The Cathar Economy

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Given the upsurge in interest in the widespread heretical movements of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and their connections with the early Franciscan and Dominican movements, it is odd that so little attention has been paid to the way in which the heretical movements, committed to preaching and poverty, supported themselves. This is particularly true in the case of the Cathars, the dualist heretics who flourished in Southern France and Northern Italy in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The problem for all these groups was how to combine the spiritual benefits of renunciation of wealth with the degree of financial support necessary to provide the pastoral care to which they aspired. Attitudes to poverty among evangelical movements in the early thirteenth century were divided: on the one hand, those such as the Waldensians, the Humiliati and the early Franciscans saw poverty as an ideal, a direct and necessary link between themselves and Christ's Apostles, while on the other, the view of the Dominicans was summed up by Aquinas 'perfectio non consistit essentialiter in paupertate, sed in Christi sequela ... paupertas enim est sicut instrumentum vel exercitium perveniendi ad salutem'. Dominic himself seems to have only gradually moved to a position of complete poverty and total dependence on mendicancy around 1220.[1] It has been largely assumed that the Dominican espousal of poverty was a response to the attitudes of their Cathar rivals. The famous story of Bishop Diego upbraiding the Cistercian preachers for their ostentation and large retinues when their heretical opponents travelled in pairs, poorly dressed, is used to illustrate Cathar poverty.[2] But there has been no serious study of Cathar practice which confirms this. The *perfecti* seem to have been involved in several aspects of the economic life of the community and it may be that they, like Dominic, appreciated the spiritual benefits of poverty, but were prepared to hold some land and handle money in order to sustain the organisation necessary for their pastoral responsibilities.

Therefore, this limited study aims, primarily, to stimulate further research by giving an account of the everyday economic transactions of Catharism in France in the period 1209–50. It is true that historians have paid some attention to the economic life of the Cathars; there have

been three valuable contributions by Jean Duvernoy,[3] Yves Dossat[4] and Malcolm Barber[5] respectively. This piece, then, is consciously placed within this context, but is limited to a specific time and place within the Cathar era, and to documents which allow *perfecti* and believers as far as possible to speak for themselves. The conclusions reached are different from those of Duvernoy and Dossat. Moreover, by studying the daily economy and separating it from the difficult question of the relationship of Cathars with usury, a clearer picture of Cathar ideals and practices emerges, without resort to first principles of Cathar theology.[6]

The major source used is the Doat Manuscript,[7] (Volumes 21 to 25) seventeenth century copies of Inquisition interrogations of confessing believers and *perfecti* (Volumes 22, 23, 24 and 25) and the penances enforced on 'other believers' (Volume 21). Unfortunately Doat deals almost exclusively with Southern France and since there are no equivalent documents for Northern Italy this provides the geographical limit of this research. In chronology, the boundaries are self-imposed: quite apart from the fact that later confessions may have been gained by torture, Dossat's study of the *perfectus* Vigouroux de la Bacone, shows that there were inconsistencies in the accounts of witnesses, particularly when they reached back far into the past.[8] Moreover, to take into account evidence of Cathar economic life for the whole period of their existence would be to run the risk of conflating evidence from different eras, ignoring changes in the structure of the sect and the environment in which it operated. Therefore, only the earliest of the inquisitions in the 1230's and 1240's have been used and these have provided a picture of the everyday life of the Cathars from 1209, and the arrival of the Crusade, to around the year 1250. The fall of the Cathar fortress of Montségur in 1244 marked a change in the organisation and customs of the Cathar church which is reflected in the interrogations which took place in the following years. There are also references in Doat to the period before the Crusade, but these are few and more than thirty years old in the memories of witnesses and consequently will only be mentioned in passing.

The Inquisition depositions have the advantage over the written accounts of Catharism produced by orthodox writers of being nearer to what Cathar believers actually said to the inquisitors, albeit in response to set questions;[9] in addition, their sheer bulk reinforces their credibility. The aim of the Inquisition at this time was more to secure conversion than condemnation. The sentences given in Volume 21 are costly in terms of a pilgrimage or support of paupers but do not include imprisonment or burning.

The documents exist in the form of seventeenth century copies by the staff of Jean de Doat, a royal secretary, who was inquiring into the rights of the French Crown in Provence and Languedoc.[10] Once again the modern researcher is fortunate in that Doat seems to have copied out whole sections of documents, although one cannot be sure since the originals are lost. Nevertheless, since the documents are copies there are certain difficulties in using them. For instance, the tedium of the job is occasionally reflected in scribal errors. More seriously, the incomprehensibility of many of the quotations in the vernacular suggests that either the Inquisition or the later copyists had only a sketchy knowledge of Provençal.[11] If the ignorance was on the part of the former, then the implications are serious, since the version of the witness' evidence read back to him for verification was a translation from the notary's Latin, which in turn was a translation of the witness' vernacular. Thus there was a considerable scope for distortion, as well as plain incomprehension. Moreoever, the Doat manuscript is taken from the neat copy of the interrogation made by the notary which only included evidence considered relevant to heresy.[12] Nevertheless, the records are sufficiently comprehensive to include even unwitting meetings with heretics,[13] so that one can say that they do provide a fair cross-section of the inhabitants' dealings with the *perfecti*, the Cathar spiritual élite.

Even when one has considered the problems in the making of the text itself, there are difficulties in analysing the attitudes of those asking the questions. The most serious flaw in the inquisitors' approach was their tendency to over-categorise; since they only acknowledged *Waldenses* and *haeretici* (Cathar *perfecti*) in their records, it is possible that there were witnesses whose beliefs defied such a simple classification. Consequently, the documents are more useful as evidence of Cathar practice, rather than belief. Many witnesses gave identical lists of their beliefs about the Creation, the Eucharist and other issues,[14] which were probably more influenced by the Inquisition's preconceptions about Cathar beliefs than by the witness' original views. On the other hand, despite a degree of standardisation in formulae when describing the arrival of *perfecti*, their preaching and the response of their audiences, the gifts and commercial transactions always strike the reader as fresh and noteworthy occurrences.

The Cathars in Southern France gained the greater part of their wealth through money left to them by the dying, usually in return for the performance of the *consolamentum*, by which the dying person entered the sect fully and became one of the *perfecti*, bound for heaven.

From day to day, active *perfecti* took part in a complicated informal system of charity and exchange. There is evidence of them working in textiles and on the land, and occasionally presenting gifts to favoured supporters or buying the services of a guide. However, the individual *perfecti* were mainly reliant on goodwill; most food, accommodation and guides were provided free, in return for nothing more than the *perfecti* blessing bread at a meal or preaching to the family and neighbours. In other words, Cathar economic activity owed more to the customs and expectations of the society in which they moved than to what might be deduced from their theology. One instance of this is the insignificance of usury in the records considered. There are a few instances of *perfecti* lending money, but they are infrequent, the sums are small and the borrowers are trusted associates.[15] This is not surprising since usurers were universally disliked in Southern France at this time.[16] There is no trace of resentment of the *perfecti* who lent money, so it is open to doubt whether interest was demanded. It is certainly interesting that money-lending by Cathars took place at all, but it hardly deserved the importance many historians have placed upon it.[17] Where it may be more significant is among the Italian Cathars, operating in a more urbanised context.[18] As for Languedoc, there is not even evidence that usurers were more attracted to Catharism than to Catholicism. Merchants involved in usury took great pains to show their devotion to the Church; after all, they were constantly vulnerable to criticism.[19] The only exception to this picture may be Montségur where there was certainly a large amount of cash on hand and perhaps a rudimentary banking operation.

There are no entirely typical examples of bequests given to Cathars, but there is a full acount of the death of Esclarmonde, wife of 'en Assaut' which gives the main bequest and some interesting asides. While Esclarmonde lay ill in the cowshed of Alamanni de Roaxio at Lantar, two *perfecti* , namely Bernard Bonafos, the Cathar deacon of Lantar and Pons de Sagorna, his companion, were brought to perform the *consolamentum*. After a few days Esclarmonde died, leaving the heretics a tunic and 22 *denarii*, as well as various other items such as a linen cloth *ad opus linteaminum*, a gold coin, a winnowing fan and a cloak.[20] Other gifts were less elaborate; in cash, as in the case of Mir Bernard's brother, who left 100 *solidi* sterling to be paid to the *perfecti*;[21] or in kind, like the horse which Bertrand de Durban, brother of the Abbot of Foix, left to the sect in 1227.[22] There were even some examples of land being left to the Cathars, the status of which is discussed below; Pierre-Roger de Mirepoix bequeathed to the *perfecti* 200 *solidi* and a vineyard in 1209.[23]

It is not surprising that the Cathars received most of their funds through bequests. After all, the *consolamentum* before death was theologically the most important event in the life of a believer, and the deathbed the crucial psychological moment in a believer's assessment of his life and wealth. The money which was gathered could be justified by the elaborate system of guides and safe houses needed to be able to get *perfecti* to the bedside of a dying believer. A contribution of some sort at *consolamentum* seems to have been more or less obligatory. Serena, wife of Atho Arnaud, after a long dispute over the payment of 100 *solidi* willed to the heretics in 1235, eventually

> dedit unum lectum munitum dictis haereticis ad
> requisitionem ipsorum pro haereticatione
> dicti Athonis Arnaudi.[24]

Obviously those interested in Catharism deeply enough to be consoled would want to give, but the very poor were not obliged to do so. This explains the occasion in Moissac when Paubert del Clusel gave two *saumatae* of wine, collected from several people, to the *perfecti* after they had consoled an unnamed sick woman.[25]

It is worth stressing that the exchange of worldly goods for the benefits of belonging to a spiritual élite at death is a feature of both orthodox and heretical religion. In November 1206 a gravely sick man gave to the Hospital at Toulouse his bed, 200 *solidi* and himself:

> pro fratre ubi volo iacere et esse sepelitus et volo esse
> particeps omnium beneficiorum predicte domus.

In August 1229 a dying man wanted to be buried as a *donatus et particeps* of the Templars.[26] The Inquisition unconsciously admitted the similarity by describing bequests to the Cathars in the same terms as the wording used in orthodox wills; that is *in infirmitate de qua obiit*.[27] In fact, the wording was just a convention for most orthodox wills, since arrangements had usually been made some time in advance.

The same was probably true for the Cathars; there was a formal agreement (the *pactum* or *convenensa*) with the *perfecti* to console the believer on his deathbed, even if unconscious, which was a feature of later Catharism.[28] Although earlier *perfecti* were scrupulous about only consoling those who were conscious, informal arrangements must have been made in advance, since the *perfecti* had to be fetched and persuaded that the case was genuine. There were presumably as many unlikely candidates for the heretical spiritual élite as for the orthodox. A rare example which confirms that there were advance arrangements is the case of Arnaud Daniel in Sorege around 1229. Already sick, Daniel

pointed out a hoard of 300 *solidi* to a friend, who was instructed to fetch the *perfecti* the next night and hand over the hoard.[29]

Direct comparison of orthodox and heretical bequests during this period is difficult, as the documents most likely to survive in an orthodox situation were those which recorded a gift of land or buildings or a regular payment. Since, from 1209, the Cathars were persecuted, mostly vagrant and had no legal status, they were very unlikely to receive similar bequests. A better comparison would be schemes for a kind of spiritual insurance; a tailor and his wife in Toulouse in 1254 bequeathed to the Templars a half interest in a house which both or either of the principals were to hold and exploit until their deaths. The donors received all the spiritual benefits of the Temple and an annual eleemosynary gift of corn and wine on the feast of St Michael.[30] There is a similarity with Paubert Sicart who, as a penance from Montauban in 1241 records, received a payment of 20 *solidi* for the use of his land by women *perfectae*. Sicart, a Cathar sympathiser, bought and transported provisions to the Cathars, for which they paid. His wife also received two or three presents of wine from the women.[31] Here the bequest is unspoken, but the believer has the benefits of *perfectae* on hand to adminster the *consolamentum*, as well as the rents and gifts, while the *perfectae* have security and no doubt the prospect of a substantial legacy on Sicart's death. In other words, in these cases the social roles of Catharism and Catholicism are very similar, and before 1209 may have been more so, since there is evidence of Cathar hospitals and graveyards.[32]

One case which does closely parallel the orthodox pattern of bequests if that of Isarn d'Espertenx who insisted in 1233 that the money he bequeathed on being consoled be handed over to the *perfecti* while he was still alive.[33] However, it has more to do with the great difficulty the Cathars experienced in actually obtaining payment of money due. This alone would give reason enough for the *perfecti* to strive to retain the goodwill of the community, since the Cathars were usually dependent on the deceased's executors for delivery. The *lectum munitum* mentioned above, donated by Serena, wife of Atho Arnaud, was the result of a five-year dispute over money left to the heretics by her husband. She explained that she had arranged with her fellow executor, Garcia Arnald (probably a relative) to pay 50 *solidi* each; she had paid her share, but she did not know about Garcia, who claimed to be deeply in debt. The *perfecti* evidently held Serena responsible and the gift was by way of compensation.

In the majority of cases, there was little the *perfecti* could do if executors refused to pay money due. Bernard Oth, brother and executor of Raimond de Roquafoill, refused to hand over money left to the Cathars by his brother and appears to have got away with it.[34] Sometimes, as in the case of Pierre Fournier, quoted by Dossat, spiritual penalties were tried,[35] and sometimes the testator tried to minimise the chances of fraud by giving the *perfecti* something as security while still alive; B. Batalla of Mirepoix gave his horse, but even so, it is not clear whether the money he promised to the sect was ever paid.[36] However, Isarn d'Espertenx remains the only case in this period of someone feeling it necessary to hand over money before death.

Storage of bequests provided another reason why the Cathars were concerned to remain popular. Although, as has been seen, *perfecti* were not averse to inquiring after the fate of money owed to them , they also used sympathisers as collecting agents. In 1237, Alamanni de Roaxio of Toulouse, who regularly put up *perfecti* and gave them food, was cited and accused for a fourth time of abetting heresy. With a number of others, he was described as a *fautor*, *receptator* and *deffensor haereticorum*, but the sentence says of him alone that he

> litteras haereticorum pro colligendis denariis legatis in testamentis haereticis portaverit et nomine eorum denarios receperit.[37]

This is the only instance of a Cathar supporter with a specific task of collecting, carrying and receiving the money which had been willed to the heretics, but there are some references to *depositarii* , people with whom money was lodged.[38] It was not a term used by the witnesses themselves, but a label applied by the Inquisition. The Cathars simply seem to have used those whom they could trust for their financial dealings. In Gourdon before 1241, Ricarda and her husband Rocas were both *credentes*, they had guided *perfecti* and made donations to them. The Inquisition drily recorded that Rocas *flevit in recessu haereticorum* and that he *legata haereticorum recipiebat* .[39] G. Ricart performed a similar function, in the same town, but is designated *depositarius* .[40]

More formal supervision of the system was probably provided by the Cathar deacons. The word *diaconus* is one which is frequently used by witnesses and the office was important; on one occasion believers penetrated a jail to get an imprisoned deacon to name his successor.[41] Moreoever, there is evidence that by administering the *aparelhamentum* or confession to *perfecti* , they acted as supervisors who were more

prestigious than their Catholic namesakes, since they had full spiritual powers, but with many of the same functions. It has been shown that the system of deaconries was surprisingly comprehensive in the dioceses of Carcassonne, Toulouse and Agen, and remained intact despite persecution.[42]

Even so, the storage of funds usually remained a personal matter between *perfectus* and *depositarius* . In 1232, Ugo Rotland of Puylaurens was taken ill and one Pons Pinel asked Saixs de Montesquiro, a knight sympathetic to the Cathars to come to Ugo's house where the *perfectus* Bernard Engilbert and his companion wanted to talk to him. Once there, Bernard asked the knight to speak to the dying man

> super depositum quod habuerat infirmus ab eodem haeretico seu a sorore eiusdem haeretici.

Saixs did this and Ugo told him to dig under the threshold. There they found a pot of money which was handed to Bernard. Saixs estimated there must have been 600 *solidi* in the pot.[43] Although the exact circumstances of the case are not clear, Ugo was apparently only prepared to reveal the whereabouts of the hoard to someone he trusted. Rural *depositarii* are rarely mentioned acting in the capacity more than once, and then usually for named *perfecti* . Urban *depositarii* could not work on quite such strict personal contact; Alamanni de Roaxio in Toulouse and the husband and wife in Gourdon were used several times and must have been generally known to be trustworthy by the visiting *perfecti* .

As persecution of the Cathars increased, collecting and keeping in touch with bequests must have become more difficult. Although the deaconries survived with an extraordinary tenacity in the thirteenth century,[44] trust and goodwill must have been at a premium. The Inquisition made an impact: bequests had to be promised by heirs *cum recuperassent suam terram* ,[45] and there is also a case where it was thought best to use a messenger who was unaware of its eventual destination to deliver the money to *credentes* .[46]

In these circumstances, Montségur stood as an exception, since it had the advantage of being a permanent institution. The *perfecti* were able to guard their interests. In 1229 or 1230, Peire de Flaira was told to come to Montségur by the *perfectus* Pierre de Rodoma. De Flaira came with 50 *solidi*, which he owed to the heretics. This having been paid, Rodoma gave de Flaira 10 *solidi* in return.[47] De Flaira was probably a *depositarius* , returning funds to the *perfecti* and being paid

for his services, for previously he had given hospitality to *perfecti* several times, and had taken care of a fur coat which had had to be returned to the *perfecti* .[48] As a whole the key feature about management of funds from bequests is informality; de Flaira is the exception in a rural area, because of his relation to Montségur. The lack of any terminology among the witnesses themselves for the various functions they performed indicates that the emphasis was placed on the trustworthiness of individual believers. In the rural areas covered by the depositions in Volumes 22, 23 and 24 occasions when believers looked after goods and money given to the *perfecti* were informal and irregular. In urban areas such as Gourdon (in Volume 21) and Toulouse, key believers were known by general reputation but their links with *perfecti* were still more personal than formal.

The technique of storage and collection of bequests is more clearly understandable when considered in relation to the remainder of Cathar economic life. In fact, although bequests comprised the bulk of Cathar finance, they were only a part of a complex economy of gifts, favours and goodwill between the *perfecti* and believers.

Bequests make up a relatively small proportion of the evidence collected in the Doat Manuscript, which implies that the major part of the life of a *perfectus* was spent in activites other than consoling the dying. But the financial importance of bequests is a material reason why *perfecti* had to earn and keep the respect of believers from day to day, in order to persuade them eventually to be consoled. This aim was reflected in such spiritual activities as preaching and blessing bread and also by more mundane practices, such as weaving and selling cloth. However, most of the economic activities of the Cathars were informal and moreover not run on strictly commercial principles. The only exception may be Montségur, where there was a large store of goods and capital which may have resulted in formal commercial links with the surrounding community.

Despite the rise of the mendicant orders, the idea that a spiritual elite should combine religious duties with manual labour remained powerful at a popular level, and the Cathars seemed to have endorsed it. In fourteenth-century Montaillou, Pierre Authié and Guillaume Bélibaste were respected because they worked, as a tailor and comb-maker respectively.[49] There was also a notorious association between heresy and the cloth industry. Not only did the large working communities of weavers desire spiritual guidance, but also weaving provided a convenient occupation for preachers with an itinerant lifestyle.[50] Most of the references to cloth production in the Doat

Manuscript concern small-scale activity: Berbequeira, wife of Loubenx of Puylaurens came across two *perfecti* in a house there in 1225, who wove cloth for her.[51] But there are a few indications of work on a larger scale: Guillaume de Elves, also known as Guillaume Donadeu, reports the establishment of an *operatorium artis textorie* by a number of *perfecti* in Cordes, around the same time.[52]

Such public operations may belong to the earlier part of Cathar history; weaving among the Cathars probably developed on a scale sufficient to produce their distinctive dark blue or black dress, which was worn from the mid-twelfth century.[53] However, the arrival of the Inquisition in 1233 would have increased the need for secrecy and reduced both the production opportunities and the requirement for large-scale production of cloth for the *perfecti* . Only Montségur remained safe and just before its surrender in 1224, Pierre-Roger de Mirepoix took 50 doublets

> quae ipsi haeretici fecerant fieri de suo proprio.[54]

It is not clear whether the *perfecti* themselves made the doublets, but one can reasonably assume that they were produced in the Monségur community. The Cathars also gained some support from lay weavers: among the believers were a certain *P. textor* and a female weaver whom Guillaume Salamon, Cathar deacon of Toulouse, said could provide a safe house.[55] Such links with the textile industry were common to the Cathars, Waldensians, Humiliati and Beguines.[56]

More surprising is the Cathar relationship with land. There seems little doubt that, in the early years of the thirteenth century at least, Cathar landholding was permissible. Raymond Hugon, a knight of Aiguesvives recalled in 1244 how, 35 years before, his father Raymond Arnaud

> dabat quandoque terras ad acapitum haereticis qui manebant
> publice apud Lauracum et faciebat cartas quas faciebat
> dictis acapitis laudari ab ipso teste;

his father died, consoled, around 1220.[57] Subsequent to this, the witness, being the heir to these lands, asked a *perfectus* by the name of Esquet who lived there with other *perfecti* , to give the land back to the witness. Esquet refused and even offered to take Raymond to the court of the lord of Laurac. As a result the witness had no spiritual contact with the *perfecti* for 18 years.[58] There were other instances: Arnaud Guillaume, according to his wife Jeanne, gave two *perfecti* , Pierre Galibert and Pierre Rosaut, land to work in a wood near Francarville, in

return receiving a payment from the produce. This arrangement lasted four years until Francarville was captured by the French in the Crusade of 1226.[59] Joanna de Avinione, a *perfecta*, apparently owned a vineyard and employed Bernard Ioculator on it, some time before 1241,[60] and there is the case of Paubert Sicart letting his land to two *perfectae*, mentioned above.

It is difficult to state the precise position of the Cathars on landowning; outright ownership in common was probably acceptable, as is shown by Pierre-Roger of Mirepoix's gift to the sect of a vineyard in 1209.[61] Moreoever, individual *perfecti* may not have been required to give up their property on being consoled, and instead made it over to the use of the heretics. Arnauda de la Mota talks quite simply about staying for a year *in domum Orbriae haereticae*, although this was in 1212, or even earlier.[62] Jean Bloanch of Hautpoul in 1244 talked about often seeing *perfecti* in the house of Melina Ermengaudus de Marmoreiras and her companion at Pradelles, around 1225.[63] More often the wording is ambiguous; the usual phrase is that the *perfecti tenuerunt domum publice*[64] in a certain village, which perhaps meant that the *perfecti* were using premises owned by a supporter. There are far fewer references to Cathars holding land after 1225 and more of them living in woods near settlements in *cabanas*, often built by themselves or with help from their supporters.[65] This decline in Cathar land ownership and holding as the century wore on may be due to the Inquisition's persecution, or more interestingly, as a response to the Dominican and Franciscan rejection of property. All three groups laid stress on poverty, but the idea of the rejection of ownership came gradually: the Franciscans first penetrated Languedoc between 1217 and 1219, but only resolved the problem of ownership in 1219. The Dominicans were active in substantial numbers from around the same time, moving from a rejection of rights of properties away from where they lived in 1216 to rejection of rents as well in 1220, although they retained ownership of their priories.[66] Further research might be directed on the other important heretic group, the Waldensians, who had made a virtue of poverty as early as the 1170's, to see if they made a similar progress. Apart from the question of ownership, there is ample evidence that the Cathars had no qualms about working on the land and *perfecti* in the early 1240's are found doing agricultural work such as weeding and harvesting.[67]

The *perfecti* also practised medicine and in this they also paralleled their Waldensian rival.[68] Hugo de Vilars recounts how in 1235, when Isarnus de Faniovis was ill at Cuella, he was treated by the *perfectus*

Guillaume Bennardi Dairos, who was a *medicus* and treated him for a few days.[69] This may well have been the same Guillaume Bernard who took care of Berbequeira and her husband when they were ill around 1219–20,[70] and there were other cases where *perfecti* offered themselves or were consulted about illness.[71] Clearly, there were advantages for the sect both in terms of goodwill and in gaining access to the dying. Rather surprisingly, there is only one instance of a *perfectus* giving formal education; the recipient was a child in Pradelles-Cabardes.[72] There is also a record of two *perfecti* working as pelterers.[73] From the circumstantial evidence in the depositions of goods exchanged and donated, the *perfecti* may have been involved, as well, in the manufacture of shoes, gloves, purses and stockings, but it is difficult to be certain.[74]

What is curious about this picture is that there is comparatively little sign of money changing hands. There is one account of a *perfecta* making and selling cloth, to Raymond de Miraud, a witness from Cabaret around 1233,[75] and on various occasions corn, plaice, cameline, cloth and stockings are exchanged for money by the *perfecti*,[76] but they may have been merely selling what had been donated to them. Not surprisingly most of these transactions are urban, as are the few occasions when *perfecti* bought goods, such as oil and fish, bread, breeches, purses and scissors,[77] or gave money to believers to make purchases for them. Often this was done to get food for a meal,[78] but a tunic and woollen and linen cloth were also bought in this manner.[79]

There is also little evidence of the Cathars begging; P. Stephani gave three *solidi* when approached in Moissac before 1241,[80] but Guiraud Gaillard refused when asked in Castelsarrasin in 1218.[81] On the rare occasions when a campaign for alms was undertaken, as happened during the shortage of grain at Montsegur during the winter of 1234, the response from the Carcassonne and Toulouse dioceses was very good.[82] The evidence implies that the Cathars did not lack spiritual respect, but on the whole refused to beg for alms.

One can conclude, therefore, that neither mendicancy nor commerce played a substantial part in the financing of Catharism. However, the *perfecti* had to have goods and money to conduct their routine duties. One of the most frequent testimonies in the depositions is that a witness led or guided a *perfectus* and in a few cases these were purely business transactions with guides who claimed that they were unaware their clients were heretics.[83] But most transactions had a spiritual

element; Pierre de Corneliano and his uncle, both Cathar sympathisers, led seven *perfecti* from the citadel at Roquafort to the church at Crassenx, but the heretics refused to pay the agreed fee of ten *solidi* , with the result that Pierre did not adore the heretics for the next 34 years.[84] In other words, the Cathars could only perform their pastoral duties so long as they retained the goodwill of the lay community.

The work of the Cathars was directed to encouraging this goodwill. Medical care was either given free of charge, or was repaid by a gesture, such as the fish and onions given to Guillaume Bernard by the grateful Berbequeira. Many of the goods produced by the *perfecti* must have been given to their supporters in return for favours granted: Guiraud Molinier in Gourdon acted as a scribe for the heretics and received shirts and shoes as a reward,[85] while in the same town Arnaud Rectus received a cap in return for shaving some heretics and sharing his wine with them.[86] In urban areas especially, there may have been some cases of formal bartering, but in most cases help was repaid with a gesture on an informal basis. Important sympathisers were singled out for favour, as was Arnaud Roger, a knight of Mirepoix, who received ten *solidi Tholosani* in 1237 in part-return for his services as a guide, and a year later received a share in two pounds of pepper for helping to guide eight heretics from Montségur.[87]

In many cases, however, the *perfecti* were guided, fed and given accommodation with little recompense. G. Ricart mentioned above not only was a *depositarius* for the heretics, but also gave them shelter, attended an *aparelhamentum*, ate with them and donated corn and clothing. In return the Cathars gave him a pair of scissors.[88] The only way such transactions can be interpreted is that the very presence of the *perfecti* was repayment enough for most. The *perfecti* did not just appeal to a small band of *credentes*; there was widespread support for them and many of those brought before the Inquisition do not seem to have called themselves heretics, merely good Christians who respected the way of life of the *perfecti* . In the towns where the Waldensians were also present, there are records of people giving alms to both sects,[89] and of a doctor who treated patients from both orders.[90]

In return for a meal, the *perfecti* would normally bless the believers' bread and perhaps preach to the household and the neighbours. Sometimes hospitality was given for a considerable period. Around 1242, Raymond Carabassa and his companion stayed with Vigueria, a woman of Bram, for four months: their only contribution was to pay for the food which Vigueria bought. At Alpersona they stayed with

Raimunda, the wife of Pierre Castelnau, under similar conditions. But there is no mention of such an arrangement during their stay with Bernard Raseire of Alzonne, their previous host.[91] Isarn Bonhomme even alleges that Adam de Garneri of Hautpoul was providing food for a *perfectus* with money lent to him by the heretic.[92]

Most believers made small contributions, since little was needed to prove sympathy for the sect. Pons Faber of Villanova exploited this to capture two *perfecti*: he lulled their suspicions with the gift of a salted herring.[93] Even Philippa, wife of the wealthy knight Pierre-Roger de Mirepoix, only offered the *perfecti* bread, fish and vegetables, albeit on numerous occasions between 1241 and 1244.[94] In July 1244, Raymond Carabassa gave an account of a typical progress. In Alzonne Raimunda de Gordo had baked bread for him and in Montolieu Guillaume Vitalis had adored him and his companion and offered them produce from his vineyards.[95] The majority of the gifts offered were perishable and in small quantities: beans, leeks and apples are among the fruit and vegetables given.[96] Occasionally a larger quantity is noted, such as the cartload of corn sent by Raimond de Acha to his *perfecta* mother.[97] In a few cases the donations were sold,[98] but this was mostly confined to the towns. There is also an instance of *perfecti* demanding cash instead of the produce offered.[99]

The Cathars performed a useful social function and this may be due to their reliance on voluntary contributions as opposed to the tithes levied by the Catholic church. Occasionally believers made spontaneous donations to the sect; Pons de Villanova gave 100 *solidi* to Montségur in 1229 or 1230[100] and Pierre de Cabanil collected corn from four neighbours, as a gift to some *perfecti* whom they had all recently heard preaching.[101]

In the majority of cases the family of the individual *perfectus* was the most reliable source of material support. Wills tended to be executed through the immediate family and the aid given to relatives who had become active *perfecti* reflects this closeness. B. Remon took his *perfecta* sister and her companions from Toulouse to Montauban, paying 50 *solidi* to a man to accommodate them. He later made his sister a tunic and cape.[102] Many *perfecti* had to rely on their families when the Inquisition was in the vicinity, as did Raimond Carabassa who, along with his companion, was supplied with food by his two sons while forced to hide out near Montolieu.[103] The secret of the Inquisition's success was that eventually, through their techniques of encouraging denouncements in secret, they undermined the structure of trust between the *perfecti* , their families and the wider community, carefully built up by the Cathars and on which they depended.

The impression received from the Doat Manuscript is of informality with a frequent interchange of gifts and favours; a kind of 'spiritual economy'. The biggest Cathar institution, Montségur, both epitomises and contradicts the image. It contradicts it in that the number of inhabitants there required regular supplies, thus enabling a sizeable industry to flourish. The 50 doublets found formed a considerable stock and a great quantity of grain, pepper, oil and salt were also captured.[104] The community was a commercial centre for local villages, creating a market economy in parallel with the 'spiritual economy' found throughout the area. There are many references to the sale of goods at Montségur,[105] but particularly revealing is the deposition of Guillaume de Bonan of Avellard who recites a long list of people from the surrounding villages, covering the years 1241 and 1242 and concludes,

> aportabant victualia in Castrum Montis Securi et vendebant eis indiferenter haereticis.[106]

For the heretics' part, the concern shown over the fate of their fortune at Montségur and its great size make one wonder how literally to interpret the poverty of the Cathar church.

Montségur can also be seen as a prime example of the intimacy established between the *perfecti* and laity. There was great concern when the community was threatened by famine and during the last days before the surrender of the castle many *credentes* were consoled, while the *perfecti* divested themselves of their worldly wealth and gave alms to their supporters. Imbert de Salles tells how the Cathar bishop Bertrand Martin gave salt, pepper and olive oil to the soldiers and servants of the castle at the beginning of that final Lent. Imbert personally received from several *perfecti* and *perfectae* cash, shoes, clothing and a purse.[107] Although these circumstances were exceptional, a daily combination of religious and commercial interchange can be observed. Stephanus Massa of Toulouse, a servant of Raymond Roger of Toulouse tells how around 1239 his master together with Dominicus Archibalasterius solemnly led a horse, willed to the Cathars by Guillaume Segarii, to the Cathar bishop Guilabert de Castres at Montségur. After lunch Raymond Roger bought the horse from the *perfecti* and the party returned home.[108] Peire de Flaira, a faithful Cathar supporter, bought food for the Montségur community, provided scissors and a razor on request and took up some shoes and stockings, for which he was paid seven and half *solidi*. He, in turn, used part to buy a tunic for his wife.[109] This relationship may have even extended to banking de Flaira's savings. Arnaud Roger de Mirepoix reports that in June 1244 Peire, with his sister Maurina, inquired

si sciebat aliquod de comandis Montis Securi quia P de Flaira amiserat trecentos solidos quos deposuerunt haereticis in dicto castro.

Arnaud replied that Pierre Roger of Mirepoix had all the *comandos dicti castri* .[110] It is not clear here what exactly happened, but it may well be that one of the favours the Cathars were able to perform for loyal supporters during the increasing turbulence of the 1240's was to bank savings in the safety of the castle. This may have been the gold and silver which Pierre Roger was allowed to remove at the surrender,[111] as opposed to the Cathars' own wealth which was removed the previous Christmas.[112]

Within the Catholic church, the Templars provided similar financial services, allowing large sums of money and plate to be stored in the security of their castles. In his will of September 1211, Pierre Constant arranged for 2000 *solidi Melgorienses* to be drawn out of his holding in the Templar fortress of St Gilles to repay his wife's dowry.[113] The Templars developed a very different reputation from the Cathars; their armed knights, their close relationship with very large depositors like the King of France and their involvement in tax collection contributed to their unpopularity, besides showing how hard and skilfully the Cathar *perfecti* had to work to maintain their own support. There are also parallels between Montségur and the Cistercian movement in that they gave economic and spiritual stimulation to backward rural areas. From the evident wealth within the castle, the seat of Cathar spirituality may have also been facing the same problems caused by popularity and prosperity.

Such conclusions have to be drawn with caution. The long inventories given and received serve as a reminder that one is still dealing with a predominantly rural economy. There is an impression of a substantial number of saleable and manufactured commodities being produced, but in a world where *denarii* were expensive to mint in relation to value, it is possible that the same goods circulated as a substitute for small change,[114] and thus were recorded many times.

Contemporary propaganda and the survival of religious institutions are insidious enemies of the historian of heresy. The former marks the heretic out as irredeemably different from the orthodox while compared to the latter, any heresy seems a fleeting mutation outside the slow evolution of the Church. Much has already been done to rescue the Cathars from the influence of these enemies: thanks to the modern intellectual interest in their dualist origins, research has been undertaken and credit has been given to the thoroughness and resilience of their

organisation. At the same time, there have also been attempts to view the sect as part of a wider movement of heresies during the period. However, what is still consistently underrated is the way in which the orthodox and heretical interacted to fulfil people's spiritual needs. What emerges from the study of the Cathar economy is the way in which it parallels the orthodox; not only the preaching friars and their wandering lifestyle, but also the services, both spiritual and economic, provided by established institutions such as the military orders.

Not unexpectedly, considering the predominantly rural nature of Languedoc, the other parallel which is present is with many peasant economies which depend on a degree of unsentimental mutual trust and cooperation, going beyond the strict rules of the market economy.

However, the Inquisition did overcome the Cathars and study of this defeat still suffers from seeing the Cathars as a momentary event: that they did not change their nature very much in the 150 years or so they were present in Southern France. In what ways did the Church persuade people to give up their allegiance and break down the strength of the spiritual economy? How did the Cathars respond to these challenges? Did they, like other groups of contemporary religious reformers, eventually alienate their own lay supporters?

Notes

1. R.F. Bennett, *The Early Dominicans. Studies in Thirteenth-Century Dominican History*, Cambridge 1937, pp. 35–51.
2. S. Tugwell, (Ed. & Transl.) *Jordan of Saxony; On the Beginnings of the Order of Preachers*, Parable, U.S.A. 1982, pp. 6–7.
3. J. Duvernoy, 'Les Albigeois dans la vie sociale et économique de leur temps', *Annales de l'Institut d'Etudes occitanes. Actes du colloque de Toulouse, années 1962–63*, pp. 64–72.
4. Y. Dossat, 'Les Cathares d'après l'Inquisition', *Cahiers de Fanjeaux*, 3, 1968, 76–103.
5. M.C. Barber, 'Women and Catharism', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 3, 1977, 45–62. I should also add that Dr. Barber's help and advice have been invaluable at every stage of the preparation of this piece.
6. R. Nelli, *La Vie Quotidienne des Cathares du Languedoc au XIII^e siècle*, Paris 1969, uses this method extensively with mixed results.

7. *Collection Doat*, Vols. 21–24, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
8. Y. Dossat, 'Un Evêque Cathare Originaire de l'Agenais, Vigouroux de la Bacone', *Bulletin Philologique et Historique*, 1965, 623–39, (631).
9. For the sort of questions asked, see Bernard Gui, 'The Conduct of the Inquisition of Heretical Depravity' in W.L. Wakefield and A.P. Evans, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, Columbia 1969, pp. 383–85.
10. C. Molinier, *L'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France*, Paris 1880, pp. 34–35.
11. Doat, 24:231v.
12. B. Hamilton, *The Medieval Inquisition*, London 1981, pp. 40–41.
13. Doat, 21:309v.
14. Doat, 21:208v et al.
15. Doat, 21:188r, 201v, 239r, 246r; 23:166r, 183v–184r; 24:265r, 282v.
16. In 1211 Bishop Fulk of Toulouse set up the White Confraternity to fight heresy and usury. The people of Toulouse seized the opportunity to do violence to usurers. See W. Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition in Southern France, 1100–1250*, London 1974, pp. 75 and 105.
17. Dossat, 'Les Cathares', p. 94; Duvernoy, p. 70; E. le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, Paris 1978, trans. Bray, B., London 1978, pp. 5, 355; L.K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, London 1978, p. 143 (albeit more cautiously); Nelli, pp. 27–30, 34–5, 114–5. Wakefield, *Heresy* p. 40.
18. Certainly most of the sources alleging usury are Italian in origin, most notably Raynerius Saccone in A. Dondaine, (Ed.), *Un Traité néo-manichéen du XIII^e siècle: le 'Liber de Duobus Principiis', suivi d'un fragment de rituel cathare*, Rome 1939, pp. 64–78. I hope to consider the Italian context in a later study.
19. J.H. Mundy, 'Charity and Social Work in Toulouse', *Traditio*, 22, 1966, 203–87, (264–65).
20. Doat, 23:46v–47r.
21. Doat, 21:321r.
22. Doat, 24:244r; 23:301r–302r.
23. Doat, 22:116v.
24. Doat, 24:262v–263r.
25. Doat, 21:293v.

26. Mundy, 258, n. 188.
27. Mundy, 273, n. 223, cf. Doat, 22:192r, 193r, 24:321v et al.
28. Bernard Gui in *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, p. 382.
29. Doat, 25:250v–251r.
30. Mundy, 282, n. 193.
31. Doat, 21:321r.
32. Dossat, 'Les Cathares', 72–3, 80.
33. Doat, 23:113r.
34. Doat, 24:99v–100v, cf. 23:221r.
35. Dossat, 'Les Cathares', 91. The most potent penalty was, of course, to refuse the *consolamentum* to the offender on his deathbed.
36. Doat, 22:114r–v.
37. Doat, 21:144r–145v.
38. Doat, 21:189r–v, 208v.
39. Doat, 21:198r–v.
40. Doat, 21:208v.
41. Dossat, 'Les Cathares', 73–4; Doat, 25:12v–13v.
42. The most systematic analysis of the organisation of the Cathar church is A.J. Peal, *The Spread and Maintenance of Catharism in the Languedoc, 1200–1300*, University of Reading unpublished M.Phil. thesis, 1981.
43. Doat, 24:132r–v.
44. Peal, p. 192.
45. Doat, 22:140v, cf. 22:117v.
46. Doat, 24:155v.
47. Doat, 22:184v–185r.
48. Doat, 22:197r.
49. Le Roy Ladurie, p. 340.
50. Wakefield, *Heresy*, p. 76.
51. Doat, 24:137r, cf. 22:123v–124r, 24:1v.
52. Doat, 23:209r–210v.
53. Nelli, p. 35.
54. Doat, 24:173v.
55. Doat, 24:3.
56. Little, pp. 118, 132.

57. Doat, 23:117r–v.
58. Doat, 23:117v–118r.
59. Doat, 23:257r.
60. Doat, 21:266v. The actual text says 'Joannis de Avinione', but there is reason to believe from the gender of the *haeretica* giving Ioculator orders in the same deposition that 'Joannis' is the same as the 'Joanna de Avinione' mentioned as living in Montauban, Doat, 21:240r–v.
61. Doat, 22:116v.
62. Doat, 23:6r.
63. Doat, 23:250r.
64. Doat, 23:159r, 161v, 163r et al.
65. Doat, 23:266v–68r.
66. Little, pp. 151, 164.
67. Doat, 23:278r, 289v.
68. Doat, 21:200v–201r, 198r, 233r, 233v–234r, et al.
69. Doat, 23:199v–200r.
70. Doat, 22:139r–v.
71. Doat, 21:298r, 312r; 22:35v, 312r.
72. Duvernoy, p. 69.
73. Doat, 23:269r–v.
74. Nelli, p. 54 speculates on these and a number of other trades.
75. Doat, 23:237v.
76. Doat, 21:187–88r. P. Bonaldi of Gourdon received *munuscula* from the heretics *et emit alias frumentum haereticorum*, Doat, 21: 290v, 228r, 290r respectively.
77. Doat, 24:66r, 21:240r, 286r, 24:237r respectively.
78. Doat, 22:182v, 23:19v, 24:213r et al.
79. Doat, 21:283v, 21:226r–v, 22:182r respectively.
80. Doat, 21:202r.
81. Doat, 21:202r.
82. Doat, 24:88r–89v. Wheat and barley were supplied for the stronghold.
83. Doat, 21:206r, 305r.
84. Doat, 24:22v–23r.
85. Doat, 21:205v–206r.
86. Doat, 21:197r.

87. Doat, 22:132v–33r, cf, with the *camisas* and *angtm* (anguillam?) received by Fortanerius de Gourdon for guiding the heretics and giving them food and shelter, 21:199v–200r.
88. Doat, 21:208v.
89. Doat, 21:187v, 241v et al.
90. Doat, 21:256v.
91. Doat, 24:211r–13r; someone giving *perfecti* accommodation was usually termed a *receptator* by the Inquisition.
92. Doat, 23:231r–v.
93. Doat, 24:116v.
94. Doat, 24:199v.
95. Doat, 24:219v.
96. Doat, 21:189r, 202r, 22:14v respectively; in addition were given nuts, 22:55v, cucumbers, 22:197r, a pear, 21:226r and strawberries, 21:220r.
97. Doat, 21:289r.
98. See above n. 76.
99. Doat, 21:314v–15r.
100. Doat, 22:147r.
101. Doat, 24:26v–27r.
102. Doat, 21:242r–243r.
103. Doat, 24:222v–23r.
104. Doat, 24:173v.
105. Doat, 22:150r, 151r; 152r, 24:66r, 81r–v, 172r–v.
106. Doat, 24:78v–79r.
107. Doat, 24:179r–80r.
108. Doat, 24:301r–302r.
109. Doat, 22:185v–86r.
110. Doat, 22:153r.
111. P. Belperron, *La Croisade entre les Albigeois et l'union du Languedoc à la France*, Paris 1942, p. 431.
112. Doat, 24:171v.
113. M.L. Delisle, 'Mémoire sur les Opérations Financières des Templiers', *Mémoires de l 'Institut National de France. Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, 33, 2ème partie, 1888, pp. 1–245, (6–7).
114. N.J. Pounds, *An Economic History of Europe*, Harlow 1974, p. 437.