

FROM OCCITANIA TO CATALONIA. CATHARISM: THE CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH

CARLES GASCÓN CHOPO
UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN A DISTANCIA
SPAIN

Date of receipt: 16th of January, 2019

Date of acceptance: 24th of July, 2019

ABSTRACT

This article offers a historiographical analysis of the question of Catharism in medieval Europe, taking as its starting point a proposal structured around two clearly differentiated parts, which respectively focus on an overview of Catharism as a field of study and the perception of its impact in the area of Catalonia. Beyond the potential interest in examining the overall contextualisation prior to presenting a study of a more specific geographical case, the reason for adopting this dual approach lies in the limited interaction that there has historically been between the different discourses put forward on this subject, depending on whether they originated on one side of the Pyrenees or the other, each case being based on very specific interests, concerns and perspectives¹.

KEYWORDS

Catharism, Historiography, Historical deconstructivism, Catalonia, Occitania.

CAPITALIA VERBA

Haeresis Catharorum, Historiographia, Deconstructivimus historicus, Catalonia, Occitania.

The study of the history of Catharism, particularly in the neighbouring lands of Occitania and Catalonia, has often been the subject of manipulation based on the very wishes, concerns or contradictions of the people living in those regions, depending on the historical context. Such appreciations often tend to be the norm in the collective perception of certain past events, but in very few cases are these interpretations put forward from such a wide range of viewpoints as in the case of Catharism, especially in the Occitan context, but also in that of Catalonia.²

Be that as it may, until the 1990s, interest in Catharism was largely restricted to the academic world or spheres close to the cultural activism sector. It was from this decade onwards that the first echoes of the intense media campaign of the *Pays Cathare* trademark in the French department of Aude, the result of an ambitious local development programme that aimed to promote the rich cultural heritage of the region, comprising a series of medieval castles and fortresses around the monumental citadel of Carcassonne, started to be heard. A discourse structured around memory of the Cathars sought to endow this cultural output with coherence. In 1992, the project was selected to receive financing from the Europe Union's LEADER programme for economic development in rural areas, which led to the *Pays Cathare* becoming the main cultural tourism destination in Europe as a consequence of the systematic exploitation of the memory of Catharism.³

From the view point of those managing the trademark, because of its proximity, its demographic potential and its inhabitants' awareness of a medieval past that, in addition, exhibited many common features, Catalonia was one of the priority areas of promotion for the *Pays Cathare* message. This situation was to have repercussions for the soaring demand for everything that could be described as 'Cathar', including innumerable publications that filled the shelves of Catalan bookshops: novels, popular works, guidebooks and even recipe books, which in some cases became best-sellers.⁴ Parallel to this, the success of the *Pays Cathare* programme as a model of economic development was also followed up and applied, at a smaller scale, in Catalonia by means of a new project oriented towards the promotion of cultural tourism based on the memory of Catharism to the south of the Pyrenees. The project on the Catalan slopes of the mountain chain was dubbed the *Camí dels Bons Homes* (the Route of the Bons Homes) and brought together the four Pyrenean districts with a supposed Cathar past: Alt Urgell, Berguedà, Cerdanya and Solsonès. Since 1997 this programme has had a stable organisation overseen by a regulatory council, made up by public and private bodies, which, in this case, prioritises the promotion of tourist activity based on hiking rather than on history and the cultural heritage, although it is true that there has also been a series of initiatives of a cultural

1. I thank Philip Banks for his translation of this article into English.

2. An interesting comparative study on the exploitation of Catharism on the two sides of the Pyrenees can be found in Mármol Cartañá, Camila del. "Cátaros: entre memorias y olvidos. Usos del pasado en el Pirineo catalán y occitano". *Ibix. Annals del Centre d'Estudis Comarcals del Ripollès*, 6 (2010): 321-335.

3. Soula, René. *Les cathares: entre légende et histoire*. Toulouse: Institut d'Études Occitanes, 2004: 426-436.

4. Mármol Cartañá, Camila del. "Cátaros... ": 326-331.



nature that have had an impact on the identity of local towns and villages through the agency of a real or imaginary Cathar past.⁵

At present, interest in the history of Catharism has passed its peak. In its time, the commercialisation of the subject brought about an excessive exploitation of its contents that was to make it difficult for academic and university channels to express their complicity, when it did not result in open rejection. On the other hand, the promotion of new periods of interest in the historical record has played a part in this stagnation, relegating the debate created around Catharism as a whole to a secondary role. This can be clearly perceived in Catalonia, where the complex political situation of recent years has oriented the interest of the public at large towards historical episodes more explicitly associated with the epic of national identity. A good example of this arose in 2013 with the different treatment given to the history of the War of the Spanish Succession, one year prior to the celebration of the tercentenary of the siege and fall of Barcelona facing the Bourbon troops, and the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the Battle of Muret, an event that, beyond a few occasional events organised by the academic world, remained almost unnoticed by the population at large.⁶

Nevertheless, and looking beyond the banalisation of contents implicit in the commercialisation of the Cathar world, from a historiographical viewpoint, the balance of this period should be considered as having been positive, as it succeeded in placing the subject at the centre of the debate on certain periods, which stimulated research into this area of history. Now that the consumer boom that was unleashed around this historical period has calmed down, and matters have returned to normal, it is the appropriate moment to analyse the state of the question of Catharism, as will be proposed below. With this aim in mind, this article is divided in two main sections, the first of which is devoted to the principal lines within the historiography of the subject as a whole, with the aim of providing a suitable context for an analysis of the development of historical studies on Catharism in Catalonia, the aspect that will be considered in the second part of this study.

1. Catharism: the current state of research

The historiographical output on the subject of Catharism is so complex and diverse that it is essential to make a selection and to focus on the most influential works. The first references to Catharism in historical studies are to be found in the

5. I thank Karina Béhar, the manager of the *Consell Regulador del Camí dels Bons Homes* from 2006 to 2014 for this information.

6. Such as the International Conference under the title of *La encrucijada de Muret. ¿Una nueva definición para Europa y el Mediterráneo?* (The Crossroads of Muret. A new definition for Europe and the Mediterranean?), held in Barcelona on 27-29 November, 2013 and organised by the Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales (The Spanish Society for Medieval Studies), which, significantly, did not count on the Generalitat de Catalunya among the entities behind the event.



sixteenth century, in the context of the Protestant Reformation. The link between Catharism and the Reformed Churches was a question that interested certain Protestant historians who, at the same time, took special care to disassociate it from Eastern Manichaeism. The connection between Catharism and Manichaeism came from a Catholic school of historiography that took care to discredit medieval dissent by means of the pagan associations attributed to Manichaeans. Debate on this period eventually led to the gradual differentiation of Catharism with respect to other medieval dissenting movements, such as the Waldensians, even though it continued to attract the interest of Protestant historians, as it was identified as a precedent of the Reformation.⁷

This interpretation of the reality of Catharism in terms of Protestantism was to be of decisive influence in the appearance of the first synthesis on this medieval form of dissent in the mid-nineteenth century. This was a study by Charles Schmidt, a Protestant pastor from Alsace, whose work entitled *Histoire et doctrine de la secte des cathares et albigeois* was published in two volumes in 1848 and 1849; these analysed respectively the movement's doctrine and historical development,⁸ thereby initiating the tendency to divide the subject into the two fields of religion and politics, which was to a great extent continued, although not without some problems of interpretation. Returning to the arguments of his predecessors and basing himself on Catholic sources, Schmidt conclusively demonstrated the dualist nature of Cathar doctrines, although, unlike Catholic historians, he disassociated them from Manichaeism and related them more closely to the Bogomilism of the Balkan region, thereby eliminating their pagan connotations. In many respects, Schmidt's work is considered to be the pioneer of present-day Cathar historiography; he was the person to introduce the term Cathar to refer to this dissenting movement, a concept of uncertain origin that Schmidt preferred in order to cast off the national implications inherent in the term of Albigenianism.

At the same time, another French Protestant pastor, in this case of Occitan origin, focused the question of Catharism in the geographical area of southern France, presenting it by means of a series of arguments destined to survive for a long time. This was Napoléon Peyrat, the son of a family of Pyrenean landowners, who put forward his progressive, anticlerical and federalist ideals in his five-volume work *Histoire des Albigeois*, published between 1870 and 1872.⁹ Peyrat's approach, guided by his adamant anticlericalism, presented the Albigenian Crusade as a struggle between the tolerant, refined and culturally superior civilisation of southern France and the coarse feudal lords of the north of France, heirs of the barbarians, who achieved a military victory and thereby prevented the creation of a state stretching across the Pyrenees. By means of this discourse, Peyrat forged an argument that was destined to have a long life in the historiography of Catharism, the repercussions of

7. Jiménez, Pilar. *Les catharismes. Modèles dissidents du christianisme médiéval (xii^e-xiii^e siècles)*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008: 25-26.

8. Schmidt, Charles. *Histoire et doctrine des cathares et albigeois*, 2 vols. Paris-Geneva: J. Cherbuliez, 1848-1849.

9. Peyrat, Napoléon. *Histoire des Albigeois*, 5 vols. Paris: Librairie Internationale, 1870-1872.



which were also to be noted in Catalonia. However, Napoléon Peyrat should also be recognised for being the first to appreciate the value of the Doat Collection in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, which, in the course of time was revealed to be one of the main documentary sources for the study of the historical evolution of Catharism and the suppression carried out by the Catholic Church.

In 1887, the publication of the first of the three volumes of *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*,¹⁰ by the American historian Henry Charles Lea, continued the approach of Protestant historical writing, focusing on its condemnation of the Catholic suppression of Catharism and other forms of dissent. Lea's highly learned work presents the evidence without attempting to argue in favour of a particular interpretation, a paradigmatic example of positivist historical writing which, on the other hand, contributed a crucial amount of information to undertake subsequent research, and also devoted a chapter to the Inquisition in the Crown of Aragon, which will be discussed below.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the negative image of the Catholic Church that was repeatedly presented as a consequence of the renewed interest in the history of Catharism started to be contested by Catholic historical writing, which had hitherto shown little interest in the question. From the point of view of doctrine, Ignaz von Döllinger, a Catholic professor from Munich, returned to the question of whether pagan origins could be attributed to Catharism in his work *Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters*,¹¹ which was published posthumously in 1890; this study stated that the origins of Catharism were close to ancient dualism, which reached the West through Manichaeism and Gnosticism, in an interpretation that also had a long life in historical works on Catharism. Other Catholic historians, aware of the difficulty involved in the rehabilitation of the Inquisition's role in view of its acts, advocated returning to the sources as their reinterpretation would enable the condemnatory attitude that certain schools of historical thought made use of as a way of criticising the Catholic Church to be toned down.¹² Among the latter, Célestin Douais, professor of the History of the Church at the Institut Catholique in Toulouse and bishop of Beauvais from 1899, stands out; he devoted himself to the study and publication of documents related to the Dominican Order and the Inquisition. Amongst all his works, the two volumes of *Documents pour servir à l'histoire de l'Inquisition dans le Languedoc*, published in 1900,¹³ in the second of which he included a number of unpublished Inquisition trials from the Doat Collection, are

10. Lea, Henry Charles. *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, 3 vols. New York: Harper & Brothers – The Macmillan Company, 1887-1906.

11. Döllinger, Ignaz von. *Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters*, 2 vols. Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1890. I would also mention Duvernoy, Jean. *Le catharisme: l'histoire des cathares*. Toulouse: Privat, 1979: 342 and Jiménez, Pilar. *Les catharismes...*: 27.

12. Duvernoy, Jean. *Le catharisme...*: 341.

13. Douais, Célestin. *Documents pour servir à l'histoire de l'Inquisition dans le Languedoc*, 2 vol. Paris: Société de l'Histoire de France, 1900.



particularly noteworthy. Despite the erudition of the work, his benevolent attitude towards the Inquisition led to him being widely criticised.¹⁴

In spite of all this, Célestin Douais opened a path for other contemporary historians, such as the militant Catholic Jean Guiraud, born near Carcassonne,¹⁵ who, after his initial studies on the Cathar Ritual, and after he had been appointed to a post as a professor at the University of Besançon,¹⁶ published his *Histoire de l'Inquisition au moyen âge*, the two volumes of which appeared in 1935 and 1938,¹⁷ including a study on the so-called Lyon Ritual, which led to his admitting its Cathar origins, in addition to incorporating new judicial sources for our knowledge of Catharism and thirteenth-century Occitan society. The study of the Cathar Ritual was taken further by Antoine Dondaine, a historian belonging to the Dominican Order, whose knowledge of the Catholic and Cathar sources, many of them consulted in Italian archives, resulted in him becoming one of the leading specialists on the period, even though his initial study of the *Liber de duobis principiis*, an authentic Cathar treatise written in Latin and published in 1939,¹⁸ was to remain largely unnoticed until some years later.¹⁹ In addition, Dondaine was responsible for the first studies of one of the most significant, and, at the same time, controversial documents in the history of Catharism: the Charter of Niquinta, a document with a complex documentary tradition that records a supposed Cathar assembly, held in 1167 in the Languedoc village of Saint-Félix-de-Caraman and presided over by an eastern dignitary, who is referred to as Papa Niquinta.²⁰ In his contribution, Dondaine endeavoured to refute the arguments of Louis de Lacger, who had questioned the authenticity of the charter in an article published in 1933,²¹ giving rise to a debate that, in the course of time, was to become one of the central features among the different historiographical positions with respect to Catharism. For historical studies of Catharism in Catalonia, the Charter of Niquinta is also of considerable importance because of the references to a Cathar community and bishop in the Val d'Aran, an Occitan region that nowadays lies within the Catalan Pyrenees.

14. See Dognon, Paul. "Douais (Mgr C.). I. 'Documents pour servir à l'histoire de l'Inquisition dans le Languedoc', publiés pour la Société de l'Histoire de France. Paris, Renouard, 1900; 2 vol.; II. 'La procédure inquisitoriale en Languedoc au XIV^e siècle, d'après un procès inédit de l'année 1337'. Paris, Picard; Toulouse, Privat, 1900 [compte-rendu]". *Annales du Midi: revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale*, 14 (1902): 553-564.

15. Toutain, Jules. "Jean Guiraud (1866-1953)". *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome*, 67 (1955): 339-342.

16. Guiraud, Jean. "Le Consolamentum cathare". *Revue des questions historiques*, 31 (1904): 74-112; Guiraud, Jean. *Le Cartulaire de Notre-Dame de Prouille, précédé d'une étude sur l'albigéisme languedocien aux XI^e et XIII^e siècles*, 2 vols. Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, 1907.

17. Guiraud, Jean. *Histoire de l'Inquisition au moyen âge*, 2 vols. Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, 1935-1938.

18. Dondaine, Antoine. *Un traité néo-manichéen du XIII^e siècle: le Liber de duobus principiis*. Rome: Istituto storico domenicano, 1939.

19. Soula, René. *Les cathares...*: 139.

20. Dondaine, Antoine. "Les Actes du Concile Albigeois de Saint-Félix de Caraman, essai de critique d'authenticité d'un document médiéval". *Studi et Testi*, 125 (1946): 324-355.

21. Lacger, Louis de. "L'Albigeois pendant la crise de l'albigéisme", *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 29 (1933): 314-315.



The debate around the Charter of Niquinta was taken up again by Yves Dossat, also a Dominican and a specialist on the history of the initial period of the Inquisition,²² who made use of certain contradictions in the document to question its authenticity.²³ One of the most contested aspects in Dossat's arguments was the existence of a supposed Cathar bishop of the Val d'Aran, which was attributed to an error on the part of the copyist who had transcribed the document in the seventeenth century. In this respect, a certain reluctance to accept the possibility of a more or less fluid exchange of ideas between the two sides of the Pyrenees can be detected behind Dossat's position.²⁴

Outside the Catholic historiographical sphere, Napoléon Peyrat's influence made itself felt in circles that were less and less interested in history and increasingly concerned with a mystical, esoteric mindset, which reached out to the Occitan regionalist approach and even, during the interwar period, came into contact with individuals close to Nazism through the figure of Otto Rahn.²⁵ After the Second World War, these approaches were renewed by the contributions of Déodat Roché, who was linked to the Freemasons and a devotee of the occult sciences,²⁶ Ferdinand Niel, the engineer who identified the mountain of Montségur as a solar temple, thereby encouraging research to focus on the ruins of the castle,²⁷ and, above all, René Nelli. The latter undertook the study of Catharism from the two standpoints of hermeticism and ethnology, but as from the 1950s he gradually abandoned the esoteric connotations, while at the same time he increasingly concentrated on ethnographic aspects and also on the evidence for doctrine, publishing the texts of the Cathar treatises and rituals in a single volume, thus making them more accessible for study.²⁸ Furthermore, Nelli started to manifest his interest in the popularisation of the subject, which led him to propose that a centre of academic research on Catharism should be set up.²⁹

Influenced by these writers, particularly by Déodat Roché and Ferdinand Niel, Michel Roquebert, a philosopher by training and a journalist by profession, started

22. His doctoral thesis, which was presented in 1951, focused on this question and was published several years later; see: Dossat, Yves. *Les crises de l'Inquisition toulousaine au XIII^e siècle (1233-1273)*. Bordeaux: Imprimerie Bière, 1959.

23. The principal points of his ideas on the subject were brought together in Dossat, Yves. "Remarques sur un prétendu évêque cathare du Val d'Aran en 1167". *Bulletin philologique et historique du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques*, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale-Presses Universitaires de France, 1957: 339-347; Dossat, Yves. "À propos du concile cathare de Saint-Félix: les Milingues". *Cahiers de Fanjeaux*, 3 (1968): 201-214.

24. In his studies of the Waldensian movement, for example, neither did he accept that it was feasible that Durand of Huesca was from Aragon, attributing the confusion to an incorrect reading of his surname, which he preferred to understand as indicating that he was from Losque, in Rouergue; see: Dossat, Yves. "À propos du prieur des Pauvres catholiques: Durand de Huesca ou de Losque en Rouergue?", *Bulletin Philologique et Historique (jusqu'au 1610)*. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1969: 673-685.

25. Soula, René. *Les cathares...*: 105-139.

26. Soula, René. *Les cathares...*: 148-156.

27. Soula, René. *Les cathares...*: 158-163.

28. Nelli, René. *Écritures cathares. L'ensemble des textes cathares traduits et commentés*. Paris: Denoël, 1959.

29. Soula, René. *Les cathares...*: 147-158.



to publish a series of articles of a popular nature on the castle of Montségur and other fortresses associated with Catharism, which he brought together in a book entitled *Citadelles du vertige* (1966),³⁰ published in the same year as French state television broadcast the extremely successful historical TV film *Les Cathares*.³¹ As a consequence, Catharism found an audience among the general public through the mass media and acquired a level of visibility that clearly extended beyond the limited circles that it had previously reached. This almost sudden higher profile was to have an impact on the cultural heritage supposedly related to Catharism, especially as regards a series of fortresses located in the mountainous periphery of the plains of Languedoc, which began to be called, without any historical basis whatsoever, Cathar castles. After the success of *Citadelles du vertige*, Roquebert began work on his monumental study *L'Épopée cathare*, published in five volumes between 1970 and 1997,³² which became an account of the persecution experienced by Catharism in Occitania between the late twelfth century and the early fourteenth century and its political connotations, in a work of a clearly narrative nature, fundamental for knowledge of the entire range of political history connected with the establishment of Catharism in Occitania and of the Albigensian Crusade together with its political repercussions.

Returning to the strictly academic world, until the early 1960s, the study of Catharism had almost exclusively focused on religious and doctrinal aspects. However, it was precisely the systematic edition of the doctrinal sources in Dondaine's and Nelli's works, as well as in those by Puech and Valliant on Bogomilism,³³ by Théo Venckeleeer on the subject of the Dublin Occitan Cathar Ritual,³⁴ or by Christine Thouzellier concerning the controversial work from a Waldensian context in Occitania on which she based her doctoral thesis,³⁵ that led to better knowledge of Catharism, which would open the door to a far-reaching renewal of historical writing. On the one hand, the newly available sources gave rise to further studies still focusing on a religious perspective, such as the thesis *Die Katharer* by the German historian Arno Borst, which appeared in 1953 and stands very close to the dogmatic

30. Roquebert, Michel. *Citadelles du vertige*. Toulouse: Imprimerie régionale, 1966.

31. Soula, René. *Les cathares...*: 187-188.

32. Roquebert, Michel. *L'Invasion (L'Épopée cathare. Tome 1, 1198-1212)*. Toulouse: Privat, 1970; Roquebert, Michel. *Muret ou la dépossession (L'Épopée cathare. Tome 2, 1213-1216)*. Toulouse: Privat, 1977; Roquebert, Michel. *Le lys et la croix (L'Épopée cathare. Tome 3, 1216-1229)*. Toulouse: Privat, 1986; Roquebert, Michel. *Mourir à Montségur (L'Épopée cathare. Tome 4, 1230-1244)*. Toulouse: Privat, 1989; Roquebert, Michel. *Les Cathares, de la chute de Montségur aux derniers bûchers (L'Épopée cathare. Tome 5, 1245-1321)*. Paris: Perrin, 1997. More recently, Roquebert's work has been republished on several occasions; the version published in 2001 by Éditions Perrin is particularly noteworthy.

33. Puech, Henri Charles; Valliant, André. *Traité contre les bogomiles de Cosmas le prêtre*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1945.

34. Venckeleeer, Théo. "Un rituel cathare, le Manuscrit A 610 de Dublin: I Une apologie". *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 38 (1960): 815-834; Venckeleeer, Théo. "Un recueil cathare: le manuscrit A.6.10 de la 'Collection vaudoise' de Dublin. II Une Glose du Pater". *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 39 (1961): 759-793.

35. Thouzellier, Christine. *Un traité cathare inédit du début du XIII^e siècle d'après le Liber contra Manicheos de Durand de Huesca*. Louvain: Bibliothèque de l'Université de Louvain, 1961.



Catholic standpoint that defended that this form of religious dissent had pagan origins, as he considered dualism to be irreconcilable with the Christian tradition,³⁶ and also *L'eresia del Male*, by the Italian scholar Raoul Manselli (1963),³⁷ which discussed the possible derivation of Catharism from Eastern European Bogomilism, while at the same time linking certain practices and rituals with Christianity. On the other, knowledge of a greater range of sources enabled the question to be approached from new angles, reconsidering certain lines of research that were less concerned with doctrine and religion and more interested in social dynamics in order to explain the origins of medieval dissent.³⁸

These new stimuli were taken up by Jean Duvernoy, a French lawyer from Burgundy, whose work led him to settle in Toulouse in the 1950s. Imbued with the erudite atmosphere that developed around the study of Catharism, and taking advantage of his knowledge of Latin, arising from his specialisation in the field of Roman law, he started to dedicate his time to the study of the sources for the Inquisition. In 1965, he published an edition of Jacques Fournier's early fourteenth-century Inquisition register.³⁹ Even though its procedural nature might seem to indicate the contrary, the document provides evidence for a monumental portrait of everyday life in a Pyrenean village in Cathar times, paying attention to a great wealth of minute details and anecdotes. Appreciated as an authentic early fourteenth-century anthropological treatise, it was subsequently used by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie as the basis for his most celebrated work, a landmark in the field of microhistory: *Montaillou, village occitan de 1294 à 1324*.⁴⁰

Although Duvernoy advocated a greater focus on social matters in the study of Catharism, he also dealt with religious and doctrinal aspects. In fact, in his work *Le catharisme*, published between 1976 and 1979,⁴¹ he returned to the traditional format of two volumes devoted respectively to religion and social and political history. In *Le catharisme*, Duvernoy maintained that Catharism and Bogomilism shared common origins, although he did not associate them with pagan roots, relating them instead to the glosses found in first treatises of early Christianity, thereby turning round traditional theses, a step that was to have an enormous influence on new generations of historians. Moreover, Duvernoy's work appeared at the same time as other contributions, not necessarily linked with the study of Catharism itself or of religious dissent, but rather with a broader historiographical debate, with social contents, which sought to understand the phenomena that led to the appearance of medieval heresy within the context of the overall transformations taking place

36. Borst, Arno. *Die Katarer*. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1953. See Jiménez, Pilar. *Les catharismes...*: 36.

37. Manselli, Raoul. *L'eresia del Male*. Naples: Morano editore, 1963.

38. Among them we draw attention to Morghen, Raffaello. *Medioevo cristiano*. Bari: Giuseppe Laterza & Figli, 1951.

39. Duvernoy, Jean. *Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier 1318-1325*, 3 vol. Toulouse: Privat, 1965.

40. Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel. *Montaillou, village occitan de 1294 à 1324*. Paris: Gallimard, 1975. English edition: Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel. *Montaillou. Cathars and Catholics in a French Village 1294-1324*. London: Scolar Press, 1978.

41. Duvernoy, Jean. *Le catharisme*, 2 vols. Toulouse: Privat, 1976-1979.



in the European societies of the time, with contributions from medieval scholars of the stature of Georges Duby or Jacques Le Goff,⁴² who added to the debate the idea that the point of view of the Catholic hierarchy was a fundamental aspect for the definition of heresy. In this way, heresy ceased to be an objectively defined, immutable movement and came to be interpreted as a response to the specific interests of the Catholic hierarchy, a view that considerably enriched discussion, and nurtured subsequent revisionist approaches.

The surge in the study of Catharism in the 1960s, with its implicitly positive view of this medieval heresy, led to the reaction of a group of Catholic historians, most of whom were ecclesiastics, with the goal of countering the negative view of the Catholic Church that, as a consequence, was being promoted and of rehabilitating the perception of historical figures of the stature of Dominic de Guzmán, the founder of the Dominican Order, whose image had been severely harmed. As from 1960, some of these historians started to meet regularly in the town of Fanjeaux, the headquarters of Dominic de Guzmán's preaching in Languedoc prior to the Albigensian Crusade. Starting in 1965, these encounters became the *Colloques de Fanjeaux*, the first of which, organised by Marie-Humbert Vicaire, a member of the Dominican Order, was devoted to the figure of Saint Dominic in Languedoc.⁴³ The acts of these colloquies, which have continued to be held down to the present day, gave rise to the *Cahiers de Fanjeaux*, devoted to the study of the religious situation in thirteenth-century Languedoc in general terms, beyond the specific context of the Cathar crisis.

In 1981, bolstered by a certain rebirth of regionalist concern in the French *Midi*, René Nelli's project of creating a centre for research into and documentation of Catharism saw the light of day with the inauguration of the *Centre d'Études Cathares* in Carcassonne. Funded by the *Conseil Général de l'Aude* and the French Ministry of Culture, academic management of the centre was entrusted to the historian Anne Brenon, who promoted the publication of the academic journal *Heresis*, which was expected to become a new point of reference for the study of Catharism from a standpoint of intellectual rigour, barring the way to the esoteric contents that had formed part of popular perception of the heresy.⁴⁴ The *Centre d'Études Cathares* contributed to disseminating the innovative proposals that Jean Duvernoy had put forward in his historical studies of Catharism, an approach that was fully adopted by Anne Brenon in her study *Le vrai visage du catharisme*, published in 1988,⁴⁵ which was to be extremely influential in Catalonia. In fact, the Spanish historian Emilio Mitre, whose approach was close to that of the abovementioned historians of the *Centre d'Études Cathares*, and who had a close working relationship with some of them, started a series of monographs devoted to medieval heresies, among which

42. Le Goff, Jacques. *La civilisation de l'Occident médiéval*. Paris: Arthaud, 1964; Duby, Georges. *L'An mil*. Paris: Julliard, 1974.

43. Soula, René. *Les cathares...*: 237-240.

44. Soula, René. *Les cathares...*: 489-493.

45. Brenon, Anne. *Le vrai visage du catharisme*. Carbonne: Nouvelles Éditions Loubatières, 1988.



La herejía medieval (1984),⁴⁶ *Las herejías medievales en Oriente y Occidente* (2000),⁴⁷ or *Iglesia, herejía y vida política en la Europa medieval* (2007)⁴⁸ stand out. They were pioneering studies in Spain as regards the study of Catharism from this new standpoint.

In the closing decades of the twentieth century, knowledge of Catharism entered a new phase led by the work of British historians and their renewed interest in the textual tradition associated with the growth of the phenomenon of heresy starting in the High Middle Ages.⁴⁹ Adopting a line close to the new perspectives developed by Georges Duby and Jacques Le Goff, among others, who defined heresy as the effect of the condemnation on the part of the Catholic hierarchy, in his *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*,⁵⁰ the British historian Robert I. Moore developed the image of the heretic as a person challenging and opposing the innovations introduced by the Church from the late tenth century onwards that strengthened the foundations of its predominance. In this way, he firmly placed the definition of the heretic in the hands of the Catholic hierarchy and its peculiar interpretation of what should be considered as orthodoxy, condemning any attitude that diverged from it. Taken to its ultimate consequences, this revisionist approach, which led to heresy in general and Catharism in particular being placed in quarantine, including it as an evolutionary feature characteristic of medieval societies, tended to restrict the objective reality of the heresy and to present it as a theoretical construct created by the Catholic hierarchy to tighten control over the faithful. This interpretation was more completely developed by Moore himself in his work *The War on Heresy: the Battle for Faith and Power in Medieval Europe*, published in 2012.⁵¹

Taking as his starting point Robert I. Moore's hypothesis, another historian of the Anglo-Saxon school who has achieved considerable impact among the historians most critical of the objective reality of Catharism is Mark Gregory Pegg. In his study *The Corruption of Angels: The Great Inquisition of 1245-1246*, published in 2001,⁵² Pegg focuses on the Inquisition records collected by Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre in the Toulouse area, reaching conclusions similar to those of Robert I. Moore, centring on the construction of the notion of the Cathar heresy as a consequence of the inquisitors' own action. He attributes to them the classification of a series of concepts by means of the application of a predetermined lexis for defining heresy, an aspect that must have been misinterpreted by previous historical works, when they attached to it an objective condition that this scholar attributes to the inquisitors'

46. Mitre Fernández, Emilio. *La herejía medieval*. Madrid: Marcial Pons, 1984.

47. Mitre Fernández, Emilio. *Las herejías medievales en Oriente y Occidente*. Madrid: Arco Libros, 2000.

48. Mitre Fernández, Emilio. *Iglesia, herejía y vida política en la Europa medieval*. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores cristianos, 2007.

49. Jiménez, Pilar. *Les catharismes...*: 43-44.

50. Moore, Robert I. *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987.

51. Moore, Robert I. *The War on Heresy: the Battle for Faith and Power in Medieval Europe*. London: Profile Books, 2012.

52. Pegg, Mark Gregory. *The Corruption of Angels: The Great Inquisition of 1245-1246*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.



own imagination. Similarly, in his *A Most Holy War: The Albigensian Crusade and the Battle for Christendom* (2007),⁵³ this historian applied the same hypothesis to the study of the Albigensian Crusade, coming to a comparable conclusion.

These revisionist lines of research introduced by Robert I. Moore and Mark Gregory Pegg, among others, reached France at a moment when the *Centre d'Études Cathares* was experiencing a degree of internal tension arising from the new mission set out by the public authorities as regards the academic coordination of the *Pays Cathare* project. The inherent contradiction between historical accuracy upheld by the academic management and the promotional requirements of the tourism-centred product led to the resignation of Anne Brenon in 1999.⁵⁴ In this context, a collective work with the explicit title *Inventer l'hérésie? Discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l'Inquisition*⁵⁵ was published in 1998, with the conclusions of the seminar directed by Monique Zerner, of the University of Nice, between 1993 and 1996, on the influence of the pre-inquisitorial textual sources for the definition of the heresy. In 1999, continuing with this idea of systematic doubt as regards the objective existence of heresy, Monique Zerner organised a debate at the University of Nice on the subject of the Charter of Niquinta, one of the most controversial sources in the history of Catharism in Occitania, with the aim of demonstrating that the document was a forgery and, at the same time, of undermining the credibility of one of the few sources of Cathar origin, which, as a consequence of presenting the Cathar churches of Occitania as having been linked by a well-established organisation, limited the arguments of those who questioned the very existence of the heretics as such.⁵⁶ Alongside Monique Zerner, the debate was also able to count on contributions from other historians holding views similar to hers, such as Jean-Louis Biget, previously linked with the *Centre d'Études Cathares* and the *Colloques de Fanjeaux*, whose output was increasingly critical of what he considered to be an excessive mythification of Catharism; from the 1980s onwards, he published a series of works in which he limited the real extent of the heresy in Languedoc.⁵⁷ However, the discussion also benefited from a contribution by Jacques Dalarun, who, on behalf of his team at the *Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des textes*, made up by experts on diplomatics and codicology, declared his support for the authenticity of the document that had been called into question.⁵⁸

53. Pegg, Mark Gregory. *A Most Holy War: The Albigensian Crusade and the Battle for Christendom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

54. Soula, René. *Les cathares...*: 493-495.

55. Zerner, Monique, ed. *Inventer l'hérésie? Discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l'Inquisition*. Nice: Université de Nice, 1998.

56. The acts of the meeting were published in Zerner, Monique, dir. *L'histoire du catharisme en discussion. Le «concile» de Saint-Félix (1167)*. Nice: Université de Nice-CNRS, 2001.

57. Among which, see Biget, Jean-Louis. "Les Cathares: mise à mort d'une légende". *L'Histoire*, 94 (1986): 11-21.

58. Dalarun, Jacques; Dufour, Annie; Grondeux, Anne; Muzerelle, Denis; Zinelli, Fabio. "La Charte de Niquinta, analyse formelle", *L'histoire du catharisme en discussion. Le «concile» de Saint-Félix (1167)*, Monique Zerner, dir. Nice: Université de Nice-CNRS, 2001: 135-201.



Pilar Jiménez, Anne Brenon's successor as the director of the *Centre d'Études Cathares*, adopted an intermediate position with respect to these new approaches in the study of the history of Catharism; her doctoral thesis, supervised by Pierre Bonnassie, was one of the first research works on Catharism to come from the French university world, which had hitherto been little inclined to undertake such studies. Starting with an analysis of the doctrinal sources to reconstruct the long historiographical tradition surrounding the definition of Catharism, in her thesis, *Les catharismes. Modèles dissidents du christianisme médiéval (XI^e-XIII^e siècles)*, presented in 2001 and published in 2008,⁵⁹ Jiménez defined Catharism as a dissenting movement that developed in Western Europe in a specific historical period, one that was characterised by the gradual centralisation of the Church of Rome after the lengthy Gregorian Reform process. In this way, she took great pains to differentiate Catharism from other heretical movements that can be traced in similar settings throughout the eleventh century and definitively rejected Eastern Bogomilism as a way of explaining the origins of Catharism. Furthermore, she made use of the plural to define Cathar dissent as a multifaceted phenomenon with several different focal points where it emerged in Western Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, by accepting the authenticity of the Charter of Niquinta, she did not doubt the objective existence of a dissenting movement which even attained a certain degree of institutionalisation.⁶⁰

The doubts created as concerns the historical reality of Catharism, which were developed as a consequence of analysis of and reflection about the documentary sources in terms of deconstructionism, have led to a fierce controversy and the reticence of a series of French historians, especially those associated with the *Centre d'Études Cathares*, regrouped under the aegis of the *Collectif International de Recherche sur le Catharisme et les Dissidences* (CIRCAED), created in 2011, after the definitive closure of the institution set up by René Nelli, who have supported several international meetings. In these colloquiums, these historians have collectively defended their response to the proposals that define Catharism as a theoretical construct conceived by inquisitorial bodies, and have attracted support from outside France. The acts of the colloquiums held in Foix in 2003,⁶¹ and in Mazamet in 2007⁶² and 2009⁶³ have been published; among the contributions they include the last ones to be made by Jean Duvernoy, who died in 2010 at the age of 93, those of Anne Brenon and of Pilar Jiménez, together with those made by other specialists such as Gwendoline Hancke, Daniela Müller, Ylva Hagman, Francesco Zambon or

59. Jiménez, Pilar. *Les catharismes...*

60. Jiménez, Pilar. "Relire la charte de Niquinta: 1) Origine et problématique de la charte". *Heresis*, 22 (1994): 1-41; Jiménez, Pilar. "Relire la charte de Niquinta: 2) Étude et portée de la charte". *Heresis*, 23 (1994): 1-28.

61. Aurell, Martin; Brenon, Anne; Dieulafait, Christine, eds. *Les cathares devant l'Histoire. Mélanges offerts à Jean Duvernoy*. Cahors: l'Hydre éditions, 2005.

62. Benoit, Sonia; Brenon, Anne, eds. *Écrire l'histoire d'une hérésie*. Mazamet: Association de Valorisation du Patrimoine Mazamétain, 2008.

63. Brenon, Anne, ed. *1209-2009, cathares: une histoire à pacifier?* Portet-sur-Garonne: Loubatières, 2010.



David Zbiral. Particularly outstanding among these studies are the ones focusing on the sources for the study of Catharism, to which the Mazamet colloquium in 2007 was devoted, and also those considering certain key aspects in the controversy about the historical nature of Catharism, such as the so-called Council of Saint-Félix-de-Caraman.

At the present time, however, the main weight of the controversy concerning the objective existence of Catharism largely falls on the contributions made by English-speaking historians, who take the proposals introduced by Robert I. Moore and Mark Gregory Pegg as their starting point, or who alternatively write as a reaction against them. In 2013 there was a conference in London which brought together scholars of different origin, mainly from the English-speaking world, at which the real or invented nature of Catharism was once again the central point of discussion. The acts of the conference, brought together in a volume entitled *Cathars in Question: Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages*,⁶⁴ edited by Antonio Sennis in 2016, include the contributions of the leading defenders of the theoretical construct of Catharism, among them those of Robert I. Moore⁶⁵ and Mark Gregory Pegg⁶⁶ and the French scholar Julien Théry-Astruc, whose views are close to those critical of the excessive mythification of Catharism, which had already been established as a trend in France by Jean-Louis Biget, Monique Zerner and others. Julien Théry warns of the risks involved in the literal interpretation of the Inquisition sources, which has led to widespread belief in the existence of a single, well-structured heretical organisation in Languedoc when, according to his claims, and without denying the existence of a theological approach revealing dualist tendencies among its followers, the evidence better reflects a series of local responses to the oppression involved in the authority wielded by the great Occitan prelates.⁶⁷

However, the majority of the scholars who contributed to *Cathars in Question* disagreed with the deconstructionist positions of the abovementioned writers and continued to maintain a line closer to the traditional viewpoint that understands there to have been an organised, hierarchically-structured Cathar church in Languedoc. Prominent among them, because of his lengthy career, is Peter Biller, a Fellow of the British Academy, who has written many works on the question of heresy in the Middle Ages;⁶⁸ he pointed out that there are many omissions and

64. Sennis, Antonio, ed. *Cathars in Question. Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages*. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2016.

65. Moore, Robert I. "Principles at Stake: The Debate of April 2013 in Retrospect", *Cathars in Question. Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages*, Antonio Sennis, ed. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2016: 257-273.

66. Pegg, Mark Gregory. "The Paradigm of Catharism; or, the Historians' Illusion", *Cathars in Question. Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages*, Antonio Sennis, ed. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2016: 21-52.

67. Théry-Astruc, Julien. "The Heretical Dissidence of the 'Good Men' in the Albigeois (1276-1329): Localism and Resistance to Roman Clericalism", *Cathars in Question. Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages*, Antonio Sennis, ed. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2016: 79-111.

68. In works such as Biller, Peter. *The Waldenses, 1170-1530: Between a religious order and a Church*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2001; Bruschi, Caterina; Biller, Peter, eds. *Texts and the Repression of Medieval Heresy*,



errors in the interpretation of the evidence on which Moore and Pegg base their proposals to reject the existence of Cathars in Languedoc in their contributions.⁶⁹ Other contributions, made by Caterina Bruschi,⁷⁰ Lucy J. Sackville⁷¹ and Rebecca Rist⁷², focused on Papal letters and certain anti-heretical treatises written in Italy so as to separate them from a supposed invention of Catharism by comparing them with the Inquisition records of the second half of the thirteenth century. However, and despite some proposals for a compromise solution between the two extremes, the conclusion that one reaches after reading *Cathars in Question* is that the controversy is far from achieving points of consensus at the present moment.

2. The Catalan case

Even though in the Catalan context Catharism has generated a far more limited amount of interest than in France, we should also seek the first references to it in historical works arising from the context of the Protestant Reformation. However, in this case, the way in which the subject was dealt with differed substantially both as regards the approach and the tone used, very much in accordance with the militant Catholicism characteristic of the domains of the Spanish monarchy and its precaution when faced with the pressure exerted on its Pyrenean frontiers.

Hence, foremost among the earliest historiographical contributions associated with the presence of Catharism in Catalonia is an apologetic chronicle of the Dominican Order and its decisive role in the creation of the Tribunal of the Inquisition in the area. This is the *Historia de la provincia de Aragón de la orden de predicadores*, written in 1599 by Francisco Diago, a Dominican friar and chronicler of recognised prestige, who was entrusted with the task of writing a historical account of the Order of Preachers in the former lands of the Crown of Aragon by the Superior General of the Order.⁷³ This commission was undertaken in the midst of a climate of profound militancy among the ranks of Catholics, reinforced by the dispositions of the Council of Trent

Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Inc., 2003; Biller, Peter; Bruschi, Caterina; Sneddon, Shelagh. *Inquisitors and Heretics in Languedoc: Edition and Translation of Toulouse Inquisition Depositions, 1273-1282*. Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2011.

69. Biller, Peter. “Goodbye to Catharism?”, *Cathars in Question. Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages*, Antonio Sennis, ed. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2016: 274-313.

70. Bruschi, Caterina. “Converted-Turned Inquisitors and the Image of Adversary: Rainier Sacconi Explains Cathars”, *Cathars in Question. Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages*, Antonio Sennis, ed. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2016: 185-207.

71. Sackville, Lucy J. “The Textbook Heretic: Moneta of Cremona’s Cathars”, *Cathars in Question. Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages*, Antonio Sennis, ed. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2016: 208-228.

72. Rist, Rebecca. “‘Lupi rapaces in ovium vestimentis’: Heretics and Heresy in Papal Correspondance”, *Cathars in question. Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages*, Antonio Sennis, ed. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2016: 229-241.

73. Diago, Francisco. *Historia de la provincia de Aragón de la orden de predicadores*. Barcelona: Convento de Santa Catalina, 1599: f. A2r.



and with particular attention being paid to the advance of Protestantism in Europe; in addition, it was further promoted by an atmosphere of religious exaltation on the eve of the canonisation of Raymond of Penyafort, one of the great medieval specialists in Canon Law and one of the main promoters of the introduction of the Tribunal of the Inquisition in thirteenth-century Catalonia. At the time when it was written, the north of Catalonia was at the mercy of Huguenot incursions from the south of France, and this threat was perceived as immediate. The context encouraged a line of discourse that was favourable to the role of the Inquisition,⁷⁴ one that went back to its medieval origins in search of parallels between the heresies of the Middle Ages and Protestantism, which was understood as a heresy.⁷⁵

Diago devoted the first part of his study to the overall development of the Order in the Province of Aragon, with frequent references to the origins of the Tribunal of the Inquisition, and the second to the history of each of the convents in the province. All this is written in a style praising the merits of the Order and its most illustrious members, including prodigious episodes involving them with the aim of reinforcing this apologetic theme. However, the care that Diago took to reinforce his argument by means of the inclusion of original documents endows the work with additional value, as it led to the incorporation of information that would have otherwise been lost. For all these reasons, and despite the fact that the sections dealing with the suppression of Catharism represent only a very small part of the work as a whole, Diago's study is a remarkable milestone in the study of Catharism in Catalonia.

Among the eminent Dominicans mentioned in his work, Diago devotes two chapters to three inquisitors murdered in Castellbò, in the Catalan Pyrenees, as a result of their suppressive activity against Catharism at different moments in the thirteenth century: Ponç de Planès, Bernat de Travesseres and Pere de Cadireta. The account is derived both from the hagiographical tradition that was developed in the Order itself and from local tradition.⁷⁶ In this respect, the memory and veneration of the three inquisitors who met their deaths was maintained very much alive in the Church of Urgell, the diocese of which bordered with France and received direct Huguenot pressure in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1865, a bishop of Urgell, Josep Caixal, promoted a canonisation process for them, which, however, did not see completion because of the Revolution of 1868 and all the subsequent events.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, this local tradition contributed to a certain vague memory being maintained in clerical circles in Urgell, always in pejorative terms, of the

74. Moreno, Doris. *La invención de la Inquisición*. Madrid: Marcial Pons: 193-194.

75. In one of the first known chronicles of the Church of Urgel, written by an anonymous hand in 1617, the Kingdom of France in general and the county of Foix in particular are characterised as *partes de más tinieblas por sus heregías tan antiguas y aún en estos tiempos* ("parts of great darkness because of their ancient heresies, and still in these times"); ACU, Episcopologi, *Relación de algunas cosas notables de la Santa Iglesia de Urgel*, f. 2v.

76. Diago, Francisco. *Historia de la provincia de Aragón...*: f. 7v-12r.

77. Picanyol, Llogari. "Para el reconocimiento canónico del martirio de los santos populares de Moyá, Ponç de Planella y Pere de la Cadireta". *Modilianum*, 3 (1962): 65-74.



particular ties of the diocese of Urgell, and especially the lords of Castellbò, with the Cathar dissent that arrived in the area from the south of France. These references were included, in greater or lesser detail, in several historiographical collections concerning the Church of Urgell, such as the *Relación de algunas cosas notables de la Santa Iglesia de Urgel*, of 1619,⁷⁸ or the *Compendio Histórico* of the Church of Urgell, composed in 1762 and 1763;⁷⁹ they kept the historiographical interest in the effects of Catharism among the clergy of Urgell alive, and were to provide source material for subsequent more popular accounts with a wider impact, such as the *Viage literario a las iglesias de España*, by Jaime Villanueva, a member of the Order of Preachers from Valencia.

Volumes IX to XII of Jaime Villanueva's work, which was undertaken for the purpose of collecting and copying the documents and codices preserved by religious communities in Spain, are devoted to the diocese of Urgell. In them, this Valencia-born Dominican, displaying his great erudition, offers a lengthy exposition concerning the diocese, which is organised in three main sections dealing with, respectively, the seat of the diocese and the organisation of its clergy, a study of the bishops, and the main monasteries and other religious foundations in the bishopric.⁸⁰ Villanueva's contributions as regards Catharism in Catalonia are included in the section dealing with the bishops, more precisely in the article on Bishop Ponç de Vilamur, who governed the diocese from 1230 to 1256. In it, Jaime Villanueva paid special attention to the circumstances at the end of his episcopate, when Bishop Ponç, accused of different offences, was removed from office by Pope Alexander IV. This information is derived from a series of letters in the Archdiocesan Archive in Tarragona, which were written to and from different individuals involved in the Inquisition against heretics in Berga in 1256.⁸¹ The documents, published by Villanueva, reveal the evidence for a major Inquisition trial and, had they not been collected by him, their information would have been disappeared in the fire that the archive suffered in 1813.⁸²

However, the earliest historical works to focus on Catharism in Catalonia as a subject of study did not appear before the last quarter of the nineteenth century; until that moment, all the contributions concerning the matter had been written from the viewpoint of the history of the presence of the Tribunal of the Inquisition in the Crown of Aragon. However, Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo's *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, published in three volumes between 1880 and 1882, took heresy as a subject of study in its own right, always with the same critical attitude

78. ACU, Episcopologi, *Relación de algunas cosas notables de la Santa Iglesia de Urgel*: f. 3v.

79. Moliné, Enric. "El 'Compendio Histórico' (1762/1763). Un nou manuscrit sencer". *Urgellia*, 15 (2002-2005): 466.

80. Simon, Antoni. *Diccionari d'historiografia catalana*. Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 2003: 1200-1201.

81. Villanueva, Jaime. *Viage literario a las iglesias de España*. Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1850: XI, 90-93.

82. Grau, Josep M. T.; Güell, Manel. "La crònica negra de la destrucció d'arxiu a la demarcació de Tarragona". *Lligall*, 18 (2001): 68-69.



of the abovementioned chronicles.⁸³ A Spanish philologist and literary critic with a deep commitment to conservatism and fundamentalist Catholic circles, in this work Menéndez Pelayo expressed the concern felt by Catholic Spanish right-wing individuals about the freedom of worship established by the Spanish Constitution of 1876.⁸⁴ In it, he sought to prove the lack of roots within Spain of what he defined as heresy, particularly Protestantism, but also progressive thinking, coming to the conclusion that Catholicism was inherent in the character of the peoples of Spain, whereas heterodoxy had always been a foreign body that had arrived from abroad.⁸⁵

The *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles* explains in minute detail the development of heresies in the Iberian Peninsula from the Visigothic period down to the end of the *Sexenio Revolucionario* (1868-74). One of the chapters in the first volume covers Catharism and Waldensianism, considering them to have been *predecesores y aliados de la Reforma [protestante]*.⁸⁶ Menéndez Pelayo associated the origins of Catharism in the Iberian Peninsula with the south of France, in the same way as the Dominican chroniclers had intuitively claimed in previous centuries, based on the Huguenot analogy, and dated them to the end of the twelfth century with Catalonia as the principal area of impact. The writer described King Peter the Catholic's anti-heretical decree of 1198 to have been the earliest known evidence for their presence in the Crown of Aragon and considered it to be irrefutable proof of the king's deep Catholic convictions, in opposition to the doubts that his clash with the crusaders in southern France might have given rise to.⁸⁷ Menéndez Pelayo was unable to contemplate any other behaviour on the part of a Spanish king. In the same line, he also attributed the same anti-heretical zeal to his son, James I, because of the constitutions published in 1225, 1228 and, above all, 1233, the latter being considered as the starting point for the Tribunal of the Inquisition in Spain;⁸⁸ to bring the subject to a close, he focused on the specific situation of the diocese of Urgell, where the sovereignty of the counts of Foix over the viscounty of Castellbò must have favoured Cathar penetration and the dispatch of inquisitors in 1237.⁸⁹

Through these contributions, Menéndez Pelayo expressed a new line of discourse as regards the spread in the Iberian Peninsula of the dissent already known by the name of Catharism or Albigensianism, in which he included part of the contributions made by the early chronicles although without really manifesting any interest in

83. Menéndez Pelayo, Marcelino. *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, 3 vols. Madrid: Imprenta de F. Maroto e hijos, 1880-1882.

84. Santoveña, Antonio. *Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo. Revisión crítico-bibliográfica de un pensador católico*. Santander: Universidad de Cantabria – Asamblea Regional de Cantabria, 1994: 25-30.

85. Marco, Luisa. "El Catolicismo identitario en la construcción de la idea de Nación Española. Menéndez Pelayo y su 'Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles'", *Ilu. Revista de Ciencias de las Religiones*, 14 (2009): 101-116.

86. "predecessors and allies of the [Protestant] Reformation". Menéndez Pelayo, Marcelino. *Historia de los heterodoxos...*: I, 411-412.

87. Menéndez Pelayo, Marcelino. *Historia de los heterodoxos...*: I, 422.

88. Menéndez Pelayo, Marcelino. *Historia de los heterodoxos...*: I, 431-432.

89. Menéndez Pelayo, Marcelino. *Historia de los heterodoxos...*: I, 437-440.



a historical context that, in view of his objectives, was not the subject that most concerned him, as his principal goal was to demonstrate that there was no link between the kings of the Crown of Aragon and heresy.

From a totally contrary perspective, as from 1887 Henry Charles Lea published his *History of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages*, this being the liberal counterpoint to Menéndez Pelayo's work. A member of a wealth American family and a convinced humanist, Lea was extremely critical of the role of the Catholic Church, which he considered to have hindered the progress of humankind. This led him to develop an interest in the Tribunal of the Inquisition as the main manifestation of the phenomenon, adopting a point of view totally opposite to that of Menéndez Pelayo, with whom, however, he maintained a friendly exchange of letters.⁹⁰ Concentrating again on the viewpoint of the institution of the Inquisition, Henry Charles Lea devoted the third chapter of his second book to the Inquisition's interventions in the Iberian Peninsula and thus on the extent of Catharism in Catalonia. According to this writer, Catharism must have been introduced via the south of France by means of family contacts, through their shared cultural background—above all in the linguistic field—and alongside the policies of King Peter the Catholic, whom he considered to have been, unlike Menéndez Pelayo, the protector of the Cathars due to the support he gave to his Occitan vassals in the crusade of 1209.⁹¹

The subsequent establishment of the Inquisition in the Crown of Aragon must have reflected a change in the dynasty's policy towards Catharism, which was prompted by the defeat of the Occitan nobility in Languedoc. This belated response would have allowed Cathars to settle in the Pyrenees, taking the case of Castellbò as an example on the basis of the evidence found in the French records.⁹² As a consequence, Lea opened new perspectives on the basis of his knowledge of the French documentary sources, especially the Doat Collection in the Bibliothèque nationale. Furthermore, unaffected by Menéndez Pelayo's patriotic, ultra-conservative discourse, Lea introduced his own personal interpretation of the attitude of monarchs of the Crown of Aragon with regard to heresy, in which he related their dynastic interests to their veiled support for the Cathars. This interpretation ultimately became widely accepted.

In addition, from the late nineteenth century onwards, in the context of the controversy that unfolded as regards the legal nature of the sovereignty of Andorra, which brought Spanish and French historians and legal scholars into conflict over their respective states' degree of influence over this Principality,⁹³ renewed interest in the medieval history of the Pyrenees and in the lineage of the counts of Foix, the original co-sovereigns of Andorra on the French side, brought about renewed interest in Catharism, a belief protected by the counts of Foix and by their

90. Moreno, Doris. *La invención...*: 272-274.

91. Lea, Henry Charles. *A History of the Inquisition...*: II, 162-163.

92. Lea, Henry Charles. *A History of the Inquisition...*: II, 169.

93. Viader, Roland. "La frontière démultipliée ou les origines de la Question d'Andorre", *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, 13 (1998): 157-181; Belenguer, Ernest, dir. *Història d'Andorra*. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 2005: 277-285.



immediate predecessors, the viscounts of Castellbò. In 1896, Charles Baudon de Mony published a two-volume work, *Les relations politiques des comtes de Foix avec la Catalogne jusqu'au commencement du XIVe siècle*, which analysed the relations between the counts of Foix and the lands of the north of Catalonia.⁹⁴ In order to do so, he made use of his direct knowledge of the documentary sources in the Arxiu Capítular d'Urgell (ACU), offering in his account an analysis of a highly conflictive political process that pitted the counts of Foix against the Church of Urgell for more than a century as concerned supremacy over the uplands of the former county of Urgell, which culminated in the shared division of sovereignty in 1278. Consistent with this approach, Baudon de Mony compared the violence of the conflict in the Pyrenees with the excesses unleashed during the Albigensian Crusade in Languedoc, introducing the possibility of the counts of Foix having been heretics and their role in the introduction of Catharism in the Catalan Pyrenees.⁹⁵ Following these arguments, this French historian noted the posthumous condemnation of Viscount Arnau of Castellbò and his daughter Ermessenda, highlighting the fact that the latter was the wife of the heir to the county of Foix.⁹⁶ As far as Catharism in Catalonia is concerned, Baudon de Mony linked the counts of Foix's closeness to the viscount of Castellbò with the profound anticlericalism of both families, which arose from a serious conflict of a political nature with the bishops of Urgell. In this way, he detracted from the arguments put forward in clerical circles in Urgell that systematically demonised these families, and proposed that the debate should be transferred to the secular sphere.

In 1900, the Catalan lawyer and academician Joaquim Miret i Sans published his *Investigación histórica sobre el vizcondado de Castellbó*; this work followed the line taken by Charles Baudon de Mony very closely, while expanding the latter's contributions with unpublished evidence from different Catalan archives, which resulted in a detailed monograph on one of the great, but at that time least known, feudal lineages of Catalonia.⁹⁷ As regards the question of whether Viscount Arnau and Ermessenda of Castellbò were heretics, Miret i Sans followed the line adopted by Baudon de Mony, minimising the weight of their sins, although in this case he did so by casting doubt on the legal guarantees of the Inquisition trial and emphasising the circumstantial nature of these condemned nobles' Catharism.⁹⁸ This attempt to play down the connection between the protagonists of his study and Catharism can be interpreted as the persistence of a negative perception of the heresy in the early twentieth-century Catalan academic world. Alongside the family of the viscounts of Castellbò, Miret i Sans also linked another Catalan lineage, that of the lords of

94. Baudon de Mony, Charles. *Les relations politiques des comtes de Foix avec la Catalogne jusqu'au commencement du XIVe siècle*, 2 vols. Paris: Alphonse-Picard et fils, 1896.

95. Baudon de Mony, Charles. *Les relations politiques des comtes de Foix...* I, 115-121.

96. Baudon de Mony, Charles. *Les relations politiques des comtes de Foix...* I, 213-215.

97. Miret i Sans, Joaquim. *Investigación histórica sobre el vizcondado de Castellbó*, Barcelona: Imprenta "La Catalana" de J. Puigventós, 1900.

98. Miret i Sans, Joaquim. *Investigación histórica...*: 165-169.



Josa,⁹⁹ with the history of Catharism; one of the members of this family, Ramon III, was also posthumously condemned by the Inquisition in 1258. Henry Charles Lea had misidentified this individual as a count of Urgell,¹⁰⁰ as a consequence of the attempt made to hide his family background on the part of the Dominican friar Francisco Diago.¹⁰¹

The most critical view of Catharism, inherently reflecting the milieu of the cathedral of Urgell, reappeared in the work *Santa Maria de la Seu d'Urgell*, published in 1918 by the renowned Catalan architect Josep Puig i Cadafalch.¹⁰² The initiative for the book had come from the bishop of Urgell, Joan Benlloch, who around that time had promoted the first interventions in the restoration of the Romanesque cathedral. This study analysed the origins and the development of the cathedral of Urgell and, although only in passing, took aim against Catharism, which, according to this account, must have inspired Count Ramon Roger of Foix and his troops to sack the building in about 1196, indefinitely interrupting its construction.¹⁰³ In fact, the work is now known to have been largely written by Pere Pujol, a priest closely related to the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*, who at that time was an assistant to the canon archivist of Urgell;¹⁰⁴ he thus recovered the longstanding distrust that the memory of Catharism gave rise to in ecclesiastical circles in Urgell, a view that was to be repeatedly defended in subsequent contributions associated with that environment.

As they had only very briefly touched upon Catharism in works of wider scope, Charles Baudon de Mony, Joaquim Miret i Sans and Pere Pujol i Tubau made a series of contributions that linked the question to the Pyrenean context, a region far from the main areas of academic interest, which contributed to the fact that Catalan historical works expressed very limited interest in the subject. Furthermore, the Spanish Civil War and the immediate post-war period meant that any attempt at reconsidering the question was delayed.

Interest in the history of Catharism was reactivated from 1959 onwards, through the work of the powerful figure of Jordi Ventura, who had been born in Barcelona in 1932. After a childhood marked by the Civil War and its aftermath, he settled in the south of France in 1951, where he had family ties, and also became very actively involved in pro-Occitan cultural media and activism from a very early stage. At a later date he took a master's degree in economics and marketing in the United States. During this period he moved in Freemason and Mormon circles, undertaking

99. Miret i Sans, Joaquim. "Rebelió de la noblesa catalana contra Jaume I en 1259". *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, 6 (1911-1912): 502.

100. Lea, Henry Charles. *A History of the Inquisition...*: II, 169.

101. Diago, Francisco. *Historia de la provincia de Aragón...*: f. 8r.

102. Puig i Cadafalch, Josep. *Santa Maria de la Seu d'Urgell*. Barcelona: Tallers d'Arts Gràfiques Henrich i C^a, 1918.

103. Puig i Cadafalch, Josep. *Santa Maria...*: 52-55.

104. Arbués, Clara; Gascón, Carles. "Mossèn Pere Pujol i Tubau (1887-1962), arxiver capitular d'Urgell". *Actes de la IV Jornada de Museus i Patrimoni de l'Església*. Solsona: Museu de Solsona Diocesà i Comarcal, 2018: 173-174.



advanced studies at the Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and his brother became a bishop of the Mormon Church in the United States. During this period, his growing interest in spirituality and the history of religious dissent gradually took shape.¹⁰⁵ After his return to France in 1957, his new concerns, expressed within a context of an increasing interest in Catharism, led him to write a preliminary article about its spread in Catalonia, which was published in Barcelona two years later.¹⁰⁶

In this initial study, Jordi Ventura articulated the first well-rounded examination specifically devoted to the subject of Catharism in Catalonia, providing it with the identity that it had not previously had and generating a certain interest in the field in a sector of society where nationalist sympathies were prominent. In 1960, one year after publishing his first article on Catharism in Catalonia, and after its being screened by the Franco regime's censorship, the same writer published *Pere el Catòlic i Simó de Montfort*,¹⁰⁷ a book in which, in his own words, he tried to write a history of the Albigensian Crusade from the Catalan viewpoint.¹⁰⁸ Two years later, he was focusing on the study of Waldensianism in Catalonia; however, the fact that the movement was contemporary with Cathar dissent, the shared Occitan origin that was at least attributed to them both, and the considerable lack of evidence for the subject led him to repeat aspects that he had already dealt with in previous works.¹⁰⁹

In these initial works, Jordi Ventura developed his principal lines of argument as regards Catharism, arguments that he was to return to in subsequent works. His most significant contributions were the product of thorough research that enabled him to incorporate a large part of the information contained in French sources, which had remained almost unknown until that moment, with the possible exception of Henry Charles Lea's work, into the previously rather limited explanatory framework of Catharism in Catalonia. In addition, during the years that he spent in France and the United States, Ventura was able to gain access to specialised bibliography that it would have been difficult for him to become familiar with in Spain. On these foundations, Jordi Ventura constructed a line of discourse with strong nationalist contents, according to which, assuming the idea of a historical and cultural community shared between the lands on the two sides of the Pyrenees and even that of a common civilisation, he identified the Cathar heresy as the spiritual expression of that same community, the political embodiment of which

105. Sabaté i Curull, Flocel. "Un précurseur des études sur le catharisme en Catalogne: Jordi Ventura i Subirats (1932-1999)". *Heresis*, 34 (2001): 131. On the figure of Jordi Ventura in the historiography of Catharism in Catalonia and the Albigensian Crusade, see also Alvira, Martín. "La Cruzada contra los Albigenses: historia, historiografía y memoria", *Clío & Crimen*, 6 (2009): 126-127.

106. Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. "El catarismo en Cataluña". *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, 28 (1959-1960): 75-158.

107. Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. *Pere el Catòlic i Simó de Montfort*. Barcelona: Aedos, 1960.

108. Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. *Pere el Catòlic...*: 6.

109. Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. "La valdesía de Cataluña". *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, 29 (1961-1962): 275-317.



under the auspices of the counts of Barcelona was truncated by the Albigensian Crusade.¹¹⁰

Taking this idea as his starting point, Ventura sought to demonstrate that Catharism had been a deeply rooted movement in Catalonia from a very early date, indicated by the presence of representative of the Val d'Aran at the Council of Saint-Félix, being the first Catalan writer to write on this specific question.¹¹¹ Following the same line of argument, Ventura openly expounded the hypothesis that the kings of the Crown of Aragon, particularly Peter the Catholic, offered active protection to the Cathars.¹¹² This idea was to become ingrained in the popular perception of the monarch as a protector of the Cathars. Finally, in the same vein of emphasising the impact of Catharism in Catalonia, on the basis of the documentary evidence that he consulted, Jordi Ventura was able to include new spaces where Catharism had taken root, particularly in the county of Cerdanya (Cerdagne) and that of Rosselló (Roussillon),¹¹³ the city of Lleida¹¹⁴ and the mountainous inland area of the present-day province of Tarragona.¹¹⁵

With a greater or lesser degree of immediacy, Jordi Ventura's studies had a certain influence on other historical works, as can be seen in *L'heretgia albigesa i la batalla de Muret*, a short book published in Barcelona in 1960 by Rafael Dalmau i Ferreres, the founder of the publishing house of the same name,¹¹⁶ aimed at a sector of the Catalan reading public that was keen to acquire a greater knowledge of the history of Catalonia, which it was very difficult to satisfy at that time. In this respect, it is significant that that book was the first to be published in a well-known series of popular studies on Catalan history, called *Episodis de la Història*, which has continued to be published down to the present day. In addition, neither can Jordi Ventura's contributions to the diffusion of the history of Catharism in Catalonia be separated from an article published by the Andorran historian Montserrat Palau in 1970; in this study, entitled *Le catharisme et ses conséquences sur le statut politique actuel d'Andorre*, she returned to the historical account of the origins of Andorra laid down in the late nineteenth century and added the effects of Catharism to it.

Ventura's output enjoyed greater influence, at least more immediate impact, on French historical writing, at that moment in full swing; this was achieved by means of his articles in specialised French journals, particularly in the *Cahiers d'Études Cathares*,¹¹⁷ and through his participation in colloquiums such as the one held in

110. Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. "El catarismo en Cataluña...": 75.

111. Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. "El catarismo en Cataluña...": 78.

112. Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. "El catarismo en Cataluña...": 50-51.

113. Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. "El catarismo en Cataluña...": 95-112.

114. Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. "El catarismo en Cataluña...": 120-121.

115. Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. "El catarismo en Cataluña...": 121-125.

116. Dalmau i Ferreres, Rafael. *L'heretgia albigesa i la batalla de Muret*. Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau editor, 1960.

117. Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. "Le catharisme en Catalogne". *Cahiers d'Études Cathares*, 14 (1963): 3-25; *id.* "Hérétiques du Roussillon et de Cerdagne au temps de Jaime I^{er}". *Cahiers d'études cathares*, 16 (1965): 3-10; Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. "Derniers contacts entre catharisme et Catalogne". *Cahiers d'Études*



Toulouse in 1963 to commemorate the 750th anniversary of the Battle of Muret,¹¹⁸ where his presence encouraged interest in medieval contacts with Catalonia on the part of French historians. Among the works that were published in connection with Ventura's hypothesis, *Les cathares en Catalogne et Sabarthès d'après les registres d'Inquisition*, by Annie Cazenave, was particularly noteworthy;¹¹⁹ it made available new data on the presence of the Cathar hierarchy in Catalonia after the fall of the fortress of Montségur in 1244, a date that is traditionally considered to mark the end of Catharism in Occitania. In this context, Cazenave identified Catalonia as the area where the Cathars persecuted in Occitania took flight and sought refuge, thereby establishing the basis for the frequently repeated identification of Catharism in Catalonia with Catharism in exile.

Shortly afterwards, in the second volume of his study *Le catharisme*, published in 1979, Jean Duvernoy included a chapter on the spread of Occitan Catharism in the Hispanic kingdoms, in which he highlighted Catalonia as the area of the Iberian Peninsula where the largest number of Cathars arrived.¹²⁰ Duvernoy was also aware of Ventura's works and, moreover, shared some of the same hypotheses, such as that of the common cultural background on the two sides of the Pyrenees and the tacit protection given by the kings of the Crown of Aragon to the Cathars.¹²¹ However, his argument also presented certain significant nuances, in which he limited the initial impact to a number of Catalan noble lineages related to Occitan families, especially the Castellbò family, as well as the link between the wider diffusion of Catharism and Occitan exiles. Hence, Duvernoy minimised the extent of Catharism in Catalonia, and underlined the fact that it depended closely on Occitan Catharism and also its exogenous nature. This hypothesis was to be adopted by the historians in his immediate circle, prominent among them being Anne Brenon, who, in her work *Le vrai visage du catharisme*, devoted a short chapter to Catalonia, in which she insisted on Duvernoy's argument limiting the extent and influence of Catharism to the south of the Pyrenees.¹²² The work was translated into Catalan in 1998, a year before the death of Ventura, who wrote its prologue, which came to have considerable influence in Catalonia.¹²³

Apart from these studies directly concerned with research on Catharism, the influence of the monograph that Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie devoted to the Pyrenean village of Montailou, the first edition of which was published in 1975, should also be highlighted.¹²⁴ Even though the author did not intend to devote his study to

cathares, 17 (1966): 3-12; Ventura i Subirats, Jordi. "Catharisme et valdisme en pays catalan". *Cahiers d'études cathares* 25 (1974): 30-39.

118. Soula, René. *Les cathares...*: 228-241.

119. Cazenave, Annie. "Les cathares en Catalogne et Sabarthès d'après les registres d'Inquisition. La hiérarchie cathare en Sabarthès après Montségur", *Bulletin philologique et historique*, 1 (1969): 387-436.

120. Duvernoy, Jean. *Le catharisme...*: II, 151-164.

121. Duvernoy, Jean. *Le catharisme...*: II, 154.

122. Brenon, Anne. *Le vrai visage du catharisme*. Carbonne: Nouvelles Éditions Loubatières, 1990.

123. Brenon, Anne. *El veritable rostre dels càtars*. Lleida/Barcelona: Pagès/Proa, 1998: 11-24.

124. Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel. *Montailou, village occitan de 1294 à 1324*. Paris: Gallimard, 1975.



Catharism but rather to the way of life of the inhabitants of this community, the nature of the main source used, the Inquisition register of Jacques Fournier, bishop of Pamiers, meant that Catharism was the implicit protagonist of the work. The close ties between the members of this community, whose lives largely revolved around pastoralism, and other communities in the adjoining lands of Catalonia, where many of them went into exile, represented a substantial contribution to defining the features of the final stages of Catharism and of the role played by the uplands of Catalonia and the north of Valencia in these times. Le Roy Ladurie's study, which took Jean Duvernoy's edition of Jacques Fournier's Inquisition register published in the 1960s as its starting point, became known by Spanish readers prior to the latter's own studies thanks to the translation of *Montaillou, village occitan* into Spanish in 1981. In contrast, the first partial translation of Duvernoy's work into Spanish was not carried out until 1988, with the publication of *La captura del cátaro Belibaste*, which elaborated on this same crepuscular context of Catharism in its Catalan exile, while defining a profile of Guillaume Bélibaste, the last known Occitan Cathar, who went into exile in northern Valencia and was captured in the north of Catalonia in 1321.¹²⁵

During the 1970s, the climate of opposition to the Franco regime, very evident in university circles, marginalised interest in the history of the Church and everything that was related to it, considering it to be superfluous in the best of cases, and harmful and reactionary in the worst of them.¹²⁶ For this reason, Ventura's publications failed to raise great enthusiasm in Catalan scholarly circles, and they were more warmly welcomed in the local historiographical sector. In this respect, Ventura's influence made itself noted in the first volume of Josep Lladonosa's *Historia de Lleida*, published in 1972, in which the evidence for dissent in the area covered by the province, which formed the geographical framework of the book, especially the Pyrenean districts, including the Val d'Aran, and the city of Lleida itself, can be found.¹²⁷ Even though it was written in French, the article *La société cathare en Cerdagne: nobles et bergers du XII^e siècle au XIV^e siècle*, de Mathias Delcor,¹²⁸ a priest, theologian and orientalist from French Cerdanya (Cerdagne), who adopted a position of militant anti-Catharism very close to the traditional view of the Church of Urgell, should also be related to the world of local historiography. Strangely, although for different reasons, in certain aspects Delcor's line of discourse recalled the stance of French historians, who tended to minimise the impact of Catharism in Catalonia. In the specific case of Cerdanya, Delcor held that Catharism was a minority belief among

125. Duvernoy, Jean. *La captura del cátaro Belibaste*. Barcelona: Muchnik, 1988. The translation is derived from the last three chapters of the book by the same author: Duvernoy, Jean. *Inquisition à Pamiers, interrogatoires de Jacques Fournier: 1318-1325*. Toulouse: Editions Edoaurd Privat, 1966.

126. Jiménez i Sureda, Montserrat. "L'evolució de la història de l'Església", *Església, societat i poder a les terres de parla catalana. Actes del IV Congrés de la CCEPC*. Valls: Cossetània edicions, 2005: 822.

127. Lladonosa i Pujol, Josep. *Història de Lleida*. Tàrraga: Camps Calmet, 1972: I, 353.

128. Delcor, Mathias. "La société cathare en Cerdagne: nobles et bergers du XII^e au XIV^e siècle". *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique*, 4 (1979): 279-304; Delcor, Mathias. "La société cathare en Cerdagne: nobles et bergers du XII^e au XIV^e siècle". *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique*, 5 (1980): 17-49.



the local population, its influence being limited to the lesser nobility and a small number of shepherds and minor craftsmen, attracted by the anticlericalism inherent in the heresy, and he described its arrival as a traumatic process full of violence against the Catholic Church, resulting from an armed invasion, a hypothesis that had already been put forward in the work on the cathedral of Urgell signed by Puig i Cadafalch.¹²⁹

In 1981 the novel *Cercamón*, written by Lluís Racionero, himself born in la Seu d'Urgell, made its appearance. It was extremely successful and widely distributed in Catalonia. It is a work of fiction, set between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, with one part revolving around the rise and fall of Catharism, depicted as a friendly version of Christianity that developed against the background of a new civilisation that emerged on both sides of the Pyrenees and was destroyed by the action of the French crusaders and the Inquisition. A certain influence of Jordi Ventura's research can be detected in the novel, despite its large doses of fiction, together with several other literary and local historiographical traditions. The success of *Cercamón* stimulated the appearance of new works of a fundamentally popular nature dealing with the phenomenon of Catharism in Catalonia,¹³⁰ among them *Arnau de Castellbó*, by Esteve Albert, a writer and cultural activist who went into exile in Andorra after the Spanish Civil War, whose works had already had an influence on Lluís Racionero. Esteve Albert devoted this study to one of the Catalan nobles most closely identified with Catharism,¹³¹ in an attempt to rehabilitate the image of this bellicose viscount and assert his role as the initiator of a long process that was to culminate, many years after his death, in the establishment of the *Paréages* (the charters of joint sovereignty of 1278 and 1288) of Andorra, considered by this writer to have been the foundational act of the Principality and once again linking Catharism with the origins of the Pyrenean state.

While Lluís Racionero's novel had a substantial impact within the promotion of the Cathar question among a wider Catalan public, the launching of the *Pays Cathare* project in the south of France in the 1990s had an even greater impact in the diffusion of everything related to Catharism in Catalonia as well. The increase in the number of works published with the encouragement of the marketing industry generated around Catharism soon crossed the frontier and was extended to Catalonia through works such as *Els càtars. Problema religiós, pretext polític*, by Jesús Mestre,¹³² published in 1994 and denounced for its plagiarism by Anne Brenon.¹³³

Despite that, Mestre's work was a publishing success that introduced the fashion for Catharism into the Catalan book market, in spite of developing a line of discourse

129. Puig i Cadafalch, Josep. *Santa Maria...*: 52-55.

130. Màrmol Cartañá, Camila del. "Cátaros: entre memorias...": 327-330.

131. Albert i Corp, Esteve. *Arnau de Castellbó*. Andorra la Vella: Edicions Pirene, 1983.

132. Mestre i Godes, Jesús. *Els càtars. Problema religiós, pretext polític*. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1994. There is also a Castilian translation, which also enjoyed a noticeable impact; Mestre i Godes, Jesús. *Los càtars. Problema religioso, pretexto político*. Barcelona: Península, 1997.

133. See Brenon, Anne. "Els càtars. Problema religiós pretext polític, de Jesús Mestre i Godes". *Heresis*, 25 (1995): 154.



that minimised the influence of the movement in Catalonia. Through its pages, Mestre made a popular synthesis of Catharism from a general, political and religious standpoint available to a wide public; covering the period from its origins down to the capture of Montségur in 1244, it also included a brief chapter on the spread of the heresy in Catalonia. Perhaps Mestre's main contribution to this question was his dispassionate tone and his aim to demythify this episode, which he described as being marginal in the history of both Catharism and Catalonia,¹³⁴ in the wake of the French historiographical currents that were prevalent at that time.

The extraordinary success of Jesús Mestre's book made this writer, whose historiographical vocation came at a relatively late stage in his life, the leading figure on Catharism in Catalonia in the 1990s, even though his works never ventured beyond a purely popular level. The success of publishers' backing for works on Catharism spurred on other similar initiatives aiming at taking advantage of this thematic vein, which also resulted in a further upturn in works of fiction centred around Catharism and its historical context, among which the novels that Antoni Dalmau devoted to the subject, alongside several works of synthesis, stand out,¹³⁵ as does, more recently, the novel by the journalist Víctor Amela, based on the life and travels of the Cathar Guillaume Bélibaste, who was condemned to be burned at the stake in 1321 after being captured in Catalonia.¹³⁶ As regards works of popularisation, in 1996 this renewed interest in Catharism led to the publication of *Càtars i catarisme a Catalunya*, by Anna Maria Adroer Tasis and Pere Català Roca,¹³⁷ a work that once again focused its interest on the Cathar presence in Catalonia, and which was the fruit of having searched through previously published works with very little in the way of critical apparatus. Shortly afterwards, *Crònica dels càtars. El somni occità dels reis catalans*, by Xavier Escura Dalmau,¹³⁸ appeared, in which the author maintained a line of discourse firmly rooted in outdated studies, extolling the role of the kings of the Crown of Aragon as defenders of Catharism. In the same context, another writer who also contributed to the popularisation of Catharism in the Catalan sphere was the abovementioned Antoni Dalmau, who, having taken his first steps in the field through the medium of literary fiction, published a more serious small-format factual work targeted at a university audience.¹³⁹

The success of these works of popularisation concerning Catharism in general terms, which usually include a chapter or section devoted to Catharism in Catalonia, together with that of works of fiction centring on the same topic, gave renewed impetus to local historiographical studies with works such as those of the historian

134. Mestre i Godes, Jesús. *Els càtars...*: 140.

135. Dalmau, Antoni. *Terra d'oblit. El vell camí dels càtars*. Barcelona: Columna, 1997; Dalmau, Antoni. *L'amor de lluny*. Barcelona: Columna, 2001; Dalmau, Antoni. *El testament de l'últim càtar*. Barcelona: Columna, 2006.

136. Amela, Víctor. *El cátaro imperfecto*. Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2013.

137. Adroer, Anna M.; Català, Pere. *Càtars i catarisme a Catalunya*. Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau editor, 1996.

138. Escura i Dalmau, Xavier. *Crònica dels càtars. El somni occità dels reis catalans*. Barcelona: Signament edicions, 1996.

139. Dalmau i Ribalta, Antoni. *Els càtars*. Barcelona: Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, 2005.



and scholar Cebrià Baraut, a monk of the Montserrat community, with close ties to the Church of Urgell, who, between 1995 and 1997, produced two articles on the presence and suppression of Catharism in the medieval diocese of Urgell.¹⁴⁰ Despite their moderate tone, Cebrià Baraut's works are ultimately the heirs of an ecclesiastical approach to the writing of history in Urgell, openly hostile to any manifestation of heresy. In his works, Baraut recovered the hypotheses put forward by Pere Pujol and Mathias Delcor, and blamed Catharism for being the ideological basis for the count of Foix and the viscount of Castellbò's violent military campaigns in the areas of Alt Urgell and Cerdanya. Likewise, he questioned the supposed collusion with Catharism on the part of the monarchs of the Crown of Aragon and defended the moderation of the Inquisition in its struggle against the heresy, attributing this to the character of Raymond of Penyafort, as well as the legality of its sentences. They are thus rather biased studies from an ideological point of view, but they have the advantage of including an extensive appendix of documents that, for the first time, brings together a substantial part of the written evidence associated with the presence of Catharism in the Catalan Pyrenees.

In 1999 interest in Catharism from the perspective of local historiography shifted towards the south of Catalonia with *Occitans i càtars a Montsant i muntanyes de Prades (segles XII-XIV)* by Ezequiel Gort,¹⁴¹ who at that time was the municipal archivist of Reus. Gort presented his study on the diffusion of Catharism in that area "to put an end to the imaginary and para-historical accounts that accompanied the commercial success of Catharism",¹⁴² focusing on the presence of Cathars in a geographical region at a considerable distance from the Pyrenees that had not previously been paid much attention in studies of Catharism in Catalonia. The contributions of these and works of similar scope in the field of local historical writing have been important for expanding our knowledge of Catharism in Catalonia, although they have also helped to create a fragmented panorama that has made it difficult to establish a broader picture.¹⁴³

The Anglo-Saxon school of history has also recently shown an interest in the question of Catharism in Catalonia, portrayed in the work *Crusade, Heresy and Inquisition in the Lands of the Crown of Aragon (c. 1167-1276)*, by the American scholar Damian Smith.¹⁴⁴ Published in 2010, it is a very well-documented research study into the origins and development of the Inquisition in the Crown of Aragon during James I's reign and, to a certain extent, the sections of his analysis devoted to

140. Baraut i Obiols, Cebrià. "La presència i la repressió del catarisme al bisbat d'Urgell (segles XII-XIII)". *Urgellia*, 12 (1994-1995): 487-524; Baraut i Obiols, Cebrià. "Els inicis de la Inquisició a Catalunya i les seves actuacions al bisbat d'Urgell (segles XII-XIII)". *Urgellia*, 13 (1996-1997): 407-438.

141. Gort i Juanpere, Ezequiel. *Occitans i càtars a Montsant i muntanyes de Prades (segles XII-XIV)*. Albarca: la Carxana, 1999.

142. According to the author in a conversation on 3rd December, 2005.

143. A number of works of this nature have been written by the author of this study: Gascón Chopo, Carles. "El catarisme a les valls d'Andorra". *Papers de recerca històrica*, 6 (2009): 128-135; Gascón Chopo, Carles. "Els càtars a la Cerdanya. Invasors o dissidents?". *Ker*, 4 (2010): 19-23.

144. Smith, Damian. *Crusade, Heresy and Inquisition in the Lands of the Crown of Aragon (c. 1167-1276)*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2010.



religious dissent within that area, especially Catharism but also Waldensianism, are secondary to his main topic of study, namely the mechanisms of suppression.

The year 2012 saw the publication of *Cátaros e Inquisición en los reinos hispánicos (siglos XII-XIV)* by the historian Sergi Grau Torras,¹⁴⁵ a synthesis of Catharism in Catalonia, with some incursions into the rest of the Iberian Peninsula, in order to update his discourse. The result is somewhat unequal, very interesting insofar as the overall view of anti-heretical suppression is concerned, but less well structured as regards the dynamics of the introduction of Catharism. Revealing his familiarity with the sources, Grau based part of his analysis on an excessively literal interpretation of the controversial doctrinal sources for Catharism, insisting on hypotheses that are no longer accepted in historical writing on the subject, such as that of its uninterrupted ancestry dating back to the time of the Apostles. In 2015 he published a new synthesis as a work of popularisation,¹⁴⁶ and in 2017, together with Stefano Cingolani and Eduard Berga, a corpus of documents related to the spread and suppression of Catharism in Catalonia.¹⁴⁷

Finally, the first doctoral thesis specifically devoted to the question of Catharism in Catalonia was presented by the author of this article in 2016.¹⁴⁸ The study was oriented towards an analysis of Catharism in Catalonia from a social perspective, which integrated the diverse cases of the presence of Cathars detected in Catalonia so as to create a unified line of discourse on the dynamics of its diffusion and establishment in the area. The conclusion emphasised the importance of urban centres, especially the city of Lleida, for the organisation of the networks that structured Catharism throughout Catalonia, especially in the western half. The mountainous regions in the north and south of the country played the role of refuges for the members of the Cathar church, who moved round a substantial part of its territory as itinerant preachers, and who could also count on the support of the anti-clerical nobility in the northernmost parts. The thesis also included other new aspects, the result of previous research dealing with the controversial question of the Cathar church in the Val d'Aran and the earliest phases of the Cathar presence in Catalonia, earlier than is commonly accepted,¹⁴⁹ or the question of the establishment of the Cathar church in Catalonia as a result of the political effects of the Battle of Muret.¹⁵⁰

145. Grau Torras, Sergi. *Cátaros e Inquisición en los reinos hispánicos (siglos XII-XIV)*. Madrid: Cátedra, 2012.

146. Grau Torras, Sergi. *La invenció dels càtars*. Barcelona: Angle editorial, 2015.

147. Grau, Sergi; Berga, Eduard; Cingolani, Stefano M., eds. *L'herètica pravitat a la Corona d'Aragó: documents sobre càtars, valdesos i altres heretges (1155-1324)*, 2 vols. Barcelona: Fundació Noguera, 2017.

148. Gascón Chopo, Carles. *La disidència càtara y sus bases sociales en la Cataluña de los siglos XII-XIV*. Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (PhD Dissertation), 2016. The thesis in question was supervised by Dr. José Miguel López Villalba and jointly supervised by Dr. Pilar Jiménez Sánchez.

149. Gascón Chopo, Carles. "La carta de Niquinta y la 'Eclesia Aranensis': una reflexión sobre los orígenes del catarismo en Cataluña". *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Third Series*, 21 (2008): 139-158.

150. Gascón Chopo, Carles. "Muret, un hito en la sedentarización del catarismo en Cataluña", *La encrucijada de Muret*. Sevilla: Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales, 2015: 149-161.

