

SOME SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS
OF
THE MIDI REGION
IN
THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

By

MIRIAM FRANCES WHITTEMORE

Bachelor of Arts

Texas Technological College

Lubbock, Texas

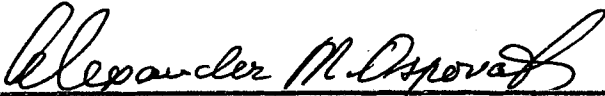
1942

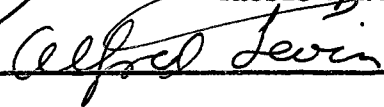
Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate College of
the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
July, 1967


JAN 18 1968

SOME SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS
OF
THE MIDI REGION
IN
THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Thesis Approved:



Thesis Adviser




Dean of the Graduate College

660131

PREFACE

The Albigensian Crusade (1209-1244) was a major factor in the unification of the Midi Region and northern France in the thirteenth century. The geographical area involved was the Provinces of Languedoc and Provence. Accounts of this bizarre internal conflict from both the religious and political viewpoints have been written by historians.

Wishing to know more about this intriguing segment of French history, I decided to do research on some of the social and economic aspects of the Albigensian Crusade to show that the subsequent annexation of the Midi Region by the French Crown was the result of the destruction of the Provençal civilization.

Using primarily French source materials, I found that social and economic information on this small episode in French history was not too plentiful, with most of it written prior to World War I and only a limited amount of recent vintage which is chiefly in periodicals. The material used in this thesis was obtained from the Asakawa Collection of Medieval History and various periodicals in the Oklahoma State University Library or through inter-library loan.

I am deeply appreciative to the Inter-Library Loan Staff of Oklahoma State University--Mr. Guy Logdon, Mrs. Joni Grady, Mrs. Ann Klaus and Mr. Richard King--who went to great lengths to obtain now out-of-print French books from libraries all over the country. Further appreciation goes to my chief adviser, Dr. Alexander M. Ospovat, the

History Department, Oklahoma State University, for his constructive suggestions on a rather difficult theme. Special mention must be made of my husband, Colonel Kenneth S. Whittemore, Jr., who returned from Viet Nam in time to help me in the proofreading of the thesis. My three daughters, Amanda, Vanessa and Alison, gave me special consideration most of the time and indulged my desire for more education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF THE MIDI.	5
The Nobility and the Church Hierarchy	5
Midi Culture and Education.	10
The Growth of the Merchant Class.	15
The Peasantry in the Midi	26
III. SOME ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE MIDI.	34
Commercial Growth of the Midi	34
Financial Affairs	38
Trade Fairs	44
Domestic Products and Trade	45
Land Transportation Problems.	50
International Commerce.	51
IV. DESTRUCTION OF A CIVILIZATION.	57
The Church and Heresy in the Midi	57
The Impact of Heresy on Midi Society.	61
The Albigensian Crusade	72
The Loss of a Civilization.	81
V. CONCLUSION	83
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	88

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The rise and decline of the political and religious institutions of the Provençal civilization of southern France in the thirteenth century has been thoroughly researched, especially by French historians. But very little has been done on the social and economic history of that region during that period. Indeed, there are no works dealing exclusively with Midi culture in the thirteenth century, and there are no comprehensive works on the commercial life of the Midi in the thirteenth century, the period during which it reached its zenith as a commercial power in the Mediterranean world. But there are materials pertaining to social ideas, population movements and economic wealth in its various manifestations in the monastery cartulaires and in the old provincial records, which are the only primary sources available on medieval social and economic history.¹ There are also documents pertaining to various aspects of commercial life in the thirteenth century scattered indiscriminately throughout publications of various kinds.

Marc Bloch and Henri Pirenne have done much to promote interest in the social and economic aspects of the Middle Ages. Bloch focused

¹Révue de Synthèse Historique, IV (Paris, 1902), 326. Hereafter this work will be cited as RSH.

his last book, Feudal Society on the material basis of medieval life, i. e., soil topography, methods of cultivation and types of settlement.² And Henri Pirenne tried to clarify the role of the merchant and the industrial associations in the rise and decline of municipal life in the Middle Ages.³

The most important works which explore southern commercial activities were written by Alphonse Blanc in 1899 and E. Forestié in 1893. M. Blanc delved into the commercial records of Jacme Olivier, a merchant from Narbonne,⁴ while M. Forestié examined the accounts of the Bonis Brothers, merchants of Montauban.⁵ Although these works are chiefly concerned with commercial activities which took place in the fourteenth century, they have become an important key to research on economic life in general in thirteenth century southern France.

Both historians discovered that the primary deterrent to any historical research on commercial activities in southern municipal archives was the lack of cohesive and coherent information. Another obstacle to a proper interpretation of available commercial records

²During World War II, Marc Bloch was a member of the M. U. R. (Mouvements Unis de Résistance) at Lyons. He was captured, tortured and executed by the Gestapo at Trévoux on 16 June 1944. This information is taken from the Preface of Strange Defeat by Marc Bloch, translated by Gerard Hopkins (London, 1949), pp. xiv-xix.

³RSH, V, 236-37.

⁴Alphonse Blanc, Le livre de comptes de Jacme Olivier, marchand narbonnais du XIVe siècle, II (Paris, 1899).

⁵E. Forestié, Les livres de comptes des frères Bonis, marchands montalbanais du XIVe siècle (Paris, 1893).

was the linguistic difficulty concerning Provençal and other local dialects which made translation errors inevitable.⁶

Many intriguing questions arise on the social and economic aspects of the Midi, and in some respects, they can only be partially answered because of a lack of reliable information. What social and economic influence did the rising merchant class wield over the nobility and the Church? What factors encouraged the commercial growth of the Midi (Languedoc and Provence)? What were some of the problems of domestic and international commerce? What were the real reasons for the religious crusade against the Midi Region? And finally, how did the Midi Region accept the authority emanating from northern France after its annexation by Paris in 1271?

On the whole, in the absence of detailed studies of the social and economic conditions in the Midi in the thirteenth century, historians dealing with this period have assumed that the rise and fall of the brilliant but eccentric Provençal civilization came about from a breakdown of political and religious institutions. However, through an examination of the social and economic conditions of the Midi before and after the Albigensian Crusade (1209-1244), I will show that they were the primary causes which led to the annihilation of the Provençal society in the thirteenth century, and not the breakdown of political and religious institutions.

The social and economic atmosphere was an important factor in the Provençal civilization before the Albigensian Crusade. The conflict

⁶Blanc, pp. 46-47.

between the Church and the Midi society came about from the rapid rise and popularity of the Cathari heresy. And this struggle was further encouraged by the luxurious and romanticized environment of southern France, the wealth and independence of the great merchants and the effeminate qualities of its urbanized nobility. Indeed, social and economic aspects played a far more important rôle than many historians have been willing to acknowledge.

CHAPTER II
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS
OF
THE MIDI

The Nobility and the Church Hierarchy

Jealousy and greed were the two powerful catalysts in the struggle between the insolent southern nobility and the wealthy and luxury-loving church hierarchy for control of the Midi Region. The Church in the Midi was a world within a world. Its bishops were great feudal landlords with vast estates and princely revenues. The southern nobility not only coveted the ecclesiastical wealth but also resented the payment of large church tithes. Misuse of church revenues led to the decline of the authority and prestige of the Church in the Midi in the thirteenth century.¹

In social protocol, each caste tried to take advantage of the other, and often, both sides were inflexible. For example, there was the annual acknowledgment of the superiority of the Bishop of Toulouse and the Church over the nobility which was in the form of a grand entry into the city. The Bishop of Toulouse, seated in a special gilded chair which was carried on the shoulders of the great lords, was the

¹Zoé Oldenbourg, Massacre at Montségur, tr. Peter Green (New York, 1962), pp. 21-23.

all-powerful symbol of the Catholic Church in southern France. His colorful entourage followed a predetermined route through the city from the bishop's residence to the great cathedral. The number of lords required to carry the bishop's chair was never less than four, and each bearer's place was fixed by custom. This "chairing" of the bishop was the focal point of many disputes. If a young noble presented himself in the place of his father, the bishop could refuse recognition. This "chairing" was an effective method by which the Bishop of Toulouse could force an unwilling noble to acknowledge the power and the authority of the Church.²

A second and equally effective instrument of the Bishop in his control of the nobility was the investiture ceremony, or the initiation into knighthood. This ceremony involved the use of visible symbols which signified that a person of noble birth was to be honored above all other men with the exception of priests. At first, this ceremony was purely secular with a monarch conferring the coveted title of chevalier. But in a social order which lived continually in fear of the unknown and the supernatural, the Church gradually gave a sacred nature to the colorful ritual. This gave the Church an opportunity to exercise its influence in secular affairs.³

The price of investiture was usually a symbolic object which

²Achille Luchaire, Manuel des institutions francaises--période des Capétiens directs (Paris, 1892), p. 46.

³Marc Bloch, Feudal Society, tr. L. A. Manyon (Chicago, 1964), Vol. II, pp. 314-19.

varied according to the customs and usages of a particular fief.⁴ However, from the middle of the thirteenth century, many localities preferred money to the symbolic gifts.

Knighthood stressed the importance of lineage in the nobility. Illegitimate children became the victims of injustice, for all inheritances of real property were based on lineage. A bastard son was excluded from all inheritances, and his actual existence was deleted from lineage records. In principal, the father usually gave a pension to a natural son.⁵

One interesting fact is that in the entire Cartulaire de Durbon, which contains 319 documents, only two illegitimate sons were recorded. One was simply listed as a bastard, and the other was recorded as "Rollandus qui non est legitimus."⁶

Another facet of the inheritance problem was that each endowed daughter of a Midi noble always had the right of legitimacy (old Roman law). The dowry was given in money and not in land which was saved for the sons. When a noble had no sons, then the daughter or eldest daughter was the legitimate heir. Yet this status was conditioned by the fact that when the husband took the name and coat-of-arms

⁴Luchaire, pp. 204-19. Symbolic objects could be a pair of gauntlets, a lance, a sword, an iron spur, a set of gold spurs, a gold goblet or even a horse, commonly called roncin de service.

⁵Roger Aubenas, "La famille dans l'ancienne Provence," Annales d'Histoire Économique et Sociale, VIII (1936), 528. Future references will list this publication as AHES.

⁶Notices et Documents--Cartulaire de Durbon (Paris, 1884), p. 110.

of his father-in-law, he would then be acknowledged as the legal heir. So jealous were the southern nobles of the rising merchant class that they believed this elaborate ritual was necessary in order to prevent valuable estates from passing to outsiders.⁷

Ambitious church prelates were either ranked as seigneurial bishops who controlled the provincial lay nobles, or as royal bishops who were responsible only to the French Crown, and whose homage was a simple oath of loyalty. Later, these royal bishops were to figure prominently in the destruction of the Midi.⁸

During the twelfth century, there was a unique social class known in the Midi as the bishop-counts. French historians, Achille Luchaire and Clément Compayré, discovered in their research that it was difficult to assign an origin and date to this unusual social caste.⁹

So powerful did a few of these bishop-counts become that they controlled great nobles and kings as vassals. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, the situation was such that:

The Bishop of Mende had as vassals the Kings of Aragon and the Counts of Rodez; even the Bishop of Paris had the King of France and other powerful lords as vassals. . . .¹⁰

⁷Aubenas, AHES, 526.

⁸Luchaire, pp. 46-47.

⁹Ibid., pp. 43-44.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 45. The French version reads: "L'évêque de Mende a pour vassaux les rois d'Aragon et les comtes de Rodez; de même que l'évêque de Paris a pour vassal le roi de France et d'autres puissants seigneurs. . . ."

So warlike were these bishop-counts in the years before the Albigensian Crusade (1209-1229) that they often flaunted royal authority. At one time, resentment in the city of Albi ran so high that the King's officers and the Bishop's men-at-arms were not permitted to wear arms on the streets or in public places. This militant chivalric spirit on the part of the bishop-counts in the Midi dominated the first quarter of the thirteenth century.¹¹

Before the Albigensian Crusade, the Provençal civilization enjoyed a prosperity which came not from real estate but from commercial negotiations, foreign exchange and partnerships in speculative maritime expeditions. These commercial activities absorbed all the energies of the affluent nobles and church princes, and to them, there was no advantage in bickering over real estate. But their dealings and negotiations with the merchant class were frequently more flexible and more tolerant than with each other.¹²

The primary sphere of conflict between the Church and the nobility involved various aspects of social prestige and protocol. The great religious processions were meant to impress the masses and to flaunt the omnipotent authority of the Papacy.

Although well-endowed with great estates, many southern nobles were "land poor," and openly resented the great wealth of the Church. Another problem involved the status of legitimacy with regard to inheritance, and this legal aspect required the sanction of the Church.

¹¹Clément Compayré, Études historiques et documents inédits sur l'Albigeois, le Castrais et l'ancien diocèse de Lavaur (Albi, 1841), p. 27.

¹²Aubenas, AHES, 537-38.

The nobility considered this as a direct interference into a genuine secular matter. Yet, despite a militant minority on both sides, the nobility and the church prelates were more dedicated to civil rather than military affairs. The nobility and the Church were not involved in any great causes at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Decentralization of political power and land distribution prevented the buildup of any kind of a political machine on either side.

Midi Culture and Education

Friction between the nobility and the clergy carried over into the fields of culture and education. Being the only literate class, the clergy kept tight control over the theology-based education. Rural schools had appeared in the thirteenth century, but provincial municipal schools did not exist until the beginning of the fourteenth century. The fast-rising merchant class began to demand a more varied curricula for their children, since the rigid church schooling could not cope with the commercial expansion of the Midi.¹³

Realizing that education was a steppingstone to power and wealth within the church hierarchy, many great nobles sent promising sons to the church-controlled schools. Consequently, most of the church prelates of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries came from families having the highest noble lineage. Other less mentally-endowed sons of the nobility were taught the arts of war and hunting. In the field of education, daughters of the nobility were ignored. Their lives were geared to bearing children, to being used as pawns in

¹³Luchaire, pp. 126-27.

the political marriages so rife during the Middle Ages and to the maintenance of a household in the manner befitting a noble family.

It is difficult to judge the exact standards of education for children of the nobility, because nothing has been written about the ability and the capacities of the student bodies. A boy's life in the medieval concept of education was ideally grouped into seven year periods--(a) one to seven years, at home, (b) seven to fourteen years, a page or at school, and (c) fourteen to twenty-one years, a squire or a university student. University teaching was limited to the trivium and quadrivium curricula. The main goal of a teacher was to teach accuracy of word and thought and swiftness of argument. This system produced clever speakers but not learned men.¹⁴

For girls, schooling was limited to the religious teaching given by convent nuns, and this, only when the girls intended to become nuns. Education was never available to the masses.¹⁵

Literature was unimportant to Medi education, but art, sculpture, songs and ballads had many advocates among the clergy and the nobility. Despite the cruelty attributed to the times, the upper classes were not insensitive to the beauties of nature. A sensitive description of nature was recorded by Gautier de Coinci, a thirteenth century monk of St. Médard near Soissons:

¹⁴Bédé Jarrett, Social Theories of the Middle Ages (London, 1926), pp. 35-40.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 38.

Therefore will I do ever as he does who seeks flowers in a meadow the which is all springlike and bedecked with flowers and who sees all around him so many divers ones, crimson and violet and yellow and dark blue, that he knows not the which to pluck first.¹⁶

The Church refused to acknowledge that the vital commercial life of the Midi was slowly influencing the curricula of provincial schools and universities. By denying the existence of commercial influence on theology-based education, the Church, unwittingly and unknowingly, was building up a resistance to its rigid authority. The Universities of Toulouse, Narbonne and Montpellier gradually rejected the yoke of spiritual authority and placed themselves under the protection of great lay nobles. Although the idea of secular learning had been viewed as a possibility in the twelfth century, it was not put into practice until the thirteenth century.¹⁷

One intriguing aspect of Midi culture was the importance of poetry to the southern nobility. The poetic heritage of the Midi Region was supreme, and it was unique in its inspirational quality. Many of the southern nobles were known as excellent troubadours--genuinely and passionately devoted to poetry. Their poetry became an expression of self-adoration through mental sufferings. Their turbulent, restless and egotistical natures were given to prodigal extravagances. However, their romanticism hid a ferocious type of patriotism and a vital energy.¹⁸

¹⁶Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁷Luchaire, pp. 134-36.

¹⁸Oldenbourg, p. 26.

This romanticized poetry of Provence has become the subject of endless scholarly controversy. Alfred Jeanroy, a distinguished French scholar, has put forth the theory that the troubadour evolved from the wandering minstrel.¹⁹

Ballad topics usually dealt with battles, humorous tales and personal exploits. But hungry troubadours discovered that noblewomen were more amenable to hearing their womanly virtues praised than listening to boring recitations of battles and brave deeds.

When William IX, Count of Poitou and Duke of Aquitaine, composed love lyrics about his amorous adventures, it became fashionable for all nobles to bolster their personal prestige by composing poetic verses. If the noble was not endowed with natural singing talent, he hired singing poets. Lyric poetry became a fad to the nobles who sang for pleasure and prestige, while the poor troubadours sang for a living.²⁰

The service to the adored noblewoman of troubadour poems consisted merely of fidelity and continuous worship. The lady was not required to reward her devoted knight, and usually felt no need to become involved in a passionate love affair.²¹

¹⁹Sidney Painter, French Chivalry: Chivalric Ideas and Practices in Mediaeval France (Baltimore, 1940), pp. 110-12. Unfortunately, there were no scholars who were masters of both Provençal and Arabic who might have furnished evidence that the minstrel-troubadours were directly influenced by the Arabic lyric poetry of the tenth century.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., pp. 113-15.

This enthusiasm for lyric poetry probably was not shared by all thirteenth century nobles. There was still a great deal of popular support for the chansons de geste (poems on heroic themes), which were more appealing to the conservative nobles.²²

The most important factor was that these courtly love tactics were bringing about a change in the attitude of the feudal noble towards women of his own class--he began giving them equal rank and status. Naturally, the manners of the nobility filtered down to the lower classes who assiduously imitated their betters. Women gradually assumed a more prominent position in society. A gentlewoman was no longer a mere child-bearer and lust-satisfier but became an inspiration for brave deeds.²³

In the Chanson de la croisade contre les Albigeois, it was strongly emphasized that even Simon de Montfort who hated all Midi heretics, gave orders that no noblewoman was to be molested. Women of rank were normally protected from the rough and brutal common soldiers, but the women of lower social rank were fair game for many indignities. Brutality and the demeaning of women at public gatherings were generally accepted practices in the early thirteenth century.²⁴

Occupied with their own amusements and problems, neither the southern nobility nor the church hierarchy was overly-concerned with

²²Ibid., p. 139.

²³Ibid., pp. 142-44.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 145-46.

the rapidly-rising middle class. Steadily amassing vast fortunes from varied business ventures, rich merchants turned to cultural pursuits in order to occupy the additional leisure time. Being prodigal and extravagant by nature, many southern nobles were generally heavily in debt. The rich bourgeoisie saw in this situation a means by which they could better their social standing. The lure of money helped to lower the formerly insurmountable social barriers between the wealthy merchants and the Midi nobility. Intermarriage between the two classes was to become commonplace. The rich merchants would gain entry into a noble house which meant more social prestige, and the nobles would have the means by which they could alleviate pressing debts and still live in the opulence expected of the nobility.²⁵

The Growth of the Merchant Class

The chief distinction between the noble and the merchant was that the merchant possessed a cash income which, through prudent investments, could be turned into cash capital. With almost all of their income tied up in land, many nobles were led into financial ruin by trying to keep up a high standard of living. This factor led to the expansion of the loan business with the moneylender taking land as collateral. Many feudal statutes forbade the selling of hereditary estates to the merchant class, but in times of need, such restrictions were ignored. Though the nobles could not close their ranks completely to outsiders, they still retained their social prestige. The

²⁵E. Baratier and F. Reynaud, Histoire du commerce de Marseille (Paris, 1951), II, p. 848.

proud nobility capitalized upon their traditions, and even the wealthiest merchant princes could not overcome the stigma of a lower class origin. Although kings, nobles and church prelates entrusted the business of finance and government administration to the merchant class, they sought companionship among their own peers.²⁶

Non-payment of loans enabled wealthy merchants to acquire valuable fiefs and to attain a higher social level as an urban noble. By the middle of the thirteenth century, the large landholdings of the Midi aristocracy had dwindled, and even land rents fluctuated with the value of hard money circulation plus the high cost of living.²⁷

In Arles, Marseille and Nice, nobles were active in domestic and international commerce. Even nobles from estates surrounding Toulouse did not hesitate to seek standing in the bourgeoisie. Through marriage and business alliances, nobles pushed the development of a powerful social group which in future centuries would be known as the "capitalistic" class.²⁸

Despite the lowering of social barriers, intense class struggles were not unusual in Languedoc. In the latter part of the twelfth century, there was a bitter social struggle in Toulouse. There was a sharp division of thought between the richer merchant oligarchy and the small group of local tradesmen who were also highly vocal. These

²⁶Painter, pp. 25-26.

²⁷R. Fawtier, The Capetian Kings of France: Monarchy and Nation, 987-1328. tr. L. Butler and R. J. Adam (London, 1960), pp. 203-204.

²⁸Aubenas, AHES, 537.

factional rivalries turned over more control of citizens' rights and liberties to the Counts of Toulouse during the thirteenth century.²⁹

During the thirteenth century, the old rigidly stratified society in the Midi began to break down. The lowering of social barriers encouraged people to move from one "rung" of the social ladder to the next. This shifting of social status gained impetus with the introduction of symbols and titles which emphasized the growth and importance of the bourgeoisie.

For example, the masses began to indicate and insure their station in life by using the titles of their trades as surnames, i. e., baker, miller, tanner, carpenter, etc.³⁰ Even wealthy merchants and trade-minded nobles favored the use of distinctive symbols in commercial matters.³¹ For easy identification of their commercial firms, merchants used special symbols such as birds, flowers or animals encircled by a decorative wreath bearing the merchant's name. These status symbols later became coats-of-arms, moneterial tokens or organizational symbols.³²

A definite awareness of social status and rank existed on all sides, and a new terminology came into use to indicate the different social rankings. The term noble was being applied to those who in

²⁹John Hine Mundy, "On the Political Institutions of Toulouse in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries" (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1950), p. 150.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 162-63.

³¹RSH, V, 235-36. Special works have been written on this phase of commercial status by such French scholars as A. Franklin, R. de Lespinasse, A. Forgeais and A. de Schødt.

³²Forestié, p. 32.

the past had been known as knights and burghers, and it was to become the specific and exclusive term for this social group. Burgher was to designate individuals with some social status; eventually, the term was used to describe the public offices held by such a person. The special term prud'homme included all of the nobility, while the artisan and the merchant had no specific title--they were simply individuals.³³ However, in Languedoc, the term prud'homme developed a special social meaning, in that it meant a person of some prominence and stature. In all probability, this individual was a leader in the social and political affairs of a town or city.³⁴

There is one interesting social point concerning the status of the working tradesmen. There was a gradual assumption by the artisans and the handicrafters of the special title of prud'hommes. These workers took great pride in the fact that their "word was as good as their bond."³⁵ This social aspect was later to become a very important status symbol to all lower class people. It eventually came to mean a man who was neither a noble nor a true merchant, but simply a "good, hard-working man."³⁶

Commercial traders also had their own system of stratification. At the top were those enriched through maritime trade. By investing their profits in real estate, these wealthy merchants realized

³³Mundy, p. 208.

³⁴Ibid., p. 138.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 16-17.

³⁶Ibid.

enormous revenues which made them influential in municipal matters. The next category included the shipbuilders, the provision merchants and the textile manufacturers. They became known as the nouveaux riches who were recognized for their spectacular commercial ventures--realizing either fabulous profits or similar losses.³⁷

To cater to the ever-expanding tastes of the southern nobles and the church prelates, Midi merchants became highly diversified in both local and foreign trade.³⁸ With so many trades, there was a never-ending quest for raw supplies, and this in turn expanded the domestic and international trade of the Midi.

The world of the wealthy merchant oligarchy consisted of many trade and handicraft guilds which were the basis of the expansion of Midi commercial horizons. Less important merchants were agents for the great merchants, and still others operated small businesses. In the city of Marseille, there were large colonies of foreign traders from Genoa, Pisa, Florence, Barcelona, North Africa and Germany.³⁹

In the thirteenth century, master and apprentice had a special relationship. Normally, it was one of mutual respect and affection. Although a worker was subject to severe regimentation by his guild, he took pride in the quality and execution of his work. It was also the custom of the times that the master was obligated to protect the

³⁷ Baratier and Reynaud, pp. 63-64.

³⁸ Forestié, pp. 190-91. Commercial diversification included carpentry, masonry, furriers, shipchandlers, apothecaries, retail produce dealers, weavers, etc.

³⁹ Baratier and Reynaud, p. 64.

worker from unemployment in case of illness and hard times.⁴⁰

A master was also obligated to feed and clothe an apprentice as well as teach him a trade. A domestic would apprentice himself for two years and pay twenty-five sous in advance for this privilege. The master received a mortgage on all future and current property in case death prevented completion of the contract. This form of mortgage and a similar renunciation of all legal privileges figured prominently in, and was invariably a part of, all commercial contracts of the thirteenth century.⁴¹

Each trade had its own guild and in large cities, such as Marseille and Toulouse, they had their own quarter or street. Small workshops worked independently of each other and were located in the center of the town in order that watchful masters could maintain an easier surveillance.⁴²

One very important aspect of the influence of the merchant was the obtaining of special privileges from the ruling provincial noble. Midi merchants formed an organization known as the "Society and Community of the Merchants of France." Montpellier had the privilege of naming the leader who was listed as "Captain Consul of France and merchants trading in France." This leader performed not only the duties of a group director but also consular duties in dealing for the entire

⁴⁰Forestié, p. 184.

⁴¹L. Blancard, Documents inédits sur le commerce de Marseille au moyen-âge, I, pp. 6-7.

⁴²RSH, III, 337.

group. In this manner, he was in a strong position to obtain special commercial privileges from the provincial count or other rulers.⁴³

The power of a merchant guild can be best exemplified by the dominance of the merciers or notions salesmen at the fairs and in the shops. The merciers were wholesale merchants who went from town to town and from castle to castle to sell their wares. Their constant travelling promoted the exchange of regional products. Recognizing the usefulness of this group, royal authority did not require them to pay taxes in the Midi Region. The disadvantage of this privilege was that with each change of the royal head, this special privilege had to be bargained for anew.⁴⁴ To remove any misunderstandings regarding the overlapping of commercial territories and privileges, the merciers seem to have entered into restricted relationships with other regional groups.⁴⁵

Smaller merchants formed religious confraternities or brotherhoods which at first gave only charitable assistance and spread religious propaganda. Later in the thirteenth century, these brotherhoods became more secretive and attempted to restrict the enormous powers of both secular and religious merchant princes.⁴⁶

Relationships among Midi merchants did not always run smoothly. There was a natural rivalry involving three groups: the merchants

⁴³J. W. Thompson, An Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages (300-1300) (New York, 1928), p. 600.

⁴⁴Baratier and Reynaud, p. 841.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 842.

⁴⁶RSH, V, 236.

and master designers versus the manufacturing merchants.⁴⁷ Even the brotherhoods conducted a small civil war in Toulouse in order to decimate the number of usurers. However, these violent attempts to solve problems of social and economic importance died down but did not fade away.⁴⁸

One main inconvenience to the merchant was the number of languages spoken. In the Middle Ages, there was no national language, and every province had its own patois. Written Latin was universally used for all records. The great Midi merchants kept their accounts in both Latin and Provençal. The constant use of the two languages in many documents has caused much confusion to translators. When the trend towards nationalism began, Latin was gradually replaced as the universal oral and written language by the "langue d'oïl" of northern France which eventually became the national language.

The extent of Midi commercial life was impressive, and in this commercial world there was one individual, the notary, who was indispensable to both the merchant and the noble. Commercial activities could not function properly without the services of this individual. Without help, a notary daily drew up an average of fifty-seven agreements of all kinds.⁴⁹

A notary could become influential in the business affairs of his area. A notary named Giraud Amalric was not only one of the most powerful notaries of the Marseille district in 1250, but also expanded

⁴⁷Ibid., III, 337.

⁴⁸Mundy, p. 104.

⁴⁹Blancard, pp. 45-49.

his power to include all of Provence by 1263. Not only was he under the protection of Duke Charles of Anjou, but he was almost as important as that royal prince.

The notary's office was located on the public square near the tables of the money-changers. Usually, it was only a cubby-hole made out of boards, but it provided adequate shelter for his clients. The public image of the notary was that of an effeminately dressed person seated comfortably on a wooden chair. He always had an attentive ear and a watchful eye. His working year began in the spring, when the ships were ready to sail, and other merchants prepared to go to the great trade fairs.⁵⁰

The notary's importance can be further established by the fact that in the small city of Montauban alone, there were seventy-five notaries. In view of the great number of daily commercial transactions, this number does not seem to be excessive, especially when one considers the fact that all business transactions were conducted by the notaries who were the only public officials able to read and write.⁵¹

The great merchants employed dozens of notaries to handle all the necessary business documents and to keep extensive ledgers on all their accounts. Typical Midi merchants were the Bonis Brothers of Montauban, Jacme Olivier of Narbonne and Jean de Manduel of Marseille. The

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Forrestié, p. 189. A breakdown of the seventy-five notaries in Montauban shows that there were fourteen notaries of the king, eleven notaries of the local bishop, one papal notary, ten legal notaries, two notaries for the consuls of the commune, one notary of the Provost and thirty-six ordinary notaries.

ledgers of these merchants provide a fairly complete picture of thirteenth and fourteenth century commercial activities. The growth and prosperity of the Midi depended on such men. They acted as agents between their clients and factors, and their duties involved the buying of all types of merchandise. Naturally, the profits realized from these commercial ventures made it worthwhile to run the customary risks of brigandage and maritime losses.⁵²

A study of the Bonis Brothers' ledgers reveals that they were worth at least a million and a half livres.⁵³ This sum was invested in land around the city of Montauban, several houses, warehouses, ships, etc. This money aristocracy or l'aristocratie de l'argent of the Midi Region does not appear to have had a similar counterpart in northern France.⁵⁴

L. Blancard gives an excellent account of the far-flung business empire of the Manduel family in thirteenth century Marseille. The first Manduel, Pierre Jean, built the bridge of Crau in 1178 in Arles. His revenues from this venture were sizable. In 1200, Étienne de Manduel established himself in Marseille and opened trade with Sicily. Some later documents show that he had banking connections with Syria, Egypt and the "barbarian" cities of Tlemcen, Oran, Ceuta, Bougie and Tunis in North Africa. He traded raw or manufactured goods such as

⁵²Blanc, pp. 16-17.

⁵³In the Middle Ages, a livre had the value of a pound of silver. By the thirteenth century, the silver had been debased with copper, and the value varied in weight and size from province to province. In the Midi, the livre tournois (city of Tours) was the preferred coinage in commercial trading.

⁵⁴Forestié, p. 183.

wine, coral, wheat, flax, cotton, bolts of silk and sailcloth, thread from Burgundy, and sheepskin and carded wool from Arras and the Barbary Coast.⁵⁵

In 1237, Jean de Manduel succeeded his deceased brother, Étienne, and began sending sugar and alum to England. Not content with the goods trade, he also set up a loan business. This energetic merchant increased not only his father's heritage but also his own fortune. Owing real estate in Marseille and Majorca, Jean de Manduel was a very rich and influential man. His wealth was so impressive, that in 1245, Jean de Manduel married the last daughter of Raymond de Bérenger V, the last Count of Provence and of the House of Catalonia.⁵⁶

These vignettes of two successful merchant princes show the steady rise and influence of the merchant class in the life of the Midi. The moral state of the commercial class in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has never been fully researched. And the extent of debt-ridden nobles deliberately marrying into rich merchant families is not known.⁵⁷

The cosmopolitan atmosphere surrounding the Midi caused great changes in social life, and consequently, to family institutions. But the rural family kept its cohesiveness for a longer period of time.

⁵⁵Blancard, pp. 16-18.

⁵⁶Ibid. The other three daughters of Raymond de Bérenger V had been married off to the Kings of France, England and the Holy Roman Empire.

⁵⁷RSH, V, 325.

Agricultural life demanded far less of the individual than did commercial activities.⁵⁸

The Peasantry in the Midi

Generally, the rural people of the Midi lived a relatively comfortable life. In the rural areas the status of serfdom was weak and inconsistent. The poor soil of the countryside contributed more to an urbanized type of society. The Midi peasant was not overburdened with services or servile dues. A diversified agriculture was common, and, in a way, the peasant was a tenant farmer and gave his lord one-quarter of his land crops and one-half of the crops from his vineyards and orchards.⁵⁹

Forest land was of primary economic importance in the Midi. To the peasant, it furnished food, materials to build his home and shelter for his livestock. To the noble, forest land with its thick groves of trees assured him of plentiful hunting.⁶⁰

In the peasant hierarchy, the hired servant was at the bottom of the social ladder. He was the simple rural worker who owned nothing and was the exclusive property of some noble. Next came the tenant farmer who worked another's property. He had no right of ownership of the land he cultivated and could be thrown off the land without

⁵⁸ Aubenas, AHES, 531.

⁵⁹ The Cambridge Medieval History, ed. J. R. Tanner, et al., VI (1921), p. 482. Hereafter this encyclopedia is cited as CMH.

⁶⁰ RSH, IV, 337.

indemnity.⁶¹

Despite the low social ranking of the peasant, there were self-made personalities among these land serfs. Royal or ecclesiastical serfs occupied specialized positions which enabled them to escape in a sense the miserable lot of their class. Some entered feudal society by holding a rural office or becoming mayor of a village. Others were born or admitted into the entourage of nobles, and by using their intelligence, they could put their humble origin in the background and hold high administrative positions.⁶²

A church serf held a higher social ranking than a manor serf. Peasants sought service with an abbey or religious chapter in the belief that life would be easier. There were various reasons why being a church serf was desirable: it was a means of security to insure one's entry into heaven; it was a means of escaping the violence of the times; it was a means of escaping the constant famines; and, it was a means by which he could enjoy a legal capacity, for sometimes powerful nobles pledged by charter that such a legal privilege was to be perpetual and absolute.⁶³

Church chroniclers would have readers believe that the life of a church serf was enviable; however, there are documents which give contradictory statements. For example, les oblates (lay brothers) performed voluntary services, but with the conditions of the times and

⁶¹Cartulaire de Durbon, p. 112.

⁶²Luchaire, p. 310.

⁶³Ibid., p. 311.

the progressive usurpations by the church prelates, these lay brothers, who had willingly offered themselves and property to the Church for protection and the pursuit of the monastic way of life, were forced into complete serfdom by the Church and committed to all the burdens of this class. Church serfs who had counted on material security often found that it was a myth. Even acknowledging that such abuses may have been exceptional, it was more difficult for a church serf to gain his freedom. Not having the constant money problems that plagued the lay nobles, the Church kept its serf families in bondage longer.⁶⁴

The status of being a royal serf was more preferable to some peasants. These serfs observed the customs and laws of the French monarchy and were not subject to church control.

There were instances when royal serfs were ceded by their masters to a church (in order to pave an easier way to heaven) and refused to submit to the rigid church authority. But, it was unusual for church serfs to leave church security and claim royal protection. The Capetian kings were more than once obliged, in order to keep peace with the Church, to discourage wholesale desertions to the Crown. Evidently, the protection of a more lenient sovereign was more appealing. Serfs soon realized that better guarantees of peace and security could be found in tax-exempt villages, cities and towns. With the growing new social attitudes on the part of the peasantry, control of the prosperous Midi was passing from the Church to the Capetian monarchy.⁶⁵

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 312.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 313.

During the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the peasantry had one status that has become controversial. This was over the meaning of the word collibert which is derived from the Latin word colon (settler) and designated a peasant whose status was non-servile. A peasant was born either a collibert or a serf. A collibert was actually a serf but only one rank higher on the social ladder. Originally, a collibert was a serf freed by his master and given to a church in a condition of semi-freedom. He was actually being given as a redemption for his master's sins and was attached to God's service under the law of the Church.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, writers do not agree as to the exact connotation of the word collibert, and the two words, servus and collibert have been used interchangeably. During the Capetian era, a collibert was either a free or a half-free man heavily burdened with taxes. During the second half of the twelfth century, the term collibert was becoming rare. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, the status of the lowest serf had improved to the rank of collibert, and during the entire century, the generic term servus was being applied to all the non-free population.⁶⁷

In the Midi, conditions for the free peasant had improved to the point where he was no longer subjected to the characteristic obligations of serfdom, i. e., the poll-tax, loss of his property by mortmain and marriage only with his master's permission. By the early thirteenth century, he could freely dispose of his children and his heritage. He owned his land in free tenure and paid only an annual

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 314.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 315-17.

rent--a normal sign of dependence of the peasant with regard to his lord.⁶⁸

There were various ways for a serf to gain his freedom. To gain access to the bourgeoisie in free towns, he could follow an ecclesiastical or military career. Frequently, a noble in desperate need of money would grant special concessions to his serfs. Many serfs simply deserted their masters and fled to the comparative safety of towns and cities. But by the thirteenth century, formalities for freedom were rapidly becoming more simplified. The symbolism of previous eras had vanished. A serf now appeared before an official, church or secular, and obtained a freedom agreement which was a document containing not only the name of the freed serf, but also the formal renunciation by the master as to the serf's person, property and military status.⁶⁹

Contrary to assumptions by other historians, French scholar L. DeLisle strongly insisted that in the thirteenth century, the peasants were far from being dressed in rags. He stated that in the Midi, the male peasants had hard money to buy work aprons, breeches, cloaks, shirts, loincloths and shoes or boots. Their women wore short petticoats, capes, hoods and a doublet, which was a close-fitting garment with or without sleeves.⁷⁰

As for shelter, peasants often built homes of brick. Proof that bricks were used in rural building can be found in the numerous

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 318.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 319-22.

⁷⁰Forestié, p. 60.

transactions recorded in the Bonis accounts.⁷¹ For extra structural strength, some peasants used small wooden beams in the construction of their homes, but others made their homes solely of sun-dried mud bricks. An unusual feature of each home was the strongly reinforced north wall which had to bear the brunt of wintry winds. Each farm was amply supplied with tools and agricultural instruments belonging to the lord, but all maintenance was done by the peasant farmer.⁷² Information was not available as to actual methods of cultivation, land conditions and technological advances.⁷³ The gradual substitution of contracted service for earlier servitude created a shortage of agricultural labor, and this, in turn, caused a rise in wages. In parts of Provence, the landlord received as little as one-eighth of the crop yield, while a quarter was deemed a high proportion to turn over. Man no longer felt bound to the land. There was now a tendency to wander to the cities and towns to seek better paid work and throughout the thirteenth century, bands of wandering workers roamed the trade routes.⁷⁴

In these years before the Albigensian Crusade, the nobility and the clergy were so busy feuding over social prestige and personal wealth, that they failed to appreciate the rising threat of a prosperous and ambitious middle class. This new class with its new ideas and

⁷¹Ibid., p. 193.

⁷²Ibid., p. 200.

⁷³RSH, IV, 307-308.

⁷⁴Joan Evans, Life in Medieval France (London, 1925), pp. 195-96.

new wealth was becoming powerful and influential in many phases of Midi social and economic life. Even the peasantry was rising above its old serfdom status.

The lure of money was helping to lower the old and formerly insurmountable social barriers between those of noble birth and those who amassed great fortunes through their own efforts and intelligence. The merging of the two classes through intermarriage was developing a powerful social group to become known as the "capitalists."

The lowering of social barriers between the nobility and the merchants encouraged the masses to try to better their station in life by climbing up "the rungs" of the social ladder through their own efforts.

The commercial way of life was influencing the theology-based curricula of Midi education. By failing to accept the fact that there was such a new way of life, the Church was unwittingly encouraging the large universities to reject church authority and put themselves under the protection of the nobility who were vassals of the Crown. Thus the demand for better secular education was to lay the groundwork for future bitter struggles between the Church and the State over education.

The new problems of stratification within the bourgeoisie were emphasized by the growth of trade and artisan guilds. Future problems were to arise over the division of privileges between the guilds and municipal administrative groups.

The free and unrestricted way of life under the easy-going secular French monarchy appealed far more to all stratas of society than did the old and rigid feudal life of the Church which permitted no

change in social and economic conditions. In the feudal world of the Church, there could be no alteration in the way of life oriented towards finding salvation in the hereafter. The Midi society encouraged and abetted a separation of secular and religious concepts.

Thus before and after the Albigensian Crusade, the social and economic conditions of the Midi were to furnish a breeding ground for seeds of discontent against the feudal authority of the Church. The social, economic and religious importance of the Midi in the thirteenth century was not underestimated by either Paris or Rome.

CHAPTER III

SOME ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE MIDI

Commercial Growth of the Midi

A warm, sunny climate and a favorable geographical location were the two catalytic agents in the rapid growth and expansion of southern France in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Being a good distance from the Capetian monarchs in Paris, the large cities of Toulouse, Marseille, Montauban, Narbonne and Montpellier enjoyed a large measure of self-autonomy. And because of the business ineptness of local feudal lords, many merchant guilds gained either partial or total control of Midi economic affairs.¹

The southern ports of the Midi were the key to the trade expansion with the Levant countries. And this Mediterranean commercial traffic did much to build up the wealth of the southern merchant princes. The domestic trade depended on the great water arteries of the Rhône and the Garonne Rivers which bore the domestic stream of raw materials and manufactured goods from the Midi to the North.²

In the thirteenth century, Montpellier was the main market center of Languedoc, and its commercial and industrial activities rivaled

¹Max Beer, The General History of Socialism and Social Struggles in the Middle Ages, I (Boston, 1957), p. 180.

²Oldenbourg, p. 23.

those of Marseille. Montpellier merchants found it easier and cheaper to send most of their merchandise via coastwise shipping to Marseille and to the northern Spanish port of Barcelona with whom close commercial ties had also been established. Coastwise trade was apparently more extensive than existing records have indicated.³

Because of its strategic position between the two provinces of Quercy and Languedoc, its navigable river and its natural defenses, Montauban was eyed enviously by the French Crown.⁴ Outside of Marseille, the activities of the smaller Midi ports of Narbonne and Nîmes were seriously threatened when Louis IX (later canonized as St. Louis) had his engineers build the artificial port of Aigues Mortes about 1240. Intent on his own profits, Louis IX tried to channel all foreign trade through Aigues Mortes, and this maneuver effectively hamstrung the development of other Midi ports. Italian merchants used their superior business techniques to take over the control of Aigues Mortes and the inland commercial center of Nîmes.⁵

But the importance of Aigues Mortes stems primarily from its rivalry with Marseille. It had the support of the French Crown which gave it an export monopoly on most of the merchandise from the kingdom. Frequented by Italian merchants, Aigues Mortes absorbed the

³Henri Laurent, La draperie des Pays-Bas en France et dans les pays Méditerranéens (XIIe-XVe siècle) (Paris, 1935), p. 107.

⁴Forestié, p. 181.

⁵The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, ed. M. Postan and E. E. Rich, II, (Cambridge, 1952), p. 302. Hereafter this work will be cited as CEH.

commercial traffic between the Rhône Valley and other Mediterranean countries. But when river silt gradually filled up its harbor mouth, Aigues Mortes went into decline. Merchandise then had to be unloaded over the beaches outside the harbor where it was exposed to inclement weather and pirate attacks, and naturally, merchants were unwilling to use a port which could not guarantee cargo protection.⁶ Yet, Aigues Mortes, in its short life, had profoundly changed the economic life of southeastern France.

The decline of the inland ports of Aigues Mortes and Narbonne, whose harbor mouth became landlocked when the Aude River suddenly changed its course, forced the merchants of Languedoc to turn towards the deep water harbor of Marseille in Provence. By the end of the thirteenth century, Marseille had established lucrative commercial connections with the entire Provençal coast and Catalonia in northern Spain. Marseille rapidly became an important international trade center.⁷

The great city of Toulouse in Languedoc had a strategic location between the Garonne and the Rhône Rivers and controlled the trading routes leading to the Mediterranean, the Rhône Valley and the popular pilgrimage route to the shrine of St. James of Compostella in northwestern Spain. Although Toulouse was a fief of the French Crown, its remoteness from the seat of authority in Paris encouraged a large

⁶Baratier and Reynaud, pp. 285-86.

⁷Ibid., pp. 273-74, 777, 919.

measure of independence.⁸ And so powerful were the Counts of Toulouse that merchants were able to navigate on the Garonne without fear of having their persons searched or their merchandise arbitrarily seized.⁹

Commercial growth must also have affected the social barriers existing among the various classes in the Midi, and even though information on this aspect is scarce, it is safe to assume that there was a conception of dynamism which the freedom and adaptability of a maritime fostered.¹⁰

With the decline of feudalism, the gradual extension of royal authority favored the expansion of commerce. From the reign of Louis IX, the many laws and regulations showed the royal interest in commercial revenues. An important book on weights and measures was published during the reign of Louis IX (1226-1270) by Étienne Boileau, and this book was an arrangement and codification of all the ancient statutes on the various trades. Later laws ensured security for vendors and purchasers against fraud.¹¹

Municipal administrations in the Midi approved various statutes which stipulated that the rights and privileges of every Midi citizen included the right to buy, sell or trade without having to pay any

⁸Robert J. Kovarik, "Simon de Montfort (1165-1218) His Life and Work: A Critical Study and Evaluation Based on the Sources" (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, St. Louis University, 1963), pp. 4-5.

⁹A. Magen and G. Tholin, Archives municipales d'Agen chartes (Villeneuve-sur-Lot, 1876), p. 52.

¹⁰Aubenas, AHES, 538.

¹¹Paul Lacroix, France in the Middle Ages (New York, 1963), pp. 259-60.

duties or taxes and that all resident aliens were entitled to enjoy full citizens' rights. The "free towns" of the Midi were the centers of social life, and city public life was the most powerful instrument of secularization in the thirteenth century.¹²

Financial Affairs

Inaccurate records were a serious handicap to the merchant, for there was no way he could get an overall aspect of his business affairs. This was one reason why many merchants went bankrupt in the thirteenth century. Generally, a merchant had his actual capital invested in many ventures and had no reserves of money which could be used to weather losses caused by the elements or wars.

It is not known whether cash payments were used more frequently than letters of credit, or what was the proportion of payments in hard money to payments in kind, since information on bonds and credit money was seldom given--either written or oral. Because of the few and unsatisfactory documents on finance, any conjecture or reconstruction is open to challenge.¹³

During the period of barter economy in the twelfth century, pepper had a monetary value, because it was sufficiently rare and had a relative value, either by volume or by weight, and it kept well which meant that the quality rarely deteriorated. But in the North, belts

¹²Oldenbourg, p. 24.

¹³Robert S. Lopez, "The Dollar of the Middle Ages," Journal of Economic History, XI (1951), 216-17. Hereafter this work will be cited as JEH.

of cloth were used as a means of payment. In certain respects, the use of pepper and bolts of cloth as "money" tended towards a closed economy. But when the Italian bankers of Genoa and Pisa gradually forced the use of hard money on the Midi merchants, both domestic and international commercial fields expanded.¹⁴

Up to the middle of the twelfth century, contracts of all kinds had been honored by one's word, a handshake or even a kiss of peace. But by the thirteenth century, contracts which had been brief and simple became greatly detailed, regardless of the relative importance of the transaction.¹⁵

Notaries wrote up these contracts in Latin, including not only the substance of the business involved but also the proper names. Since these names were usually given orally by the contracting parties and witnesses in Provençal, they were then immediately latinized by the notary in the document. The obvious inconsistencies in records arising from this practice of such recording makes historical analysis of these documents difficult. An excess of details was preferred by both sides, even to the insertion of clauses of obligation and forfeiture.¹⁶

Cash sales, if recorded at all, were simply noted in a journal. But for credit sales, the merchant made special notations in a large ledger. These notations included the description of the object, its

¹⁴Marc Bloch, "Économie-nature ou économie-argent: un pseudo-dilemme," Annales d'Histoire Sociale, I (1939), 9-14.

¹⁵Blancard, pp. 5-6.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 7-8.

destination, to whom it was sold, the date of delivery, the names of the witnesses of the business deal and the stipulated terms. In some cases where the price was changed, the difference was also recorded.¹⁷

The thirteenth century also saw the development of letters of exchange and security, and this new method was an improvement on the old primitive loan contract. Originally, the exchange or barter contract extended a recognition of a debt which would force a payment in kind, whether it was in the same locality or in some distant town.

There were many types of commercial contracts. Four of the more common forms were: The contract of terrestrial exchange was used primarily by Marseille merchants in carrying on business at the Champagne Fairs in northern France. There the moneylender received from his client a specified amount of money which he then promised to return at a predetermined time and place using the monetary system predominant at the meeting-place. The letter of exchange was simply a letter of notice of payment. To Italian merchants, this letter was only a complement to a contract of exchange and served only as evidence of the intentions of both parties in case of disagreements. This letter of exchange eventually replaced the contract of exchange and acquired both a probatory and executory value. The contract of maritime exchange involved loans for shipbuilding, insurance against sea perils and also permitted creditors to deposit overseas the sums of money necessary for various commercial ventures. However, this document did not come into popular use until the latter part of the thirteenth

¹⁷Forestié, p. 31.

century. Finally, there was the security contract by which the money-lender charged a heavy interest on his loans which was paid by the borrower. But the actual rate of interest was never mentioned in the contract because of the canonical laws against usury. This interest had to be incorporated in the actual money borrowed, and usually, this premium was paid only on the arrival of the ship with its merchandise at the port. Also, the security of the merchandise was more important than the ship.¹⁸

The most important and least-liked moneylenders were the Jews, and as tax collectors and bankers, they were everywhere. Although social and religious outcasts in the eyes of the Church, they became so skilled and adept in financial matters as to become indispensable to the nobility and the church hierarchy. Without them, commerce would not have flourished. Their toleration by other social groups varied with the times. Although forbidden to own land, the Jews monopolized the commercial lifelines in the Midi. And until the Albigensian Crusade, the Jewish financiers in the Midi were generally free from the crushing social and economic prejudices of the remainder of Europe.¹⁹

In Languedoc, influential Jewish and Christian merchants profited from the financial troubles of the Catholic Church, for many of the great churches had impoverished themselves by excessive building enterprises. Midi moneylenders supplied the necessary funds and gradually displaced the church hierarchy as advisers to the great

¹⁸Baratier and Reynaud, pp. 875-884.

¹⁹RSH, V, 360.

lords and to the French Crown. By the early thirteenth century, church influence over the Midi nobility had declined alarmingly.²⁰

Wealthy merchants, such as Juan de Manduel, Jacme Olivier and the Bonis Brothers, kept close track of all debts owed them by the nobility and the Church, and when debts were not honored, guarantees or hostages had to be given the merchants. The commercial ledgers of these merchants furnish evidence that severe judicial measures were taken against the nobles and church prelates in order to force them to pay their debts.²¹

Another commercial privilege which was coveted by the Counts of Languedoc and Provence was the minting of coins, a manifestation of sovereign power and prestige. Later coinage debasement did not seriously hurt the economy of the Midi, but it seemed to bring on a period of moderate economic growth. The Counts of Toulouse and the Bishops of Cahors, Agen, Albi and Rodez are excellent examples of upper class influence in money matters, and it would be extremely enlightening to compare the Midi revenues of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries with those of the French Crown.²²

The weakness of the French monarchy encouraged the Counts of Toulouse to usurp royal monetary powers and use them for their own profits. During the reign of Raymond V of Toulouse, the royal power was so ineffectual that the king's image was no longer imprinted on

²⁰CEH, III, p. 444.

²¹Forestié, pp. 182-83.

²²Luchaire, p. 271.

Toulousain coinage. This provincial minting system lasted until the reign of Philip the Bold who gained complete control of Languedoc in 1271.²³

John Hine Mundy, dealing with the political institutions of the twelfth and thirteenth century Toulouse, stated that "the count had the initiative in the money matter. But the free exercise of this initiative was inhibited by the numerous 'monetarii' who enjoyed lordly rights at the mint. The count's right was therefore a matter of social alignments and agreements by the end of the twelfth century."²⁴

The Church objected to the monetary principles of commercialism, and it further declared that loans with interest were outright usury.²⁵ Nevertheless, great merchants and bankers succeeded in skirting church prohibitions and loan contracts flourished in thirteenth century Midi.²⁶

In the thirteenth century, the Church revived its former policies of social coercion and police power, and in 1215, Bishop Foulques of Toulouse made a speech attacking moneylenders, usury and heresy in the Midi. The people gave him their support, but the real issue seems

²³Maurice Baron, La monnaie de Toulouse, historique, organisation, juridiction (Toulouse, 1917), pp. 18-22.

²⁴Mundy, pp. 120-21.

²⁵RSH, V, 359. On the subject of usury, the Church early recognized the advantage of money loans and opened negotiations with Italian bankers. Even monastery abbés issued life-annuities loaned on permanent and non-permanent securities and actively engaged in commerce.

²⁶Ibid., p. 358.

to have been over the question of debts and credit.²⁷

Why was the question of usury so important to Bishop Foulques? Did his position and his later claim to spiritual guidance motivate his hostility to usury? One fact is that when Bishop Foulques assumed office in 1206, he discovered the Church to be so head over heels in debt, that "the very asses in the stables of the episcopal palace were liable to seizure."²⁸

In 1215, Bishop Foulques applied canon law against usury, but the usury problem was only one phase of intervention in secular affairs by a revived church authority in the Midi. Evidently, Bishop Foulques' future goals were for more discipline within the Church and more regulating and policing of the social mores.²⁹

Trade Fairs

Money played an important rôle in the development of the trade fairs which were a necessary and vital link in the commercial expansion of the Midi. Generally, fairs of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries handled all commercial transactions. The most famous fairs of the Midi were held at Saint Gilles and Beaucaire in Languedec. These fairs offered established markets and were often the only means for the distribution of regional profits and the purchase of staple goods from other countries. However, unlike the northern fairs which

²⁷Mundy, p. 164.

²⁸Ibid., p. 102.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 210-11.

were under royal control, the fairs in the Midi Region were tightly regulated by the provincial counts who provided great storehouses and huge selling halls. Naturally, better fairs meant larger crowds and more money and hence more prestige and prominence for the town or city.³⁰

Decline of the trade fairs was hastened by a system of taxes collected by the French royal authorities at the borders of the Low Countries--Bapaume, Peronne, Roye, Compiègne and Crépy-en-Valois. In 1284, Jeanne, heiress of Champagne, married Philip the Fair and brought Champagne and Brie under direct royal control. Philip the Fair used such a coercive commercial policy that a body blow was dealt to all French fairs. And with the interference of the French monarchy in international affairs, commerce was becoming a "political football." Oppressive taxation forced many merchants to avoid the fairs and the difficult land routes. Finally, Venetian entrepreneurs opened a sea galley route to Bruges and London via the Straits of Gibraltar and the English Channel. Philip the Fair's greed for extra revenues was the foundation for the start of tariff wars and furnished a preview of the mercantilistic policy of the seventeenth century.³¹

Domestic Products and Trade

The Languedoc region was agriculturally rich and Toulouse, its largest city, never had the food problems that plagued Marseille, the

³⁰Thompson, pp. 587-94.

³¹Ibid., pp. 599-602.

largest city in Provence. The municipal administration of Marseille was constantly faced with the never-ending task of obtaining food for the non-agricultural population of the city, and officials were forced to set food quotas for all of Provence and build up and maintain foreign lifelines. This vital need created situations which could not be solved by ordinary commercial methods, and inevitably, economic questions became intertwined with politics.³²

Languedoc was famous for its many large vineyards in which were raised the "petits vins" and much of the "vin ordinaire" of the Midi.³³ In all localities, wines were financially protected. To bring in foreign wines, a merchant had to have the permission of the nobles and consuls of the respective wine-growing areas. Offenders had their illegally imported wines confiscated and, in addition, were heavily fined. Although these restrictions were at times inconvenient to local wine merchants, the tariff barriers were set up to maintain the price of wine at a remunerative rate for the proprietor.³⁴

In general, olive oil, fruits and honey were important items in the diet of the Midi population, and even cheeses were imported from Sardinia and Sicily. In turn, Midi almond crops were exported in large quantities to the Italian cities of Genoa and Milan. Olive oil was a staple item which played a large part in food preparation and consumption, and Marseille used enormous quantities of olive oil

³²Baratier and Reynaud, p. 753.

³³H. Ormsby, France: A Regional and Economic Geography (London, 1950), pp. 420-21.

³⁴Forestié, pp. 201-202.

brought in from the Provence countryside. Beekeeping was another well-developed industry, and the honey was used locally in apothecary shops, where it was the basis for many medicinal remedies. Also, the beeswax was an important ingredient in the manufacturing of candles.³⁵

The development of the livestock industry came about in the eleventh century with the clearing of the dense forests. Monasteries did much to improve agricultural techniques in the Midi; especially in the breeding of pigs, sheep, horses, poultry and mules. Stable animals and poultry have been well-described in the treatises of the times known as volucraires and bestiaries.³⁶ And we find in the records left by the Prior of Saint Martin des Champs that his monastery used much butchered beef and poultry products. French historians interested in the eating habits of the people in the Middle Ages have examined with interest the menus of monasteries.³⁷

Cattle-slaughtering was an important industry in the Midi economy, but transportation facilities were so poor that herds could not be moved any great distance. Since fresh meat could not be kept for any length of time, the slaughter industry had only local or regional importance. In Marseille, butchers formed a special commercial group, and to maintain a steady supply of meat for the population, many butchers raised their own herds of cattle and flocks of sheep for their abattoirs or slaughter-houses. To fatten up their stock, the butchers

³⁵ Baratier and Reynaud, pp. 766-68.

³⁶ RSH, IV, 339.

³⁷ Ibid., 340.

hired small tenant farmers to pasture the animals on the lush mountain slopes in the Comte de Nice and the Comte de Dauphine. Although the small farmers were held responsible for any losses, in return, as a salary, they were permitted to keep half of the cheeses, the wool and other by-products such as hides, tallow, manure for fertilizer, etc.³⁸

Tallow, a by-product of the slaughter industry, became a vital ingredient in the manufacturing of candles used for lighting purposes. Although lighting had been furnished by oil lamps and wax candles for years, municipal statutes had rigidly regulated the production of wax candles. But piracy and unrestrained pillaging had caused wax imports from North Africa and Provence to dwindle drastically, and it became necessary to use the lowly tallow which was also being used in the curing of leather and in the caulking of ships.³⁹

In the thirteenth century, a salt monopoly was coveted by both the clergy and the nobility. Since salt was a daily necessity, enormous revenues were realized by the provisioner. The furnishing of salt to Marseille was largely controlled by the Abbey of Saint Victor, and this abbey's salt monopoly provoked never-ending quarrels between the municipal council of Marseille and the monastery camérier (chamberlain). Although the abbey increased its salt production each year, it was never enough to cover the local consumption, and it was often necessary to obtain additional supplies from Hyères and Berre.⁴⁰

³⁸Baratier and Reynaud, pp. 768-72.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 773-74.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 783-84.

Foreign exploitation of fishing waters around Marseille and the Provençal Coast had been expressly forbidden by the Capetian monarchs. However, fishermen from surrounding lands were tolerated, if they complied with the municipal regulations of Marseille. Contracts were made with particular fishing boats to assure a steady supply of fish which was then sold at a profit to both parties, but prices for a catch were sometimes fixed in advance. Naturally, such a profitable industry could not escape heavy tax levies, and it was not unusual for an unscrupulous tax official to abuse his position and offer certain advantages in order to enrich his own pockets.⁴¹

The spice trade brought in such premiums that some merchants specialized in it alone. The thirteenth century spice middleman usually bought spices in bulk and then resold them at very high prices to the public. However, the spice seller was gradually replaced as a middleman by the épicier or general grocer whose business slowly expanded to include a more varied type of trade.⁴²

Another specialized organization in the thirteenth century was the apothecary guild, and all members of this group were closely controlled and were severely penalized if their herbs and other medicinal remedies were not properly dried or maintained in a proper state of cleanliness. Such regulations were necessary since there were always a few apothecaries who were not above mixing starch, wheat or other materials in their merchandise.⁴³

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 778-82.

⁴²Ibid., p. 775.

⁴³Forestié, p. 132.

In the textile industry, herds of sheep furnished wool to the looms of Albi, the most important wool manufacturing city of Languedoc. Woolen cloth was also manufactured in Montauban, Nîmes and Toulouse, and even in Cahors, a special type of canvas cloth for sails was highly prized by ship captains. In general, the amount of diversified goods which flooded the domestic markets of the Midi was impressive.⁴⁴

Land Transportation Problems

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the land transportation organization in the Midi was still rudimentary. There were special guilds and associations who attempted to keep highways and bridges repaired, but maintenance was practically nil. Pack animals were used to carry merchandise along land trade routes, and not until near the end of the thirteenth century were solid, heavy wagons regularly used.

The manner of land transportation used depended primarily on the distance which had to be covered. Mules trained to the pack-saddle were often used for local and regional transport, and the best mules came from the Haute-Provence region where breeders had vast areas of pasture land. Oxen were used for short trips within a town and its environs, but their importance to distance transportation was negligible. Horse-drawn wagons followed definite itineraries, but a wagon drawn by four horses could only haul 1600 to 2200 pounds. Such a small load is not surprising when one considers the condition of the roads.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Baratier and Reynaud, p. 832.

⁴⁵Ibid.

Normally, wagon drivers and muleteers hired out for a job, a journey or for a fixed period of time, but in imitation of the Italian companies who used salaried carriers in their service, some influential and wealthy Marseille merchants established their own strings of muleteers and wagon drivers.⁴⁶

For self-protection, transporters often formed syndicates in order to furnish reasonable service to all clients. Even under favorable conditions, all land commerce was hazardous, since merchants were subjected to unreasonable high tolls, high taxes and highway robbery. And the dangers of land transportation forced the development of the easier and cheaper river boats, and guilds of "keelmen" or "watermen" controlled all major domestic water routes between the North and the Midi.⁴⁷ But domestic commerce with Provence and the interior of France via the Rhône Valley was popular and profitable because of the relative security of land transportation within these regions.⁴⁸

International Commerce

The international trade of the Midi differs greatly from its domestic commerce. Midi foreign commerce was largely in the hands of Italian banking firms who established large trading colonies in the principal cities along the southern French coast. These firms made numerous agreements with the various counts and municipal councils in

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 890-91.

⁴⁷Thompson, pp. 570-74.

⁴⁸RSH, V, 353-55. The type and volume of internal river traffic, especially in the North, has been little explored.

order to obtain preferred treatment in exchange for improving the business techniques of the Midi business houses. And when the Moslems withdrew from the Mediterranean scene during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Italian merchants stepped in to exploit the profitable Midi markets.⁴⁹ Merchants from Genoa and Pisa established trading colonies in the ports of Narbonne and Montpellier in Languedoc. In the twelfth century, Marseille and the maritime cities of Languedoc did not have what is called a "personalité commerciale." Their economic techniques were inferior, even though their industries were in tune with the times. This "lack of know-how" provided the opening for the progressive merchants of Genoa and Pisa.⁵⁰

Indeed, the impact of international trade on medieval economies should not be minimized simply because the volume was small and the merchants few. Like today, the high costs of transportation and marketing affected the final price more than did the costs of production. Circulation was sluggish and both output and sales were hopelessly limited. But in the Midi, international trade was the foundation of many fortunes, not the domestic trade which was far more risky to its

⁴⁹ RSH, V, 347-48. Arabic commercial influence in the Midi Region has been neglected in scholarly studies. However, a few historians such as Mas-Latrie, Primaudeau and the German Hüllmann have written monographs on trade between the Byzantine world and the West. During the height of the Arabic domination of the Byzantine world, international traders actively used the Mediterranean Sea as the great trade route to the Levant. The Levantine trade has been studied with great success by L. de Mas-Latrie, G. Reyand and P. Vidal.

⁵⁰ André Dupont, Les relations commerciales entre les cités maritimes de Languedoc et les cités méditerranéennes d'Espagne et d'Italie du Xe au XIIe siècle (Nîmes, 1942), pp. 9-10.

investors.⁵¹

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Italian merchant brokers also played an important rôle in Midi commercial affairs. Being bitter commercial rivals, Genoa and Pisa tolerated and encouraged piracy as a commercial weapon against each other. Legalized reprisals were practiced under letters of marque, and this often became full-blown piracy without regard to nationality. In commercial enterprises, Genoa was superior to Pisa and her progressive infiltration influenced the business affairs of the cities in Languedoc.⁵²

Both Genoa and Pisa wanted to control the town of Saint Gilles which was the crossroad of all trade between Toulouse and northern Spain. But, in 1109, in return for their aid, Count Bertrand of Saint Gilles granted the Genoese land in Saint Gilles on which they could build thirty houses. With this commercial colony, the Genoese established an important base from which they could exploit the trade in the Toulouse territory, and not only did the Genoese have direct access to the Rhône Valley but also to the entire Midi Region.⁵³

During the twelfth century, Genoa aggressively undercut the influence of Pisa in Montpellier, Narbonne, Toulouse and Marseille. In the vicious commercial struggle which lasted from 1163-1169, Genoa skillfully contrived incidents which served to reduce the influence of Pisa in the interior of the Midi and confined her commercial activities to

⁵¹Lopez, JEH, 226.

⁵²Dupont, pp. 12-13.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 68-69.

the small coastal towns of southern France.⁵⁴

In the thirteenth century, the technique of negotiations among the cities of Languedoc and Genoa and Pisa was an indication of the type of sophisticated techniques being introduced into both domestic and international commerce which was lacking in the old barter-type economy. Commercial relationships from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries were complex and even confused. There were numerous trade alliances and frequent contract breakdowns. Yet, despite the vicious quarrels and fights over trading privileges, the Italians clearly dominated Midi commerce. Both Genoa and Pisa played significant rôles as intermediaries between the West and the East, and their monopoly of the Levant trade provided a source of fabulous profits and of envy among their rivals.⁵⁵

What was the attitude of the native-born Midi merchants towards the aggressive Italian merchants? That the Midi merchants tried to resist or escape the oppressive Italian control should not be doubted. And to reduce the Italian influence in their international trade, the Midi merchant princes actively worked to create further dissension between Genoa and Pisa. However, being disorganized from their own internal disputes, perhaps because of their fear of severe reprisals by the stronger Italians, the Midi merchants were unable to unite and physically resist the Italian encroachment on their commercial rights and privileges.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 82-90.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 129.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 130.

The intense commercial rivalry between Genoa and Pisa became involved in local politics. Unknowingly, both Genoa and Pisa lost some territory which was attached to Toulouse and Marseille. Since the Italians sought cooperation from the municipal councils and actually solicited their aid, they were obliged to give concessions on the principle of reciprocity. In following this line, they encouraged and gave relief from their oppressive domination to the Languedocian ports. After being modernized in commercial techniques and shipbuilding by the latest Italian methods, the Midi Region, just before the Albigensian Crusade, was enjoying an era of genuine commercial expansion which brought great prosperity to the entire Provençal civilization. But with the religious persecution of the Cathari heresy and the subsequent holy crusade, the brilliant and ebullient Provençal civilization saw its commerce and easy mode of living effectively destroyed.⁵⁷

In the Midi commercial world, all classes of people had cooperated to make the Midi independent and relatively free of royal control. Southern city life was the most powerful instrument of secularization in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and its commercial life led to a freedom of thought which in turn encouraged the growth and spread of a heresy which was to challenge the doctrines and authority of the Church.

The abundance of food and the diversification of crops in the South contrasted sharply with the austere northern economy. And by using their navigable waterways to full advantage and expanding their

⁵⁷Ibid.

coastwise shipping, the Midi merchants became wholly self-sufficient and independent of northern control. Having access to the sea, the Midi population came in contact with new ideas and commercial techniques from other countries. This mingling with other nationalities developed a toleration for an easier way of life which would inevitably conflict with the rigid views of the Church and force a showdown.

The concept of a re-united French kingdom was growing, and with a union of the agriculturally-rich South and the industrial North, the Crown felt that it would be stronger and better able to cope on more even terms with the English monarchy, a perennial adversary. The potential for additional revenues from such a geographical union became more and more tempting to the French Crown.

CHAPTER IV

DESTRUCTION OF A CIVILIZATION

The Church and Heresy in the Midi

Languedoc and Provence were exposed to all of the intellectual currents of the Mediterranean world and probably contained more skeptics, agnostics and unbelievers than any other region in France. Geography and climate contributed significantly to the breeding of a sturdy independence and a strain of fiery resistance throughout the Provençal civilization. Regular contacts with the Moslem world came through Arab merchants and physicians who streamed into the Midi Region from Eastern Europe or across the Pyrenees from northern Spain. Even the Jews were not barred from participation in public life simply because of their religion.¹

The Midi was Catholic in theory and actuality, yet its way of life had encouraged it, without any open rebellion, to become a land of heresy. The Cathari religion had penetrated so deeply into all classes of society that the Church was forced to strike indiscriminately or not at all. Catharism went underground yet survived for nearly a century. Its end was only achieved by the annihilation of the living traditions of Languedoc and Provence.²

¹Oldenbourg, p. 230.

²Ibid., p. 27.

Döllinger, a noted German church historian, had observed that:

Every heretical doctrine which arose in the Middle Ages had explicitly or implicitly a revolutionary character, that is, in the measure that it attained to a commanding position, it threatened to dissolve the existing political order and to effect a political and social transformation. These Gnostic sects, the Cathari and the Albigenses . . . were the Socialists and Communists of that time.³

Whatever the reason, in the Midi there was a deep and widespread hatred of the Catholic Church which found a sympathetic response at every level of society. The anti-clerical bias of the Albigensian preaching has been regarded as one of the major reasons for the success of the heresy.⁴ The propaganda efforts put out by the leaders or perfecti may have been responsible for the wave of fanaticism in the Midi and for irresponsible crimes committed by both the North and the South.

When the new religion not only denied the most sacred traditions of the Church and questioned its fundamental doctrines, there could be no peaceful co-existence. The Papacy did not refrain from trying to stamp out Catharism by any means possible. In the thirteenth century, the Church emerged as a totalitarian power which turned it towards oppression of any new concepts threatening her authority.⁵

³Beer, pp. 137-38.

⁴The Catholic Encyclopedia, ed. Charles G. Herbermann et al., I, (New York, 1907), p. 267. Albigenses was the name given by the Council of Tours in 1163 to the Cathari sect. Although the sect was connected with the town of Albi where the largest numbers were, the headquarters was at Toulouse, fifty miles to the southwest. For a long time all heretics in the Midi were categorized either as Albigenses or Albigensis, although the Albigensians were really only a branch of the Cathari movement as a whole. Heretics were also called Cathari.

⁵Oldenbourg, pp. 80-83.

Outwardly, the Church had great administrative and financial control over the Midi, yet it was incapable of checking the advance of this new heresy which was completely breaking down the resistance among the faithful. Pope Innocent III and his special legates could see no other way to check the heresy than by force of arms.⁶

The most serious charge against the new heresy was that of religious intolerance. But for this attitude, the worldly conduct of the church prelates and priests, the harshness of the papal administration and the quixotic Provençal temperament could be blamed.

Why did the Church persecute the Albigensians so relentlessly? These heretics were not warlike in their opposition to the church authority. Their leaders or perfecti asked for no money but refused to take the oath of loyalty to the Faith. Perhaps their preaching for a return to a simpler and purer religion was regarded by the church authorities as anti-social propaganda, and this campaign of words had to be stopped because it was becoming very effective in influencing the faithful to defect.

Realizing that it was losing control over the Provençal society, the Church panicked. The open heresy brought a genuine fear that this anti-social poison would penetrate all the known feudal world. Christianity was in trouble in the Midi. From Rome, Pope Innocent III, in the last years of the twelfth century, attempted to suppress the Albigensian heresy by calling the faithful into a holy crusade against the Midi "infidels." But first, Innocent III sent in numerous papal missions to re-claim the people to the Faith. But these missions were

⁶Ibid., p. 101.

strongly resented and resisted by the diocesan prelates in both Languedoc and Provence. In 1204, the Pope suspended the southern bishops from all their church functions, and in 1207, Peter of Castelnau excommunicated Raymond VI of Toulouse for aiding and abetting heretics. And finally, in 1209, the murder of Peter of Castelnau was the spark which set off the holy crusade against the Albigensian heresy.⁷

The social basis for the heresy had its start among the lower clergy from which the Albigensian hierarchy was recruited. Essentially, it attracted the great and small nobles and the bourgeoisie or the men with wealth and property. The response of the city crowds or underprivileged classes or rural tenant-farmers was more conservative--even passive. Few of the ordinary folk were active in the heresy movement. They neither sheltered the perfecti nor denounced them to the Inquisition.⁸

The plundering of church lands in the South had reached scandalous proportions before the Church saw the danger. It was an old southern custom for the nobility to take over the property and wealth of the bishops when they died. But in 1144, this custom was abolished, and many nobles swore a solemn oath to defend the bishops and their clergy.⁹

In the Midi, the increasing decadence of the Church itself went

⁷F. W. Bussell, Religious Thought and Heresy in the Middle Ages (London, 1918), pp. 736-37.

⁸Jean Duvernoy, "Albigisme ou Catharisme?" Cahiers du Sud, LXI, (April-June, 1966), 212.

⁹Compayré, p. 7.

hand in hand with economic progress. Even such a personage as the Archbishop of Narbonne was more concerned with filling his treasury than with administering his office. Many of the clergy had taken wives, and some made a living by resorting to the practice of usury which was roundly condemned by the Church.¹⁰

In the Midi, there was a general apathy towards all religion which was further compounded by a materialistic attitude on the part of the bourgeoisie. The Church issued endless papal bulls declaring that the heretics had ruined the land, that the Albigensian heresy was worse than leprosy, that the Albigensians were destined for self-destruction because they rejected the marriage vows, and finally, that all Albigensian believers were consumed by an insatiable greed.¹¹

But despite these allegations, the rebellious and cynical Provençal society deliberately condoned various acts of defiance against the established authority of the Church. Confiscation of church property, acceptance of heresy, contempt for church doctrines, and finally, freedom for intellectual pursuits which commercial wealth provided were permitted, and they were the clinching factors which brought about a religious crusade and then the final political oppression by the Inquisition and the French Crown.

The Impact of Heresy on Midi Society

When Innocent III ascended the papal throne in 1198, the influence and control of the Church in the Midi was at its lowest ebb. His

¹⁰Oldenbourg, pp. 52-53.

¹¹Duvernoy, Cahiers du Sud, 217.

archbishops in Narbonne, Béziers and Carcassonne refused to take repressive measures against the heretics. Even after his special legates had collected damaging evidence which removed high prelates from their church offices, Innocent III discovered that the support of the prelates remaining in Toulouse, Albi and Viviers was highly unreliable. However, the Pope, knowing that he could not permit Languedoc to defy his policies, worked relentlessly to bring the recalcitrant rebels back into the fold.¹²

From 1203 to 1208, special papal missions were sent to Languedoc in order to stem the tide of heresy. Their success was on the dismal side, but for several years, Innocent III persisted in this policy of trying to reform the Midi clergy, converting the heretics and inducing Raymond VI of Toulouse and other great nobles to expel their non-conformists.¹³ In northern France, where the people and clergy were equally as fanatical, the Papacy had to curb the zeal of its prelates who were making thundering denunciations against the "devil's heresy" in the Midi.

The preaching campaigns were put into the hands of the Dominican Order who were under the special protection of the French Crown. The Dominicans introduced the institution of inquisition tribunals into the South. These tribunals continued their infamous work throughout the thirteenth century with their principal offices established in the cities of Toulouse, Carcassonne and Albi. The inquisitional procedures

¹² Steven Runciman, The Medieval Manichee (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 134-37.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

differed from regular church tribunals in that torture was used to obtain confessions, that legal assistance was denied to those accused of heresy and that the judicial competence of witnesses who were called to testify before the Inquisition was not to be questioned.¹⁴

Although the Church branded the Albigensian doctrines as being a genuine heresy, its hierarchy seemed to concern itself only with exposing doctrinal errors through the means of interpretation and expression. But the unorthodox aspects of this heresy could not be neglected; i. e., a belief in the Devil, the condemnation of marriage and the prohibition of the eating of any flesh which was held to be sexually stimulating. Like their Catholic counterparts, the perfecti, men and women, were celibates. But the two heretical dogmas which disturbed the Church were those denying the Trinity and the Incarnation, for these were held by the Albigensians to be hindrances, not aids, towards salvation.¹⁵

The people in the areas where the Albigensian perfecti conducted apostolic missionary work were not sufficiently instructed in the Faith to resist the arguments of these formidable logicians. Converts included burghers, noblemen, an occasional grand seigneur, priests, monks and artisans, but rarely a professional theologian.¹⁶

It is possible that reclaimed heretics simply paid "lip-service" to Catholicism--either worshipping with apparent deep conviction or in

¹⁴Luchaire, pp. 123-24.

¹⁵Oldenbourg, pp. 39-41.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 56.

a spirit of easy-going traditionalism. With no firm evidence on this subject, it is a fair assumption that heresy during the decade of 1220-1230 could have taken outward characteristics which would have seemed to bring it back into line with Catholic practices.¹⁷

Church documents show indications that doctrines of communism and natural law were diffused among the Albigensians. Catholic persecutors accused the Albigensians of being communist agitators because of their methods of evangelical preaching among all classes. But the most serious charge was that the Albigensians were also promising a division of riches and a variety of indulgences which were to be obtained at the expense of the Church.¹⁸

The most noted heresy-hunter of them all, Bernard of Clairvaux, testified concerning the social ethics of the Albigensians:

If you ask them, none can be more Christian than these heretics; as far as their conduct is concerned, nothing can be more blameless; and their deeds accord with their words. The Cathari deceives no one, oppresses none, strikes none; his cheeks are pale from fasting, he eats not of the bread of idleness, and supports himself with the labour of his hands.¹⁹

It seems doubtful that the Albigensians ever possessed extensive communistic institutions. The sect had no real opportunity to put such ideas into practice. And considering the fact that as soon as the Church realized the threat of this heresy, she embarked on a policy of ruthless persecution by fire and sword, realization of any type of communism under such conditions was out of the question.²⁰

¹⁷Ibid., p. 231.

¹⁸Beer, pp. 132-33.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 135.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 136-37.

The Midi had enough intellectual flexibility to assimilate this strange new doctrine--archaic and different in nature, but with a vitality to make it a powerful economic factor and with enough critical feeling to keep it from degenerating fanaticism, Pietism or theocracy.²¹

Indeed, many of the lesser nobility would attend the Albigensian assemblies where they listened carefully to heretical sermons which were delivered in the form of poetry containing cleverly contrived phrases attacking the Church. However, to have survived in its conflict with the Church, Catharism would have had to increase the number of "secure" places for its supporters (as would happen in another religious war in the sixteenth century).²²

We cannot really answer this question, because unfortunately, almost all of the Cathari writings were confiscated and systematically destroyed by church and secular authorities. Researchers have had to rely on the documents of the Inquisition which presented only the views of the Church. But, as the Church was more concerned with the religious attitudes towards the church doctrines, little regard was given to the social and economic aspirations of the Albigensians.²³

However, the information which has been gleaned from church records, has shown that the Albigensians favored a communal life and a cooperative form of economy, and that they emphasized the evangelical

²¹Duvernoy, Cahiers du Sud, 213-18.

²²Ibid.

²³Beer, pp. 129-30.

poverty-Christian ideal of life. Private property and marriage were considered to be the evils of a materialistic and evil world. And the tenets of the Cathari religion were to love one's enemies, to be their brother's keeper, to be peaceful, to show humility and to keep a sexual purity.²⁴

The Albigensians were divided into two classes--the perfect and the faithful. The perfect or perfecti were the leaders who lived ascetic lives in poverty. The ordinary folk or the faithful, though renouncing the doctrines of the Church, pursued a normal livelihood. Pacifism was an important tenet of the Cathari heresy. The Albigensians were opposed to all force and to any kind of external coercion, except when threatened with annihilation.²⁵

Many southern nobles, including the powerful Raymond VI of Toulouse, tried a reconciliation with the Church, but to bring this about, they would have had to give in to the demand of the Papacy to persecute their own subjects, and they were temperamentally incapable of doing this, at least not in the manner demanded by the Pope. Over half of the ordinary folk in Languedoc were members of the Albigensian sect, and it was an impossible task for the nobles to find out which of their subjects were heretics.

The male and female perfecti were so filled with the Holy Spirit that they were worshipped as God by the ordinary believers. The perfecti had no true home and wandered around the countryside, preaching and giving the "Consolamentum" or last rites to the dying faithful.

²⁴Ibid., p. 131.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 128-29.

But the one Albigensian rite which horrified Rome was the Endura in which the Cathari beliefs were carried out to a logical end. A perfect would deliberately commit suicide through self-starvation. Such a death inspired the ordinary faithful to revere the perfect as a martyr and saint.²⁶

The social edifice of the Albigensians depended on the great families with their traditions handed down unbroken from father to son. The lords of Niort, Saint Michel, Festes, Fanjaux, Mirepoix, Castelbon, Castelverdun, Carabet and Miravel were widely known for their heretical beliefs. There was a strong sense of solidarity among the southern nobility which continued for several generations and was a source of frustration to the Church.²⁷

The perfecti did encourage marriages among the ordinary faithful; otherwise, mixed marriages between Catholics and Albigensians were shunned. Justice was forbidden by the Gospel, but not arbitration. The perfecti tried to appease quarrels, solve differences and keep peace among the high-ranking, turbulent nobles. Delinquents, murderers and highwaymen were comforted and encouraged to repent their sins. It is interesting to note that within the hierarchy of the heresy, there was still a social distinction. An ordinary perfect was called "Bon chrétien," but a distinguished or noble perfect was addressed as "Bon seigneur" or "Monseigneur."²⁸

²⁶Runciman, pp. 158-59.

²⁷Oldenbourg, p. 66.

²⁸Duvernoy, Cahiers du Sud, 213-14. The perfecti were dedicated black-clad men or women who travelled by couples to spread their beliefs in every village, château and city. They were received everywhere in the Midi with rapturous veneration. Oldenbourg, p. 50

The support of the noblewomen of the southern nobility did much to spread the heresy. The most fervent heretic among the noblewomen was the Countess of Foix who left her husband, Count Raymond-Roger of Foix to become a perfect. Esclarmonde Foix, his sister, gained renown as the most holy of all the Albigensian women perfecti. She firmly believed in equality between men and women, and to emphasize her point, she used to appear at her brother's court and attempt to enter the debates between the heretics and the Catholic priests. Her interruptions of the theological debates were resented by the priests. And on one occasion at her brother's castle of Pamiers, one monk bluntly told the noblewoman, "Go, Madame, spin at your distaff. You know nothing of such matters."²⁹

The Albigensians were often called tisserandes or "weavers." This was an indication that the heresy had a large following in the textile industry. As their trade covered both Eastern and Western Europe, many Cathari missionaries became itinerant cloth merchants. In the Midi, cloth shops were natural meeting-places where the women gathered and exchanged gossip on old and new happenings. The close contact between buyer and seller provided a perfect atmosphere for the exchange of new concepts.³⁰

To camouflage their calling in times of persecution and also to earn a livelihood, the perfecti worked at common trades, such as troubadours, cobblers, bakers, woolspinners, hairdressers, coopers, saddlers or masons. And despite their contempt for the physical body,

²⁹Runciman, p. 159.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 132-33.

many perfecti became renowned for their medical skills. Steven Runciman, an English medieval historian, likens their medical theories to be "very similar to those of the Christian Scientist healers of today."³¹

The privacy surrounding a physician's calling furnished innumerable opportunities for the spreading of the new heretical concepts. Their skill in medicine and their contempt for the body created a paradox, but such a situation was a powerful tool for proselyting. For example, a perfect named William of Ayros constantly visited villages and châteaux to heal the sick and preach the new heresy. For his medical services, he took no fees and furnished his own drugs. This approach to proselyting hastened the suspicions of the Church about the unreliability of the medical profession in the Midi. In other cases, the weavers' guilds were particularly suspect of heresy, and the number of weavers began to decline because of the constant persecution by the Inquisition tribunals.³²

In the Midi, heresy became strong not only through the religious ignorance of a large secularized laity but also through its own forceful teachings. The Albigensian priests were far closer to their own flocks than the Catholic clergy. Being poor, they mixed easily with the masses and shared their daily labor. They gave new courage to the poverty-stricken through the example of their own lives which were more severe than those of the lowest peasants. The perfecti embodied a genuine kind of power and authority without any pomp and ceremony.

³¹Ibid.

³²Oldenbourg, pp. 314-15.

They claimed to be a "Church of Love" and were against violence to any man, and during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the Albigensian sect flourished and grew prosperous. They offered a greater unity, and a richer and more spiritual inner life than Catholicism.³³

By the beginning of the thirteenth century, there were at least two hundred perfecti, both men and women, in Languedoc. However, this figure is not reliable, since it comes from a hostile source--the church records. The Albigensians revolutionized religious practices in the Midi. They did not build churches nor did they collect relics for adoration. All donations of money were used to promote Midi handicrafts and improve the guild organizations. The Albigensians seem to have been prominent in domestic trade but apparently never had the desire to infiltrate international commerce.³⁴

The Albigensian sect probably never numbered over a thousand apostles at any one time, but it took the Inquisition decades of pitiless persecution and terrorization to suppress the sect. The most famous Albigensian Bishop was Guilhabert de Castres of Toulouse who spent his life on pastoral visits. It was he who asked Raymond de Peirella, the seigneur of Montségur, to put his fortress at the sect's disposal and to organize the last headquarters of the Albigensian resistance movement.³⁵

³³Ibid., pp. 56-57.

³⁴Duvernoy, Cahiers du Sud, 212-13.

³⁵Oldenbourg, p. 235. There is little information on Guilhabert de Castres who seems to have been one of the greatest personages in thirteenth century France. In 1207, he had held his own with St. Dominic and the papal legates during the heresy debate at the Château of Montréal.

The women of the Midi, both noble and peasant, were more ardent about the new faith than were the men. They coerced or dragged along in their wake their more cautious and not overly-enthusiastic husbands. The men had certain obligations, both social and military, to perform and could not afford to be too open in the practice of a new religion which was adamantly against the giving of loyalty oaths.³⁶

The Albigensians encouraged education among its most promising members, and the most gifted scholars were sent to the University of Paris to study theology and other scholastic topics. The reason for this step was to have these scholars better able to match or exceed the Catholic representatives in theological debates.³⁷

The effect of the eloquent Albigensian preaching on the ordinary people in the Midi was overwhelming. A modern reader cannot imagine the emotional impact made by the spoken words of a skilled speaker on ignorant and prejudiced minds. The anti-clerical diatribes by the perfecti concerning the worldliness of the Church produced violent excitement which was then transformed into action. Emotions, tears and spiritual upheavals are the factors which accurately portray the violent, high-strung life of the thirteenth century Midi Region.³⁸

The Albigensian sect is known to have had only three cemeteries for its faithful--Puy-laurens, Montesquieu and Lordat. In all probability, the Catholic clergy closed its eyes to the existence of these

³⁶Ibid., pp. 60-62.

³⁷Beer, p. 160.

³⁸Johann Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (London, 1937), pp. 4-5.

burial grounds. But the influential perfecti were buried secretly in order to prevent desecration by Catholic fanatics.³⁹

Catharism flourished in the Midi because of the fascination of the readily grasped dualistic principles of Good and Bad, the remnant of the Jewish and Moorish doctrinal elements from Spain, the wealth, leisure and imaginative minds of the inhabitants of Languedoc, the open contempt for the corrupt clergy, the protection of the heretics by an overwhelming majority of the nobility, and the intimate local blending of national aspirations and religious sentiments.⁴⁰

On the eve of the Albigensian Crusade, the Church stood for neither justice, peace, order, charity nor God, but for the authority of the Papacy. This position brought about a terrible confusion of values and forced the Church to subordinate all moral considerations to the defense of her secular interests. The strength of the Albigensian sect derived in part from its comparative poverty, and the fact that they were not responsible for the administration of public affairs.⁴¹

The Albigensian Crusade

The nobility, when not at Court or celebrating the numerous feast days, had scarcely nine months remaining in which to keep their affairs in order. In order to keep their estates intact, they carried on a continual guerrilla-type warfare against bandits, aggressive neighbors

³⁹Duvernoy, Cahiers du Sud, 211.

⁴⁰Catholic Encyclopedia, I, p. 268.

⁴¹Oldenbourg, p. 75.

and insubordinate vassals. The Cathari religion tried to bring about a change in the war loving nobility through preaching a humane doctrine regarding the value and dignity of a human life. And yet the Church denounced the connection of the nobility with these heretical doctrinal concepts as scandalous. The Church was in a dilemma.⁴²

In 1208, after failing to persuade the people of the Midi to abandon their allegiance to the Cathari heresy, Innocent III called for a holy war to stamp out the rebellion against church authority. Economic gain in the form of confiscated land was held out as a reward to the northern crusaders. At this time, Philip Augustus, who was on the French throne, withheld his support, since he feared that the English would take the advantage and plan new attacks on his holdings. Furthermore, he resented papal interference in French internal affairs.

Even after Innocent III had declared a holy war against the Albigensians, the general attitude of the inhabitants of Toulouse was "to wait and see." The average citizen of Toulouse and the rest of Languedoc could not conceive that the northern crusaders were a deadly enemy who would take away his freedom. Only when Simon de Montfort appeared on the scene were the suspicions of the people of Toulouse aroused, because Simon de Montfort was known as a ferocious enemy of all heretics.

In 1209, an army of northern crusaders commanded by Simon de Montfort captured the city of Béziers and massacred all twenty thousand inhabitants. The religious crusade soon became a destructive war

⁴²Ibid., pp. 69-70.

of conquest. At first, the southern nobility was badly disorganized and lacked a competent military leader. However, they soon found a leader in Raymond VI of Toulouse, and when he died, his son, Raymond VII, assumed command.⁴³

At first, the northern crusaders arrived in successive waves in the Midi, but their normal tour of duty in the field was only forty days. When the tour of duty ended, most of the crusaders returned to their northern homes. This constant turnover of troops probably prolonged the Albigensian Crusade.⁴⁴

But, during the first years of the Crusade, the Church could rely on some of the southern aristocrats for support, but most of these nobles were from Provence, an area relatively untouched by heresy. Yet in the region between Montpellier and the Pyrenees, only isolated groups of supporters could be relied upon.⁴⁵

The Church was constantly irritated by the "weathervane" character of Raymond VI, and his successor, Raymond VII. When in distress, these clever Counts of Toulouse were ready to promise the Church anything but carried out only those promises which were of the most benefit to Languedoc. Innocent III was probably justified in saying that the southern nobles were "worse than the Saracens" in keeping their end of a bargain. As for the Albigensian Crusade, the Church firmly believed that the principles behind it would lead to the salvation of

⁴³Mundy, pp. 100-101.

⁴⁴Pascual Guebin et Henri Maissonneuve, Histoire Albigeois (Paris, 1951), p. 18.

⁴⁵Oldenbourg, p. 100.

the human race.⁴⁶

One important Catholic chronicler of the Crusade was a young man named Pierre des Vaux de Cernay. Being the nephew of a Cistercian abbé, he was highly esteemed by his own superiors and the Pope. De Cernay was charged with preaching against the heretics and later became Bishop of Carcassonne. In 1213, he was appointed the official historian of the Albigensian Crusade. Most of the information on the Crusade comes from his chronicles. De Cernay emphasizes the hatred of the Church towards the Albigensians in these words: "Il a certainement conçu le dessein d'exterminer les hérétiques. ..."⁴⁷

Also, the northern crusaders dealt severely with "backsliders" within their own ranks. One priest was accused of becoming too attached to the former lord of the Château of Montréal. He was arrested, degraded by the Bishop of Carcassonne, tied to the tail of a horse and dragged through the entire town of Carcassonne and finally was hung. "A just penalty," says Pierre des Vaux de Cernay.⁴⁸

The first phase of the Albigensian Crusade lasted nearly twenty years, 1209-1229, and during that time, the religious issue had become confused with economic gain. Simon de Montfort and his knights were not particularly concerned with the heretical beliefs of Languedoc, for they simply wanted the large estates of the wealthy southern nobles. The massacres at Béziers and Carcassonne in 1209 dissipated all hope of the Church that the southern nobles would attempt any kind of

⁴⁶Catholic Encyclopedia, I, p. 269.

⁴⁷Guebin et Maissonneuve, p. 16.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 22

a reconciliation. Innocent III disavowed these atrocities, but at the Council of Montpellier in 1211, he yielded to the pressure exerted by Simon de Montfort and his knights to persecute the Midi heretics to the fullest measure. After Simon de Montfort's great victory at Muret in 1213, during which he used a "scorched earth" policy, the southern nobles capitulated. They reconciled themselves with the Church and promised faithfully to suppress all heretics in territory under their control.⁴⁹

In 1216, Simon de Montfort gave his oath of loyalty to Philip Augustus and became the most powerful vassal in the kingdom. Not content with his spoils, de Montfort, under the pretense of suppressing heresy, invaded the Pyrenees fiefs of the King of Aragon, the Counts of Foix and Comminges and the Viscounts of Béarn and Couserans. Successful in his conquests, Simon de Montfort crushed any expansionist ideas that the Aragonese monarchs might have had in the Midi.⁵⁰

In 1217, the citizens of Toulouse with Raymond VI as their leader rebelled and threw their French conquerors out of the city. While trying to retake Toulouse, Simon de Montfort was killed in June, 1218. But with his death, he left to the citizens of Toulouse a heritage of houses in ruins, an empty city treasury, a destroyed commerce and a decimated male population. Although aware of the seeming hopelessness of their situation, the people of the Midi continued to nurse an implacable hatred for all northern crusaders.⁵¹

⁴⁹Runciman, pp. 140-42.

⁵⁰Guebin et Maissonneuve, pp. 10-29.

⁵¹Oldenbourg, pp. 219-20.

With the crusade on the verge of collapsing, Philip Augustus, in 1218, decided to intervene directly in the struggle to the south. Politically, his timing was excellent, for the crusaders were quarreling among themselves over the division of the spoils, and the Midi was suffering from the effects of Simon de Montfort's "scorched earth" policy. By 1220, the Albigensian episode was apparently over, but nothing had been accomplished but material destruction, and heresy still flourished openly.

Innocent III excommunicated Raymond VII and assigned all his estates to the French Crown. All heretics were to be examined by the Inquisition tribunals, and if found guilty, they were to be burned at the stake. From 1217 to 1229, Raymond VII had fought bitterly against Simon de Montfort, and later against the son, Amaury de Montfort, and finally, against the King of France. Against the Crown, Raymond VII suffered final defeat, but by that time, his cause was exhausted and drained of all resistance.⁵²

After years of sporadic guerrilla fighting, Raymond VII of Toulouse realized that the Midi needed some sort of a peace treaty in order to rebuild the economy to its former prosperous standards. Count Raymond and his nobles had no illusions about the harshness of the treaty terms which would be imposed on them by the French Crown. In 1229, Blanche of Castille, while acting as Regent for her young son, Louis IX, forced the Treaty of Meaux on Raymond VII and the Midi nobility. Its harsh terms included the extermination of all heretics, the restitution of all church property, compensation for all church

⁵²Mundy, p. 114.

damages, the foundation of a theological college, obligatory penitential voyages to the Holy Land, a list of towns to be dismantled and the amount of indemnities to be paid, and the swearing of homage by all southern nobles to the French king. In addition, the Crown took immediate possession of all territory between the Rhône River and Narbonne in Languedoc, and upon the death of Raymond VII of Toulouse, the Province of Toulouse would revert to the Crown.⁵³

To enforce the religious clauses of the Treaty of Meaux, the Inquisition was brought to Toulouse in 1229 by the Dominican Order. At first, inquisitional methods were benign. But the resentment in Toulouse, Narbonne and Albi introduced a wavering in the use of too strong measures by the Inquisition which lasted until the final rebellion in 1240. After 1240, persecution became so intensive that the Albigensians were forced to go underground. Louis IX offered southern nobles amnesty in exchange for their active participation in the final extermination of the Albigensians.⁵⁴

From 1222 to 1232, an uneasy truce had existed between the Midi and the Inquisition. And in 1232, the fortress castle of Montségur became the last refuge from persecution by the Inquisition. This truce period fostered a new and dangerous element against the Church-- a growing southern patriotism. However, there was no real chance for internal peace while the Church had the power to threaten excommunication of all the nobles who had reconquered their own land. Peace with the Church was becoming vital to Raymond VII. Whether he might have

⁵³Oldenbourg, pp. 216-17, 249-50.

⁵⁴Duvernoy, Cahiers du Sud, 219.

gained clemency for the heretics remains questionable, for the Church never allowed him to furnish proof of his good intentions.⁵⁵

A new political crusade by Louis IX caught Languedoc badly crippled and struggling back to normalcy. The Inquisition was a worse disaster for Languedoc than the pending annexation by the Crown, and the years of oppression by the Dominican Order finally forced the southern nobility into one last desperate revolt. In the spring of 1240, Raymond Trencavel commanded a polyglot army of exiles, Aragonese and Catalan troops which advanced down the Aude Valley to Carcassonne. At first, Raymond VII did not support this premature revolt, because through complex political alliances, he was planning a rebellion of his own. However, both Trencavel and Raymond VII were defeated, and in 1242, a peace treaty was signed. This last stand by Raymond VII has been described in the eyewitness accounts of Guillaume de Puy-laurens, an inquisitor for the Faith in the city of Toulouse and also by the sénéchal Guillaume des Ormes who had held the city of Carcassonne for the King of France.⁵⁶

Finally, in 1243, the last Albigensian stronghold of Montségur fell to the troops of Louis IX led by Raymond VII. A combination of treachery and the withdrawal of noble support were the crowning blows to the Albigensians.⁵⁷

The Crown's intervention in the troublesome Midi question was

⁵⁵Oldenbourg, pp. 227-28.

⁵⁶Viollot-le-Duc, La Cité de Carcassonne (Paris, 1881), p. 8.

⁵⁷Bussell, p. 738.

considered to be a right and a duty. By virtue of his oath, the King was the natural defender of church doctrine and the executor of the judgments rendered by popes, bishops and councils. With this interpretation, laws against the heretics were passed and carried out by Philip Augustus (1180-1223), Louis VIII (1223-1226) and Louis IX (1226-1270).⁵⁸

The crushing of heresy in the Midi Region was imperative for the politically ambitious Capetian monarchy. Languedoc and Provence had shown strong separatist tendencies which might have prevented the union of northern and southern France into a united kingdom. The early history of the Capets was largely provincial and relatively unimportant, but the important factor is that the Capets made the French throne hereditary by primogeniture. Later on, their thorough subjugation of the great northern nobles proved to be a sound policy. The attitude of Philip Augustus toward the Albigensian Crusade had been astute and prudent. He consistently maintained suzerain rights in Languedoc but refused to aid Innocent III when he appealed to the King to open the Crusade in 1209. But the King did permit the Pope to recruit armies in his territory.

The constant vacillation between fear of hell and desire for salvation, cruelty and tenderness, harsh asceticism and sensual desires, hatred and love were carried to extremes in the Midi. The acquisition of money was important to the southern nobility, and when this was combined with an extravagant opulence, the Midi Region had an atmosphere of unleashed passion which was completely destroyed by the end

⁵⁸Luchaire, pp. 508-509.

of the Albigensian Crusade. Survivors fled to Lombardy which was another hotbed of heresy. Its towns and villages were centers of propagation and refuge for Albigensian survivors. A reign of terror was conducted by the Inquisition long after the heresy had lost all religious, political and even social significance.⁵⁹

The Loss of a Civilization

The Crusade eventually compromised the humane attitude of the perfecti towards life. There was a possibility that their pacifism contributed to the relative weakness of resistance in Languedoc at the beginning of the Crusade. Another factor was the lack of a centralized military command to combat the northern armies. Guerrilla tactics used by the Albigensians were unable to stem the tide of the larger and stronger northern invasion armies.⁶⁰

By 1227, Languedoc had no reserves of strength left but continued to fight only to retain its independence. The Pope found it necessary to destroy Languedoc as an independent republic, because he could not let the region challenge his authority. Morally speaking, a separation had already taken place. The Church was also the hated foreign conqueror, and Catharism as a persecuted religion had by force of circumstances become identified with nationalism.⁶¹

The constant ravaging of food resources in Languedoc by the northern armies was also an important factor in forcing the region to

⁵⁹Beer, p. 159. Huizinga, pp. 18-21. Bussell, pp. 743-44.

⁶⁰Oldenbourg, p. 70.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 228-29.

surrender. And the constant devastation of the countryside produced such terror for the peasants that they gave up in despair.⁶²

Marseille, the largest city of Provence, never welcomed French sovereignty. The Marseille commune made three separate revolts against the tyranny of Charles of Anjou in 1252, 1257 and 1262, but Charles successfully put down these rebellions against his authority. He did permit the citizens of Marseille some privileges and promulgated his laws under the title of "chapitres de paix."⁶³

Religion actually played only a restricted role in the struggle between the North and the South. The ultimate prizes of authority and revenues did not go to Rome but to the French Crown and a slowly evolving central state. Finally, the deliberate destruction of the Languedoc region by envious northerners created an atmosphere of hatred and distrust that has persisted through the centuries.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 215-22.

⁶³Blancard, pp. 18-20.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

To have a clearer understanding of the downfall of the Provençal society, it is necessary to recall the Treaty of Verdun (843 A. D.) which completed the dismemberment of the Empire of Charlemagne into the now well-known three kingdoms, the westernmost of which was the geographical nucleus of modern France.¹ With the extinction of the Carolingian dynasty, the House of Capet came to power and began to play off the growing strength of the towns and their commerce against the feudal nobility and the Church.

The industrial activity of northern France, the international fairs at Champagne and the prosperity of the towns and ports of the Midi Region formed strong bonds joining the North, the Middle and the South. The Capetian monarchs wanted to formally unite the three regions. A united French kingdom would give the Capets an economic foundation on which to build a centralized national policy.²

There might have been a lack of common interests and understanding between the North and the South before 1209, but there were no signs

¹In 843 A. D., the three sons of Louis the Pious (814-840) divided the Empire of Charlemagne by the Treaty of Verdun into three kingdoms. The Western Kingdom went to Charles the Bold; the Middle Kingdom went to Lothair and the Eastern Kingdom went to Louis the German.

²Beer, pp. 173-74.

of outright hatred. In 1229, after the twenty years of the Albigensian Crusade, Languedoc became categorically united to France in the most traditional fashion--a political marriage between Alphonse of Poitiers, the second son of Blanche of Castille, and Jeanne, Countess of Toulouse and the only daughter of Raymond VII.

In 1249, Raymond VII died, leaving no legitimate heir. The Province of Toulouse passed into the hands of Alphonse of Poitiers. After the end of the Albigensian Crusade, the Midi was, for all practical purposes, colonized, exploited and dominated by the northern monarchy. Both Alphonse and Jeanne died in 1271, also without issue. Their deaths finally gave to the French Crown a region which had been, de facto, a French province. The Crown emerged stronger than ever and soon was able to defy the Papacy itself.³

The foundations of church authority were seriously undermined by the oppressive Inquisition which brought about a lowering of the christian morals of the Catholics. And the commercial oligarchy, no longer content with local and regional power and growing in prestige, identified itself with royal judicial powers and administrative functions. Civic democracy and communal institutions were practically dead.

The victory over heresy was costly to the Church. It had forgotten a simple truth stated by Saint Hildegarde in the twelfth century: ". . . that a man who errs in religious matters is still one of God's creatures, and that to deprive him of his life is a crime."⁴

³Oldenbourg, p. 365.

⁴Ibid., p. 367.

The extreme bitterness generated by the holy crusade of the Pope was an expression of hostility between established order and heresy. The main weakness of the Albigensian heresy in the Midi was that it relied too heavily on the support of a highly emotional and overly-sentimental nobility who were no longer the renowned warrior-knights of old. The prosperity and leisurely way of life influenced all classes to pursue a course of least resistance in all matters.

It is difficult to make an assumption on what course the heresy in the Midi might have taken, if the Church had followed a policy of toleration. A primary drawback to research on all aspects of this thesis was the lack of reliable and plentiful sources on social and economic facts and theories. The Church, being the dominant authority throughout the Middle Ages, was interested only in preparing the living for life in the hereafter and not in social and economic problems.

Domestic and international trade in the thirteenth century brought new concepts of religion, arts and politics into southern France. The wealthy merchant class was reaching out for more and more secular administrative power, and the Church finally realized that its position in the feudal world was being seriously challenged.

In the destruction of the Provençal traditions, the Church won a Pyrrhic victory. Now the Capetian monarchy stepped in to reap a social, economic and political windfall from a weakened Church. Seeing no other way out of their dilemma, the southern nobility took the oath of loyalty to the Crown. The ordinary folk adjusted to a new master as best as they could, hoping for a new and more fruitful life. The merchant class tried to recoup its losses but was unable to rebuild southern commerce to its old standards of prosperity.

The people of Languedoc and Provence have lived for centuries with the unhappy memories of crushing defeats suffered at the hands of the armies of northern France. Even in the twentieth century, southern Frenchmen, more volatile and obstinate than their northern cousins, still resist the central authority of Paris and claim that the Parisian administration has never understood them or their needs.⁵

Another recent French writer, M. Joseph Delteil, has written extensively about the Midi. He, too, is bitterly resentful over the wanton destruction of the Provençal society in the thirteenth century. And he fiercely extols the mixture of many races which made up the population of Languedoc and Provence--the ancient Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Jews, etc. He further claims that the Midi, or Occitanie, was, and still is, a unique country, "having one foot in the Mediterranean, which after all, is only a lake, and the other in the nordic world"⁶

Thus the temper of the Midi Region, with its culture, social relationships and religion, was entirely alien to that of the less cultured kingdom of northern France. Like the Italian culture of the fifteenth century, this southern society favored a pagan type of life. The warm climate, fertile land and a proximity to the Mediterranean Sea formed a combination that produced a superior civilization.

An analysis of the destruction of the Provençal civilization

⁵Maurice Louis, "L'occitanie à travers le temps," Cahiers du Sud, LXI, (April-June, 1966), pages unnumbered.

⁶Joseph Delteil, "Les temps Cathares," Cahiers du Sud, LXI, (January-March, 1966), p. 2.

in the thirteenth century leads to speculation as to whether the Renaissance might have begun in the Languedocian city of Toulouse and not in Florence. All the ingredients were there--wealth, leisure, anti-clericalism and the relaxation of rigid caste lines.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aubenas, Roger. "La famille dans l'ancienne Provence." Annales d'Histoire Économique et Sociale, VIII (1936), 532-41.
- Baratier, E. and F. Reynaud. Histoire du commerce de Marseille. Vol. II, Paris, 1951.
- Baron, Maurice. La monnaie de Toulouse, historique, organisation, juridiction. Toulouse: Imprimerie M. Bonnet, 1917.
- Beer, Max. The General History of Socialism and Social Struggles in the Middle Ages. Vol. I, Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1957.
- Blanc, Alphonse. Le livre de comptes de Jacme Olivier, marchand narbonnais du XIVe siècle. Vol. II, Paris: Picard, 1899.
- Blancard, L. Documents inédits sur le commerce de Marseille au moyen-âge. Vol. I.
- Bloch, Marc. "Économie-nature ou économie-argent: un pseudo-dilemme." Annales d'Histoire Sociale, I (1939), 7-16.
- _____. Feudal Society. Translated by L. A. Manyon. Vol. II, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.
- Bussell, F. W. Religious Thought and Heresy in the Middle Ages. London: Robert Scott, 1918.
- Compayré, Clément. Études historiques et documents inédits sur l'Albigeois, le Castrais et l'ancien diocèse de Lavaur. Albi, 1841.
- Delteil, Joseph. "Les temps Cathares." Cahiers du Sud, LXI, (January-March, 1966), 1-4.
- Dupont, André. Les relations commerciales entre les cités maritimes de Languedoc et les cités méditerranéennes d'Espagne et d'Italie du Xe au XIIe siècle. Nîmes: Chastanier frères et Almeras, 1942.
- Duvernoy, Jean. "Albigisme ou Catharisme?" Cahiers du Sud, LXI, (April-June, 1966), 196-220.

- Evans, Joan. Life in Medieval France. London: Oxford University Press, 1925.
- Fawtier, R. The Capetian Kings of France: Monarchy and Nation, 987-1328. Translated by L. Butler and R. J. Adam. London, 1960. (Original book: Les Capétiens et la France: leur rôle dans sa construction. Presses Universitaires de France, 1942.)
- Forestié, E. (ed.). Les livres de comptes des frères Bonis, marchands montalbanais du XIVe siècle. Vol. I, Paris and Auch, 1893.
- Guebin, Pascual et Henri Maissonneuve. Histoire Albigeois. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1951.
- Herbermann, Charles G., et al. The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. I. New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1907.
- Huizinga, Johann. The Waning of the Middle Ages. London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1937.
- Jarrett, Bédé. Social Theories of the Middle Ages. London, 1926.
- Kovarik, Robert J. "Simon de Montfort (1165-1218) His Life and Work: A Critical Study and Evaluation Based on the Sources." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, St. Louis University, 1963.
- Lacroix, Paul. France in the Middle Ages. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1963.
- Laurent, Henri. La draperie des Pays-Bas en France et dans les pays Méditerranéens (XIIe-XVe siècle). Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1935.
- Lopez, Robert S. "The Dollar of the Middle Ages." Journal of Economic History, XI (1951), 209-34.
- Louis, Maurice. "L'occitanie à travers le temps." Cahiers du Sud, LXI, (April-June, 1966), approximately 20 pages.
- Luchoire, Achille. Manuel des institutions françaises--période des Capétiens directs. Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1892.
- Magen, A. et G. Tholin. Archives municipales d'Agen chartes. Première Série (1189-1328). Villeneuve-sur-Lot: Imprimerie de Xavia Duteis, 1876.
- Mundy, John Hine. "On the Political Institutions of Toulouse in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1950.
- Notices et Documents--Cartulaire de Durbon. Publiés pour la Société de l'Histoire de France. Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1884.

- Oldenbourg, Zoé. Massacre at Montségur. Translated by Peter Green. New York: Pantheon Books, 1962.
- Ormsby, H. France: A Regional and Economic Geography. 2nd. ed. revised. London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1950.
- Painter, Sidney. French Chivalry: Chivalric Ideas and Practices in Mediaeval France. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940.
- Postan, M., et al. The Cambridge Economic History of Europe. Vol. II: Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages. Vol. III: Economic Organization and Policies in the Middle Ages. Cambridge University Press, 1952 and 1963.
- Révue de Synthèse Historique. Dtr. Henri Beer. Vols. III-IV (1901-1902), Vols. V-VI (1902-1903). Paris: Librairie Leopold Cerf.
- Runciman, Steven. The Medieval Manichee. Cambridge University Press, 1947.
- Tanner, J. R., et al. The Cambridge Medieval History. Vol. VI: Victory of the Papacy. Cambridge University Press, 1929.
- Thompson, J. W. An Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages (300-1300). New York: The Century Co., 1928.
- Viollet-le-Duc. La Cité de Carcassonne (Aude). Paris: V^c A. Morel et Cie., Editeurs, 1881.

VITA

Miriam Frances Whittemore

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: SOME SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE MIDI REGION IN
THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Major Field: History

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Newport, Rhode Island, July 23, 1919, the daughter of William Truman and Emma Edwina Peckham; married to Captain Kenneth S. Whittemore, Jr., Ordnance Corps, U. S. Army, in Paris, France, March 1, 1947.

Education: Attended grade school in Middletown, Rhode Island and Amarillo, Texas; graduated from Amarillo Senior High School in 1937; received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Texas Technological College, Lubbock, Texas, with a major in French, in August, 1942; completed requirements for the Master of Arts degree from Oklahoma State University in July, 1967.

Professional experience: Entered the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in 1943, as a private, and was discharged as a Captain, Women's Army Corps, 1947; primary duties were those of an Information and Education Officer and as an Adjutant; from 1961-1964, taught English and Public Speaking to Chinese officers in the Officers' Language School, Ministry of National Defense, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China; also am a member of the Nu Chapter, Phi Alpha Theta (1961) and of The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi (1967).