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Historiographical essay

On Cathars, Albigenses, and good men of Languedoc[☆]

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Abstract

This essay proposes a re-evaluation of how Cathars, Albigenses, and the heresy of the good men are studied. It argues that some commonplace notions about the Cathars, virtually unaltered for over a hundred years, are far from settled — especially when inquisition records from Languedoc are taken into account. It is this historiography, supported by a tendency to see heresy in idealist and intellectualist bias, suggests how the history of the Cathars and the good men might be rethought. © 2001 Published by Elsevier Science Ltd.

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The article on the ‘Cathars’ in the splendid 11th edition (1910) of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, written with a kind of giddy elegance by Frederick Conybeare, begins by noting that these medieval heretics ‘were the débris of an early Christianity’. The Cathars were, and Conybeare had no doubts about this, the direct descendants of late antique Manicheans who, after a long and hidden diaspora, resurfaced between the tenth and fourteenth centuries as Paulicians and Bogomils in the Balkans and, with somewhat less discrimination in western Europe, as just about any heretic with vaguely dualist tendencies. Catharism, in this epic narrative, reached its apogee in the heresy of the good men (*boni homines*, *bons omes*) of Languedoc.¹ No matter

[☆] This essay condenses, refines, and occasionally expands, some of the arguments made in M.G. Pegg, *The corruption of angels: The great inquisition of 1245–1246* (Princeton, 2001), esp. 15–19, 141–151.

¹ F. Conybeare, ‘Cathars’, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed. (Cambridge, 1910), vol. 5, 515–517. Conybeare, in: *The key of truth: A manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia* (Oxford, 1898), argued on lv–lvi that the Paulicians were the direct ancestors of the Cathars. Indeed, he included a translation on pp. 160–170 of the Provençal Cathar ritual edited by Leon Clédât in *Le Nouveau Testament traduit au XIII^e siècle en langue provençale, suivi d’un rituel cathare* (Paris, 1897), 470–82. J.B. Bury discussed

the time, no matter the place, all were one and the same heresy. Five volumes earlier in the eleventh edition (skipping, though not ignoring, Moses Gaster's pithy sketch of the 'Bogomils' as the heirs of the Manicheans and frequent tourists in northern Italy) the entry on the 'Albigenses' by Paul Daniel Alphandéry adopted a slightly more restrained tone than Conybeare. The Manicheans were ignored, the influence of the Bogomils and Paulicians taken seriously, and the Albigenses, as Catharist heretics, initially appearing in the Limousin between 1012 and 1020, finally immigrated to the Toulousain in the early twelfth century.² Conybeare and Alphandéry neatly abridged what was assumed about the Cathars, the Albigenses, the heresy of the good men, indeed all medieval heresies, in the century before them.³ Yet, somewhat more surprisingly, these two Edwardian scholars in their verve, erudition, and sheer wrong-headedness, anticipated what a great many historians have thought since.⁴

A powerful intellectualist and idealist bias is what unites the historical assumptions of the last century with the techniques used, consciously or not, at the start of this

this work of Conybeare's, and agreed with his notion of Paulician ancestry for the heretics of Languedoc, in an appendix to his edition of Edward Gibbon's *The history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1898) vol. 5, 543. Gibbon himself, 124–5, thought the Albigensians (as he called the good men) were descended from the Paulicians as well. Conybeare's other publications which mentioned the Cathars: 'A hitherto unpublished treatise against the Italian Manicheans', *American Journal of Theology*, 3 (1899), 704–28 and, with F.P. Badham, 'Fragments of an ancient (? Egyptian) Gospel used by the Cathars of Albi', *The Hibbert Journal*, 11 (1913), 805–18, argued for similar continuities. Now see W. Wakefield's comments on Conybeare in 'Notes on some antiheretical writings of the thirteenth century', *Franciscan Studies*, 27 (1967), 285–321, esp. 285 n. 4. The anonymous author of the entry 'Katharer' in (what is usually considered to be the German equivalent of the 11th ed.) *Brockhaus' Konversations=Lexikon* (Berlin, 1902), vol. 10, 229–230, made the same connections through history and over geography as Conybeare (and the bibliography is a short but learned list of exemplary nineteenth-century scholarship).

² P.D. Alphandéry, 'Albigenses', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 1, 505–506, and M. Gaster, 'Bogomils', *ibid.*, vol. 5, 119–120. Alphandéry, *ibid.*, vol. 14, 587–596, also wrote the balanced and learned entry on 'Inquisition, The'. Again, see 'Albigenses', *Brockhaus' Konversations=Lexikon* (Berlin, 1901), vol. 1, 329–330, and 'Bogomilen' *ibid.*, vol. 3, 173. Now, see P.D. Alphandéry, *Les idées morales chez les hétérodoxes latins au début du XIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1903), and his *La chrétienté et l'idée de croisade. Texte établi par Alphonse Dupront* (Paris, 1954).

³ See, for example, S.R. Maitland, *Facts and documents illustrative of the history, doctrine, and rites of the ancient Albigenses and Waldenses* (London, 1832), esp. 92, who thought that the southern French Albigensians were Paulician immigrants. The great Frederic Maitland wrote a very revealing letter about his grandfather Samuel Roffey in *The letters of Frederic William Maitland*, ed. C.H.S. Fifoot (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), No. 98, to Selina Maitland, 22 Nov. 1891, 98. C. Schmidt, *Histoire et doctrine des Cathares* (Bayonne, 1983, orig. 1849, 2 vols), esp. 1–54, and H.C. Lea, *A history of the inquisition of the middle ages* (New York, 1887), vol. 1, 89–92, argued for a broad chain of ideas, through time and over space, in a manner similar to Conybeare's. On Schmidt, see Y. Dossat, 'Un initiateur: Charles Schmidt', *Cahiers de Fanjeaux: Historiographie du catharisme*, 14 (1979), 163–184 and B. Hamilton, 'The state of research: the legacy of Charles Schmidt to the study of Christian dualism', *Journal of medieval history*, 24 (1998), 191–214. On Lea, see E. Peters, 'Henry Charles Lea (1825–1909)', in: *Medieval scholarship. Biographical studies on the formation of a discipline, 1: history*, ed. H. Damico and J. B. Zavadil (New York, 1995), 89–100.

⁴ In the far from splendid *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, Micropædia, 15th ed. (Chicago, 1987), vol. 2, 951, the anonymous author of the half-page entry on the 'Cathari' says almost exactly the same as Conybeare did eighty years earlier — but without the latter's erudition or flair.

one. All heresies, like all religions, are understood to be nothing more than distinctive attitudes, abstract doctrines, clear philosophies, elaborate discourses, pristine representations, in other words, intellectually pure entities, able to be cleanly sifted out from other less coherent ideas and, most crucially, never contaminated by material existence or historical specificity.⁵ Anything that is not the stuff of thoughts, like a habit or an action, a practice or a behaviour, is assumed to follow an idea wherever it may go, sometimes kicking and screaming, sometimes mute and passive, either way it makes no difference, because the intellectualist bias takes it for granted that worlds are made from theories, that cultures are hammered together from discourses, and that the elaboration of a philosophy is all the explanation a scholar need ever give.⁶ The heresy of the good men, for instance, becomes nothing more than a set

⁵ This view was explicitly stated by Herbert Grundmann throughout his influential *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter. Untersuchungen über die geschichtlichen Zusammenhänge zwischen der Ketzerei, den Bettelorden und der religiösen Frauenbewegung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert und über die geschichtlichen Grundlagen der deutschen Mystik*, 2nd ed. (Hildesheim, 1961, orig. 1935), esp. 396ff, 503 [trans. by S. Rowan as *Religious movements in the middle ages: the historical links between heresy, the mendicant orders, and the women's religious movement in the twelfth and thirteenth century, with the historical foundations of German mysticism* (Notre Dame, 1995), and see esp. R.E. Lerner, 'Introduction', ix–xxv]. It is implicit, as far as Catharism is concerned, in: J. Duvernoy, *Le catharisme: la religion des cathares* (Toulouse, 1976); J. Duvernoy, *Cathares, Vaudois et Beguins, dissidents du pays d'Oc* (Toulouse, 1994); R. Nelli, *La philosophie du catharisme. le dualisme radical au XIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1978); and A. Brenon, *Le vrai visage du Catharisme* (Portet-sur-Garonne, 1988). Now see J.B. Russell, 'Interpretations of the origins of medieval heresy', *Medieval Studies*, 25 (1963), 34, where he emphasised over thirty years ago that most modern writers, especially Grundmann, favoured intellectual or moral reasons for medieval heresy and implicitly rejected any thesis that wanted to include the material world. The irony here is not only that Russell's observation is still correct but that the somewhat older Russell, in works such as *Lucifer. The devil in the middle ages* (Ithaca, 1984) or *A history of heaven: the singing silence* (Princeton, 1998), is just as intellectualist, ahistorical, and moralising, as the historians his younger self had once criticised. A recent learned, passionate, though rather shrill, restatement of the intellectualist approach to religion is B.S. Gregory, *Salvation at stake: Christian martyrdom in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), esp. 1–15, 342–352. On the idealist bias generally in the study of religion, see especially M. Douglas, 'Rightness of categories', in: *How classification works. Nelson Goodman among the social sciences*, ed. M. Douglas and D. Hull, (Edinburgh, 1992), 239–271; M. Douglas, *In the wilderness. The doctrine of defilement in the Book of Numbers* (Sheffield, 1993), 26–29; M. Douglas, 'Comment: hunting the Pangolin', *Man*, n.s. 28 (1993), 161–164. Two much cited anthropological justifications of an intellectualist and idealist attitude towards religion (and so heresy) are R. Horton, 'African conversion', *Africa*, 41 (1971), 85–108 and C. Geertz, 'Religion as a cultural system', in his *The interpretation of cultures. Selected essays* (New York, 1973), 87–125.

⁶ This attitude governed Arno Borst's important *Die Katharer* (Stuttgart, 1953) and, under the confessed influence of Borst, Malcolm Lambert's revised *Medieval heresy: popular movements from the Gregorian reform to the Reformation*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1992, orig. 1977), esp. 126, n. 126. This guiding assumption caused Borst, *Die Katharer*, 49, to refer, rather weirdly, to Austin Evans' not especially outlandish arguments about heresy as being based upon a 'sozialistische These', simply because Evans thought that there was some relation between the society in which heretics lived and their beliefs. Now see Evans, 'Social aspects of medieval heresy', in: *Persecution and liberty. Essays in honor of George Lincoln Burr* (New York, 1931), 93–116 and J.H. Mundy, *The repression of Catharism at Toulouse* (Toronto, 1985), 57, n. 49. Significantly, Borst discussed the life and work of Grundmann (it reveals much about both men) in 'Herbert Grundmann (1902–1970)' in: *Herbert Grundmann Ausgewählte Aufsätze. Teil 1 Religiöse Bewegungen* (Stuttgart, 1976), 1–25. Some useful insights on Grundmann, and the study of medieval religion in general, are given in S. Farmer and B.H. Rosenwein, 'Introduction', in: *Monks and*

of stable dualist ideas (good God, bad God, benign spirit, evil matter) lodged in the heads of people — which, if those minds move, so too those vacuum-sealed beliefs. The original heresy, no matter how many different societies rose and fell through the decades, no matter how great the geographical and cultural differences, stays recognizably the same.⁷ ‘Heresies’, as Sir Thomas Browne gracefully encapsulated this idealist tendency three and a half centuries ago, ‘perish not with their Authors, but like the River *Arethusa*, though they lose their currents in one place, they rise up again in another’.⁸

An important observation is warranted here, in that the letters, polemics, treatises, exempla, inquisitorial manuals, sermons, all writings by intellectuals in the Middle Ages that seem to be describing dualist heresies, and which always present the ideas of heretics as coherent and articulate, and which are used by historians to demonstrate all kinds of dualist heterodox connections, actually demonstrate much more powerfully a rigid and inescapable anti-dualism, for want of a better phrase, that, first developing in the eleventh century and reaching fruition by the end of the thirteenth, saw the potential for heresy in almost anything that was vaguely dissenting from the Church. It was for this reason that labelling men and women accused of heresy as ‘Manichaeans’ — like the Cistercian Caesarius of Heisterbach in the early thirteenth century who compared the Albigensians to them or, fifty years later, the Franciscan William of Rubruck knowing that the theological idiocies of a false Armenian monk at the Mongol court were undoubtedly the dualist errors of Mani or, fifty years later again, how the Dominican inquisitor Bernard Gui had no reservations about renaming the good men of the Toulousain with this soubriquet — was, at one and the same time, a realisation that the new was always revealed in the old, that heresy had always lingered in the world, and that heretics were never isolated, never unconnected to each other, but always organised, always threatening.⁹

nuns, saints and outcasts: religion in medieval society. *Essays in honor of Lester K. Little*, ed. S. Farmer and B.H. Rosenwein (Ithaca, 2000), 2–3.

⁷ S. Runciman’s *The medieval Manichee. A study of the Christian dualist heresy* (Cambridge, rpr. 1982, orig. 1947), esp. 62, 87–88, 171–174, is a famous illustration of this assumption about being able to delineate original religious intent despite millennia and landscape. H. Söderberg, *La Religion des Cathares: Étude sur le Gnosticisme de la basse antiquité et du moyen âge* (Uppsala, 1949), argued for such crystalline continuities. Y. Stoyanov in his *The hidden tradition in Europe: the secret history of medieval Christian heresy* (London, 1994) and reissued, but heavily revised, as *The other God: dualist religions from antiquity to the Cathar heresy* (New Haven, 2000) assumes the same ability to follow dualist thought through time and space, whether Mahayana Buddhism, Manichaeism, Bogomilism, or Catharism. On not wishing ‘to get mired in the monotonous and undifferentiated continuities assumed, without reflection, to exist across the centuries’, especially with regard to religion and epitomised by idealist methods of *Religionsgeschichte*, see P. Brown in ‘The rise and function of the holy man in late antiquity, 1971–1997’, *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 6 (1998), 375.

⁸ Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio medici* (1636) in: *Selected writings*, ed. G. Keynes (London, 1968), 12.

⁹ Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, ed. J. Strange (Cologne, 1851), 1, V, xxi, 300–303, under the chapter *De haeresi Albiensium*; William of Rubruck, *Itinerarium Willelmi de Rubruc*, ed. A. Van den Wyngaert, *Sinica Franciscana I* (Quaracchi, 1929), 295 [trans. by P. Jackson, with excellent notes by him and David Morgan, as *The mission of Friar William of Rubruck: his journey to the court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253–1255* (London, 1990), 232, 284–285, for the incident and a commentary on this Manichaean heresy]; and Bernard Gui, *Practica inquisitionis heretice pravitatis*, ed. C. Douais

Admittedly, tracing the origins of the heretical good men all the way back to the Manichaeans, though still found in all kinds of surprising places, is far less common than a century ago.¹⁰ A subtle scholarly variation on this theme has the *gnosis* of Mani sneaking back into medieval western Europe through the Byzantine Bogomils who, it is tacitly understood, were undoubtedly influenced by this late antique heresy.¹¹ As for there being any genuine intimacy between the Bogomils and the heretical good men, it is neither obvious nor irrefutable that such a liaison ever existed, even though the assumption of such a connection between the two heresies has become a truism in almost all studies of medieval heterodoxy.¹² For a start, any

(Paris, 1886), esp. Part 5, 235–355. The Benedictine Wibald of Corvey, writing to Manegold of Paderborn in 1147, deftly stated the guiding principle of this explanatory technique (medieval and modern) when he noted, in Ep. 167, *Monumenta Corbeiensia*, ed. P. Jaffé (Berlin, 1864), vol. 1, 278, that so much had already been written ‘that it is impossible to say anything new [ut nichil iam possit dici novum]’ and that even heretics ‘do not invent new things but repeat old ones [non nova inveniunt, set vetera replicant].’ Three or four years earlier, Eberwin, the prior of Steinfeld’s Premonstratensian abbey, in a letter (Ep. 472, PL 182, col. 679) to Bernard of Clairvaux, described a group of heretics (usually, and incorrectly, labelled as Cathars) seized in Cologne who, when brought to trial, defended their beliefs by saying that their heresy had ‘lain concealed from the time of the martyrs even to our own day’, and, intriguingly, they went on to say that these hidden philosophies had apparently ‘persisted so in Greece and certain other lands [...hanc haeresim usque ad haec tempora occultatam fuisse a temporibus martyrum, et permansisse in Graecia et quibusdam aliis terris].’ On heresy and anti-dualism, see M.G. Pegg, ‘Questions about questions: manuscript 609 and the great inquisition of 1245–1246’, in: *Trials and treatises: texts on heresy and inquisition*, ed. P. Biller and C. Bruschi (Woodbridge, forthcoming).

¹⁰ See, for example, in the nineteenth century, J. Michelet, *Histoire de France: moyen age* (Paris, 1869), vol. 2, 317–319; C. Douais, *Les Albigeois. Leurs origines, action de l’église au XII^e siècle* (Paris, 1879), 1–216; Lea, *A history of the inquisition of the middle ages*, vol. 1, esp. 92. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries see, for example, C.H. Haskins, ‘Robert le Bougre and the beginnings of the inquisition in northern France’, *American Historical Review*, 7 (1902), 440–441; Söderberg, *La Religion des Cathares, passim*, esp. 6, 82, 265–268; H. Sproemberg, ‘Die Entstehung des Manichäismus im Abendland’, in: *Mittelalter und demokratische Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. H. Sproemberg and M. Unger (Berlin, 1971), 85–102; A. Abel, ‘Aspects sociologiques des religions ‘manichéennes’’, in: *Mélanges offerts à René Crozet*, ed. R. Crozet, P. Gallais, and Y. J. Rion (Poitiers, 1966) 1, 33–46; R. French and A. Cunningham, *Before science: the invention of the Friars’ natural philosophy* (Aldershot, 1996), 103, where the ‘derivation of Catharism from Manicheism is almost certainly correct, and on its long journey, chronologically and geographically, the heresy has developed variations’; L. Kaelber, *Schools of asceticism: ideology and organization in medieval religious communities* (University Park, 1998), 175; and R. Weis, *The yellow cross: the story of the last Cathars 1290–1329* (London, 2000), esp. xv and 137, where a confused, and confusing, link appears to be made between Catharism and Manichaeism. Hamilton, ‘The state of research: the legacy of Charles Schmidt to the study of Christian dualism’, 194–195, implies that a continuity may still be established between the Manichaeans and the Cathars. Interestingly, Schmidt, *Histoire et doctrine des Cathares*, 253, thought there was no connection between the Cathars and the Manichees. P. Jimenez, ‘La vision médiévale du catharisme chez les historiens des années 1950: un néo-manichéisme’, *Heresis*, 7 (1994), 65–96, is a good survey of this issue and many others relating to the historiography of Catharism.

¹¹ See, for example, D. Obolensky, *The Bogomils: a study in Balkan neo-Manichaeism* (Cambridge, 1948), 109–110, and Antoine Dondaine, ‘Aux origines de l’hérésie médiévale’, *Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia*, 6 (1952), 78, ‘...les Cathares occidentaux étaient fils des Bogomils, eux-mêmes héritiers du lointain Manichéisme.’

¹² On the Bogomils, see F. Sanjak, *Les chrétiens bosniaques et le mouvement cathare XII^e–XV^e siècles* (Brussels, 1976); F. Sanjak, ‘Dernières traces de catharisme dans les Balkans’, *Cahiers de Fanjeaux: effacement du Catharisme? (XIII^e–XIV^e S.)*, 20 (1985), 119–134; J. Sidak, *Studije O., Crkvi Bosanskoj* i

suggestion that Bogomil preachers were in Europe from the first millennium onwards and that these Bosnian or Bulgarian seers were the cause of almost all eleventh-century heresy is simply untenable because this argument rests, quite weakly, on the historian simply perceiving a similarity between one set of ideas and another.¹³ A

Bogumilstvu (Zagreb, 1976); D. Angelov, 'Der Bogomilismus in Bulgarien', *Bulgarian historical review*, 2 (1975), 34–54; and J. Sidak, 'Ursprung und Wesen des Bogomilentums', in: *The concept of heresy in the middle ages (11th–13th C.). Proceedings of the International Conference, Louvain May 13–16, 1973*, ed. W. Lourdaux and D. Verhelst (The Hague, 1976), 144–156. By contrast, J.V.A. Fine, Jr., *The early medieval Balkans. A critical survey from the sixth to the late twelfth century* (Ann Arbor, 1983), 179, notes, '[I]f we are analyzing Bulgarian history as a whole and significant movements and causes of historical developments in Bulgaria, Bogomilism's importance has been tremendously exaggerated in all historical works. In fact ... one would be justified in writing a history of medieval Bulgaria without the Bogomils at all.' Indeed, in P. Stephenson's recent *Byzantium's Balkan frontier: a political study of the northern Balkans, 900–1204* (Cambridge, 2000), the Bogomils receive no mention.

¹³ See, for example, the arguments for Bogomil influence in western Europe before the twelfth century by Borst, *Die Katharer*, 71–80; Runciman, *The medieval Manichee*, 117–18; Dondaine, 'Aux origines de l'hérésie médiévale', 43–78; Lambert, *Medieval heresy: popular movements from Bogomil to Hus*, 1st ed. (London, 1977), 24–36, 343–348; J-P. Poly and E. Bournazel, *La Mutation féodale, x^e–xii^e* (Paris, 1980), 382–427 [translated by C. Higgin as *The feudal transformation, 900–1200* (New York, 1991), 272–308]; H. Fichtenau, *Ketzer und Professoren: Häresie und Vernunftglaube im Hochmittelalter* (Munich, 1992), 17–53 [trans. D.A. Kaiser as *Heretics and scholars in the high middle ages: 1000–1200* (University Park, 1998), 13–51]; M. Frassetto, 'The sermons of Ademar of Chabannes and the letter of Heribert: new sources concerning the origins of medieval heresy', *Revue Bénédictine*, 109 (1999), 324–340; and C. Taylor, 'The Letter of Héribert of Périgord as a source for dualist heresy in the society of early eleventh-century Aquitaine', *Journal of Medieval History*, 26 (2000), 313–349. R.I. Moore, 'Heresy, repression, and social change in the age of Gregorian reform', in: *Christendom and its discontents. Exclusion, persecution, and rebellion, 1000–1500*, ed. S.L. Waugh and P.D. Diehl (Cambridge, 1996), 19–46, and 'The birth of popular heresy: A Millennial phenomenon?' *Journal of Religious History*, 24 (2000), 8–25, repeats his nuanced opposition, first articulated in 'The origins of medieval heresy', *History*, 55 (1970), 21–36, to these opinions. Other important arguments against Bogomil influence in the early Middle Ages were made by R. Morghen, *Medioevo Cristiano* (Bari, 1953), 212–86; R. Morghen, 'Problèmes sur l'origine de l'hérésie au moyen-âge', *Revue Historique*, 336 (1966), 1–16; H-C. Puech, 'Catharisme médiéval et bogomilisme', in his *Sur le Manichéisme et autres essais* (Paris, 1979), 395–427; R. Manselli, *L'eresia del male* (Naples, 1963), 118–38; B. Stock, *The implications of literacy. Written language and models of interpretation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries* (Princeton, 1983), 98–99, 102–103; G. Lobrichon, 'The Chiaroscuro of heresy: early eleventh-century Aquitaine as seen from Auxerre', in: *The peace of God: social violence and religious response in France around the year 1000*, ed. T. Head and R. Landes (Ithaca, 1992), 80–103, and his 'Arras, 1025, ou le vrai procès d'une fausse accusation', in: *Inventer l'hérésie?: discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l'inquisition*, ed. M. Zerner (Nice, 1998), 67–85. R. Landes, *Relics, apocalypse, and the deceptions of history. Ademar of Chabannes, 989–1034* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), 188–189, argues, somewhat inconclusively, that heretics in the early Middle Ages suffered from this 'Manichaean scapegoating' because such scapegoating 'made sense of a confusing and disappointing world'. Now, without going into the ephemeral problem of millennialism around 1000, which really only exists if one has an intellectualist bias, see R. Landes, 'The birth of heresy: a millennial phenomenon', *Journal of Religious History*, 24 (2000), 26–43 (which is also a rather angry reply to Moore's 'The birth of popular heresy: a millennial phenomenon?'). Hamilton, 'The state of research: the legacy of Charles Schmidt to the study of Christian dualism', 196–198, while not openly suggesting Bogomil missionaries before the twelfth century, still condemns what he calls 'reductionist' arguments that dismiss the possibility of such Balkan visitors to western Europe. Furthermore, searching within the handful of reported (and persecuted) incidents of heresy in western Europe before the middle of the twelfth century for pre-Catharism or proto-Catharism by simply unearthing what appear to be dualist

more nuanced (and more persuasive) vision imagines Balkan missionaries only coming to Europe in the twelfth century. Still, despite some allusions to wisdom arriving from the east in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as well as the small number of questionable references to heretical holy men journeying from the Byzantine empire to northern France, northern Italy and, especially, southwestern Languedoc with the apocryphal *papa* Nicetas distributing dualist doctrine in the Lauragais, the efforts to truly link the Bogomils and the good men remain unconvincing.¹⁴ Paulician influence

images, or through recognizing an inherent sameness about heretical anti-clericism between one century and the next, are more exercises in the quixotic than in quiddity. J. Duvernoy, 'Le problème des origines du catharisme', in his *Cathare, Vaudois et Beguines, dissidents du pays d'Oc* (Toulouse, 1994), 39–52; A. Brenon, 'Les heresies de l'an mil: nouvelles perspectives sur les origines du catharisme', *Heresis*, 24 (1995), 21–36; and A. Brenon, 'The voice of the good women: an essay on the pastoral and sacerdotal role of women in the Cathar Church', in: *Women preachers and prophets through two millennia of Christianity*, ed. B.M. Kienzle and P.J. Walker (Berkeley, 1998), esp. 115–116, who lean heavily toward searching for, and believing in, proto-Catharism in earlier European heresies.

¹⁴ G. Rottenwöhler, *Der Katherismus: Die Herkunft der Katharer nach Theologie und Geschichte* (Bad Honnef, 1990), vol. 3, 74–114, 570–571; Fichtenau, *Ketzer und Professoren*, 70–119 [*Heretics and Scholars*, 70–126]; B. Hamilton, 'Wisdom from the East: the reception by the Cathars of eastern dualist texts', in: *Heresy and literacy, 1000–1530*, ed. P. Biller and A. Hudson (Cambridge, 1994), 38–60, which, it should be pointed out, opens by stating that '[n]o reputable scholar now doubts that Catharism was an offshoot of medieval eastern dualism...'; M. Lambert, *The Cathars* (Oxford, 1998), 29–59; and M. Barber, *The Cathars: dualist heretics in Languedoc in the high middle ages* (Harlow, 2000), 6–33, are all good, as well as nuanced, recent summaries of the evidence (and scholarship) for missionary and doctrinal connections between the Cathars and the Bogomils. J. and B. Hamilton, *Christian dualist heresies in the Byzantine world c. 650–c. 1450* (Manchester, 1998) is a remarkable collection of translated sources on dualism and has a useful 'Historical introduction', 1–55. The visit by the supposed Bogomil bishop of Constantinople, *papa* Nicetas, to Saint-Félix-de-Caraman in the Lauragais happened in 1167. The document that records Nicetas' journey is lost and only exists as an appendix to Guillaume Besse's *Histoire des ducs, marquis et comtes de Narbonne, autrement appelez princes des Goths, ducs de Septimanie, et marquis de Gothie. Dedié à Monseigneur l'Archevesque duc de Narbonne* (Paris, 1660), 483–486. This document, given to Besse by 'M. Caseneuue, Prebendier au chapitre de l'église de Saint Estienne de Tolose, en l'an 1652', 483, is probably (at best) a mid-thirteenth-century forgery by some good men or their followers rather than a seventeenth-century forgery or a late thirteenth-century collation of a number of disparate documents by an inquisitor in Toulouse. Also, if it really existed, it probably was preserved until the seventeenth century in the Dominican inquisitorial archives at Toulouse or Carcassonne, where a number of other apocryphal documents supposedly demonstrating eastern links were filed away by inquisitors in the late thirteenth century. B. Hamilton, 'The Cathar council of S. Félix reconsidered', *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum*, 48 (1978), 23–53, is generally assumed to have proven the historical validity of Besse's appendix. Now, because so much about this document resembles a story by Jorge Luis Borges, and because one needs to already believe in connections between Cathars and Bogomils to see the evidence within the text (even though the text itself is the foundational proof underlying this belief about Catharism and Bogomilism), it is more prudent, for the present, to remain unconvinced about its historical veracity. In support of Hamilton, see, for example, Pilar Jimenez, 'Relire la Charte de Niquinta — 1) Origine et problématique de la Charte', *Heresis*, 22 (1994), 1–26, and her, 'Relire la Charte de Niquinta — 2) Sens et portée de la charte', *Heresis*, 23 (1994), 1–28; P. Biller, 'Popular religion in the central and late middle ages', in: *Companion to historiography*, ed. M. Bentley (London, 1997), 239–240; Lambert, *The Cathars*, 45–59; and Barber, *The Cathars*, 21–22, 71–73. Cf. Yves Dossat, 'A propos du concile cathare de Saint-Félix: les Milingues', *Cahiers de Fanjeaux: Cathares en Languedoc*, 3 (1968), 201–214, where it is argued that Besse's document was a seventeenth-century forgery (and probably forged by Besse). It has also been argued that Bogomil dualism was secretly carried back by crusaders returning from twelfth-century Outremer. On such heretical transmissions from the Levant,

upon the good men and good women, whether through missionaries or through immigration, has never been championed in the same way as Bogomilism.¹⁵ All in all, arguments about the specific influence of the Bogomils upon western European heresy, either in the eleventh century or in the twelfth, rely upon detecting likenesses between ideas irrespective of time and place.

Searching for what seems similar over the *longue durée*, or between *les vastes espaces*, cannot account for former predictive or inductive practices.¹⁶ Piecing together the similar in time and space may be, in the end, all that the historian actually does, but it is only the beginning of an explanation about the past and not, as is often assumed, the concluding proof, in and of itself, about why a particular society once thought certain ideas worth thinking. Two apparently similar Indo-European symbols, two popular *mentalités*, two dualist discourses, two religious *Zusammenhänge*, though undeniably interesting, prove nothing conclusive in themselves about heresy in the Middle Ages. The reasons why someone in the early twenty-first century believes that two things truly resemble each other, or can safely predict certain continuities from today to tomorrow, should never be confused with (or assumed to be the same as) the certainties that men and women in the thirteenth century knew (or attempted to know) about their world. As such, if one were to find, for example, ostensibly matching heresies from the thirteenth century in the very same region in the eleventh, then even with the same words, beliefs, representations, and symbols, the similarity would be, at best, superficial, while the meaning, in any case, could not be the same. To study heresy, therefore, as though ideas wander over landscapes and centuries like loose hot-air balloons, so that the trick is to catch

Christine Thouzellier, 'Hérésie et croisade au XII^e siècle', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 49 (1954), 855–872, was the first to strongly suggest the importation of dualist beliefs by returning crusaders. Along similar lines to Thouzellier, Karl Heisig in 'Ein gnostische Sekte im abendlandischen Mittelalter', *Zeitschrift für Religions und Geistesgeschichte*, 16 (1964), 271–74, suggested that crusaders brought ancient Gnostic practices back from the East to the Rhineland.

¹⁵ On the Paulicians see, especially, N. Garsoïan, *The Paulician heresy. A study of the origin and development of Paulicianism in Armenia and the eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire* (The Hague–Paris, 1967), esp. 18–21, where she argues against Paulician influence in western Europe in the Middle Ages. Garsoïan, 186–230, also strongly rejects the Paulicians as descendants of Manichees; rather, she considers the original Paulicians to be nothing more than Armenian Old Believers — an argument that is perhaps as unconvincing, and certainly just as unprovable, as the one she rejects. Bernard Hamilton cannot let go of the notion that there must be some connection between the Paulicians and the Cathars despite the dearth of evidence in his 'The origins of the dualist church of Drughthia', *Eastern Churches Review*, 6 (1974), 115–124, his 'Wisdom from the East', 50–51, and his *Christian dualist heresies in the Byzantine world c. 650–c. 1450*, 5–25.

¹⁶ The ideas in this paragraph were derived from N. Goodman, 'Seven strictures against similarity', in his *Problems and projects* (Indianapolis, 1972), 446. See also N. Goodman, 'The new riddle of induction', in his *Fact, fiction, and forecast*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, 1983), 59–83; N. Goodman, *Of mind and other matters* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984); N. Goodman with C. Elgin, *Reconceptions in philosophy and other arts and sciences* (Indianapolis, 1988), 446. See, also, the collected (philosophical) essays on the problem of 'grue' put forward in Goodman's 'The new riddle of induction' in: *The new riddle of induction*, ed. D. Stalker (Chicago, 1994), esp. I. Hacking, 'Entrenchment', 193–224, and the collected (historical, philosophical, anthropological) essays in: *How classification works. Nelson Goodman among the social sciences*, ed. M. Douglas and D. Hull (Edinburgh, 1992).

those drifting beliefs which look similar to each other, allows for whatever ideal contextualisation, whatever intellectual continuity, an erudite zeppelin-chaser so chooses.

Likewise, explanations which treat heresy as solely a manifestation of purely economic or material problems, as an expression of social or class discontent, not unlike something from the revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are just as limited as the more prevalent arguments from the similarity of ideas.¹⁷ A peculiar irony about these theses, tying such dated Cold War Marxist–Leninist approaches to equally dated Victorian Romantic notions, and so elevating both above the level of just curiosity value, indeed an irony permeating much historical thinking about the Middle Ages, is that if the material world is thought to be unchanging, as physical existence in the medieval countryside is especially thought to be, then the beliefs concerned with that world are assumed to be unchanging as well.¹⁸ Rural communi-

¹⁷ For example, E. Werner, *Pauperes Christi. Studien zu sozial-religiösen Bewegungen im Zeitalter des Reformpapsttums* (Leipzig, 1957); M. Erbstößer and E. Werner, *Ideologische Probleme des Mittelalterlichen Plebejertums: Die freigeistige Häresie und ihre sozialen Wurzeln* (Berlin, 1960); G. Koch, *Frauenfrage und Ketzertum in Mittelalter* (Berlin, 1962); B. Töpfer, *Das kommende Reich des Friedens: zur Entwicklung chiliastischer Zukunftshoffnungen im Hochmittelalter* (Berlin, 1964); M. Erbstößer, *Ketzer im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1984) [trans. J. Fraser as *Heretics in the Middle Ages* (Leipzig, 1984)]; and M. Erbstößer and E. Werner, *Ketzer und Heilige: Das religiöse Leben im Hochmittelalter* (Vienna, 1986). On this (especially former East German, especially Karl-Marx University of Leipzig) way with history that, despite the Marxist materialism, had many affinities with the medieval vision of a Jules Michelet, see Andreas Dorpalen, *German history in Marxist perspective: The East German approach* (Detroit, 1985), esp. 74–76, 91–92; W. Malecsek, ‘Le ricerche eresologiche in area germanica’, in: *Eretici ed eresie medievali nella storiografia contemporanea: atti del XXXII Convegno di studi sulla Riforma e i movimenti religiosi in Italia*, ed. G.G. Merlo (Torre Pellice, 1994), 64–93, esp. 68–75; P. Biller, ‘Cathars and material women’, in: *Medieval theology and the natural body*, ed. P. Biller and A.J. Minnis (Woodbridge, 1997), 75–81; Fichtenau, *Ketzer und Professoren*, 110–113 [*Heretics and scholars*, 115–119]; and Kaelber, *Schools of asceticism*, 196–202. It was also this East German treatment of medieval heresy and spirituality that Borst and Grundmann, working within the idealist *Religionsgeschichte* tradition, sincere anti-Marxists, and West Germans after World War II, consciously reacted against. An informed observation on this issue is made by Lerner in his introduction to Grundmann, *Religious movements in the middle ages*, xxii–xxv. James Given, stepping outside of this historiographic debate, has adopted a subtle neo-Marxist approach in his *Inquisition and medieval society: power, discipline, and resistance in Languedoc* (Ithaca, 1997). For further discussions about German historians and heresy, see D. Müller, ‘La perspective de l’historiographie allemande’, *Heresis*, 7 (1994), 47–64, and for German historians and the Middle Ages, see O.G. Oexle, ‘Die Moderne und ihr Mittelalter — eine folgenreiche Problemgeschichte’, in: *Mittelalter und Moderne: Entdeckung und Rekonstruktion der mittelalterlichen Welt. Kpnpgrößen des 6. Symposiums des Mediävistenverbandes in Bayreuth 1995*, ed. P. Segl (Sigmaringen, 1997), 307–364.

¹⁸ See, for example, E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou, village occitan de 1294 à 1324* (Paris, 1993, orig. 1975) [translated and condensed by B. Bray as *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French village 1294–1324* (Harmondsworth, 1981)], where a tendency to romanticise life in the Occitan countryside, and to see it as possessing unchanging qualities, is crucial to his brilliant, if wayward, evocation of rural existence from a late-thirteenth–early-fourteenth-century inquisitorial register. Weis, *The yellow cross*, mostly using the same texts as Le Roy Ladurie, namely *Le Registre d’Inquisition de Jacques Fournier, Évêque de Pamiers (1318–1325)* ed. Jean Duvernoy (Toulouse, 1965, and additional *Corrections*, 1972) and *L’inquisiteur Geoffroy d’Ablis et les Cathares du Comté de Foix (1308–1309)*, ed. and trans. A. Pales-Gobillard (Paris, 1984), promotes the same image of an unchanging rural landscape, although this time

ties, tied to the soil, trapped in the cyclical movement of the seasons, forever dwelling in an eternal present and so denied the virtues of linear time, never change the way they do things, never change the way they think things.¹⁹ The overt materialist, in the end, reinforces the idealist bias, and, once more, an anti-gravity world of long duration is imagined, where one can jump about all over the place, from century to century, from the Balkans to the Pyrénées, ignoring temporal and cultural specificity in the proving of a point.

All these assumptions, all these often unwitting biases, are thrown into high relief when the records of the thirteenth-and-fourteenth-century inquisition in Languedoc are taken into account. Testimonies given to the inquisitors into heretical depravity, numbering in the thousands, involving scores of rural communities, and which provide the most detailed documentation about the heresy of the good men and good women, do not support the general historiographic tendency. The answers to the whys and wherefores of the heresy of the good men must be sought within these specific communities, the worlds in which the heretics actually dwelt, and not through making doubtful deductions, founded upon intellectualist predilections, about outside causes, about timeless verities. Such equations, though clean and neat, presuppose a deeply unconvincing passivity on the part of medieval men and women, heretical or not. The records of the inquisition, frequently a string of fragmentary confessions interspersed with a handful of longer narratives, all too often just get concertinaed to fit *a priori* Cathar-templates, preconceived notions about what a testimony really was saying even if it did not say it (as in mistaking a scribal variation of *bons omes* for ‘Bosnians’ and misreading *et hoc in vulgari* in a seventeenth-century copy of an inquisition record as *et hoc in Bulgaria*).²⁰

it is populated with more individuals possessing many more anachronistic attitudes. The same is true for C. Ginzburg’s remarkable, but supremely ahistorical, *Storia Notturna* (Turin, 1989) [translated by R. Rosenthal, *Ecstasies. Deciphering the witches’ sabbath* (Harmondsworth, 1991)], where Ludwig Wittgenstein’s notion of ‘seeing connections’ — from *Bemerkungen über Frazers Golden Bough* [*Remarks on Frazer’s Golden Bough*], ed. with revised trans. R. Rees (Atlantic Highlands, 1979), esp. 8–8e, ‘[A]n [historical] explanation as an hypothesis of the development, is only one kind of summary of the data, of their synopsis. We can equally well see the data in their relations to one another and make a summary of them in a general picture without putting it in the form of an hypothesis regarding temporal development’, and the consequent downplaying of historical change and specificity, justifies the lack of gravity in Ginzburg’s universe. P. Anderson, ‘Nocturnal enquiry: Carlo Ginzburg’, in his *A zone of engagement* (London, 1992), 207–229, thoughtfully, but severely, reviews Ginzburg’s unchanging rural world and the materialist assumptions such an idea embraces. W.C. Jordan in his *The great famine. Northern Europe in the early fourteenth century* (Princeton, 1996), 13, has attacked the general prevalence of such timeless notions about the tempo of rural life in the middle ages.

¹⁹ A. Gurevitch, for instance, has expressed these views in his *Categories of medieval culture*, trans. G.L. Campbell (London, 1985), 98, and *Medieval popular culture: problems of belief and perception*, trans. J. Bak and P. Hollingsworth (Cambridge–Paris, 1992), 99. Cf. J. Fentress and C. Wickham, *Social memory* (Oxford, 1992), 100, who dismiss such views of time and memory in rural communities.

²⁰ As in Lambert, *The Cathars*, 62, mistaking *bonomios sive bonosios* in Guilhem de Puylaurens, *Chronica Magistri Guillelmi de Podio Laurentii*, ed. and trans. J. Duvernoy (Paris, 1976), 32, as referring to the ‘*Bonosii*’, that is Bosnians’, and so the Cathars. Or Hamilton, ‘Wisdom from the east’, 57 and n. 93, misreading *et hoc in vulgari* (about a book) in a seventeenth-century copy of an inquisition record (in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Collection Doat 25, fol. 217r,) as *et hoc in Bulgaria*. Coincidentally,

What is so fascinating about inquisition records, but what usually relegates them to be strip-mined for footnotes, is that they only make any sense, they only come alive, if an attempt is made to evoke the world in which they were created. This means turning aside from the intellectualist bias and so recognizing that communities actively survive, from one day to the next, from one decade to another, because of an interweaving of thoughts and actions, so individually intimate, so communally strengthening, that the relations a person (or thing) maintains in the material realm entrenches the relations he or she (or it) maintains in the metaphoric, and vice versa. To grasp this deep intimacy, at once collective and particular, is to grasp the meaning of heresy in the Middle Ages. What is being argued here is not that metaphors, language, texts, and such like, merely mirror social structures, habits, and so forth, because this would be no more than the historian simply noting what he or she finds similar between one set of (usually lively) discourses, ideas, symbols, and one set of (often dull and unchanging) practices, behaviours, routines.²¹ Equally, what is being suggested, is that ideas and habits never hibernate, lie dormant, or remain buried in eternal folkways. Individuals and their societies possess no inherent tendencies, no fundamental hot-wiring, towards any particular theories, towards any particular actions.²² To begin any meditation upon the past with an assumption that some things simply are universal in humans or are always just there in human society, never changing, inert, immobile, is to retreat from attempting an historical explanation about previous rhythms of existence, whether they be six hundred years old or a mere six weeks.

More prosaically, one must never approach inquisition documents from Languedoc with the *Cathari* in hand. No person, whether mendicant inquisitor or the men, women, and children they questioned, ever used the noun 'Cathar' to describe heretics in, for instance, the Toulousain, the Lauragais, or in the *pays de Foix*. Instead, it was always, with no exceptions, *boni homines*, *bone femine*, *bons omes*, *bonas femnas*, good men and good women; while the good men and good women themselves frequently referred to each other as 'the friends of God'.²³ 'Cathar' (apparently first used in the middle of the twelfth century by a group of heretics from Cologne,

Lambert, *The Cathars*, 55 n.29, faults Duvernoy for the same misreading of Doat 25. See also Rotenwöhler, *Der Katherismus: Die Herkunft der Katharer nach Theologie und Geschichte*, vol. 3, 529.

²¹ Despite agreeing with much of what G.M. Spiegel has to say in her influential 'History, historicism, and the social logic of the text in the middle ages', *The past as text: the theory and practice of medieval historiography* (Baltimore, 1997), 3–28; her final argument that texts mirror society, or that language mirrors social locations.

²² For example, D. Maybury-Lewis, 'Introduction. The quest for harmony', and U. Almagor, 'Introduction. Dual organization reconsidered', in: *The attraction of opposites. Thought and society in the dualist mode*, ed. D. Maybury-Lewis and U. Almagor (Ann Arbor, 1989), 1–18, 19–32, where each one argues (under the influence of Claude Levi-Strauss) that dualism is inherent in the human perception of the world; and P. Boyer, *The naturalness of religious ideas: a cognitive theory of religion* (Berkeley, 1994), where religion is natural and innate to human thought. Now, see S.B. Ortner, 'Resistance and the problem of ethnographic refusal', *Comparative studies in history and society*, 37 (1995), 173–193, for a discussion on how frequently inherent (and far from theoretical) assumptions often underwrite overtly theoretical scholarship.

²³ Pegg, *The corruption of angels*, 95–97.

or so Eckbert of Schönau wrote in his *Sermones contra Catharos* of 1163)²⁴ is, and always has been, deeply misleading and applied in such an indiscriminate way by modern historians as to make it, for all intents and purposes, a useless term. The word is thrown about as though it were Cathar-confetti, brightly decorating all sorts of individuals and groups accused of heresy in the Rhineland, England, northern France, northern Italy, Catalonia, and Languedoc, from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries, whose connections with one another, though worth pondering, are at best problematic.²⁵

This relentless naming of almost all heretics, particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as ‘Cathars’ (with the exception of the Waldensians) is not only the product of, but the very justification for, the intellectualist approach, in that if the word is used enough times by enough scholars to describe enough heretics in enough places then, in what can only be called a self-fulfilling prophecy, a great heretical ‘Cathar Church’ with a systematically similar doctrine comes into being.²⁶ (Intriguingly, historians convinced of Catharism as an institution usually accept that the medieval inquisition was much more institutional than ever was the case.)²⁷ This remorseless relabelling also applies to *perfectus*, ‘perfect’, as a respectful title for a good man, and taken for granted by modern scholarship, but, once again, it is a designation not found in the original records of the Languedocian inquisition.²⁸ Simi-

²⁴ Eckbert of Schönau, *Sermones contra Catharos*, PL 195, col. 31: ‘Catharos, id est mundos.’ Now, see R.I. Moore, *The origins of European dissent* (London, 1977), 176–182.

²⁵ For example, M. Camille, *The Gothic idol: ideology and image-making in medieval art* (Cambridge, 1989), 211, glosses the *Chronicon universale anonimi Laudunensis* (1154–1219), ed. A. Cartellieri (Leipzig, 1909), 62–63, where a group of *infideles* were examined and burnt in 1204, by tagging one of them, a ‘Nicholas, the famous painter in all of France’, with no evidence at all, as a Cathar. Or A. Del Col, *Dominico Scandella detto Mennocchio: I processi dell’Inquisizione (1583–1599)* (Pordenone, 1990), liii–lxxvi, where the ideas of that sixteenth-century miller from Friuli, Mennocchio — the same Mennocchio made famous by C. Ginzburg in *Il formaggio e i vermi: Il cosmo di un mugnaio del 500* (Turin, 1976) — were clearly derived from Catharism because, and this is Del Col’s only evidence, they were so similar.

²⁶ For example, Barber, *The Cathars*, passim, and B. Hamilton, ‘The Cathars and Christian perfection’, in *The medieval church: universities, heresy, and the religious life: essays in honour of Gordon Leff*, eds. P. Biller and B. Dobson (Woodbridge, 1999), 5–23, stress the existence of a ‘Cathar Church’.

²⁷ B. Hamilton, for example, in his *The Medieval inquisition* (New York, 1981) argues for the existence of a medieval inquisition. Even H.C. Lea admitted that there was no comprehensive institutional ‘Inquisition’ throughout the European middle ages. Lea’s admission is in his *A history of the inquisition of the middle ages*, vol. 1, 397ff. On Lea’s thoughts about the medieval inquisition, see Peters, ‘Henry Charles Lea (1825–1909)’, 89–100 and his *Inquisition* (New York, 1988), 287–292. Now, see Richard Kieckhefer, ‘The office of inquisition and medieval heresy: the transition from personal to institutional jurisdiction’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 46 (1995), 36–61, 56–57, and H.A. Kelly, ‘Inquisition and the prosecution of heresy: misconceptions and abuses’, *Church history* 58 (1989), 439–451, for their warnings about not confusing the medieval inquisition with the institutional early modern Inquisition.

²⁸ Pegg, *The corruption of angels*, 18. Weis, *The yellow cross*, 2, where the fact that Jacques Fournier’s inquisition did not record this title is put down to spite on the part of the bishop-inquisitor. D. Müller, *Frauen vor der Inquisition: Lebensform, Glaubenszeugnis und Arburteilung der Deutschen und Französischen Katharerinnen* (Mainz, 1996), is a nuanced study marred by a tension (largely between footnotes and text) between using terminology like ‘perfect’, with all that this implies, and the evidence that does not warrant such usage. It seems that *perfectus*, if it was transcribed, has only survived in the Collection

larly, the *heretici* were never called *Albigenses* in the registers of the inquisition. Yet, in histories and encyclopedias until the beginning of the last century, ‘Albigensian’ was almost always the term for the good men. Conybeare and Alphandéry, in their respective ways, illustrate this terminological shift from the somewhat inappropriate *Albigenses* (though still with some sense of specificity) to the incredibly inappropriate *Cathari* (with its wildly imperial and immigrant connotations).²⁹

On the other hand, what will be consistently found in inquisition registers is the epithet ‘good man’ for a heretic. This is terribly important because all men, heretical or not, especially in the first half of the thirteenth century in the Toulousain and the Lauragais, were described in charters, wills, oaths, communal decisions, court appearances, in everything and anything, as *boni homines* and *probi homines* in Latin, while in Occitan they were *bons omes*, *prozomes*, and *prodomes*.³⁰ This fact, if nothing else, should shake our complacency about using ‘Cathar’ and suggest that research into the specific communities questioned by the inquisition will reveal a very different world than the one now taken for granted. To be sure, the Dominican inquisitor (and former ‘heresiarch’ at Piacenza) Rainier Sacconi in his *Summa de Catharis et Pauperibus de Lugduno* of 1250 did add a tiny appendix about the ‘Cathars of the Toulousain church, and those of Albi and Carcassonne’ towards the end of his detailed treatise about the *Cathari* of Lombardy, but there is nothing in this brief afterthought except an opinion that the *langue d’oc* heretics were obviously connected to the *langue de si* dualists.³¹ Only five years earlier, in a sharp and rather telling contrast, two other Dominican inquisitors, Bernart de Caux and Joan de Sant-Peire, in the largest inquisition of the middle ages, where almost six thousand men and women from the Toulousain and the Lauragais were questioned in two hundred and one days, not only was ‘Cathar’ never uttered, or in any of the testimonies

Doat (e.g. Doat 26, fol. 258r–259r). This apparent fact, in stark contrast to original manuscripts surviving from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, should suggest that the seventeenth-century copyists employed by Jean de Doat perhaps took more transcribing liberties than is often realised. On Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s commission and Doat’s copying, see L. Delisle, *Le Cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Impériale*, Histoire générale de Paris (Paris, 1868), vol. 1, 441–442; H. Omont, ‘La Collection Doat à la Bibliothèque Nationale: Documents sur les recherches de Doat dans les archives du sud-ouest de la France de 1663 à 1670’, *Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des Chartes*, 77 (1916), 286–336; L. Kolmer, *Ad Capiendas Vulpes. Die Ketzerbekämpfung in Süd-frankreich in der ersten Hälfte des 13. Jahrhunderts und die Ausbildung des Inquisitionsverfahrens* (Bonn, 1982), 12–15, and his, ‘Colbert und die Entstehung der Collection Doat’, *Francia*, 7 (1979), 463–489.

²⁹ On the meaning of *Albigenses*, see C. Thouzellier, *Hérésie et Hétériques: Vaudois, Cathares, Patarins, Albigeois* (Rome, 1969), 223–262, and J-L. Biget, ‘Les Albigeois’: remarques sur une dénomination’, in: *Inventer l’Hérésie?: Discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l’inquisition*, ed. M. Zerner (Nice, 1998), 219–256.

³⁰ Pegg, *The corruption of angels*, 95.

³¹ Rainier Sacconi, *Summa de Catharis et Pauperibus de Lugduno*, is in the preface of Antoine Dondaine’s edition of *Un Traité néo-manichéen du XIII^e siècle: Le Liber de duobus principiis suivi d’un fragment de rituel cathare* (Rome, 1939), p. 77. Now, see Thouzellier, *Catharisme et Valdésisme en Languedoc*, 19–26, and the more general discussion of Italian heresy (and one which assumes a strong, and obvious, connection to the heretics of Languedoc) in: C. Lansing, *Power and purity: Cathar heresy in medieval Italy* (New York, 1998), esp. 4–5, 15–16, 37–39, 188–190.

was an elaborate dualist theology expounded, but no elaborate international heretical organization, no ‘Cathar Church’, was discovered by them or, and this can never be emphasized enough, will such an entity be unearthed by historians (unless, of course, hundreds of references to *heretici* and *boni homines* are persistently, and rather unashamedly, translated as referring to ‘Cathars’ and ‘perfects’).³²

This desire to believe that secret heretical knowledge, that a hidden Church, was, and still is, forever waiting to be found, forever ready to rise and shine when things are just right, is profoundly seductive. The Cathars, influencing everything and anything, have been tied to the Holy Grail, to courtly love, to the hidden secrets of the Knights-Templars, to the magical lodges of late-nineteenth-century mysticism, and even to the veracity of reincarnation.³³ Occasionally, these occult fantasies are grafted onto the related, and just as anachronistic, need to see the good men and good women as Protestants before their time³⁴ — like the irrepressible Conybeare, whose gift for

³² Pegg, *The corruption of angels*, esp. 130.

³³ See, out of a vast and extremely popular literature, especially D. Roché, *Études Manichéennes et Cathares* (Paris, 1952) and R. Nelli, *Histoire secrète du Languedoc* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1978). Roché was the founder of a neo-Cathar group at the turn of this century and of the journal *Cahiers d'Études Cathares*. On Roché, see J.-L. Biget, ‘Mythographie du Catharisme’, *Cahiers de Fanjeaux: Historiographie du catharisme*, 14 (1979), 308–310. Roché also had a curious correspondence with Simon Weil; for example, the latter once wrote — and cited by J. Duvernoy, ‘Albigeisme ou Catharisme’, in his *Cathare, Vaudois et Beguines, dissidents du pays d’Oc* (Toulouse, 1994), 15 — that Catharism was ‘la dernière expression vivante de l’antiquité pré-romaine ...’. Weil had more to say about Catharism and Occitanism in her ‘L’agonie d’une civilisation vue à travers une poème épique’, and ‘En quoi l’inspiration occitanienne’, in: *Écrits historiques et politiques* (Paris, 1960), 66–74 and 75–84. On Weil, see, for example, P. Winch, *Simone Weil. ‘The just balance’* (Cambridge, 1989), 369, where he considers Weil’s notion that Catharism was a descendant of late antique neo-Platonic Christianity to be historically correct; he even argues for Catharism to be the offspring of Gnosticism because (and this is his only evidence) ‘of a similarity of ideas’. Barber, *The Cathars*, 203–212, is good on Weil, Roché, and the odd Otto Rahn. A. Guiridham, *The Cathars and reincarnation: The record of a past life in 13th century France* (London, 1970), even documents a fascinating case of an English woman who was convinced that she had experienced a past life as a *crezen* in the early thirteenth-century Lauragais. A southern French travelogue, heavily laced with Cathar fact and fancy, is R. Klawinski, *Chasing the heretics: A modern journey through the medieval Languedoc* (St. Paul, 1999). S. O’Shea, *The perfect heresy: The revolutionary life and death of the medieval Cathars* (New York, 2000), is really about the Albigenian Crusade and, despite a good bibliography, wrong on just about everything. As for Catharism and the Holy Grail, see M. Roquebert, *Les Cathares et le graal* (Toulouse, 1994). On the innumerable (and usually rather odd) theories about courtly love, *Amour courtois*, and the Cathars, see the excellent critical survey of R. Boase, *The origin and meaning of courtly love: A critical study of European scholarship* (Manchester, 1977), 77–81. Today, the Centre d’Études Cathares at Carcassonne, still keeps, perhaps unintentionally, the neo-Cathar flame alive. The Centre d’Études Cathares also publishes the serious and learned journal *Heresis*. Now see Duvernoy, ‘Albigeisme ou Catharisme’, 15–38.

³⁴ J. Duvernoy, for one, basically sees the Cathars as proto-Protestants in ‘Cathares et vaudois sont-ils des précurseurs de la Réforme?’ in his *Cathare, Vaudois et Beguines, dissidents du pays d’Oc* (Toulouse, 1994), 53–62. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not surprisingly, such views were quite common amongst Catholic and Protestant thinkers. On these early modern ideas about the Cathars, see A. Borst, ‘Neue Funde und Forschungen zur Geschichte der Katharer’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 174 (1952), 17; H. Duranton, ‘Les Albigeois dans les histoires générales et les manuels scolaires du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle’, *Cahiers de Fanjeaux: Historiographie du catharisme*, 14 (1979), 85–118; A. Friesen, ‘Medieval heretics or forerunners of the Reformation: the Protestant rewriting of the history of medieval heresy’, in *The*

seeing the Cathars wherever he happened to look that day, allowed him to observe in his portrait of the ‘Anabaptists’ for the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that their sixteenth-century zeal clearly had ‘an affinity to the Cathari and other medieval sects’.³⁵ Further, mistaken notions about the Cathars have led a number of historians, who are not medievalists, to see these supposed heretics as not only having a ‘Church’ but also possessing what can only be called a distinct ethnicity along with their beliefs, one that therefore makes them a useful past analogy to, say, the systematic destruction of European Jews during the Holocaust or the genocidal violence in the former Yugoslavia.³⁶ It is because such comparisons are so important to historical research — though, once more, questions about apparent continuities and similarities immediately present themselves — that the fact, fantasy, and fiction about the Cathars, the Albigenses, and the good men, deserves to be rethought.

The scholarship on the Cathars, Albigenses, and the good men, particularly for Languedoc, rests upon almost three centuries of extraordinary learning in a way that has been, and still is, rarely equalled in the historical study of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, just as one may admire the longevity of the erudite assumptions of Conybeare and Alphandéry, their arguments, though not quite ready to be pensioned off just yet, do suggest an intellectual languor whose apparent calm is much more stifling to the historical imagination than might at first appear. What has been attempted here is a rethinking of the Cathars and the good men that, in the end, hopes to shake, if only for a moment, this Edwardian historiographic stillness.

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devil, heresy, and witchcraft in the middle ages: Essays in honor of Jeffrey B. Russell, ed. A. Ferreiro (Leiden, 1998), 165–190; and Barber, *The Cathars*, 212–225. Interestingly, under ‘Albigenses’, the first edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica or, A dictionary of arts and sciences* (Edinburgh, 1771), 1, 75, noted this: ‘... They [the Albigenses] are ranked among the grossest heretics, the Manicheans, by Roman Catholics; from which charge Protestants generally acquit them, though with some limitations ... At the time of the Reformation, those of the Albigenses who remained embraced Calvinism.’

³⁵ F. Conybeare, ‘Anabaptists’, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 1, 904.

³⁶ For example, on the Cathars and the Holocaust, see G. Lerner, ‘In the footsteps of the Cathars’, in her *Why history matters: life and thought* (Oxford, 1997), 19–32, and, on the killing of the Albigensians and the massacres in Bosnia, see David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the failure of the West* (New York, 1995), 27.