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CONFLICT AND COERCION IN SOUTHERN FRANCE

by

JUDITH BLAIR

Under the direction of Kathryn McClymond

ABSTRACT

This paper endeavors to examine the mechanisms by which the crown of France was able to subsume the region of Languedoc in the wake of the Albigensian Crusade in the thirteenth century. The systematic use of Catholic doctrine and an Inquisition run by the Dominican Order of Preachers allowed France to dominate the populace of the region and destroy any indigenous social, economic, and political structures.

INDEX WORDS: Catharism, Cathars, Languedoc, Albigensian, Crusade, Inquisition, Dominican Order, Middle Ages

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JUDITH BLAIR

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Requirements for Graduation with Undergraduate Research Honors
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Georgia State University

2005

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Acknowledgements and Dedication

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Introduction

From the twelfth century until the fourteenth century, the area that is now known as southern France was a hotbed of dualist Christian heresy. This particular heresy was called Catharism, and missionaries may have brought it to the area from the Balkans. In 1208, a henchman of Raymond VI of Toulouse murdered a papal legate sent to combat Catharism, Peter of Castelnau. Pope Innocent III retaliated for the murder by declaring a crusade against the heretics living in the County of Toulouse in Languedoc, which was an essentially autonomous region that did not answer to the French crown.¹ After years of sieges and skirmishes in the war known as the Albigensian Crusade, and after the deaths of almost all the principal players from the beginning of the Crusade, Raymond VI's son, Raymond VII, finally signed the Treaty of Meaux/Paris in 1229. The primary terms allowed him to remain Count of Toulouse, and his only child, Jeanne, was betrothed to King Louis IX's brother, Alphonse of Poitiers. Upon Raymond's death, all possessions of the house of Toulouse were to pass to Jeanne and Alphonse, regardless of any male heir of Raymond's line. In this manner, Toulouse and much of Languedoc became subject to the French crown. Since the Crusade did not rid the region of heresy, Pope Gregory IX ordered a General Inquisition throughout southern France in 1233, headed by friars of the Dominican Order. This Inquisition, while simultaneously routing out heretics, also served to quell any potential rebellions in Languedoc. The last Cathar

¹ I am using the name Languedoc here and in the rest of this thesis as a general term to indicate the area surrounding Toulouse, including the modern departments of Haute Garonne, Tarn, Hérault, Aude, and Ariège.

burned by the Inquisition in Languedoc was Guillaume Bélibaste in 1321, by which time the region was completely under French power.

A wealth of scholarly writing exists that focuses on the separate entities and events discussed in this thesis, such as Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's excellent socio-economic analysis of a mountain village essentially depopulated by the Inquisition (*Montaillou, the Promised Land of Error*) and Jonathan Sumption's discussion of the Crusade (*The Albigensian Crusade*). I, however, wish to pull all of these different threads together and weave a more complete picture of the events of the early thirteenth century in Languedoc. These events did not occur as isolated political or religious events, and it is vital to examine them in the light of a combination of military, religious, political, and social history.

At a time when war is raging between Christians and Muslims in the Middle East, much like the Middle Ages when Crusaders traveled to the Holy Land, it serves both scholars and the general public well to consider all aspects of a politically and religiously volatile situation. It is my aim, therefore, to apply an interdisciplinary approach to one small corner of history. To that end, this thesis is broken up into two sections: historical background and a discussion of the fall of Languedoc to the French. The first section gives the reader a sense of the complexity of the region's history, which is necessary to understand the motivations of the French crown and the papacy in this particular situation and why the issue of heresy in Languedoc came to a head as it did. The second section examines the reasons behind the success of the French invasion of Languedoc. By proceeding in this fashion, the reader will be able to see clearly the interplay of political,

social, and spiritual forces at work during this era. It will become apparent that the Albigensian Crusade, while ostensibly religious in nature, was motivated by much more than a theological issue. The Catholic Church pursued its own political agenda with this war, and it could not have been successful without the military involvement of the French crown. Additionally, the French takeover of Languedoc could not have succeeded without the complicity of organized religion, in the form of the Inquisition and the Catholic Church.

Historical Background

The Papacy

To fully understand the papacy of the Middle Ages, we must look at its development within the confines of the Roman Empire. When Emperor Theodosius I declared Christianity the official religion of the empire in 391, the empire itself was already in the process of splitting into eastern and western halves. Constantine had moved the capital from Rome to Constantinople in 330, and a tradition of separate eastern and western emperors had been emerging since 285.

As the western empire weakened under pressure from successive invasions of Goths, Lombards, and other so-called barbarians, the papacy became an *ad hoc* protective body for Rome. In 452, for example, a Roman embassy including Pope Leo I traveled to northern Italy to dissuade Attila, the advancing king of the Huns, from continuing his invasion toward Rome. The success of this mission inspired a similar meeting a few years later with the ruler of the Vandals, who, unfortunately for Rome, only agreed to abstain from “murder, arson and torture.”² Despite the lack of any imperial authority, Pope Leo managed to negotiate on behalf of the territory in which he lived and save it from complete destruction. This accomplishment, coupled with the weakness of imperial authority in the west, may have encouraged Leo to expand the scope of his ecclesiastical power in terms of papal relations with the empire. He believed that the see of St Peter, Rome, was the source of Christian authority, and it should be recognized as such.

² Walter Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (London,: Methuen, 1972), 20.

The major stumbling block to the papacy declaring itself the primary Christian authority was that of *ius in sacris*, the Roman law that conferred the title *pontifex maximus* (supreme priest) on the emperor. This section of public law unequivocally stated that the emperor was a divinely appointed judge, and his declarations were the last word in all religious matters.³ All the patriarchs of the church, including the pope, were subjects of the emperor and therefore subject to his will. Any dissent voiced by an imperial subject could be construed as treason, a crime punishable with imprisonment, exile or death.

Despite these risks, Pope Leo I decided to use Roman law to his own advantage and cement the concept of the pope as the immediate successor of St Peter. In Matthew 16:18-19⁴, Jesus gave Peter the authority to found His church and to decide theological arguments (by using the particular terms “to bind” and “to loose” in verse 19). Leo combined this scriptural authority with Roman inheritance law, “according to which the heir stepped legally into the place of the deceased person.”⁵ In the eyes of Roman law, there was no difference between the deceased party and his heir. Therefore, argued Pope Leo, all popes were heir to St Peter’s objective legal powers. In terms of papal primacy or infallibility, the actual person who was pope was immaterial, because he was legally St Peter. If the empire’s official religion was Christianity, and the pope was the immediate successor of St Peter, then the pope had the authority to judge religious disputes within

³ Walter Ullmann, *Law and Politics in the Middle Ages*, ed. G.R. Elton, *The Sources of History: Studies in the Uses of Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), 62.

⁴ “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:18-20 from Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁵ Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*, 20.

the entire empire. Not surprisingly, this argument held little sway in the court of Constantinople, and initially little progress in favor of the papacy was made.

As the eastern and western halves of the empire became more and more separate, however, the papacy was able to impose itself with greater effect. For example, in 726 Emperor Leo III issued a decree from Constantinople ordering the destruction of all religious images. Pope Gregory II refused to carry out the decree and even went on to respond in an official letter that if the emperor tried to force him to comply, he would not be responsible for any bloodshed.⁶ Pope Gregory stood against the emperor with impunity, a demonstration of imperial impotence in the west. Papal focus then turned away from the east and Constantinople and toward the west and the Frankish kingdoms.

The Franks were a Germanic tribe who had conquered most of what we now call France and western Germany. A family of kings known as the Merovingians ruled them, but by the early eighth century the Merovingians had delegated much of their power to the Mayors of the Palace. We shall examine more of Frankish history later, but the rise of one of these Mayors, Charles Martel, is important in the development of the papacy.

Pope Gregory II's immediate successor, Gregory III, wanted to push the boundaries of what Gregory II had started. Gregory III desired a complete extrication from the empire that still called itself Roman but had little to do with Rome or western Europe. In 740, under threat from the Lombards, another barbarian tribe, Gregory III appealed to Charles Martel for protection. This was the first of many appeals by the papacy to the Franks, as we shall see later, and it was also the first of many appeals to be

⁶ Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*, 72.

turned down. Charles Martel had no quarrel with the Lombards at that time, and he saw no reason to become embroiled in what he perceived to be papal-Lombard relations.

After Charles Martel's death in 741, his son, Pippin the Short, began engineering the overthrow of the Merovingian dynasty. His plans came to fruition in 750, and he approached the papacy for approval of his *coup d'état*. Pope Zacharias gave his consent with an eye toward the benefits of friendship with a strong Frankish king. In 751, Pippin was crowned and anointed Pippin III, King of the Franks, by Pope Zacharias. Shortly thereafter, the papacy put the wheels in motion to remove itself finally from the yoke of imperial authority.

When the Lombards overthrew Ravenna, the home of the imperial representative, and most of northern Italy in 751, the way to Rome was left open. Pope Stephen II met with King Pippin III in 754 to again request help with the Lombard threat. In this discussion, Stephen brought up a document known as the Donation of Constantine. This document, a forgery probably created about the same time, stated that the Emperor Constantine had given large, unspecified regions and the right to wear imperial insignia to the pope.⁷ Supposedly, the pope at the time, Sylvester I, had allowed Constantine to take the imperial crown with him to Constantinople, but ultimate ownership still lay with the papacy in Rome. Using this document, Pope Stephen II convinced King Pippin III that the Lombards had stolen their territory from the papacy. Pippin agreed to reclaim the land for St Peter, which he did. He then made his own donation, the Donation of Pippin,

⁷ Barbara H. Rosenwein, *A Short History of the Middle Ages* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002), 73.

to the see of St Peter. In this manner, lands that had been imperial possessions now became part of the papal patrimony, thus freeing the papacy from Constantinople.

Through the shrewd statesmanship of many popes, the papacy was able to gain the loyalty of the Frankish monarchy, enlarge its own lands, and relieve itself of the emperor by the middle of the eighth century. Over the course of the next few centuries, the Roman Church continued to slowly consolidate its power and concentrate on more ecclesiastical matters, such as Gregorian Reform in the eleventh century.⁸

One of the more important popes in our story, Innocent III, was a savvy political and spiritual leader who was able to turn Roman and canon law to his advantage. He proved a formidable foe of heresy, and his initiation of the Albigensian Crusade provided the impetus for the subjugation of Languedoc into his ally's kingdom. On January 8, 1198, upon the death of Pope Celestine III, the college of cardinals elected thirty-seven year old Cardinal Lotario dei Conti pope. This exceedingly young Roman aristocrat took the name Innocent III and reigned for eighteen years, an unusually long time for a pope.

The people of Rome and the papal patrimonies



Figure 1: Mosaic of Innocent III

Ladner, *Die papstbildnisse des altertums und des mittellalters*

⁸ See “The Growth of Heresy” below for a discussion of Gregorian Reform.

were not always amenable to the wishes of whomever was in power at the Lateran Palace, and the late twelfth century was no different. A succession of corrupt popes and archbishops had angered the people, and despite the fact that episcopal reform was already underway, the choice of a new pope was loaded with potential problems. Lotario's background and training, however, positioned him as the perfect candidate for the papal tiara.⁹ He was Roman, which meant he understood the customs and traditions of the area. He also had extensively studied both canon and Roman law while at the University of Paris.¹⁰ Knowledge of law was indispensable for a pope, as we have seen above with the example of Pope Leo I. An astute lawyer could use existing law to his own advantage. In addition, the fact that Lotario studied in Paris was an asset. The papacy had had a close relationship with the ruling families of France for centuries, and it could not have hurt Lotario's chances to have spent a great deal of time around the French court. Together with his youthful vitality and his religious zeal, Lotario combined all the right qualities to lead a Church in crisis.

In fact, in 1198 the Catholic Church was in a two-fold crisis. On the one hand, parishioners, who were taxed to the limit by secular lords, were resentful of tithe demands that they perceived as excessive. They saw their village priests getting fat while they struggled to feed their families, and people began to wonder what had happened to apostolic poverty. Despite the efforts of Gregorian Reform,¹¹ corruption was rife at all levels of the episcopate, with simony (the purchase of clerical offices) and clerical

⁹ See the *Catholic Encyclopedia* online at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14714c.htm> for a discussion of the origins of the papal tiara.

¹⁰ Helena Tillmann, *Pope Innocent III*, ed. Richard Vaughan, trans. Walter Sax, vol. 12, *Europe in the middle ages: selected studies* (Amsterdam ; New York: North-Holland, 1980), 3.

¹¹ Again, see "The Growth of Heresy" below for a discussion of Gregorian Reform.

marriage regular practices. The other crisis was the problem of reconciling spiritual authority with secular power. What was the appropriate role of a pope?

In response to the problem of corruption, heretical sects popped up all over Europe, most of them espousing true apostolic poverty and casting doubt on the efficacy of the Church and its sacraments. While the actual membership of these sects may have been quite small, the Church felt it needed to go on the offensive. For this reason, Innocent III made combating heresy one of his primary goals. One of his first decretals,¹² *Vergentis in senium* (promulgated March 25, 1199), made heresy a crime of high treason, *crimen laesae majestatis*. The penalty for such a crime followed Roman law: the death of the perpetrator and the seizure of his lands, making them unavailable both to him and his descendants. The difference between the Roman punishment and the canonical punishment was that the convicted traitor against the Church was dealt a spiritual death, i.e. excommunication, not a physical death. Physical death for heretics would come later in history.

The interesting thing about *Vergentis in senium*, however, was that it hearkened back to the Roman emperor's position as *pontifex maximus*. When the emperor was also considered the high priest of the empire, any theological opposition could be considered treason against the emperor. By likening the position of pope to that of the *pontifex maximus*, Innocent instantly made disagreement with the papacy akin to treason. In this manner, Innocent sought to silence any dissent, but he also created a new paradigm of the

¹² A papal decretal is a decree that gives a decision on a point of canon law. A papal bull is an announcement from the pope.

Church as an entity in need of protection from evil ideas, not a propagator of sacred ideas.

Innocent was not immune to using the charge of heresy to political advantage, as in the case of Viterbo, one of Italy's city-states, in 1207:

The commune of Viterbo, where there had long been a Cathar presence, was in conflict with the commune of Rome. The pope backed Rome. Viterbo defied him. Both spiritual and territorial issues were in play and *Vergentis* [*in senium*] could be used as a means of breaking down the autonomy of the city -- *ratione peccati*, by reason of the sin of heresy.¹³

In this manner, Innocent furthered his own political agenda while seeming to be merely doing his duty as the protector of Christian souls. Innocent found this method so effective that he used the same tactics again in 1212 when Milan refused to follow his political lead in the imperial power struggle between Frederick II and Otto of Brunswick.¹⁴

Politically, Innocent believed that the entire Christian world was his dominion.¹⁵ While he actually was, in a very real sense, the temporal lord of many lands,¹⁶ Innocent felt he should have jurisdiction in all Christian kingdoms. Part of his justification for this idea was that

Whenever war is threatened there is an imminent danger of commission of sin by Christians. It is the pope's duty, Innocent argued, to intervene in any temporal affair where sin is concerned (*ratione peccati*) and to pass judgment as the Vicar of Christ.¹⁷

¹³ Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars* (Oxford ; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 93.

¹⁴ Lambert, 95.

¹⁵ Norman Cantor, *Medieval History: The Life and Death of a Civilization*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1969), 448.

¹⁶ See Hoyt, *Europe in the Middle Ages*, "By the end of his pontificate Innocent was acknowledged as feudal lord of the kingdoms of Sicily, Portugal, Aragón, and England in the west, and of Bulgaria and Armenia in the east, while Hungary, Bohemia, and Poland recognized the pope's superiority and right to intervene or arbitrate in their internal affairs." (p. 465)

¹⁷ Robert S. Hoyt and Stanley Chodorow, *Europe in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc, 1976), 463.

Thus, the pope should be involved in secular disputes in order to ensure that Christians avoid sin. Innocent used this rationale to gain the advantage in political disputes, such as when King John of England refused to recognize the new Archbishop of Canterbury, who had been appointed by Pope Innocent in 1207. In retaliation, Innocent encouraged King Philip II of France to invade England.¹⁸ Such a war, instigated by the representative of St Peter, could only be considered a just war, and the corollary to this was that Christians who fight with the pope's approval would be held guiltless for any behavior that would normally be considered sinful. From this one can begin to see the possibility of papal indulgences being used in secular contexts. In fact, Innocent broached this topic in 1199 when he called for the Sicilian people to defend their country against Markward of Anweiler, a Hohenstafen leader who was trying to seize power. Describing Markward as another Saladin, Innocent reasoned that resistance against him should be rewarded with the same indulgences allowed crusaders to the Holy Land.¹⁹

As a rule, though, Innocent saw any and all conflicts against non-Christians as crusades. In 1211, he exhorted all Christians to join with the Iberian monarchies against the Almohad caliph, and after the battle of Las Navas in 1212, in which the expansion of the Moors was finally halted, he celebrated a thanksgiving feast in Rome.²⁰ Not all of the Pope's crusades were successful, however. Innocent's most bitter disappointment may have been the Fourth Crusade, which he called in 1202. Due to a lack of private funds, the crusading army was forced to borrow money from Venetian merchants who then used

¹⁸ Cantor, 452.

¹⁹ Lambert, 98.

²⁰ Tillmann, 274.

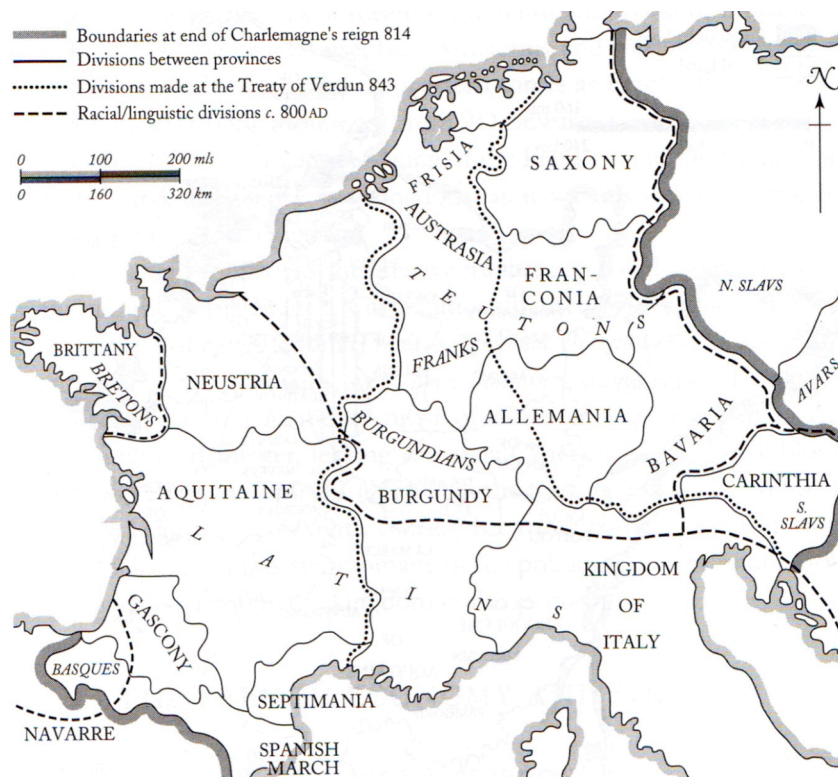
the force for its own agenda. The army helped the Venetians take Zara and the Dalmatian coast, and then they marched on Constantinople.²¹ Such an attack on Christian Byzantium was completely contrary to Innocent's mission, but he knew that he did not have the money to put a stop to it. If he had recalled the army, the Venetians would have refused to transport them, and the entire crusade would have been a waste.

As we shall see, Pope Innocent III took his position as a spiritual leader very seriously, and he did not balk at using extreme measures to realize his goals. The Albigensian Crusade and its aftermath was perhaps one of his crowning achievements, and the papacy's old friend, the monarchy of France, would benefit greatly from it.

²¹ Tillmann, 277.

France

Pippin III's famous conquest and subsequent donation of territory to the Church set the stage for his son, Charlemagne (r. 768-814), to continue the tradition of a strong French monarch. Charlemagne, who took power in 768, had visions of restoring the Roman Empire to its former glory in western Europe, with himself at the helm. He began by expanding into Italy and taking the Lombard crown in 774, after which he sent his army north into the Saxon lands of Germany.²² By the year 800, he had managed to create an empire that spanned 800 miles east to west, and he had established a new



capital at Aix-La Chapelle, now known as Aachen in western Germany.²³ On December 25, 800, Charlemagne reached the pinnacle of his career when he was crowned emperor by Pope Leo III in Rome.

Figure 2: The Carolingian Empire and its subsequent divisions
Hallam, *Capetians France*

²² Rosenwein, 73.

Kingdom, the focus of our examination, to a small area surrounding Paris. The subsequent kings of the Western Kingdom held a very small sphere of influence, as shown in Figure 3, and the various counts and dukes in the surrounding areas ruled with virtual autonomy.

In the early twelfth century, however, King Louis VI the Fat (r. 1108-1137) began exercising his royal power outside the tight confines of the royal domain. With the help of his closest advisor and biographer, Abbot Suger of St Denis, Louis reasserted his royal supremacy.²⁴ He began by declaring that all bishops and their lands that were not already under the protection of a secular lord should come under the king's direct control, an act that theoretically enlarged his influence as far as central France.²⁵

King Louis also recovered some of his power as a feudal liege lord. In years prior, the king of France was unable to rely upon his vassals to come to his aid militarily; there were just too many internal conflicts between various counts and dukes for this to be practical. By way of skillful diplomacy, Louis VI was able to get many of them to reaffirm their homage to the crown and acknowledge the king as their ultimate suzerain. A testament to Louis's abilities in this area is Suger's account of the king's victory over Emperor Henry V of Germany in 1124. Henry was planning an attack on Reims in northeastern France, so Louis "summoned his nobles... [and on that day] numerous hosts

²⁴ Jean Dunbabin, *France in the Making, 843-1180*, 2nd ed. (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 257.

²⁵ Dunbabin, 262.

of knights and foot soldiers came into view.”²⁶ The Emperor disengaged his army and retreated in the face of such an unexpectedly formidable opponent.

Despite his diplomatic skill, King Louis VI the Fat did not greatly increase the crown’s physical land holdings, but he did succeed in increasing the prestige of the monarchy. By the time his son, Louis VII, took over in 1137, many of the counts and dukes who had previously considered themselves virtually autonomous had submitted themselves at least nominally to the royal court.

King Louis VII is usually remembered as the first husband of that most famous medieval woman, Eleanor of Aquitaine, but he was an important king in his own right. Louis continued the diplomatic work his father had started. For example, the crown continued to add to its collection of bishops under its protection, and by 1180, more than half the bishops in France were under Louis’s power. Louis VII also succeeded in getting Henry II of England to pay homage for the lands he held in France in 1158, which greatly increased the amount of land legally considered to belong to the crown of France.²⁷ In fact, the practice of referring to the French monarchy as “the crown,” meaning the kingdom as a whole, came into increased use in the last years of Louis VII’s reign.²⁸

The work of the two kings, Louis VI and Louis VII, allowed the next king, Philip II Augustus (r. 1180-1223), to increase the stature of the French monarchy even further. King Philip’s goal, however, was not just the titular expansion of France but the physical expansion of the kingdom, too. Through a complicated web of alliances, Philip II

²⁶ Suger, *The Deeds of Louis the Fat*, trans. Richard Cusimano and John Moorhead (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 128.

²⁷ Dunbabin, 262.

²⁸ Dunbabin, 267.

Augustus was able to annex Normandy back into France by the early thirteenth century. The Normans had conducted themselves as a separate principality since King Charles the Simple had awarded them Normandy in 911 as a way to protect Paris from Viking attacks. While King Philip continued to enlarge his kingdom, he also understood the need to govern his reclaimed territory effectively. By 1199,

Philip Augustus had a relatively well-organised and quite thoroughly taxed principality as a power base. In addition, the feudal and sacred powers that went with his royal office were beginning to have some considerable practical meaning.²⁹

Philip felt his kingdom was strong enough to



Figure 4: Philip II Augustus of France

take on the other rulers of Europe, particularly the German emperors and the Plantagenets, who reigned in England. He became embroiled in struggles over succession in Germany, and he was in a constant state of warfare with King John of England about a series of different problems.

Despite disputes with the Pope over domestic issues (not unusual for a European monarch), Philip II Augustus had a good relationship with the papacy for the majority of his reign. In fact, as we have seen above, Pope Innocent III went to Philip for help when the Pope was having his own problems with John of England. King Philip was always careful to cultivate this positive relationship, even setting off on crusade in 1190. Philip

²⁹ Elizabeth M. Hallam and Judith Everard, *Capetian France, 987-1328*, 2nd ed. (Harlow, England; New York: Longman, 2001), 146.

went as far as Acre with the crusading army, but after capturing that city in 1191, he returned to France in order to deal with domestic issues. Many monarchs would promise to take the cross and journey to Palestine, but few ever actually did it. It is a measure of Philip's respect for the crusading ideal and the Church that he actively took part in the Third Crusade.

This record of attending to the Church's wishes, along with the long tradition of accord between France and the papacy, might suggest that Philip was at the pope's beck and call. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. When Pope Innocent began trespassing on what Philip saw as his own secular authority in France, the king had no qualms about defying the pope's wishes. In 1203, Innocent commanded Philip to make peace with John of England during one of their many quarrels, but Philip replied that the matter was not within the pope's jurisdiction. King Philip claimed that the issue was a feudal one, and, additionally, the pope did not "have a say in disputes between kings."³⁰ Similarly, when Pope Innocent needed help against heretics in Languedoc in February 1205, Philip was not quick to come to his aid. Innocent sent a letter to Philip requesting help with the recalcitrant Count Raymond VI of Toulouse and his heresy-ridden territory. According to Jonathan Sumption, this was the second time Innocent had appealed to Philip regarding this issue, and at neither time did the king come to the aid of the Church.³¹ Ostensibly, given King Philip's other occupations with England and Germany at the time, he was unable to send any troops to Toulouse. Philip's response to the

³⁰ Hallam and Everard, 254.

³¹ Jonathan Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade* (London ; Boston: Faber & Faber, 1978), 70.

Pope's third request, after the murder of a papal legate in 1208, voiced another concern regarding the legality of invading and seizing the Count's lands:

As to the matter of your declaring the Count's territory open to seizure, I must tell you that I have been advised by learned and eminent men that you cannot legally do this until he is condemned for heresy. When he is so condemned, you should clearly indicate it and request me to declare the territory open to seizure, since it belongs to my domain.³²

The tone of this letter, written in April 1208, is reprimanding, and Philip made it clear that he would not personally intervene in the problems Innocent was having with the people of Languedoc unless it was legal for him to do so.

Philip II Augustus of France trod a thin line between his own interests and those of Pope Innocent III, but his eventual involvement in the Albigensian Crusade would bring about increased prestige for both his kingdom and the embattled Catholic Church.

³² William of Puylaurens, *The Chronicle of William of Puylaurens : the Albigensian Crusade and its Aftermath*, trans. W. A. Sibly and M. D. Sibly (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK ; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2003), 131.

The Growth of Heresy

The Christian Church has perceived heresy as a problem from the very beginning. An early Christian writer, Tertullian (c.160-c.220), addressed the issue by stating that “Scripture has absolute authority; whatever it teaches is necessarily true, and woe betide him who accepts doctrines not discoverable in it.”³³ Tertullian believed that scripture revealed a *regula fidei*, rule of faith, and the failure to accept and live by the *regula* was the essence of heresy. Any deviation from the norm, that is the doctrine of the orthodox³⁴ Church, has always been considered unacceptable and condemned as heresy. Obviously, the difference between heresy and dissent is in the eyes of the beholder. For the dissatisfied laity, dissent was an attempt to return to a more apostolic Christian Church, one that followed the principles of poverty and chastity. For the established orthodox Church, however, much of that dissent was interpreted as heresy. This idea of dissent as heresy carried forward with the Catholic Church for hundreds of years.

Scholars have identified the twelfth century as a period in which the Catholic Church saw an upswing in heretical movements. Some of these scholars have posited that the roots of this increase may be found in the preceding century. During the eleventh century the Catholic Church began a massive reform movement, now referred to as Gregorian Reform. The movement’s namesake, Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073-1085), condemned his fellow prelates for crimes such as simony, the keeping of women, and

³³ John Norman Davidson Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th rev. ed. (London; New York: Continuum, 1977), 39.

³⁴ “Orthodox” in this context refers to the mainstream Christian Church prior to the split between Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Church.

fornication, but he was not the beginning of the reform movement.³⁵ His predecessor, Pope Leo IX, had issued a decree at the Council of Rheims in 1049 stating “the faithful should not attend the masses of uncelibate or simoniac priests.”³⁶ Pope Gregory enthusiastically embraced this decree as a way of disciplining recalcitrant prelates, and he allowed the people to judge for themselves the fitness of a priest for his office. The result of this, however, was an increased sense among parishioners that they were fit to pronounce judgments on those previously considered their moral superiors. Such empowerment could only lead to expressions of dissent. In fact, dissenting movements across western Europe appear in sources very infrequently during the eleventh century, but after 1100 there emerge numerous varieties of lay dissenters.³⁷ France was no exception.

Problems continued throughout the twelfth century, and the leaders of the Catholic Church were still trying to tackle them, as shown by some of the decisions made at the Third Lateran Council in 1179. Canon seven of the Council’s published decisions expressly prohibited the collection of fees by priests for administration of the sacraments, while canon eleven admonished clerics who kept mistresses or made frequent unnecessary visits to convents.³⁸ Unfortunately, canonical decrees made little impact in the outlying areas, and clerical life in Languedoc and other areas of France continued in

³⁵ R. I. Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), 55.

³⁶ Moore, 54.

³⁷ Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe : Documents in translation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 58.

³⁸ Norman P. Tanner, *Third Lateran Council - 1179 AD* (cited 4 July 2005); available from <http://www.piar.hu/councils/ecum11.htm>

much the same fashion as before. Social and economic changes were afoot in the eleventh century, though, and the whispers of discord would soon become shouts.

Society changed over the course of the eleventh century from a scattered, rural culture under the Carolingian Empire to a mixture of rural areas with urban centers. Due to the erosion of French monarchical power, these regions were no longer subject to an anointed king but rather to various ambitious princes and dukes. Movement to and from urban areas created social friction and competition for the basics of life, and the stable society of previous centuries was eroded. When the problems with the clergy were added to this equation, change became inevitable. The enrichment of the clergy through tithes, charges for services, and the purchasing of offices affected even the nobility. Paul Labal described the situation as follows: “Au moment où les chevaliers des castels vivent une existence de plus en plus difficile, le spectacle de l’enrichissement des clercs peut facilement déchaîner leur colère ou leur dégoût.”³⁹ When Catharism made its way from eastern Europe into Languedoc in the mid-twelfth century, it found fertile ground for its ideals of poverty and chastity.

Catharism was a heretical dualist religion that may have originated with a group known as the Bogomils in modern-day Bulgaria. Cathars asserted that the Old Testament God and the New Testament God were two separate entities. The god of the Old Testament was an evil being that had created everything material in the universe. The god of the New Testament was a good creature that had created everything spiritual.

³⁹ “At a time when the lives of castellans were becoming more and more difficult, the enrichment of clerics inspired their anger or distaste.” Paul Labal, “L’église de Rome face au catharisme,” in *Les Cathares en Occitanie*, ed. Robert Lafont (Paris: Fayard, 1982), 104.

Cathar doctrine went on to explain that the evil god had tricked the good god into imbuing humans with souls. These souls were now trapped on earth until they were released through proper sacramental acts. The required acts, however, were not those preached by the Catholic Church. In fact, Cathars believed that Catholic priests had no spiritual authority and their sacramental actions were useless.

Catharism had its own hierarchy, and the holiest Cathars, known as Perfects or Good Men, preached poverty, chastity, and vegetarianism. Male Perfects traveled in pairs around the countryside performing sacraments and accepting bread in exchange for small things they had made. Female Perfects tended to live in houses with other women, much like a convent. They provided food and shelter for any Perfects who were passing through.

Even though Cathars remained a minority in the region, Catharism grew so prevalent in Languedoc that the Cathar Church had a formal diocesan structure with archbishoprics in Toulouse, Albi⁴⁰ and Carcassonne, and these archbishoprics were in contact with other Cathar churches in such far-off places as Constantinople.⁴¹ Cathar bishops even held an open debate with members of the Catholic Church in 1165.⁴²

Scholars speculate that one of the reasons Catharism became so popular was the increasing wealth of the region. Southern cities essentially governed themselves following the example of Italian communes, and increasing trade across the Mediterranean enriched the townspeople, who paid few taxes to overlords. As a reaction

⁴⁰ Hence the term “Albigensian” that is used to refer to the Cathars of Languedoc.

⁴¹ Maurice Griffe, *Les Cathares* (Le Cannet: Editions Tableaux Synoptiques de l'Histoire, 2001).

⁴² Michel Roquebert, *La religion cathare* (Paris: Perrin, 2001), 20.

to this upsurge of wealth, some people turned to the voluntary poverty of Catharism.

Being poor when economic times are good could be seen as an even greater sacrifice than when economic times are bad, since the ascetic gives up the abundance around him. Few nobles actually converted, however, and the Cathars were not perceived as a threat to the wealthy population. For this reason, local nobility turned a blind eye to Catharism.

Meanwhile, Catholic priests worried about the eternal souls of their flock, many of whom were defecting to Cathar heresy. Such a situation could not continue in an atmosphere that did not officially allow dissent, and the Catholic Church prepared to do battle against the heretics in Languedoc.

Languedoc

By 760, King Pippin III of France had pushed Arabic rule out of the areas north and east of the Pyrenees thus adding these areas to Frankish territory. This region, though, was strikingly different from northern France both culturally and economically, and its attachment with the Frankish government was always fragile. As with the bulk of the Western Kingdom under King Charles the Bald, less than one hundred years later

Languedoc was only tenuously connected to the French monarchy. Noble families that were put in charge of the area by the crown had become, by the early ninth century, the only authorities to which the people could look for

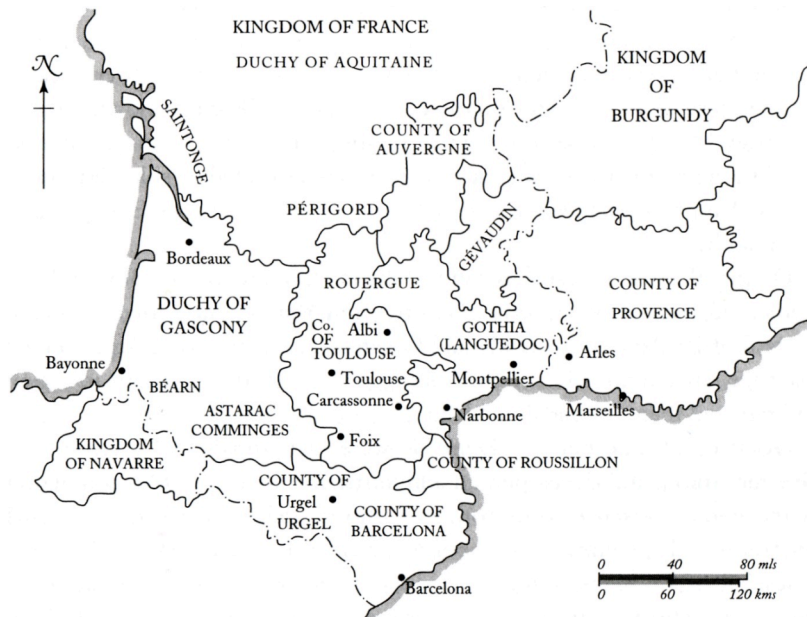


Figure 5: The south in the mid-eleventh century

protection. At the end of Hallam, *Capetian France*

Charles's reign in 877, "control over deserted lands and the property of the royal fisc was transferred absolutely to the local counts."⁴³

Over the next three hundred years, these local counts consolidated their power even further by forming marriage alliances with each other. In 1067, "the houses of Foix,

⁴³ Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Spain : Unity in Diversity, 400-1000*, 2nd ed., *New Studies in Medieval History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 255, 61.

Comminges, Couserans, Béziers-Albi-Nîmes, Bigorre, Barcelona, Navarre, and Aragón were all related.⁷⁴⁴ The resulting tangle of loyalties grew even more complicated as nobles either sold territory to one another, as in the case of Carcassonne in 1068,⁴⁵ or pledged their lands in fealty to the pope, as King Peter II of Aragón did in 1204.⁴⁶

By the time the Albigensian Crusade began in 1209, the region now known as Languedoc or southern France was a patchwork of lands loyal to a number of different rulers. Aragón laid claim to the Pyrenees and the area just northeast of the mountains along with

Montpellier, parts of Provence, and a section of land northeast of Albi.

The counts of Toulouse ruled a C-shaped territory with Toulouse at

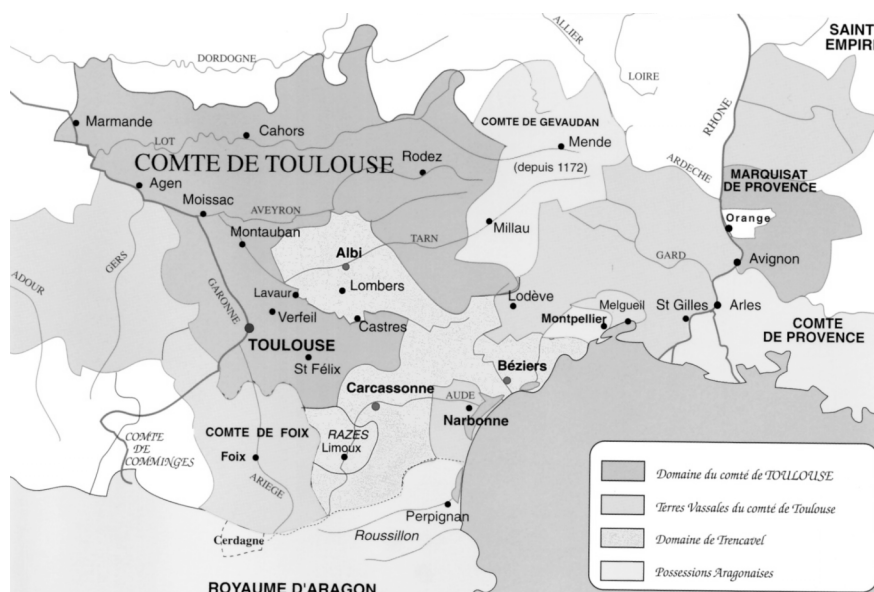


Figure 6: Toulouse and the surrounding area before the Crusade
the bottom of the C Griffe, *Les Cathares*

and Rodez at the top (see Figure 5). Carcassonne, Béziers and Albi belonged to the Trencavel family, while different families held other areas in fealty to the counts of

⁴⁴ Frederic L. Cheyette, "The 'Sale' of Carcassonne to the Counts of Barcelona (1067-1070) and the Rise of the Trencavels," *Speculum* 63, no. 4 (1988): 826.

⁴⁵ Cheyette: 836.

⁴⁶ J. B. Bury and Henry Melvill Gwatkin, *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. VI (New York, Cambridge, Eng.: The Macmillan company; The University press, 1924), 411.

Toulouse. None of these families, however, felt any great allegiance to the French monarchy.

A major reason for this disconnection with France, besides the power of the local noble families, may have been the fact that the culture of Languedoc was significantly different from that of northern France. For instance, the language was not the same. Most inhabitants south of the Massif Central spoke *Langue d'Oc*, also known as Occitan, while northerners spoke *Langue d'Oeil*, the language of the French court. In addition, trade centered on the Mediterranean, and southern cities resembled the communes of Italy rather than Paris. Urban growth fostered new ideas along with prosperity, and Catharism was flourishing. Unfortunately for the people of Languedoc, years of marriage alliances and diplomacy had left southern society unprepared for war when the Catholic Church, in the form of Pope Innocent III, stepped in.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Sumption, 17.

The Fall of Languedoc

The Albigensian Crusade

By the turn of the twelfth century into the thirteenth, Raymond VI of Toulouse knew that his county was infested with Catharism; his father had even requested help with the heretics from the Cistercians in 1177, but his motives may have been political more than religious.⁴⁸ Raymond also knew that he did not have the power to rid his domain of this heresy, because Cathars were entrenched in his government and his family. Peter of Castelnau, a papal legate charged with bringing Raymond to heel, had excommunicated Raymond in 1207 and informed Pope Innocent III that the Count was recalcitrant.

Unfortunately, one of Raymond's men took matters into his own hands and decided to rid the county of Peter.⁴⁹ This unidentified man murdered Peter of Castelnau on the banks of the Petit Rhône on January 14, 1208. This act was the point of no return for Pope Innocent III, and he felt completely justified in calling on Philip II Augustus of France to invade Raymond's territories. The Pope went one step further, though, and designated this invasion as a crusade, therefore giving the combatants "a full remission of their sins... [and] an increase of eternal happiness."⁵⁰

Count Raymond knew he had to do something, so he asked for help from potential allies. Philip II Augustus of France would not help him, because Raymond had married the sister of the English king, Philip's old enemy. Raymond next traveled to the

⁴⁸ Hallam and Everard, 74.

⁴⁹ Most scholars agree that the unnamed henchman probably acted independently and not under orders from Raymond.

⁵⁰ *Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215* (cited 15 June 2005); available from <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/lateran4.html>.

court of Otto IV of Germany, who was too weak in his own dominions to help anyone else. Raymond could not even find an ally in his own lands: Raymond-Roger Trencavel, cousin of Raymond and Viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne, refused to help Raymond because of familial bad blood. Trencavel would later live to regret his decision.

Raymond decided eventually to throw himself on the mercy of the Pope himself, and on June 18, 1209, he prostrated himself before Arnold Amalric, Abbot of Cîteaux, and promised to give up certain lands and castles to the Church. The Count also made a request that seems on the surface to be inexplicable: he asked to join the Crusade, preparations for which were well under way in the north of France. His reason for this request became clear after the Pope assented to it; in accordance with the tradition that protected crusaders property while they were fulfilling their sacred duty, Raymond's lands were immediately declared immune to seizure. Since the Crusade, however, was ostensibly directed at heretics, not Raymond himself, the invading force continued to move south. With no obvious target for the crusaders, Raymond hastened to provide an alternative: Béziers. In repayment for Raymond-Roger Trencavel's earlier refusal to help him, Raymond of Toulouse claimed that the Trencavel lands were just as riddled with heresy as his own, and he directed the troops there.

Caught unawares, Viscount Raymond-Roger Trencavel, hoping the walls of the city would protect its inhabitants, left Béziers to gather troops at Carcassonne. The walls, however, could not withstand the crusaders. Most of the townspeople, who had sought refuge in the church of Saint Mary Magdalene, were massacred on July 22, 1209. Arnold Amalric, the man who, on behalf of the pope, had earlier accepted Raymond of

Toulouse's plea for mercy, served as the leader of this part of the crusade, and his later report of the scene at Béziers described it as a "miracle" and "Divine vengeance rag[ing] marvellously."⁵¹ Amalric is also said to have replied, when asked how the crusaders were to distinguish heretics from Catholics, "Kill them all! God will know his own."⁵²

According to the chronicler William of Tudela, after subduing Béziers the crusaders set their sights on Carcassonne, where Trencavel had sought refuge. This time, Raymond-Roger Trencavel sued for peace and agreed to terms with the crusaders that included making himself their hostage in return for allowing all the citizens of Carcassonne to leave the town safely. After the people of Carcassonne had fled, the crusaders took the city and all the remaining booty.⁵³ After this success Arnold Amalric asked for a French noble to lead the Crusade. The counts of Nevers and St Pol both refused the post, saying, "they had plenty of land in the kingdom of France where their fathers were born... and they did not wish to take another man's inheritance."⁵⁴ Amalric then went to Simon de Montfort, a noble who had served in the Fourth Crusade, to make the same offer; Montfort "boldly accepted the fief, the land and the country."⁵⁵

For the next couple of years, towns all over the south fell to Simon de Montfort and his crusaders. Minerve and Termes, east of Carcassonne, both fell in 1210, while 1211 saw the defeat of Cabaret, Lavaur, Foix, Castelnaudary, and much of the area surrounding Albi (refer to the map in Appendix 1 for the locations of these towns).

⁵¹ Puylaurens, 128.

⁵² Most scholars now consider this statement to be apocryphal.

⁵³ William of Tudela and Anonymous, *The Song of the Cathar Wars : A History of the Albigensian Crusade*, trans. Janet Shirley (Aldershot, Hants, England ; Brookfield, Vt.: Scolar Press ; Ashgate Publ. Co., 1996), 25-26.

⁵⁴ Tudela and Anonymous, 26.

⁵⁵ Tudela and Anonymous, 27.

On 6 February 1211, papal legates at Montpellier again excommunicated Count Raymond for secretly helping the southern resistance, thus placing his lands in jeopardy again.⁵⁶ Later that year, the Albigensis (inhabitants of Albi) rose against the crusaders and Raymond VI was able to recover some of his fiefs.

The southern cause also received help in 1213 from King Peter II of Aragón. As we have seen above, Aragón had control over some of the lands involved in the Crusade, and Peter wanted to protect his interests. Fresh from his victory at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, King Peter was a formidable foe for the crusaders, and Raymond hoped his ally would turn the tide in his favor.⁵⁷ According to Malcolm Lambert,

Peter's presence on the Southern side in the civil war demonstrated how far the resistance to the Crusade was motivated, not by defence of heresy but of lands, rights and meridional way of life based on the bonds of loyalty between nobility and their followers.⁵⁸

Unfortunately, King Peter was unable to achieve this defense of southern lands and traditions, because he was almost immediately killed at the siege of Muret. Raymond's hopes for a quick end to the war were dashed.

From 1213 until the end of the war in 1229, Languedoc vacillated between crusader control and native noble control. One of the reasons for this instability was a lack of a standing French army. Simon de Montfort was the one of the few northern barons who stayed in the south for any length of time, because the standard tour of duty for crusaders in the thirteenth century was only forty days. This presented a serious handicap when Montfort tried to conquer new territory while simultaneously securing

⁵⁶ Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay, *The History of the Albigensian Crusade*, trans. M.D. Sibly W.A. Sibly (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK ; Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 2002), 108.

⁵⁷ The Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa was fought between the Emir of Morocco and the combined Christian forces of Aragón, Navarre, and Castille, and Peter II of Aragón had distinguished himself in battle there.

⁵⁸ Lambert, 105.

occupied lands. A constantly rotating roster of troops left many garrisons unmanned, which resulted in Montfort having to capture the same towns more than once. Simon de Montfort did succeed in gaining most of the land that Pope Innocent had released for seizure, but it was not without constant effort. Unfortunately, Simon de Montfort was eventually killed while besieging Toulouse in 1218. His son, Amaury, who took over was not as tenacious. Eventually, Amaury managed to lose much of the land his father had won, and the war became a deadlock.

When the crusade finally ended with the Treaty Meaux/Paris on April 10, 1229, most of the major players were dead: Raymond VI died in July 1222, Simon de Montfort in June 1218, Pope Innocent III in 1216, and Philip II Augustus in 1223. The treaty gave Raymond VI's son, Raymond VII, a life interest in his father's former domain, and Raymond's only child Jeanne was married to Alphonse of Poitiers, brother of King Louis IX of France. Upon the death of Raymond VII, all lands were to pass to the children of Alphonse of Poitiers, effectively returning them to the control of the French crown.⁵⁹

In calling the crusade, Pope Innocent III hoped to rid Languedoc of heresy and use Raymond VI of Toulouse as an example to all other Catholic secular rulers. Innocent viewed heresy as "the worst menace to the Christian people," and he felt he would be remiss in his duties if he allowed it to continue flourishing in Languedoc.⁶⁰ According to most scholars, Pope Innocent did not, however, wish to instigate a war that would drag on for twenty years, destroying the countryside and the local infrastructure.⁶¹ By these

⁵⁹ Sumption, 224.

⁶⁰ Tillmann, 229.

⁶¹ Tillmann, 231.

measures, Pope Innocent III failed in his mission. Catharism continued to exist in Languedoc well after the Crusade concluded, and the damage wrought by the war changed the face of southern France forever.

For its part, France entered the Crusade in stages, due to Philip II Augustus's reluctance to wage a war in the south while simultaneously fending off attacks from England. He told Pope Innocent III in 1208 that "his great vassals may go if they wished," but he was unwilling to go himself.⁶² By allowing some of his vassals to participate in the Albigensian Crusade, Philip managed to stave off any further requests for help from the pope while continuing his record as a king who was deeply concerned with matters of faith. He also left open the potential to increase French land holdings through the work of the Crusaders. In the end, Philip's strategy was successful, and the lands surrounding Toulouse officially became French upon the deaths of Jeanne of Toulouse and her husband Alphonse of Poitiers.

Count Raymond VI of Toulouse tried many different maneuvers during his lifetime to avoid the brunt of the Crusade, but he failed completely. After being excommunicated and reconciled to the Church numerous times, Raymond VI ended up anathemized and denied a Christian burial. His son, Raymond VII, tried to regain the inheritance lost by his father, and he was successful to a small degree. The consolation given him by the Treaty of Meaux/Paris, a life interest in the Toulousain, however, could not match up to his goals. In 1271, after the death of his childless daughter, Toulouse and the rest of Languedoc reverted to the French crown. The legacy of the counts of

⁶² M. D. Costen, *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade* (Manchester, U.K. ; New York, New York: Manchester University Press ; Distributed exclusively in the USA by St. Martin's Press, 1997), 121.

Toulouse and other dispossessed nobles of the region, though, would not fade away quietly, and the aftermath of the Crusade became almost as important as the war itself.

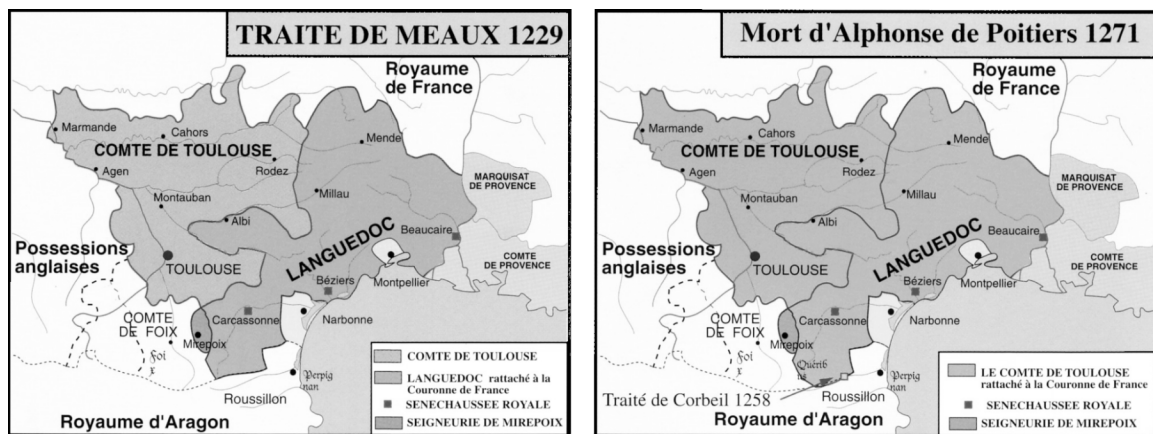


Figure 7: The results of the Treaty of Meaux/Paris before and after the death of Alphonse of Poitiers

Griffe, *Les Cathares*

The Aftermath

After the Treaty of Meaux/Paris in 1229, the French crown and the Catholic Church began working together to reshape Languedoc into an orthodox Catholic French possession. This was no easy task, because the dispossessed southern nobles, *faidits*, were still in the area, trying to regain the *châteaux* they had lost in the course of the war. In addition, Catharism, although under threat from Catholic authorities, was still a strong force among the people, but the most fervent heretics had fled most of the urban areas in favor of isolated mountain villages. In an attempt to take care of both problems at the same time, northern French authorities allied with the Catholic Church and its agent, the Dominican Order of Preachers, to create a social and economic environment that would drive out heresy and quell any potential rebellions against French hegemony. A puzzling factor in all these machinations, however, was the people of Languedoc themselves. At once independent and apathetic, Languedocians swung like a pendulum between extremes of insurgence and submission during the first few years of French occupation.

The French authorities were the first piece to this puzzle, and they arrived in the form of a system of *baillis* and *sénéchaux* set up by King Louis IX and Alphonse of Poitiers. *Baillis* were essentially appointed representatives of the crown at large who reported to *sénéchaux*, supervisors stationed in the cities. These men were bureaucrats who were loyal to the king and had no local ties in Languedoc.⁶³ It was easy for the *baillis* and *sénéchaux* to take power in the region, because in earlier years a number of Church councils had made successive declarations against all heretics and those who

⁶³ John Hine Mundy, *The Repression of Catharism at Toulouse : the Royal Diploma of 1279* (Toronto, Ont., Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1985), 30.

aided or protected them. These declarations banned those tainted with accusations from any governmental or judicial functions, thus neatly eroding the political infrastructure of the area.⁶⁴ In this manner, the Catholic Church collaborated with the crown to destabilize local governmental institutions in favor of French control.

Despite the installation of northern French peacekeepers, however, a few abortive rebellions led by *faidits* sprang up in Toulouse, Carcassonne, Narbonne, and other towns in the 1240s. For instance, in 1240 Raymond Trencavel, the descendant of Raymond-Roger Trencavel, Viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne, “led a group of exiles in an uprising. Despite some early successes, the rebels failed to capture the French citadel in the *cit  * of Carcassonne, and their rebellion collapsed.”⁶⁵ Two years later, Raymond VII of Toulouse agreed to join

...a number of other Languedocian lords, the count of La Marche, and the king of England in an alliance against Louis IX. But when Louis defeated La Marche and the English king, the Languedocians hastened to submit to the royal will.⁶⁶

The Languedocian military rebellions failed in the face of social upheaval and greater French manpower.

One cause of the social upheaval was the Inquisition. Catharism still held an attraction for many people, especially when one takes into account the fact that many native Languedocians had just seen their lords destroyed by forces claiming to be the righteous warriors of the Catholic Church. Church leaders knew that something had to be done to finally eliminate the heresy. The solution put forth by Pope Gregory IX was to

⁶⁴ See the rulings of the 12th Ecumenical Council, Lateran IV, in 1215, the Council of Toulouse in 1229, and the Council of Reims in 1157.

⁶⁵ James Buchanan Given, *State and Society in Medieval Europe : Gwynedd and Languedoc under outside rule* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 225.

⁶⁶ Given, 225.

institute an inquisition to rout out the unorthodox. The Council of Toulouse, which met in 1229, opened an episcopal investigation of heresy under the command of a papal legate named Roman, but Pope Gregory felt the situation warranted a more formal inquiry. In 1231, he wrote a decretal to two Dominican friars in Regensburg ordering them to investigate accusations of heresy,⁶⁷ and in April of 1233 he wrote two bulls specifically authorizing an inquisition in Languedoc.⁶⁸

Pope Gregory put the Dominican Order of Preachers in charge of the Inquisition, because the Dominicans had a history of combating Catharism. Years earlier, in June of 1206, two Castilian prelates, Diego, bishop of Osma, and Dominic de Guzman, passed through Montpellier on their way home from a diplomatic mission. By chance they met two legates that had been assigned to Montpellier and began discussing the problem of Catharism with them. The result of this meeting was that the legates and the prelates decided to begin a preaching campaign in the area “without shoes or money preaching by example as well as by word.”⁶⁹ While this particular campaign met with failure, Dominic de Guzman was

inspired to continue and later formed the Order



Figure 8: Mosaic of Pope Gregory IX

Ladner, *Die papstbildnisse des altertums und des mittellalters*

⁶⁷ Pope Gregory IX, "Ille humani generis," in *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe : documents in translation*, ed. Edward Peters (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 197.

⁶⁸ Walter L. Wakefield, ed., *Heresy, Crusade, and Inquisition in Southern France, 1100-1250* (Berkeley,: University of California Press, 1974), 140.

⁶⁹ Sumption, 71.

of Preachers. In 1217 Pope Honorius III confirmed the Order as a legitimate community of Catholic friars that upheld orthodox doctrine. Dominic died in 1221, and Pope Gregory IX canonized him in 1234. During his lifetime, Dominic de Guzman was a close friend of Simon de Montfort during the Crusade, serving as his personal confessor and baptizing his children.⁷⁰ Scholars have described Simon de Montfort as Dominic's lay patron and protector, and it was only natural for Pope Gregory to award the Inquisition to Dominic's followers.⁷¹

One facet of the Inquisition that increased social problems was the use of informants and coerced denunciations, which pitted neighbor against neighbor. In the Inquisitorial Register of Jacques Fournier, in which he questions most of the population of a small village named Montaillou, we find many instances of such interrogation. For example, Raimonde den Arsen denounced her cousins Bernard and Pierre Clergue, the latter being the parish priest, as heretics whom she had seen reading from a suspicious text.⁷² Both men died in prison. The Inquisition severed familial and friendship ties among Languedocians leaving them vulnerable to outside forces such as French domination.

The punishments meted out by the Inquisition ranged from various penitential acts to imprisonment to death: "orthodox officialdom... accepted that the 'fitting punishment' proposed by [Pope] Lucius III in 1184 meant death by fire. By 1231

⁷⁰ Vaux-de-Cernay, 297.

⁷¹ Christopher Nugent Lawrence Brooke, *Medieval Church and Society; collected essays* (New York: New York University Press, 1972), 226-27.

⁷² Jacques Fournier, *Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier 1318-1325*, trans. Jean Duvernoy, 3 vols. (Paris: Claude Tchou, 2004), 341-42.

Gregory IX had fully agreed with that interpretation.”⁷³ Those who received only penance may seem lucky to modern-day readers, but they suffered a social isolation that further destabilized local loyalties. Penitents were often forced to wear yellow crosses on their outer clothing at all times. The result of this particular penance was that people ostracized the reformed heretic; anyone seen in his company was automatically deemed suspect. In fact, the social effects of wearing the yellow crosses became so severe that “by 1246 it became necessary to forbid people to ridicule or refuse to do business with cross-wearers.”⁷⁴ One can only imagine that this isolation was the ultimate goal of the inquisitors, since it would discourage the spread of heretical ideas, but it also increased the social and political instability among the native population in Languedoc, thus allowing for strengthened control by the crown.

Further evidence of the involvement of the Catholic Church with French authorities comes to light with the examination of Inquisitorial records. It is impossible to separate the workings of the Inquisition from secular issues, as can be seen in the case of an uprising in Narbonne that began in 1234. The occasion of the revolt was the arrest of Raymond d’Argens, a citizen of the bourg,⁷⁵ by officers of the episcopal court. “Immediately a crowd of townsmen gathered, and before the prisoner could be taken to the city [of Narbonne] he was forcibly released.”⁷⁶ This incident snowballed into a three-year power struggle between the nobility of Narbonne and its episcopate, with heresy

⁷³ Wakefield, ed., 135.

⁷⁴ Andrew P. Roach, "Penance and the Making of the Inquisition in Languedoc," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 52, no. 3 (2001): 424.

⁷⁵ Many medieval towns consisted of a city, the central, walled area, and a bourg an area outside the walls where people often farmed. While the lord of the city had power over the bourg, disputes between people from the two areas were not uncommon.

⁷⁶ Richard Wilder Emery, "Heresy and Inquisition in Narbonne" (Columbia University, 1941), 77.

becoming less and less central as time wore on. When the *seneschal* settled the affair in 1237, none of the pertinent documents mentioned heresy or the Inquisition; rather they focused on the relationship between the episcopate and the secular government of Narbonne.⁷⁷ The fact that this theological dispute, initially involving only the episcopate, transformed into a fight between worldly and spiritual powers shows that the Church and the government were inextricably linked in the minds of the local populace.

According to William Pelhisson, a Dominican friar present in Toulouse during 1235, the populace did not meekly assent to the actions of the Inquisitors. That year, a general uprising in Toulouse paralyzed the Inquisition for a short time:

The consuls made proclamation by herald throughout the town on behalf of the count and themselves that, on penalty of corporal punishment and fine, no one was to give, sell, or lend anything whatever or to give assistance in any form to the Friars Preachers.⁷⁸

In addition to denying material assistance to the Dominican friars, people made speeches against the Inquisition and even hurled stones at the friars and their houses.⁷⁹ The following year, however, after public support for the removal of the Dominicans waned, the Friars returned to their duties as Inquisitors in Toulouse. The collapse of popular support for the rebellion in this case seems puzzling, but it is attributable to the long years of Crusade followed by the psychological stress of Inquisition. By this time, Languedocian society was beginning to show some cracks in the face of French and Catholic onslaught.

⁷⁷ Emery, 91.

⁷⁸ William Pelhisson, "The Chronicle of William Pelhisson," in *Heresy, Crusade, and Inquisition in Southern France, 1100-1250*, ed. Walter L. Wakefield (Berkeley,: University of California Press, 1974), 219.

⁷⁹ Pelhisson, 213.

In fact, as the Inquisition progressed, the Dominican Order also saw its power generally increase elsewhere as well as in Languedoc. In fact, in the thirteenth century,

The kings of England, France, Castile, Aragón, Portugal and many other countries asked Dominican and Franciscan friars to take over important tasks at their royal courts. Thus the friars were able to exercise a considerable influence on the political and religious level.⁸⁰

In addition, fewer attempts were made by Languedocians to remove themselves from French domination as the power of the Dominicans grew. The combined effects of Alphonse of Poitiers's *baillis* and *sénéchaux*, the Catholic Church's Inquisition, and the Dominican Order itself made rebellion all but impossible. In 1255, as a further measure of insurance, Alphonse of Poitiers requested that all the Inquisitors be appointed from the Paris house of Dominicans instead of the mother house in Toulouse, thus assuring that none of the Inquisitors would have any bias in favor of Languedoc.⁸¹ The combination of a twenty-year Crusade, French authority, politically, religiously and economically dispossessed local nobility, and an Inquisition wreaking havoc on social ties left Languedocians powerless to stem the tide of devastation. By the time the last known Cathar was finally burned in 1321, Languedoc was fully a French possession.

⁸⁰ Raphaela Averkorn, *The Impact of Religious Orders on Political Changes in Medieval and Early Renaissance Europe (13th-15th centuries)* [Portable document format] (cited May 25 2005); available from <http://www.stm.unipi.it/Clio/tabs/libri/book8.htm>.

⁸¹ Mundy, 32.

Conclusion

It is difficult to put a date on the completion of the French takeover of Languedoc, but it is safe to say that the burning of Guillaume Bélibaste at Villerouge Terminès in 1321 marked the end of Catharism in medieval France. 112 years had passed since Pope Innocent III had called the Crusade in 1209, and fifty years had passed since Alphonse of Poitiers and his wife had died and left Languedoc to the French crown. The assistance of the Catholic Church and the Inquisition certainly expedited the process of French conquest in Languedoc; indeed, the French crown was able to effect change in the political and social structures of Languedoc by taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the Catholic Church and the Inquisition.

The forty-year reign of Alphonse in Languedoc wrought major changes in the governmental system of the area. His *baillis* and *sénéchaux* took the place of native government, which had previously been essentially autonomous. Before the war, cities in Languedoc had been run on the pattern of Italian communes, not subject to any authority higher than the immediate lord of the land. After the war, however, Church decrees disqualified from governmental or judicial functions anyone who had protected heretics, so most of the indigenous nobility was excluded from the new secular administration. This exclusion allowed Alphonse's new regime to take over Languedoc relatively quickly and easily. Languedoc's tradition of independence and self-government was abruptly replaced by the tighter control of the French crown.

The Catholic Church was a willing partner in this takeover, as shown by Pope Innocent's zeal to involve France in the battle against Catharism. Innocent's record of

using charges of heresy to political advantage in other instances, as in the cases of Viterbo and Milan in the early thirteenth century, revealed his understanding of the interplay of religion and politics during the Middle Ages. He could not have been unaware that calling northern French nobles to crusade against heresy in the south would have political implications, but because the probable political outcome would not be detrimental to the Church, he was more than willing to continue with this plan.

The complicity between France and branches of the Catholic Church continued after the Crusade when the Dominican Order of Preachers began the Inquisition under orders from Pope Gregory IX. The Dominican Order had been combating Catharism since its inception, and its relationship with the French powerbase only increased during the Crusade. Simon de Montfort and St Dominic were good friends, and we can only assume that the two men were in agreement that violence was a valid method of dealing with heresy. Once the Crusade was over, the Dominicans continued that violence by using psychological warfare on the citizens of Languedoc. They severed communal ties by employing local spies and rewarding denunciations, and they cultivated social isolation by imposing the penance of wearing a yellow cross. These actions further weakened the Languedocian system of self-governance and sense of social cohesion, and the people were left exhausted and spiritually depleted by their ordeal. The Inquisition was a vital cog in the machine of French control.

If Pope Innocent III had not called for a Crusade to Languedoc, King Philip II Augustus and his men may have been too busy with England and the Holy Roman Empire to consider an invasion in the south. If the Church had not decreed that all

heretics and their protectors were to be excluded from governmental and judicial functions, perhaps Alphonse's *baillis* and *sénéchaux* would not have been able to take over as easily. If the Dominicans' Inquisition had not demoralized the people of Languedoc, the sporadic rebellions led by dispossessed nobles might have been able to gather more momentum. The importance of the combined force of all these factors should not be overlooked, because without any one of them, Languedoc might not have been so completely subsumed into France.

An interdisciplinary study of all the dynamics at work in the history of French domination in Languedoc reveals a more complete portrait than the study of a single aspect. Since all such events, even if they seem to involve only one area, such as religion, have some aspect of military, religious, political, and social history, it is important to shed light on the ways in which these factors come together. What at first glance seemed to be a theological issue (that of heresy and the Church's response), turned out to involve so much more: the politics of French kingship in relation to the papacy and *vice versa*, the psychological devastation of a populace, and the establishment of a destructive Inquisition that would last for centuries in one form or another. Even today, the language of crusade is used to over-simplify and justify decisions to use military force that may be motivated by more than just religion. When a leader calls his people to support a crusade against another nation or group, that leader is often purposely trying to blind his constituency to the other aspects and implications of war. Further inquiry will frequently uncover economic, political, or social motives that have not been made clear. When examining both historical and current events it is important to remember that to

focus on any one piece is to neglect the bigger picture, and understanding cannot be complete without a look at all the factors involved, even if they seem superficially unrelated.

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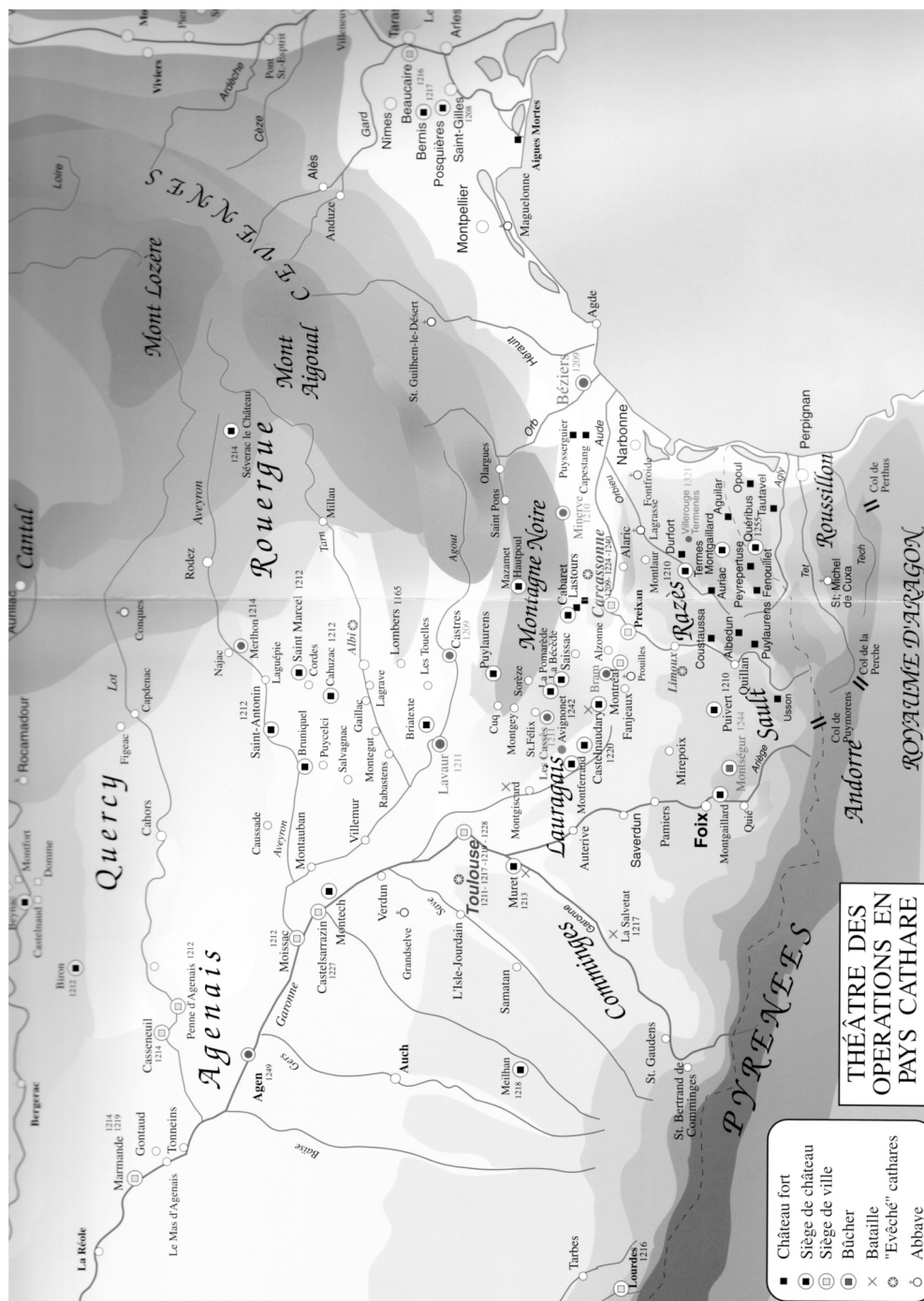
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Appendix 1: Map of Languedoc and Surrounding Area⁸²



⁸² Griffe.

Appendix 2: Chronologies

Early Chronology of France and the Catholic Church

France			Catholic Church	
r. 714-741 Charles Martel as Mayor of Palace			r. 715-731 Pope Gregory II	r. 731-741 Pope Gregory III
	732 Battle of Poitiers			
				r. 741-752 Pope Zacharias
r. 751-768 Pippin III				r. 752-757 Pope Stephen II
	r. 768-814 Charlemagne			
			r. 795-816 Pope Leo III	
r. 814-840 Louis I the Pious				
r. 840-876 Louis the German	d. 855 Lothar	843 Treaty of Verdun		
	r. 840-877 Charles the Bald			

Later Chronology Including Toulouse and Aragón

France		Catholic Church	Toulouse	Aragón	
r. 987-996 Hugh Capet					
	r. 996-1031 Robert II the Pious				
r. 1031-1060 Henry I		r. 1049-1054 Pope Leo IX			
r. 1060-1108 Philip I		r. 1073-1085 Pope Gregory VII			
				r. 1094-1104 Peter I	
			d. 1105 Raymond IV		r. 1104-1134 Alfonso I
	r. 1108-1137 Louis VI the Fat	c. 1090-1153 St. Bernard		r. 1134-1137 Ramiro II	
r. 1137-1180 Louis VII			d. 1148 Alphonse-Jourdain		r. 1137-1162 Petronilla
r. 1180-1223 Philip II Augustus		1170-1221 St. Dominic	1156-1222 Raymond VI	r. 1162-1196 Alfonso II	
		r. 1191-1198 Pope Celestine III			
				d. 1194 Raymond V	
					1196-1213 Peter II
1226-1236 Blanche of Castille (Regent for Louis IX)	r. 1223-1226 Louis VIII	1216-1227 Pope Honorius III			
		1227-1241 Pope Gregory IX			
		1233 Inquisition begun			
	r. 1236-1270 Louis IX (St. Louis)				
				r. 1213-1276 James I	

Major Events in the Albigensian Crusade

- 1204 Peter of Castelnau and Arnold Amalric, Abbot of Cîteaux, are appointed papal legates in Languedoc.
- 1207 Peter of Castelnau excommunicates Raymond VI of Toulouse as a ‘protector of heretics.’
- 1208 Peter is murdered. Pope Innocent III summons a crusade against the Cathars.
- 1209 A crusading army descends the Rhône valley. Raymond takes the cross.
Crusaders take and sack Béziers, massacring its inhabitants. Siege and surrender of Carcassonne. Imprisonment and death of Raymond Roger Trencavel of Carcassonne.
- 1210 Minerve and Termes fall.
- 1211 Council of Montpellier excommunicates Raymond VI again. Cabaret surrenders. Crusaders take Lavaur. Simon de Montfort is defeated outside Toulouse. Siege of Castelnaudary. Albigeois rise against the crusaders; Raymond recovers his fiefs.
- 1212 More crusaders arrive. In Spain: Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa; Aragón, Castille and Navarre, led by Arnold Amalric, defeat the Emir of Morocco. Crusaders conquer Gascony and Béarn. Arnold Amalric becomes Archbishop of Narbonne. Statutes of Pamiers promulgated: northern laws will replace those of the south.
- 1213 Peter II of Aragón goes to war against Simon de Montfort; Peter is defeated and killed at Muret.
- 1214 Simon de Montfort devastates Foix.

- 1215 4th Lateran Council strips Raymond VI of his land and titles. Simon de Montfort becomes Duke of Narbonne and Count of Toulouse.
- 1216 Death of Pope Innocent III. Raymond VI and his son raise Provence against Simon. Raymond VI goes to Spain in search of reinforcements. Simon besieges Beaucaire, but he abandons the siege to put down a revolt in Toulouse.
- 1217 Simon de Montfort devastates Ariège. Raymond VI returns to Toulouse. Simon besieges Toulouse.
- 1218 Simon de Montfort killed at Toulouse. Amaury de Montfort chosen to succeed him. Prince Louis of France takes the cross.
- 1219 Louis marches south, but he is only on crusade for two months. Raymond VII and other dispossessed lords capture a number of strongholds.
- 1222 Raymond VI dies in Toulouse. Raymond VII writes to King Philip II Augustus of France to demand his inheritance.
- 1223 Philip II Augustus of France dies; he is succeeded by Louis VIII.
- 1224 Amaury de Montfort leaves Carcassonne and makes over all his rights to the King of France. The Trencavel family recovers Carcassonne. Raymond VII asks the Pope to recognize him as Count of Toulouse at the Conference of Montpellier.
- 1225 Raymond VII repeats his request to the Pope at the Council of Bourges. Amaury de Montfort claims to be the sole heir to the Counts of Toulouse.
- 1226 The Church declares that Raymond VII cannot prove his orthodoxy and awards his lands to the King of France. King Louis VIII of France again takes the cross and conquers all major towns except Toulouse. Louis VIII dies at Montpensier.

- 1227 The Archbishop of Narbonne excommunicates Raymond VII. French forces devastate the south.
- 1229 The Treaty of Meaux/Paris: Raymond VII submits to the Church and to the King of France, but he keeps his title of Count of Toulouse.
- 1233 The Inquisition established.
- 1240 Raymond Roger, exiled Viscount of Béziers, returns from Spain in an attempt to throw off the French yoke.
- 1244 Fall of Montségur.
- 1271 Deaths of Jeanne of Toulouse, only child of Raymond VII, and her husband Alphonse of Poitiers, leaving no children. The French crown inherits the County of Toulouse.⁸³

⁸³ Tudela and Anonymous, 195-97.

Appendix 3: Important Individuals and Family Trees

Important Individuals and their Affiliations

Catholic Church

Pope Innocent III	r.1198-1216
Pope Gregory IX	r.1227-1241
Arnaud Amalric, Abbot of Cîteaux	d.1225
Peter of Castelnau, papal legate	d.1208
Dominic de Guzman (St Dominic)	1170-1221

House of Capet (Rulers of France)

King Philip II Augustus	1165-1223
King Louis VIII the Lion	1187-1226
Blanche of Castille (regent)	1185-1252
King Louis IX (St Louis)	1214-1270
Alphonse of Poitiers	1220-1271

House of Toulouse

Raymond VI	1156-1222
Raymond VII	1197-1249
Jeanne	d.1271

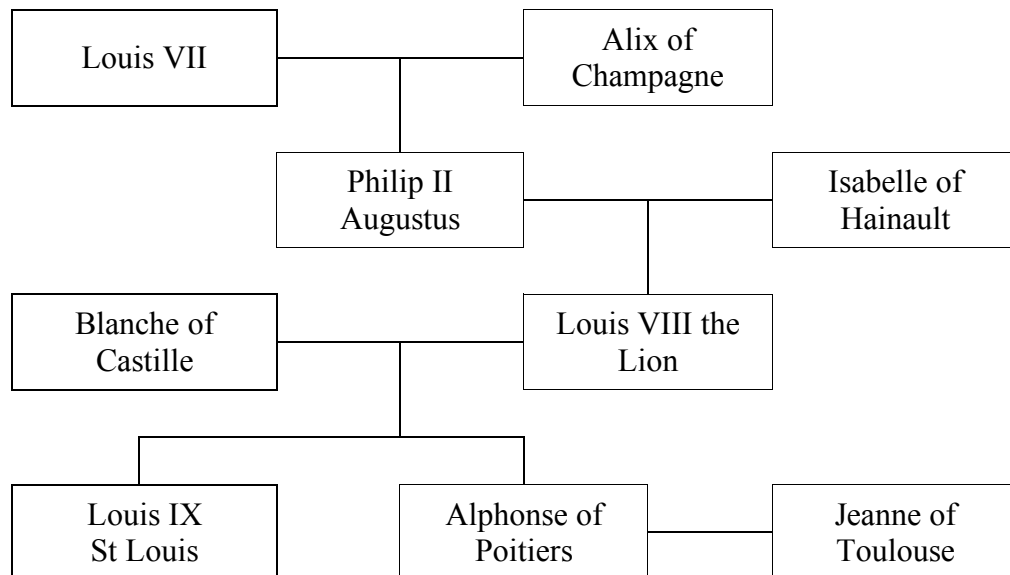
House of Montfort

Simon IV	1165-1218
Amaury IV	1192-1241

King Peter II of Aragón

1174-1213

House of Capet (Rulers of France)



House of Toulouse

