the deceased and his cause*?

Legitimately frightened by the real danger of opposing a man of this ilk, jurists and men of law refuse to cooperate in trials, even in the most just ones.

Iniquity triumphs, and law and orthodoxy are persecuted. The city of Carcassonne gains by this a sad reputation. It is a real defamation of which the consuls are affected, and the deplorable result of this regime of oppression, is the discouragement that seizes the best citizens; it is the doubt that is born to them about religion; it is the emigration en masse out of the dominions of the king of France; it is, in the short term, if the Lord does not remedy it, depopulation and ruin.

It was certainly very skillful on the part of the consuls to recall the principles of human and Christian morality, to protest their orthodoxy and the population; even more skillful was to emphasize, with respect to the king, the damage caused to the country by the emigration of men and, they might have added, that of capital. But it is also evident that his *Appeal* was inspired by a new spirit that it would be difficult not to relate to a certain progress in moral ideas, or in individual ethics. Undoubtedly, the consular rebellion was inspired by Catharism, but not only by it. The true Christians, the good people, were all in agreement in condemning the Inquisition, and the religious or philosophical syncretism, of which we spoke above, played in favor of the ideas of tolerance and freedom. New "spiritual" movements were born, and it is interesting to note that the riots that broke out soon after in Carcassonne and neighboring cities, and which led to the liberation of the prisoners of the *Wall* in Carcassonne, were caused by a Franciscan: Bernard Délicieux.

The *Appeal* was addressed to the prior of the preachers (Dominicans) of Paris, who at that time appointed the inquisitors of France: it requested the revocation of Jean Galand. A copy was sent to the Roman Curia, in the name of the community of Carcassonne. The consuls formulated in it the desire that the Inquisition be entrusted to the bishops or better to the administrators of the Church of Carcassonne, *for the glory of God, the exaltation of the Catholic faith, the conservation of the customary juridiction and the safeguard of the episcopal dignity. They also begged them to proceed themselves to the Inquisition, surrounding themselves with jurists, religious and other God-fearing persons, and helping themselves with the expert advice* (consilium prudentum) *and with all those who, in the past, had worked with zeal in the extirpation of heresy* (Cited by Monsignor Vidal).

One of the capitular vicars, whom the consuls required as inquisitor and defender of the law, was none other than Sans Morlane, the main instigator of the plot of 1284-1285. This does not necessarily mean that they wanted to sabotage the inquisitorial functions, but that they considered this man - who did not seem to be either Cathar or Catholic, in the sense that they give

The fanatics use these terms as the only one capable of re-establishing concord, within the framework of Christian justice and charity.

The papacy was undoubtedly alarmed by this bourgeois and consular resistance and the spirit of independence that they manifested. It took no account whatsoever of the just demands of the consuls and the people. And things continued as in the past. Honorius IV even ordered the *persecution of persons whose fearful audacity tried with all their might to hinder the exercise of the Inquisition entrusted to Jean Galand* (November 5, 1285). Several heretics were condemned. Sans Morlane was not bothered at all.

The vitality of bourgeois Catharism in Languedoc as a whole.

We have spoken a lot about Carcassonne and its Cathar and bourgeois party, because thanks to Jean Guiraud, the history of the events that took place in this city is perhaps better known than those that occurred in neighboring cities, especially in terms of their impact on daily life: conspiracies in the bourgeois mansions, secret *conspiracies*, consular conspiracies, appeals to the people and riots. Nor is there any document more precise about the fate of the "enmurados" than the *Appeal* of the consuls of Carcassonne. But the same social phenomena, the same consular and bourgeois reactions occurred, between 1285 and 1287, in Castres, Cordes, Limoux, Albi and elsewhere. In these cities, the formation of a real political party took place at that time, and even a sort of federation of parties, since the consulates concerted and gave mutual support to each other.

And the bourgeoisie of the "Cathar" cities were not united in absolute, although it has often been said otherwise, with the royal power. In 1305 they demonstrated this clearly at Carcassonne and Limoux. It is not that they were hostile on principle to French domination: they would certainly have accepted it unreservedly if the king had freed them from the Dominican Inquisition, and they would have succeeded, as of old, in having it entrusted to

the bishops. After all, the bourgeoisie, concerned only with its fruitful commercial operations, entirely absorbed in defending its franchises against the feudal rights of lords and clergy, must have seen in the king of France the natural protector of its independence; the interests of the king and those of the Church did not always go hand in hand. Since 1280, the consuls of Carcassonne had complained to Philip the Bold about the abuses committed by the Inquisition; although, it seems, without much success. We have seen how a copy of the *Appeal* of 1285 was sent to Philip the Fair. It is probable that the king took these repeated protests of the consuls into account: he sent investigators almost every year to Languedoc, where they were charged with keeping a close watch on the conduct of the Inquisition. In 1291, the warden of Carcassonne was ordered not to imprison anyone else by order of the inquisitors, unless they were not notorious heretics. Shortly thereafter, the king even reserved the right to have persons who were persecuted at the request of the inquisitors, and who were accused of mere appearances of heresy, tried by "capable men". As Jean Guiraud rightly emphasized, the king did not abolish the Inquisition, but only intended to subject the execution of sentences to a prior examination by his legists. Basically, this was what the bourgeois of the Cathar party, who conformed to all aspects of orthodoxy - above all, of course, to those of the Catholic clergy - and who knew for certain that they could escape any investigation concerning facts rather than "intentions", were asking for.

But the power of the Inquisition did not diminish one iota and its methods did not changed. The development of the heretical party, contributing to the revitalization of doctrinal Catharism, provided the inquisitors with a new pretext to intervene more rigorously than ever. For, without a doubt, heresy now embraced the entire bourgeoisie. In 1283, Raimon Boffinhac met his friend Master Pelet of Carcassonne in Albi. In the evening, they dined at the house of Master Isarn Ratier with Bernard Fenasse, a major financier. They would talk mostly about business. But when the two perfects, who were staying at the house of another bourgeois of Albi, Aimeric de Foissens, appeared, they rose with great respect and made the *melioramentum* before them. Aimeric de Foissens was really a believer, and not just a

enemy of the Inquisition: he venerated the perfect ones. When he knew that they were at the house of Master Bernard Not, in Carcassonne, he sent them fruits and wine. That same day, after supper at Isarn Ratier's house, he took them to his house where another meeting of friends took place, with *melioramentum* and preaching.

In Albi, as in the other cities of Languedoc, it is the bourgeois, the jurists, the bankers, the merchants who show themselves to be the most attached to the heresy and the most faithful to the good men.

The king's visit and the affront of Carcassonne.

Perhaps it is at the moment when the king, alarmed by the flight of so many subjects and the flight of Languedocian capitals towards Lombardy, was about to impose pacifying measures on the Inquisition, a bad thing spoiled everything. The population of Carcassonne, revolted by the fiery preaching of Bernard Délicieux, a Franciscan friar minor, invaded the dungeons of the Inquisition under the cry of "Death to traitors!", freeing the detainees. For some time, the city was in the hands of the insurrectionists. The king's representative, Pecquigny, to appease tempers, had the prisoners taken from the *Wall* to the king's dungeons, in the *cité*, thus taking them away from the Inquisition, but preserving the rights of their king. He was immediately excommunicated. The same uprising took place in Albi, Cordes and Castres.

Philip the Handsome left Toulouse, where he was, from the first days of February, to go to Carcassonne. Undoubtedly he was animated by the best intentions. The consuls received the king in a city in festivities, adorned with garlands and banners, under the acclamations of the bourgeoisie and the whole town. The perhaps too haughty attitude of Consul Elie Patris did not please him. "King of France," he would have said, "go away; look at this wretched city which belongs to your kingdom and which is so harshly treated," and he would show him, from the top of the *Cité*, the city stretching out at his feet, the convent of the friars preachers and the *Wall*. The king brutally ordered the consul to stand aside. "Take down the flags

and pennants," Elie Patris shouted to the people; "take away the city's festive dress, for today is a day of mourning".

Did Philip the Fair know that Bernard Délicieux and the consuls of Carcassonne and Limoux had had an interview with the prince of Majorca, Ferdinand, and had offered him the sovereignty of the former viscounty of the Trencavel? "What Philip did not want to do," the young prince would have said, "Ferdinand will do. The court quickly left Carcassonne and headed for Béziers. The consuls hurried to catch up with the king and queen to present them with two silver goblets. The queen graciously accepted the offering, but the king refused and did not even want to see the consuls; having arrived in Montpellier, he made them return the cup offered to the queen.

The King of Majorca condemned the reckless attitude of his son. In public, he had disapproved and slapped him, hastening to reveal everything to the king of France. As for the consuls of Carcassonne, they tried to foment, in the course of a religious solemnity, a new insurrection, but they could neither occupy the *cité* nor subdue the governor. They were arrested and condemned. Elie Patris, Eimeric Castel, Barthélemy Clavaire, Pierre-Arnaud de Guihermi, Bernard de Marselhe, Guilhem Delpech, Guilhem de Saint-Martin, Pons de Montolieu and six other notables of Carcassonne were each tied to the tail of a horse, dragged alive through the streets of the city to the scaffold, and there, hung with their consular attire.

The four consuls of Limoux and thirty-six notables or burghers of this city were tried in Carcassonne and most of them executed (end of November 1305). Carcassonne was fined thirty thousand pounds. Albi, which had not risen, was condemned to pay one thousand pounds to the governor of Carcassonne. Philip the Fair later pardoned this fine and commuted some death sentences to life imprisonment.

CHAPTER V

THE LAST CATHARS

Emigration

The consuls of Carcassonne had emphasized, in their *Appeal* to the pope, one of the most disastrous consequences of the inquisitorial terror: the depopulation of certain Occitan regions. No doubt they had exaggerated its importance. But it is true that after the fall of Montségur (1244) and in the last years of the 13th century, many people who were not safe in their homeland took refuge in Catalonia, Sicily, Ragusa, Dalmatia, Corsica and, above all, in Lombardy. The perfects and the bishops had abandoned their dioceses to maintain abroad, by fits and starts, the moral unity of the sect, and an administrative organization totally theoretical because of not having direct contact with their faithful. Their departure had serious consequences on the religious life of those who remained. While for the cultivated bourgeoisie, jurists and many Catholic clerics, Catharism was transformed into a kind of Freemasonry with a tendency towards a "Masonic" or "Masonic" tendency, the sect was transformed into a "Masonic" sect.

The "sibylline", for the people, was reduced to a few theories, more or less deformed, and to the superstitious search for salvation through the *consolamentum*. The perfects who remained in Occitania no longer had, with a few exceptions, the great wisdom and culture of their predecessors of the beginning of the century, or even of the years 1230-1240. They no longer received the

teachings of such inspired bishops as were, at Montségur, the Guilhabert de Castres and the Bertrán Marti. And those who, like the perfect Pagès in 1285, could have rivaled them with their science and their abnegation, were no longer sufficiently numerous to instruct the believers in their turn: they were hardly enough to fulfill the office of "consolation". From Lombardy came - or returned - the light. In the fourteenth century, the perfect Authier, a remarkable man in many ways, set out to revive Catharism in the county of Foix after a long stay in Italy, where his initiation to the true dualistic doctrine was carried out by the emigrant bishops.

Catharism in Italy.

The Italian cities, proud of their liberties, had not been very quick to apply the edicts of popes and emperors against heresy. In 1256, the Republic of Genoa was even condemned for having refused to introduce them into its constitutional laws. It was mainly the cities of Genoa, Pavia, Milan, Mantua and Cremona that attracted and hosted the southern Cathars. This was not the case in Florence and Rome. But there were isolated refugees, or small groups of refugees, in almost all the counties of Italy, where, with a few small exceptions, there was no place for the

"It is difficult to estimate the number of Occitan emigrants, which was undoubtedly quite high, and to determine their social origin. It is difficult to estimate the number of Occitan emigrants, undoubtedly quite high, and to determine their social origin. Among them were people from various walks of life, but there was undoubtedly a majority of merchants and artisans. The nobles did not emigrate, unless their heads had been put at a price. They preferred to take to the mountains, encouraged by the hope that they would eventually recover their castles. However, in 1244, many defenders of Montségur left for Lombardy: the Catalan Arnaud de Bretos, Aimeric and Pierre Girberge, Arnaud Mestre and numerous sergeants-at-arms. Those who had taken an active part in the massacre of Avignonet also hurried to leave Languedoc. Thus, Pierre de Bauville, after having been a merchant at the fairs of Lagny on the

Champagne, where he came into contact with Italian merchants, he decided to move to Italy. The Count of Toulouse and Raymond of Alfar apparently had as much interest in keeping him away as in providing him with shelter. He stopped in Coni, which was, according to the expression of the Inquisition, "a nest of heretics"; he met Bertran de Quiders, who had also participated in the death of the inquisitors and had been exiled "by order". The latter confided to Bauville that Raymond VII had given him money for his journey and was still covering his needs. "I feel like living at your expense," Bauville told him laughing, "since you yourself live at the count's expense.

He had no need of their help: he was an experienced merchant and businessman. He opened a warehouse in Pavia and traded throughout Lombardy, sometimes lending money to compatriots in distress. He even ran a hospicium. His travels brought him into contact with other Cathar emigrants who lived, like him, from trade and small industry. In 1240, he visited in Coni a community of heretics from Toulouse who worked with leather in a store rented by Guillaume Perrier, from the new burgh of Toulouse, and his wife Béatrice de Montetotino. There was an old cloth merchant, a cutler, two peasants from the region of Carcassonne and two perfects who freely exercised their ministry among themselves. The emigrants had the most diverse trades: they were bakers, confectioners, bakers, tailors, tailor-makers, or shopkeepers, merchants, bankers. Some were isolated, each one on his own; others grouped in small "colonies", forming religious communities where they had the opportunity to practice their worship. They lived in houses that they rented or bought: the colonies sometimes owned one or several houses, acquired in community. The perfects also exercised a work; on the other hand, they received their believers, who gave them subsidies, donations and legacies. Many of them had the means to support themselves with dignity and even to have a servant. Opinions about Lombardy and the Lombards naturally changed a lot. Some Languedocians returned home embittered and disenchanted, unable to acclimatize in Italy, or to make a fortune; but most, it seems, appreciated the climate of freedom that prevailed there and almost all recognized that "as long as they worked, they were never bothered by the religious opinions they might profess."

The faithfulness of believers.

From the years 1260-1280, the need to resume contact with the perfect ones, and with the spiritual life of Catharism, was almost irresistible for a large number of believers who wished to receive the *consolamentum* from the hands of their exiled ministers.

Bonet de Sanche, from the area around Castelnaudary, wanted to go to Lombardy to be consoled there, and was looking for a traveling companion. Guillaume Raffard told him: "I will gladly accompany you. But I have not enough money to make such a long journey, and I have not yet sold my cows." This Raffard had no doubt very clear ideas, since twenty years later, he was as eager to receive the "consolamentum" as Bonet de Sanche, in Italy. And he always had cows to sell. One day, however, he could stand it no longer: he left for Montpellier with his herd of cows, and finally found a buyer. So he went to Lombardy. In Pavia, he stayed with his guide Pierre Maurel, in the house of a certain Pierre de Montagut who called himself Béranger. They stayed for three months. Finally, he arrived at Sirmione, which was one of the most important centers of heresy, and there he was able to realize his dream, he received the consolamentum, to *which he had aspired for more than twenty years, from Bernard of Olive, bishop of Toulouse, from Henri, bishop of the church of France, and from Guillaume Pierre de Veronda, bishop of Lombardy. They were consoled at the same time as him: Pons Olive, brother of the consecrator and Guillaume Boñet, from the region of Mirepoix, former lord of Scaupont. Olive, the bishop of Toulouse, received from Raffart all the money he was carrying, except for thirty white tornesas which were given to him for his return journey. "This was happening in 1272."* (Doat, quoted by Jean Guiraud).

Many Languedocians also sold everything they owned and left for the adventure, without much concern for his loved ones who were left helpless without his help. Guilhem did not even think of his children. The
The "passer" - a man who was undoubtedly charitable and wise - refused to accept it: "Your children have need of you," he told her. The husbands would leave their

The women to their husbands, the wives to their husbands; one and the other, sometimes with relief, but promising to meet again there. Women were not the least enthusiastic about Lombardy. Stéphanie de Châteauverdun, abandoned all her possessions and followed the perfect Prades-Tavernier to Italy. They often grouped together, put their resources in community, to pay for the transport and left under the guidance of the Perfect One or of a very proven believer. It would have been said that they were going to the promised land.

It is true that sometimes these departures coincided with some amorous escapes or were accompanied by temptations that had nothing mystical: *Béatrice de Planissoles was alone one day, in her castle, when her intendant Raimon Roussel, who had been courting her for a long time, asked her to accompany him to Lombardy. She was seduced by the adventure, but a little doubtful: "The Lord," Roussel told her, "did he not say that a man must leave father, mother and children to follow them? "How can I leave my husband and children?" replied Béatrice, "It is better," answered Raimon Roussel gravely, "to leave a husband and children who only live for a time than to leave Him who lives eternally and gives us the Kingdom of Heaven. "But how will we get to the good Christians? When my husband notices, he will pursue us and kill us." "We will wait until he has left the castle for whatever matter." "And what shall we live on?" "When we are there the good men will take care of everything." "But, I am with child; what shall I do with the child if I depart with you to the good Christians?" "If he is born among them, this child will be an angel. They will make of him, in the name of Christ, a saint or a king, since, not having frequented the people of the world, he will be without sin; and they will be able to instruct him perfectly in their religion, since he will have known no other."*

Circumstances made it necessary for Béatrice to quickly become aware that that her quartermaster wanted nothing more than to spend a few days with her. She got angry. The seducer left the castle and Béatrice did not go to Lombardy, nor did Raimon Roussel, on the other hand.

The movement of funds.

There was always a network of passers-by in charge of guiding the emigrants to Lombardy. Perhaps the perfects of Montségur had entrusted the organization of a first system of communications, refuges and shelters to absolutely sure believers, paid by them. Towards the end of the 13th century, some *ductores hereticorum*, acting on their own, it seems, but in direct contact with the sect, were paid to gather and accompany emigrants going to Lombardy or returning. They were also in charge of passing letters and money from one country to another. *A certain Peytavi, from Seréze, had ten marks sterling, produced by the exchange of Toulouse salaries, sent in this way to the perfect Pierre Delmas, who had asked him for this service. This money was destined for the Cathars of Lombardy. On another occasion, the same Peytavi, who evidently enjoyed the confidence of the heretics, told Arnaud Terrier, of Seréze, that if he wanted to make a shipment to Lombardy it would be easy. He went to speak with two perfects, who had recently arrived from that region, and whom, moreover, Arnaud himself and his brother-in-law, Jean Brun de Durfort, had seen fifteen days before. The interview took place in Font-Audier "on the mill of Arnaud" - it was a few days before the grape harvest of 1276 - and the perfects agreed to take charge of the commission* (Doat, quoted by Jean Guiraud).

The financial operations were relatively simple. The *ductores or nuncii* remitted to the Italian perfects the amounts that they kept in deposit until the arrival of the emigrants who claimed them: *Adelais sent in this way to Cremona one hundred Toulouse coins, which he was to receive on his arrival. Then, having given up his journey, he gave the order to deliver this sum to his mother Aycelina who lived in Lombardy* (Doat, quoted by Jean Guiraud). In certain cases, the Cathars turned to the money changers or bankers of the sect; and in this case, the funds were transferred with real bills of exchange.

Adventures and dangers of clandestine travel.

Travelers naturally followed the less frequented itinerary: the Lombard road. According to Dupré-Theseider, it passed through the Var and the Maritime Alps, then through Nice and the pass of Tende, to descend via Roccavione, to the plain of Cuneo-Coni. Another road, more comfortable, crossed the mountain pass of Larche and ended, also, in Coni. The heretics could mingle with the pilgrims and merchants, and thus go unnoticed.

There were French *ductors* and Italian *ductors.* They almost always proceeded to a real "collection". For example, a group led by Pierre Maurel, had once, as a starting point, Saint-Martin-la-Lande. The travelers were lodged in the house of a woman affiliated with the sect, in a secluded house at one end of the city, while Pierre Maurel went to look for the other heretics: three women and a child (the women were going to join their husbands since, ordinarily, married couples did not travel together). They set out for Béziers, where four more people joined the caravan. *Via Beaucaire, they went to Lombardy, stopping first at Achonia where they stayed with a local woman. Often it was the women who ran the "refuges": at the same time they were innkeepers and lodged other travelers, so that the heretics could not be noticed. Pierre Maurel, in the meantime, had changed his name to Pierre Gailhard. From there they went to Asti, where they met a brother of Pierre Maurel, named Bernard, then to Pavia, where they went to the house of a Lombard named Raymond Catiero. There a weaver of his company stayed. Continuing their journey, they went to Mantua where they met two men from Limoux, of whom one was a weaver, then to Cremona, to Milan and arrived at Coni, from where they went on to France and Castelnaudary. It was in 1271-1272* (Doat, 25, pp. 17-20).

These trips were not without danger. The agents of the Inquisition
They watched the comings and goings of merchants and pilgrims. A cattle merchant leading his flock, an errand boy with his bundles of goods, a bourgeois with rich luggage, was a heretic in disguise, of whom they possessed the token. And they lacked neither sense of smell nor insight. How many adventures and misadventures! How many dramatically interrupted journeys! A servant of Graulhet, denounced to the Inquisition for having brought to the house of his

lady to a perfect one to console her, she wanted to flee to Lombardy with the son of this lady, Pierre de Palajac; she was arrested in Arles, and taken to Toulouse, where she was burned.

When one had escaped all the dangers of the Inquisition, one still ran the risk of being assaulted by thieves. In 1273, a young man from Toulouse, Aymeric, arrived at the house of the guide Etienne Hugue, in Roquevidal, accompanied by a young Englishwoman and a heretic lady who had asked him for permission to travel with them. Hugue shows the three of them the way to Lombardy. But soon Aymeric returned naked: in the first inn, they had stolen all his money and his clothes; they had even robbed the young Englishwoman and the lady... Thank God he had been able to escape!

However, the *ductores* and *nuncii* were very skillful, they changed their names and their clothes, they did not stay in their own houses but in the houses of safe friends, they made appointments with their clients in deserted places or in solitary huts, they had them warned by emissaries; in short, they surrounded themselves with all possible precautions.

It was necessary that the absence of the perfect ones be understood as capable of compromising the health of the soul, so that the believers would be willing to run such risks and make such sacrifices to find them. Sometimes, as E. Dupré-Theseider puts it very accurately, if the bishop or the deacon or the perfects did not go to Languedoc, they were to be sought in Lombardy. The perfects never forgot this obligation: *A merchant of Albi, Bertran de Montégut, had made up his mind to supply the region of Albi with perfects. He gave a passer called Marescot - or Mascoti - thirty-five white tornesas to go to Lombardy to look for the perfect Raimon Andrieu and to bring him to Albi. If he did not find him, he was to procure him another at any price. After a rather eventful journey, Marescot returned to Occitania. He was carrying Bertran de Montégut, not Raimon Andrieu, whom he had not been able to discover anywhere, but a perfect Italian, Guillaume Pagano. Bertran de Montégut was delighted and welcomed him into his home*.

At the same time, two other wealthy lords of Albir, Bertrand and Guiraud Golfier, had had the same idea as Bertrán de Montégut, and had commissioned Bernat Fabre, an Albigensian tailor who had emigrated to Genoa, to

sent perfect. Fabre found them in Visone, not far from Acqui. But we do not know if they were able to reach Albi (Declaration of Marescot, 1297).

The apostolate of Pierre Authier and the practice of "endura".

We must relate to the Cathar emigration to Lombardy, as it is a consequence, what Maselli has called "the enormous fire caused by one man". This man was called Pierre Authier. He went to Lombardy in 1296, with his brother, leaving his village of Ax (Ariège), where he was a notary of fame. After spending more than four years in Italy, he returned in 1300 to the county of Foix, with the firm will to fight against Rome and to revive the Cathar church. This former jurist of the Count of Foix Roger-Bernard III was highly educated and, in Lombardy, in contact with good men, he had perfected his knowledge. He began to travel the country, night and day, preaching everywhere, visiting castles and huts, openly or clandestinely, reorganizing the Cathar church, even daring to show himself in Toulouse and always keeping the police of the Inquisition in check. He ended up, however, by being captured, and was burned at the stake on April 9, 1311. His brother Guillaume, his son Jacques and many of his disciples were also burned shortly after. His demise truly marks the end of Occitan Catharism.

Pierre Authier's action did not modify the Cathars' habits.
Neither the Ariège nor their daily life, at the most, were impregnated with mysticism: there was a greater number of clandestine *consolations*, preaching in friendly houses, in the midst of redoubled precautions, and perhaps, a strengthening of the heretical fraternity, translated by a greater influx of voluntary contributions and, above all, by the reorganization of a counter-terrorism destined to neutralize, in part, informers and traitors. The misfortune of the times also gave rise to a heroic asceticism; and it is commonly admitted that under the influence of Pierre Authier and his followers, the practice of the *endura* spread in the county of Foix.

The *endura*, or renunciation of life, is totally within the Cathar spirit, and even in all religions that teach that "wanting to live" chains the soul to the satanic flesh, in the cycle of reincarnations and, consequently, prevents it from freeing itself. We do not know why the Cathars are reproached. The "suicide" for love of the Self, for love of the *true life* (should we remember it, it is that of Werther and numerous Indian sages) was never considered by the "spirituals" as a crime against the individual, nor as an offense against God, since it was to merge in Him that one renounced life...

It is possible that Pierre Authier knew of examples of *endura* in Italy and that they impressed him. It is known that in 1275, when Bauville was in Pavia, it was explained to him that an Occitan heretic, who had escaped from the prisons of the Inquisition, had just put on *endura*. In any case, this custom did not make its appearance in Languedoc until a rather late period, when one could be tempted to let oneself die in order to escape torture and the stake.

In Pierre Authier's time, the perfect ones did not impose it on their believers. When it is insinuated that they took the *consoled* to their hospitals, to watch over them and let them die, against their will, of starvation, they are slandered without proof. The truth is that the believers who had received the *consolamentum freely* chose to let themselves die. One does not see why, being old, sick, and no doubt having reached a high degree of detachment, they would not have preferred, instead of a painful and short survival, the end of all their ills on this earth and in Eternity. *Sick*," says Rainier Saconi, "*who could not say the Pater, preferred to die of starvation rather than sin, and asked those who served them not to feed them any more*. (One sinned mortally if, once comforted, one did not say the *Pater* before eating). But they were above all afraid of relapsing into *other sins* and facing life again without being prepared, like the perfect, to detach themselves from it by asceticism. The *consolamentum of the dying* did not summarize, like that of *ordination*, the results of a long ascetic initiation. For this reason it was only valid for those who were going to die. And the very fact that they could not ingest food was the sign, in the eyes of the perfect ones, that they would not live long.

However, *endura* was always exceptional and even frowned upon by many believers. If the perfect ones never prevented the sick from relapsing into sin by eating and drinking wine - they only allowed them cold water - it is evident that they could only exhort them to get rid of life as soon as possible. It would have been strange for them to advise them to continue under the power of Satan, when they were already beyond his reach.

Only a long *endurance*, which the sick person began very early, when his strength had not yet faded, was able to annihilate the "wanting to live" and exalt the "wanting to be". It was, in any case, more meritorious than that of the dying man, who owed it only to his weakness and circumstances not to fall into sin again. We know the case of a sick man, called Sabatier, who spent seven whole weeks in the *endura*; and that of a woman of Coustaussa who, after having left her husband, received the *consolamentum* in the Sabarthés, was put in the *endura*, and did not die until twelve weeks later. The Cathars were not wrong to consider this stoic disregard of life as a proof that the believer had completely freed himself from it. There was, moreover, as Jean Guiraud has seen very well, another kind of *endura*, consisting in abstracting oneself from life by an almost complete loss of sensibility, and even of consciousness, and thus reducing "personal" existence to a minimum. The wife of a gentleman from Puylaurens, Berbeguera, went to see, out of curiosity, a perfect man who was in this state and who seemed to her the strangest marvel: for a long time he had been sitting in a chair, immobile as a trunk, insensitive to everything around him.

By the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th century, this was no longer the case. They only gave the *consolamentum of the dying* to those who were really dying. Since the believers received it as a grace, quite unmerited, they had every interest in prolonging their life, without losing the benefit, for a few days or a few hours. Hence the Perfect Ones declare, very logically, that when a Christian has been received in this condition into their order, he should neither eat nor drink - except fresh water - *and that those who let themselves die thus, refusing food, are saints of God*.

Sometimes, it is true, the perfects were mistaken about the degree of resistance of the sick person, who then provoked, in spite of himself and in spite of them, a prolonged *endura*. A certain Guillaume, very ill, underwent the *endura* and, against all expectations, still lived fifteen days; as did a woman from Montaillou, who was thought to be condemned, and who resisted for more than two weeks. Naturally, the sick were not always so impatient to save their souls. Bernard Arquié, who had to have a solid appetite, declared to the perfects that he was advised to *endurance*:
"I want to live to the end!". "Let it be done according to your will," the perfect ones answered him.

Endura posed numerous cases of conscience to families. A good woman underwent *endura*, after having been consoled. But after five or six days, she felt better and asked for food. Her daughter, a sincere believer, did not want to give her anything but water, as prescribed by the perfect. Her mother began to shout and insult her: "I laugh at what they say; I want to eat! And her daughter, very worried, finally gave her something to eat.

On the other hand, Arnaud, the brother of a consoled woman, watches over her so that she does not eat or drink anything but water. One day passes, two. On the third day, the poor woman asks Arnaud to give her food: "I am very hungry". Arnaud, rather, gives her a bad face. "If you don't even have the strength to swallow," he says. "I'm hungry," she repeats, "I can't resist!". Then, Arnaud lets himself be touched: he tells Blanche, his sister, to feed her, and she quickly brings him bread, meat, wine, which the dying woman eats and drinks with a good appetite, joyfully losing the benefit of the *consolamentum*.

In other cases, the opposite is true: everyone in a peasant family is of the opinion that the living and the dying should be fed. The advice of the good men was not sincerely accepted, nor was the will expressly formulated by the consoled woman. The women who surround and care for the dying woman would like her to speak, to eat. They tried to make her swallow a cup of salted pork broth, but they could not even get her to drink water; the sick woman clenched her jaws tightly shut. She remained like this for two days; on the third night, at the edge of dawn, she died.

Evidently, the evil tongues cannot be prevented from saying everywhere that the son or daughter has put their old mother in *bed*, against her will, in order to get rid of her. "If poor Bernarde was so ill, how has her daughter never been seen or heard to cry? It is not surprising: the son-in-law has managed to get all her assets." Certainly, in this world of "Mixture" and of the "Terrible," where the Devil excels in wronging the best things, we will not judge that similar crimes are not committed; but the perfect are the first to know. An unfaithful wife advises her husband to put on *endura for* the health of his soul. "What, no!" says the poor man, "it is God who must kill me, if he will. For my sake, I let myself live."

Degeneration of Catharism.

In these early years of the 14th century, there were serious deviations from morals and especially from Cathar dogma. The rule was, supposing one wanted to renounce the *consolamentum of the dying*, not to eat nothing, but to eat only fish and vegetables, after having said the *Pater*. Arnaud's mother could speak and say the *Pater*. It was not indispensable to give her meat. One sees, now, peasants following, here or there, gross aberrations: a neighbor strongly advises a young mother, whose child, two or three months old, is very sick, to put him to *bed*, that is to say, not to breastfeed him any more. The mother refuses: "If he dies," she says, "God will take him in...". "If he is taken in by good men," says the neighbor, "he will be even better: he will be an angel of God...". The mother did not console the child, and she did well, according to true Catharism.

Here it is the husband who would like his young daughter, Jacoba, to receive the *consolamentum of the dying* and be sent to God. But the mother is indignant and, in spite of her husband's prohibition, stubbornly continues to breastfeed the child, who still lives a year and dies. The perfect ones went to see the woman and said to her: "You are a bad mother: you have given your daughter a useless extension of a year, and you have compromised, for an instant of bodily life, her chances of eternal salvation". Where is the

What is truth? Even so, these perfects had had to go to Italy for instruction: Catharism forbade giving the *consolamentum* to children, and above all to impose the *endura* on them.

Despite the meritorious efforts of Pierre Authier and his disciples, Catharism continued to weaken and corrupt. No one could delay its end. The last perfects, much less educated than Pierre Authier, mixed their personal concepts, often confused or contradictory, with coarse superstitions and with a little of what they had retained of the authentic tradition: Bélibaste was an independent dreamer.

The same doctrine of the two principles, now reduced to an antagonism
The "visible" of Good and Evil is no longer understood by anyone, and deprived of its esoteric second plane, it can no longer be. One begins to affirm that it is the good God, and not the Devil, who makes "nature flourish and flourish": a doctrinal deviation of grave consequences, for if the world is not all evil, it is not the Devil who has made it. Pierre Authier himself is not able to explain the existence of the good found on earth other than by the presence of good men on earth, forgetting that classical dualism explained in a clearer way the mixture of the two natures. In reality, mitigated dualism and Catholic monism now eliminate absolute dualism, without completely discarding the idea that this world, absurd, chaotic, unjust, is subject to the Prince of Darkness.

The *consolamentum*, it is true, still retains all its prestige because it corresponds to a wonderfully arranged symbolism in which the effects are felt, immediately and powerfully, on the imagination and the spirit. The sacraments of the Roman Church will take a long time, in Languedoc, to get rid of the disaffection in which they had incurred, and perhaps deserved, in times when Catharism proposed to the religious a purer and more effective way of salvation. Moreover, the bases on which the Cathar problematic is established: denial of free will, diminution of the role of the "humanized" Christ and, as a consequence, rejection of the dogma of the real presence in the host, the necessity of grace to obtain salvation, will mark the evolution of religious thought in the future. Two hundred years later, they will reappear in Calvinism.

Catharism slowly degraded: it was absorbed by each of its components, as it liberated them. It has passed on to very diverse doctrines that have used and assimilated it, and whose long road it is not for us to follow. "The Spirit comes in and goes out," say the good men. If medieval Catharism is now nothing but a historical adventure, its constants, which, as mythical schemes, condition more than human thought believes, always inspire reforming morals and liberating movements. It will probably be so until the end of time.

CONCLUSION

The survival of Catharism.

The myth of the "Uninterrupted Tradition", the myth of the "Past in the present" have been introduced today in our daily reverie: we would like to "see" the Cathars. We yield, in spite of ourselves, to the attraction exerted by affiliations that we cannot imagine. It is enough to be introduced, in Ragusa, to a young woman belonging to the oldest patarine family of the city to be surprised to find in her face the reflection of seven centuries of heresy. And who has not dreamed, at nightfall, of penetrating into some lost farm of the Ariège where the *consolamentum* was still given to the dying and where the old man still read aloud the Gospel of St. John, in a manuscript of the 13th century, handed down from father to son? No failure discourages the seekers of the treasure of Montségur, since they only wish to pursue a mirage without end.

In reality, there is nothing left of Catharism as it was lived. Where would we find it? Among the Protestants? We have often been told, particularly in the Cévennes, of peasant families who, we were told, remembered having been Cathars. And perhaps in the 16th century, their members were conscious of actually continuing an older religion; perhaps they even remained faithful, fully aware of it, to the memory of their ancestors burned by the Inquisition. It is indeed incontestable that many of the descendants of the thirteenth century heretics embraced Calvinism in order to take revenge on Rome, but for

As much as Protestant authors of the 16th century wrote about it in their efforts to find spiritual ancestors in Cathar evangelism, the two doctrines differed profoundly. And the social traumas suffered by Protestants in the 16th and 17th centuries were so painful in themselves that they made them forget the misfortunes of their fathers: the folklore of the Desert covered the folklore of Montségur.

Sometimes, words have changed their meaning and mislead the lovers of Catharism. One of our friends, on a trip in Ariège, one day had two peasants get into his car, who were going, they said, to the neighboring farm to "bring consolation". They were, in fact, going to "console" the family and not the sick person who, moreover, was already dead. Sometimes, "consolation", perhaps means, as a reminder of the *consolamentum*, extreme unction. There is obviously nothing Cathar about it. The action of the laying on of hands is still felt as beneficial by many of the inhabitants of our countryside, but it is a purely physical action. And when some doctors claim to have found at the bedside, before or after the visit of the priest, two men assisting him in his agony, these are healers or sorcerers, and not perfects. If they laid their hands on the dying man, it was to alleviate his suffering.

On the other hand, it is very difficult to know to what extent a Catholic tradition replaced a Cathar tradition of the same type. We have always suspected that the particular respect that the inhabitants of the Ariège and many other Occitans have for the blessed bread, and especially the magical use they make of it, comes from their ancient fidelity to the Cathar rites of the 1300s. But who can say if the piece of blessed bread that is discovered today between two piles of sheets, in the peasant's closet, is Cathar or Catholic?

The old Languedocians know by heart many heterodox prayers, among which we have often looked for traces of those that good men had taught the believers to replace the *Pater* that they surely did not say. Most of them are of Catholic inspiration. However, the folklorist Urbain Gibert heard in a small village of the Haute Ariège an old woman recite the beginning of a

well known prayer: *Paire Sant. Dieu dreyturier deis bons esprits*. It is the only authentic vestige of Catharism that we know of. This woman, of course, was not at all aware that she was reciting a heretical prayer.

Folklore does not recall the specifically Cathar myths, with the exception of the tale of the "ass's head" - of which we spoke earlier (a lizard comes out of the mouth of a sleeper and enters the dry skull of an ass) - which was used in the 14th century by the Perfect Ones to demonstrate that the spirit could be separated from the body; that of Saint Wednesday, a tale of Bogomil origin, in which a "saint" takes cruel revenge on the housewives who do the laundry on that day. But, in the West, St. Wednesday has taken on the fearsome features of St. Agatha, who has the same role and represents the same forbidden day.

There is not the slightest trace left of the Cathar belief that the soul needed three days to free itself from the body and that it was necessary to assist it with fervor during all this time. But, until the end of the 19th century, a tile was raised from the roof so that the soul could escape more easily, a tradition that belongs to decadent Catharism. One is surprised to see that the folklore of Montségur, faithfully collected by *Madame* Tricoire, retains no direct memory of medieval Catharism. On the contrary, French romanticism and German neo-romanticism have enriched it with a good number of legends - concerning Esclarmonde de Foix or the Graal - which in no way come from historical Catharism.

The language has retained only a few words referring to the heresy. And they are also, for the most part, pejorative. A *patarinage*, assembly of patarinos, is today a gathering of rude and noisy people. *Patarinejar* means: to wander, to beg. *Bougre* (Bulgarian) has become an insult since the 16th century (*bougre* is sodomite). As for the oath *Double dius* (Double God), to which Mistral gave a dualistic origin, it is no more Cathar than the pagan *Mila Dius*. We know of no proverb from the Middle Ages that reflects a Cathar opinion, with the exception of: *Fais du bien á tout le monde -Mais davantage á ceux de ta foi*. And it is still not very certain that this "faith" is not that of Catholics. As for the proverb that made poor Arnaud de Savinhan condemned to the *Wall*: *On a toujours vu, on*

verra toujours- Homme coucher avec la femme d'autrui ("One has always seen, one will always see - a man sleep with another's wife"), it is clear that it manifests the persistence of licentiousness and not of the eternity of the world.

Will we have better luck with the objects, will we find Cathar objects? It is thought that the cap (night cap) worn by men in the last century and called *bonnet de Cathar*, comes from the one with which the perfects covered their heads. It is possible that the *topin*, or marmite, called *patarinon* in the region of Moissac, could be a memory of the one that the perfects always carried with them, because they did not want to use other pots in which meat was cooked. It is possible and even almost certain. But it must be recognized that all this is very little. As for the investigations carried out within the popular symbolism, they are even more disappointing. The pentagon has completely disappeared from geometric decorations, except for being circumscribed in the five-pointed star. But this star has been so widely diffused throughout European folk art that it is impossible to consider it as an exclusively Cathar symbol. The anchor, the dove, appear on all the funerary monuments of the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as all the varieties of crosses (T-cross, Greek crosses, crosses of "Toulouse", etc.). All of them belong both to primitive Christianity and Catharism. This does not exclude at all, in certain cases, their Cathar origin. If it were certain that the famous cross of the Huguenots, the dove of the Holy Spirit, had really made its appearance in Languedoc and that it had succeeded the Cathar dove, we would have to consider it as the most outstanding of the "heretical" survivals in the French Midi.

Non-violence and the fanaticism of Montségur in our days.

Many men, to be sure, have been overdone. Many lives have been useless. When history is limited only to individuals, it presents only the image of moral chaos, the mixture of Good and Evil.

What has been the use of lives of pain and fervor, whose brief passage through this world, and whose

world we have tried to map out? Perhaps not at all. And what judgment can we make about them? It is indeed too difficult to probe hearts when more than seven centuries separate us. Nor shall we risk condemning the homicidal fury of the inquisitors; no more than the criminal exasperation of the knights who killed them at Avignonet. The one and the other believed they were obeying the God of Good; they did not see clearly where Evil was. For if Evil were not incomprehensible, it would not be Evil... Our book has only pretended to "make it known"....

All that can be said is that if History never repeats itself, the fanatics repeat themselves over and over again and even with a constancy that surprises: they are the same acts, the same words. To the words pronounced by Raimon d'Alfar, after the killing of the inquisitor Guillaume Arbaud: "*Esta be, esta be*". (This is going, this is going), are echoed by those of the Duke of Guise, three hundred years later, after the murder of Coligny: "Good start, good start". To the "gesture" of Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix, claiming the skull of Guillaume d'Arnaud to drink his wine in it, responds that of Catherine de Medici by sending to the pope the embalmed head of Coligny (the pope immediately ordered a procession to celebrate this happy event). The true men of spirit have not changed much in their behavior either: they prefer to let themselves be killed than to kill.

If it is true that there are "laws of evolution" of a theological-providential type -or of a Marxist type-, it is also evident that they can only be taken as projected on great men and in wide spaces of time. And perhaps they are then reduced - whatever the nature of their conditioning - to a "movement" of moral ideas. We ordinarily appreciate this movement in reference to the last moment of "evolution", to the present moment, which is not illegitimate, provided, however, that we consider this present as provisional and relative as well, and that we do not pretend to set it up as absolute under the pretext that it is our present. From this point of view we shall find it quite natural to approve, for example, the emancipation of women as announced - timidly - in the

thirteenth century; it is even more natural that the Inquisition should be condemned, I mean *all the Inquisitions...*

The daily life of a great number of Cathars would not have had any meaning without the existence of inquisitors to light the bonfires, and heretics to offer their sacrifice to the Spirit. Under this aspect, only one or the other is still relevant today. The victims of the present are reunited with those of the past; they resurrect them. In each persecution it is the same executioners, the same martyrs who are *reincarnated*. In truth, the ephemeral lives of men circulate within Man.

INDEX OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS

BÉATRICE DE LA GLEISE: Daughter of Philippe de Planissoles, lord of Caussou (Ariège), Béatrice married Béranger de Roquefort, and later Othon de la Gleise, lord of Dalou, becoming a widow for the second time. She had an adventurous life. After being raped in her castle, she became the mistress of a cursed priest; she met witches, ruffians eager for metaphysics. As she believed only in love, none of her lovers succeeded in making her lose her Roman faith, which, however, was probably reduced for her to empty formulas. Finally, she became in her old age the "legal" mistress of a Spanish priest, Barthélemy. Condemned on March 8, 1321 to the *Wall*, she was released on July 4, 1322, together with Barthélemy, but she had to wear the double crosses.

BÉLIBASTE: Guillaume Bélibaste, the last perfect, was born in Cubières (Aude). He killed a shepherd, undoubtedly in a quarrel and, feeling remorse, was initiated into Catharism by Philippe d'Alairac. Arrested for the first time, he escaped from the *Wall* of Carcassonne by taking refuge in Catalonia, in Lerida, where he made a living from the manufacture of combs for weavers; later he lived in Morella, where we find him at the head of a small community of Occitan emigrants.

Arnaud Sicre, a traitor in the service of the Inquisition, succeeded in gaining his confidence, luring him to Tirvia where he had him arrested. Taken back to Carcassonne in August 1321, Bélibaste was tried and burned.

in Villerouge-Termenés (Aude), whose castle belonged to the archbishop of Narbonne, his temporal lord.

BERNARD DÉLICIEUX: Born in Montpellier in 1260, he entered the Order of Saint Francis in 1284, and was influenced by the ideas of Joachim and Pierre-Jean Olive. He had the courage to confront the abuses of the Inquisition and encouraged popular rebellions in Carcassonne that led to the liberation of heretics imprisoned on the *Wall*. He had surely participated in the conspiracy hatched by the consuls of Carcassonne and Limoux to expel the French and return the government of the viscounty to Ferdinand, prince of Majorca (1304).

Bernard Délicieux was imprisoned. Pardoned in 1307, he was again accused in 1313 of having hindered the inquisitorial action and even of having tried to poison the pope. "His judges, Bishop Jacques Fournier and the Bishop of Saint-Papoul "Aude", did not take this second accusation into account." However, he was expelled from his order in 1318 and condemned to perpetual imprisonment (without shackles). He died in 1320.

BERTRAN MARTI: This perfect one was native of Tarabel (Haute-Garonne). We do not know anything about his family, undoubtedly very humble. In 1226 he attended the Council of Pieusse, and was elected deacon in 1230; around 1239 he succeeded Guilhabert de Castres as Cathar bishop of Toulouse and its region.

From 1229 to 1237, he preached in the Lauragais, especially in Fanjeaux and Laurac, but also in Limoux, Dun (Ariège), and in many other cities or castles, kindling everywhere the Cathar faith, "consoling" knights or knaves.

From 1238, he settled in Montségur where he was considered a spiritual master as well as an organizer and political leader. His diplomatic activity was very intense from 1240 to 1244. He died at the stake on March 16, 1244.

FOLQUET DE MARSEILLE: Folquet or Foulque de Marseille belonged to a family of merchants from Genoa who moved to Marseille. He dedicated himself first to commerce in his younger years and also to the cultivation of poetry. Touched by grace, he became a monk in 1201, became abbot of Thoronet (between Brignoles and Draguignan) and later, in 1205,

the bishop of Toulouse. *By the faith that I owe you*, says the *Song of the Crusade, with his actions, with his words, with his whole attitude, he seems more like the Antichrist than the messenger of Rome.*

He died on December 25, 1231. Dante, in his *Paradise*, placed him in the heaven of Venus (canto IX, 67-142).

GUILHABERT DE CASTRES: The most famous of the perfects of Occitania. He may have been a nobleman and, moreover, "from" Castres. His brother Isarn and his two sisters entered like him in the Cathar orders.

At first he resided in Fanjeaux (Aude) where he had a house. In 1204,

He "consoles" Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix, the father of the future defender of Montségur. In the same year, he gave the habit to Esclarmonde, sister of the Count of Foix, in the presence of a large and noble audience. In 1207, he confronted Pierre de Castelnau, Roman legate, at the colloquy of Montréal. In 1226, he was present at the Cathar Council of Pieusse where Beroit de Termes was named bishop of the new bishopric of Razès.

Guilhabert de Castres devoted his whole life to preaching and to the office of consolation. From 1211 to 1230, he walked all the roads, traveling in all directions in his ideal diocese. He is seen in Mirepoix, Castelnaudary, Labécède, Toulouse.

It was undoubtedly in 1232 that he decided to make Montségur the administrative and religious center of the sect. He settled in the castle, which he only left for brief outings. He died shortly before the siege of 1243.

GUILHEM MONTANHAGOL (1229-1258): Of Toulouse origin and having almost always lived in Toulouse, this troubadour was a protégé of Raymond VII and James V of Aragon. He attended most of the events that put an end to southern independence. In his poetry, he ardently defends the cause of the Count of Toulouse and fights against the religious oppression which, by condemning feminine luxury, chivalrous prodigality and love, dried up the source of Occitan poetry. This double protest against French rule and ecclesiastical power is expressed in a moderate and elegant way, giving it greater force.

It seems that he spent some years at the court of Alfonso X of Castile.

JACQUES FOURNIER: Born in Saverdun (Ariège), Jacques Fournier, first professor of the Cistercian Order at the abbey of Boulbonne, then doctor of theology at the University of Paris and abbot of Fontfroide, was elevated in 1317 to the episcopal see of Pamiers and transferred to that of Mirepoix in 1326. Named cardinal, he was elected pope in 1334 under the name of Benedict XII.

An outstanding spirit by any standards, Jacques Fournier was a competent, conscientious and incorruptible inquisitor in his diocese. The register in which he recorded the judicial proceedings and the interrogations that he personally conducted has been preserved. Published in 1965 by

J. Duvernoy, offers a wealth of invaluable data on the life and beliefs of the last Cathars of the county of Foix.

LOBA DE PENNAUTIER: Loba, whose real name is Orbria, was the daughter of Raimon, lord of Pennautier (Aude), called Lobat. She had married a *parier* lord of Cabaret (Lastours, Aude), undoubtedly Jourdain de Cabaret, brother of Pierre-Rogier de Cabaret.

This lady was, in the years leading up to the Crusade of 1209, the idol of the of the small court that gathered in Cabaret the Count of Foix (Raimon Roger, the "red-haired count"), Bertran de Saissac, Pierre-Rogier de Mirepoix, Aimeric de Montréal and the troubadours Peire Vidal and Raimon de Miraval. It is not certain that he was a believer, but all his friends were Cathars or members of the Cathar party.

PEIRE CARDENAL: This poet, one of the greatest poets of the Middle Ages, was born around 1180, in Puy-en-Velay, in the bosom of a noble family. He left the canonry of his hometown where his father had placed him, to follow his poetic vocation. The details of his life are little known to us. He soon took his place among the Occitans around the Count of Toulouse, who did not accept either the French domination or that of the clerics. In his eloquent and vigorous satires, he criticized the indignity of the clergy and the abandonment of customs. If he was not a Cathar, he had the reputation of being one, and was influenced by heterodox theories. Some of his poems, spread among the people, fed the anticlerical propaganda. He carried out a long activity and died almost a centenarian, around 1274.

Raymond VI, COUNT OF TOLOSA (from 1194 to 1222): Although prudently submitted to the Roman Church, Raymond VI could not avoid confrontation with Simon de Montfort, who coveted his dominions. Defeated in the battle of Muret (September 12, 1213), where his ally Peter of Aragon was killed, he lost his county whose investiture then passed to Simon de Montfort.

Meanwhile, his son, "the young count" (future Raymond VII), takes the war to Provence, besieges and takes Beaucaire. In 1217, Raymond VI triumphantly enters Toulouse, revolted against the Crusaders. Simon de Montfort vainly tries to seize the city where the young count has also entered. On June 25, 1218, Simon de Montfort died.

In June 1219, Prince Louis, son of Philip Augustus, invaded Languedoc. He took Marmande but failed before Toulouse and left (1219): "painful failure", said Pope Honorius III.

When Raymond VI died in 1222, he had reconquered, with the masterful help of his son, all his dominions.

RAIMUNDO VII, COUNT OF TOLOSA (from 1222 to 1249): Raymond VII had to to face the new royal crusade. Louis VIII takes Avignon (1226) and establishes two seneschals in Beaucaire and Carcassonne. But he dies in Montpensier without having been able to conquer Toulouse.

Raymond VII did not believe however that he could continue the fight against the French monarchy: he signed the peace of Paris with Louis IX, or *treaty of Meaux-Paris*, on August 12, 1229. Raymond kept Toulouse but lost the eastern Languedoc and northern Languedoc. And it is stipulated that at his death his property will pass to his daughter Joan, who will marry Alphonse of Poitiers, brother of the king.

Raymond VII tried throughout his life to circumvent by cunning or by force the disastrous clauses of the Treaty of Meaux. He did not succeed in seizing Provence, which was taken by Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX. In 1240, the son of Trencavel tried to take Carcassonne: he was defeated and surrendered. In 1241, Raymond VII, helped by the whole of the South and the English, rebelled: the English were defeated at Taillebourg (1243). Raymond VII, the count of Foix and the viscount of

Narbonne signs the peace. Montségur, one of the first Cathar refuges, was assaulted and destroyed (1244). Quéribus, another Cathar citadel, fell in 1255. Finally, in 1258-1259, Aragon and later England renounced their claims to the southern provinces.

Raymond VII died in 1249.

In 1271, on August 21 and 24, Countess Jeanne and Count Alphonse de Poitiers die *childless*. The King of France becomes Count of Toulouse. He governs the country with four seneschals.

RAIMON-ROGER TRENCAVEL: Viscount of Béziers, Carcassonne, Albi and Némes, he was only twenty years old when Simon de Montfort, after having taken and sacked Béziers (July 22, 1209), went to besiege him in Carcassonne. The Crusaders seized him in a cowardly ambush and occupied the city whose terrified inhabitants had fled (August 15, 1209). Trencavel died shortly afterwards, undoubtedly poisoned, at the bottom of the dungeon where Simon de Montfort had imprisoned him.

RAIMON-ROGER, COUNT OF FOIX (from 1188 to 1223): He spent almost all his life fighting against Simon de Montfort and against Gui de Lévis, his lieutenant. He was one of the most brilliant captains of his time. In 1211, he defeated at Montgey (Tarn), a corps of six thousand German crusaders; on September 12, 1213, he fought at Muret with Peter of Aragon and the Count of Toulouse. In June 1218, he took part in the defense of Toulouse against Simon de Montfort (who was killed during the siege). Finally, in 1219, he took part in the battle of Bazièges where his intervention ensured the victory of Raymond VI. In 1223 he had recovered all his dominions. He died the same year.

RAIMON OF MIRAVAL: This troubadour, born around 1135, was the lord of Miraval (Aude). He was a protégé of Peter II of Aragon and a friend of the Count of Toulouse; he enjoyed great popularity among the ladies and lords of Cabardès in the years preceding the crusade. In 1209, Simon de Montfort took his small castle of Miraval from him. He died around 1216, probably in Spain where he had followed Count Raymond VI, dispossessed of his States. He left about forty poems, almost all dedicated to love.

ROGER-BERNARD I, COUNT OF FOIX (from 1148 to 1187): He was a not very bellicose prince. In 1175 he married his daughter Esclarmonde to Jourdain de L'Isle, viscount of Gimoez. The latter, widowed in October 1200, immediately adhered to Catharism and received the *consolamentum* at Fanjeaux from Guilhabert de Castres (1204). She retired to Pamiers, where she became, according to Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay, a fervent propagandist of Cathar ideas.

ROGER-BERNARD II, COUNT OF FOIX (from 1233 to 1241): This prince continued the struggle against Simon de Montfort's son, Amaury, expelling him from all the places he occupied in the county. But when Louis VIII, to whom Amaury had ceded his rights, led the new crusade, Roger-Bernard realized that he could not hold out for long. In October 1226, the king went to Pamiers where bishops and lords swore allegiance to him. On June 16, 1229, in the church of Saint-Jean de Verges, Roger-Bernard in turn swore his submission to Louis VIII and the Church. Through his marriage to Ermesinda de Castelbon, he had added to his properties the viscounty of the same name located in Catalonia: there he protected the heretics. Excommunicated by the Bishop of Urgel, he had to appear in Pamiers before the Tribunal of the Inquisition. He was absolved and reconciled with the Church (1241). He died in the same year in the abbey of Boulbonne, where his ancestors were buried, dressed in the religious habit.

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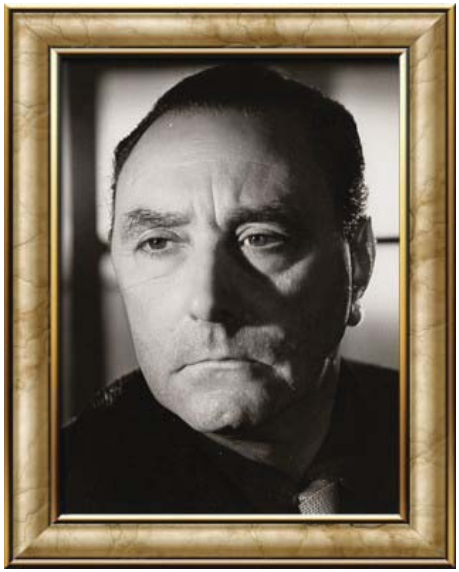

RENÉ NELLI (Carcassonne, February 20, 1906-id, March 11, 1982) was a French poet, essayist, hermeticist, writer and historian, recognized as an authority on the Occitan culture of the Middle Ages and Catharism in particular.

D. in Letters, he taught at the University of Toulouse. From 1928-1930 until 1950, Nelli was in contact with the poet Joe Bousquet who influenced him in his poems, written in French and Occitan, forming part of the so-called "Mediterranean surrealism". This movement developed somewhat on the fringes of Parisian surrealism, in Marseille around the *Cahiers du Sud* (Notebooks *of the South*) and in Carcassonne around the magazine *Chantiers*.

He participated with Joë Bousquet in the writing of a special issue of *Cahiers du Sud*, dedicated to *Le génie d'oc et l'homme méditerranéen* in 1943 in which one finds the three guidelines of his work: edition and translation of medieval Occitan poets; personal poems, close to

Paul Valéry and a critical work. His poetic anthologies are of dense writing and sensual themes. They recover the mystical and erotic-poetic tradition of the Cathars and the troubadours. He later devoted himself to prose and theater.

Nelli was the director of the journal on southern ethnology Folklore and played an important role in relation to the knowledge of Occitan culture, being one of the founders, in 1946, of the *Institut d'Estudis Occitans* (Institute of Occitan Studies) in Toulouse.

At the same time, he researched and wrote numerous works and studies on heresies of the Middle Ages in the French Midi and on Catharism, contrasting speculative and sensationalist literature written up to that time that was detrimental to rigorous studies on this social and historical aspect. As for Fernand Niel and other researchers on this subject, his relationship with Déodat Roché was fundamental.

He founded the *Centre national d'études cathares*, which houses a collection of more than 3000 volumes on Catharism and bears his name in recognition of his exhaustive research and work: *Centre d'études cathares - Association d'études du catharisme - René Nelli*.

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