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Orgolhs, Paratge, and la Gentils Toloza: Imagining Community in the Song of the Cathar Wars

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Orgolhs, *Paratge* and *la Gentils Toloza*: Imagining Community in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*

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Abstract

The Albigensian Crusade in Occitania (1208-1229), which targeted the Cathar heretics as well as their orthodox compatriots, impelled an otherwise disparate set of Occitan noblemen to unite in opposition to the invasion. This newfound cohesion gave birth to an Occitan political community whose members were united by common fears, goals, and virtues. Through my analysis of the second portion of the *chanson de geste*, *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, authored by an anonymous poet sympathetic to the Occitans, I suggest the emergence of this Occitan community based upon (1) the portrayal of the French crusaders as well as the Occitan resistance fighters, (2) the way the anonymous poet framed the conflict in terms of conquest rather than crusade and (3) the characteristics and ideals attributed each side, most notably *paratge*. The question of whether an Occitan 'nation' or community existed during the Albigensian Crusade retains its relevance today in light of recent Occitan movements whose goals range from inspiring an Occitan cultural renaissance to attempting to create a modern Occitan nation separate from France.

General Introduction

In 1979 the city of Toulouse prepared to celebrate the 750th birthday of its University.[1] Since its inception, the University of Toulouse had slowly metamorphosed from an institution that provided an education in orthodoxy for aspiring clerics into a modern university offering the full spectrum of arts, sciences, and humanities. A renaissance poem proudly displayed on the University of Toulouse's website demonstrates the city's identity as a place of learning:

Paris pour voir
Lyon pour avoir
Bordeaux pour dispendre
Et Toulouse pour apprendre[2]

However, before the celebrations could get underway a group of Occitan nationalists intervened, forcing the University to cancel its plans. This group, although its actions were unusually extreme, belonged to a wider movement termed "Occitanism." Begun in the mid-nineteenth century by the poet Frédéric Mistral, Occitanism later divided into those who sought to bring about an Occitan cultural renaissance, and those who advocated for the political independence and autonomy of Occitania. The "Occitan extremists"[3] who ruined the celebrations for the University of Toulouse belonged to the latter group. The motivation behind their actions was a grudge that went back 750 years to the University of Toulouse's foundation in 1229. According to the Occitan nationalists, the young University had been a bastion of the Inquisition, aiding in the suppression and destruction of the Cathar heretics in order to enforce the hegemony of the Catholic

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[1] David Pike and Ronald Hilton, "France: Toulouse, la Ville Rose," World Association of International Studies, http://wais.stanford.edu/France/france_toulouselavillerose112002.html
[2] "Paris to see/Lyon to have/Bordeaux to spend/and Toulouse to learn" (Author's translation). Université de Toulouse II – Le Mirail, "Historique," http://www.univ-tlse2.fr/35649971/0/fiche___pagelibre/&RH=ACCUEIL&RF=01Historique (accessed March 7, 2008).
[3] Pike, "France: Toulouse la Ville Rose."

Church. For this group of Occitans, the Albigensian Crusade and the Inquisition that followed had inflicted a wound on Occitania that time had not healed.

Significantly, most Occitan movements have featured the Albigensian Crusade in their rhetoric as both a justification for their actions and goals as well as a unifying force.[4] According to leaders like François Fontan (*Parti National Occitan*) and Robert Lafont (*Comité Occitan d'Études et d'Action*), the Albigensian Crusade is a tragedy common to every Occitan, a memory that should and does transcend lesser provincial identities, language barriers, class, and culture. Thus, modern Occitan movements find the source of their Occitan identity in the memory and legacy of the former Occitan people's experience of the Albigensian Crusade.

While this is true for some modern Occitans, can the same be said for those who lived through the Albigensian Crusade? Did the experience of being the target of a holy crusade somehow bind previously disparate groups of people together, so that one was no longer simply Gascon, Toulousan, or Provençale, but also Occitan? In an attempt to answer these questions, this paper posits the idea that a medieval forerunner of nationalism existed in Occitania as a direct result of the Albigensian Crusade. This cultural force united the aristocracy of Occitania and the residents of Toulouse through common goals, fears, and values; most notably *paratge*. To prove this hypothesis, the paper will draw upon *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, a *chanson de geste* that details the events of the Albigensian Crusade from its beginning in 1209 until 1219. While there is a strong likelihood that a type of medieval "nationalism" existed in Occitania during this time, one must keep in mind that the Occitans lost the war a mere ten years after the last events described in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*. Thus, the phenomenon was short-lived;

[4] Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

snuffed out by a French victory before it could ever bloom into an Occitan nation-state let alone be arbitrarily "revived" centuries later as the basis of a modern nationality.

Geographical and Political Background of Occitania

The region of Occitania can be difficult to define because Occitania never existed as a nation-state and the term itself was coined after the region ceased to exist as an area independent of the French crown. Geographically, Occitania refers to the area that is now the southern third of France.[5] It was bounded by the Atlantic in the west and Italy in the east and encompassed the Massif Central in the north. The border between Occitania and the land to the north represented a linguistic boundary. At the time of the Albigensian Crusade those who lived in Occitania spoke Occitan or the langue d'oc and those who lived north of the boundary spoke the langue d'oïl, the predecessor of modern French. The term Languedoc also refers to the region which encompassed the central portion of Occitania, bordered by the western Toulousan, the Massif Central, the Pyrenees, the Mediterranean Sea and the Rhône.[6] To the north of Occitania, the Isle-de-France with Paris at its center was the bastion of power for the Capetian monarchy, an institution that had been slowly acquiring land and power through a solid succession of kings.[7]

The political geography of Occitania preceding the Albigensian Crusade is as murky and difficult to define as the region itself. In the centuries preceding the Albigensian Crusade, Occitania was not united under one powerful ruler, but rather divided amongst various viscounts, counts, and lords who were locked together in a

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[5] Alan Friedlander, "Languedoc," *Medieval France an Encyclopedia*, Ed. William W. Kibler, vol. 2 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995) 521. The following description of Occitania draws upon this source.
[6] Archibald R. Lewis, "Languedoc," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages,* Ed. Joseph R. Strayer, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982) 338-9; Friedlander, 518.
[7] Friedlander, 520.

struggle for power.[8] Theoretically, the most powerful rulers in Occitania were the Counts of Toulouse. The apex of their power came with the rule of Raymond IV of Saint Gilles who unified the lands from Quercy to the Rhône before departing for the Levant as a leader of the First Crusade.[9] However, the power Raymond VI had commanded slowly eroded under his successors. At the dawn of the thirteenth century when events were underway that would eventually lead to the Albigensian Crusade, Count Raymond VI of Toulouse had only nominal power over his vassals and was unable to raise a local army, relying instead upon foreign mercenaries. Conversely, the major rivals to the Count of Toulouse, including the Count of Foix who held land to the south of Toulouse and the Trancavels who ruled Béziers, Carcassonne, Albi, and Razès, had accumulated enough power to seriously threaten the dominance of the house of Toulouse. Moreover, Raymond VI also had trouble exerting power over Toulouse itself, which was well on its way to becoming independent by the time of the Crusade.[10] This political fragmentation is reflected in the terminology used to indicate different groups of people in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*. Whereas our poet refers to the northern crusaders under the blanket term of "French," there is no universal term used to describe the Occitans themselves. Linda Paterson writes:

> Until this watershed [the Albigensian Crusade], Occitania consisted of a multiplicity of shifting regional groupings characterized...by political and social diversity. That there existed some awareness of the differences between the north and south is suggested by the criticisms that northern writers occasionally made of southerners' appearance, customs, and morals. But we should not overestimate the amount of significance of

[8] Linda M. Paterson, *The World of the Troubadours: Medieval Occitan Society, c. 1100-c. 1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 102-103.
[9] Friedlander, 520; Lewis, 339.
[10] Lewis, 339.

> regional stereotyping in our period, and the absence of a generally recognized term for 'southerners' is noteworthy.[11]

In *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, the Occitan characters are referred to by their region of origin, such as Gascon or Toulousan, rather than Languedocien or Occitan. The absence of a medieval equivalent of the term "Occitan" may mean that the idea of a wider Occitan society had not yet been conceived.

Summary of the Albigensian Crusade

Whatever the political consequences of the Albigensian Crusade, its rationale was the repression of Catharism, a type of Christianity containing elements of dualism and Gnosticism.[12] Although the origins of Catharism are obscure, by the twelfth century the new religion was widespread in Occitania, where the degraded state of the Catholic Church had failed to inspire devotion. In response to the perceived threat of "heresy," Pope Innocent III sent a legate, Peter of Castelnau, to Count Raymond VI of Toulouse to exact a promise from him to take measures against Catharism. Negotiations failed and Peter excommunicated Raymond VI in 1207 as a "protector of heretics." Soon afterward, one of Raymond's men killed Peter as he prepared to cross the Rhône. When the news of Peter's assassination reached Innocent III, the pope called for a crusade against the heretics, and sent clerics to preach it in the north of France, garnering support among the French nobility including the future leader of the crusade, Simon de Montfort. Although a

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[11] Paterson, 132.

[12] The summary provided below relies upon the following sources: Janet Shirley, ed. and trans., *The Song of the Cathar Wars a History of the Albigensian Crusade* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996); Joseph R. Strayer, *The Albigensian Crusades* (New York: The Dial Press, 1971); Jonathan Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade* (London: Faber, 1978); Michael Costen, *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997)

crusade against Raymond VI offered King Philippe-Auguste of France an opportunity to curtail the power of his vassal, his ongoing war with the English prevented him from participating.

In 1209, as the crusaders descended the Rhône Valley, Raymond VI appealed to the pope for forgiveness, and was reconciled to the Catholic Church. He joined the crusade himself soon after, although Simon de Montfort remained in command. With the main target of the crusade suddenly removed, the crusaders focused their efforts instead on the lands of Raymond Roger Trencavel, sacking the city of Béziers and brutally massacring the inhabitants before moving on to take Carcassonne in August of 1209. With his own lands under Papal protection, Raymond VI made no move to protect the Trencavel lands or Raymond Roger's vassals. However, Raymond VI was excommunicated again in February of 1211 for his failure to expel the Cathars from his domain. Thereafter he led a heterogeneous Occitan resistance. Meanwhile, Simon de Montfort paid homage to Peter II of Aragon for the viscounty of Béziers and Carcassonne, and the next year issued the Statute of Pamiers which replaced southern laws with northern ones, limiting the rights and privileges of the Occitans. From 1209 to 1215 the crusaders under Simon de Montfort won the majority of the battles including the battle of Muret, which resulted in the death of King Peter II of Aragon. The loss of the former Catholic hero brought Pope Innocent III's attention back to the Albigensian Crusade, which diverted funds and men away from a prospective crusade to the Levant. During the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, Innocent ruled that Simon de Montfort was to hold all the land the crusaders had captured from Raymond VI, regardless of the protests from the Count of Toulouse, who was present. Despite the Pope's ruling, the tide

of battle was beginning to turn. In 1216 Raymondet[13] entered the struggle, successfully taking Beaucaire from Count Simon and by 1217 Raymond VI was again in control of Toulouse. Count Simon besieged Toulouse in an attempt to regain the city, but was killed there in 1218. He was succeeded by his son, Amaury who led the crusade and ruled the former Trencavel lands.

In 1219, Prince Louis of France (the future King Louis VIII) took the cross and led his forces into Occitania, leaving after two months having achieved little. In the following years many of the original figures of the crusade died, including Raymond VI in 1222, and the struggle was continued by the next generation. In 1226 Pope Honorius III excommunicated Raymond VII and called for another crusade. This time King Louis VIII led the northern French forces, taking all the great cities of the South before dying at Montpensier.

Even the death of the French King did not herald the end of the crusade, which continued on until the possibility of an independent Occitania was destroyed. The Albigensian Crusade officially ended in 1229 with the Treaty of Paris, in which Raymond VII submitted to the Church and to the King of France, allowed the Inquisition to be established in his lands to root out what remained of the Cathar religion, and promised his daughter and heiress to a Capetian Prince, therefore insuring the eventual acquisition of the County of Toulouse by the French crown, which came to pass in 1271.

[13] Raymond VI's son and heir (the future Raymond VII) is often called Raymondet to distinguish him from his father. Our poet also calls him the "young count."

Introduction to *The Song of the Cathar Wars*

The events of the Albigensian Crusade are recorded in three major histories written by people who likely witnessed much of the war: the *Historia Albigensis* of Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay,[14] *The Chronicle of William of Puylaurens*,[15] and *The Song of the Cathar Wars* by William of Tudela and an anonymous successor. This paper focuses on *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, a *chanson de geste* that narrates the crusade from its inception until 1219, the year prince Louis of France arrived outside the walls of Toulouse in an effort to take the city.

The Song of the Cathar Wars was authored by two different poets, the first of whom is known to us as William of Tudela.[16] Born and raised in Navarre, William likely arrived in Languedoc in 1199 in time to witness Raymond VI's wedding to Eléonore of Aragon. In the beginning of *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, William writes that he left Montauban where he had been living prior to the crusade for Bruniquel because he had divined through geomancy that the region would be ruined.[17] At Bruniquel he entered into the service of Baldwin, Raymond VI's brother who had defected to the crusaders. Under Baldwin's patronage, William wrote the first 131 laisses of *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, likely composing the work between 1210 and 1213, describing events as they happened. Because William's patron supported Simon de Montfort, the first part of the narrative is decidedly pro-crusade. According to William, the crusade was launched to suppress the Cathar heresy whose adherents stubbornly and stupidly refused to convert to

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[14] Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay, *The History of the Albigensian Crusade*, trans. W.A. Sibley and M.D. Sibley (Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 1998).
[15] *The Chronicle of William of Puylaurens*, trans. W.A. Sibley and M.D. Sibley (Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2003).
[16] Rémi Pach, "Un Poème patriotique médiéval: 'La Chanson de la croisade albigeoise,'" *French Studies in Southern Africa* 22 (1993) : 1-19. The following discussion of the two authors of *The Song of the Cathar Wars* draws upon this source.
[17] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 11.

Catholicism. William's narrative ends abruptly before the battle of Muret in 1213, a spectacular victory for the French crusaders.[18]

An anonymous poet picked up William's story "almost in mid-sentence" and continued the narrative from a completely different point of view. His narrative comprises the second part of *The Song of the Cathar Wars* which this paper takes as its focus. While William of Tudela wrote competently if without imagination, the anonymous poet was a man of brilliance, an "equal of the greatest of the medieval poets."[19] As such, he was able to transform *The Song of the Cathar Wars* into a fiercely patriotic poem in which the French are no longer holy crusaders but greedy usurpers and the Occitans are not heretics but good Catholics who fight against the conquest of their native land and the robbery of their inheritance. The vehemence with which our poet[20] seeks to undermine the legitimacy of the crusade, his positive portrayal of Raymond VI and his son Raymondet and his mastery of the Occitan language suggest that he was a native of Occitania, possibly a Toulousain[21] or a native of the county of Foix. He may also have been trained as a cleric although it has also been suggested that he was a professional troubadour. Any attempts to further identify our poet have met with failure, and it is likely that he will remain anonymous.

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[18] Pach, "Poème patriotique," 2-4. While some scholars believe that William stopped writing because his patron, Baldwin, was captured and executed in 1214, this does not explain why William did not record the myriad French victories that took place in the interim between the end of his narrative and Baldwin's execution. French scholar Rémi Pach suggests instead that William became increasingly disillusioned by the crusade and disgusted by the crusader's treatment of the Occitan people. However, due to lack of resources one must be content with hypotheses that cannot be proven.

[19] "L'auteur, qui reprend le récit là où son prédécesseur l'avait laissé, s'y montre l'égal des plus grands poètes médiévaux." Pach, "Poème patriotique," 2.

[20] For the sake of brevity, this paper will henceforth refer to the anonymous poet as "our poet."

[21] The term Toulousain is used to denote someone who came from Toulouse or its environs whereas the term Toulousan denotes someone who lives in the city of Toulouse.

Medieval Historiography and *The Song of the Cathar Wars*

Before examining our poet's creation more closely, it is important to situate the text in the broader genre of medieval historical writing. Medieval historiography was heavily influenced by two distinct sources: the Bible and the philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome.[22] These two sources impacted both how history was written in the Middle Ages and how medieval people thought about history. Although the Renaissance is heralded as an age where people rediscovered the genius of antiquity, many ancient texts survived into the Middle Ages and were widely used, including texts addressing historiography.[23] According to these texts, history [*historia*] was, "a narrative of real or plausible events,"[24] a definition that kept its authority into the Middle Ages. The ancients also advocated an eyewitness account as the preferred method of gathering information and, significantly, promoted authorial bias. The reasoning behind the inclusion of authorial bias was that moderate judgment on the part of the author was essential if the history was to teach by example. This idea of history took on religious implications in the Middle Ages, as authors strove to demonstrate the presence of a divine power in an event. By writing about and studying history, medieval scholars believed they could better detect the movements of God, for, "The visible things of man reveal the invisible things of God."[25] While the practice of writing history did not disappear in the early Middle Ages, the discipline began to flower in the mid tenth century as Europe recovered from the Viking, Magyar, and Muslim invasions. As more works of history were written, different genres developed, some of which will be examined in the following pages.

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[22] *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, "Historiography, Western European."
[23] Ibid. Ancient scholars and works that influenced medieval historians included Cicero's *On the Orator*, Vergil's *Aeneid*, Sallust, Suetonius, and Caesar.
[24] Ibid., 260.
[25] Ibid., 259.

The Song of the Cathar Wars is an example of a *chanson de geste*; a sung narrative poem composed of laisses (stanzas of irregular length)[26] in which individual lines are linked by assonance or rhyme.[27] These *chansons de geste* were memorized and performed by a *jongleur* for a paying audience. The earliest examples of *chansons de geste* are written in Old French and date from the eleventh century. These poems detail the exploits of the heroes of the Carolingian era, often featuring Charlemagne and his retinue in their epic struggles against the Saracens. In a direct departure from the antique rules of what constitutes history, the *chansons de geste* are often liberally sprinkled with mythology and legend despite being based on a historical event.

The lapse of time between the earliest extant *chansons de geste* and the events they describe has led some scholars to conclude that the *chansons de geste* were composed almost immediately after the event, memorized, and passed orally from *jongleur*[28] to *jongleur* before being written down. Other scholars argue that churches containing the relics of a Christian hero would commission a *chanson de geste* featuring the hero. The newly created *chanson de geste* would then be given to *jongleurs* who, through their performances, would draw pilgrims to the church. If this is the case, the

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[26] "In the domain of literature, [a laisse] generally designated a passage, a paragraph, or a tirade from a text or poem that formed a satisfactory whole, dealt with a single proposition, and could be recited or sung in a single, uninterrupted 'flight.'" Michel Zink, *Medieval French Literature: An Introduction*, trans. Jeff Rider (New York: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1995), 19.

[27] The following examination of *chansons de geste* draws upon the following sources. *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, s.vv. "Chansons de geste," "Joglar/Jongleur," "Toubadour, Trouvère."; *Medieval France an Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Chanson de geste."; and Michel Zink, *Medieval French Literature: An Introduction.*

[28] *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, "Joglar/Jongleur." Medieval jongleurs were traveling entertainers whose skills included singing, juggling, playing musical instruments, storytelling, acrobatic feats, and mimicry. While they performed *chansons de geste*, they did not compose them.

chansons de geste are not the result of the collaborative effort of several *jongleurs* over a period of time, but the work of one *trouvère*.[29]

Although Latin chronicles were produced throughout the Middle Ages, the vernacular chronicle did not make its appearance until the mid twelfth century.[30] Although it developed into a distinct genre over time, the earliest examples share some key traits with the *chansons de geste*. Like their predecessors, the first vernacular chronicles were written in verse and the chroniclers mixed legend with factual material in order to appeal to a lay audience used to the conventions of the *chansons de geste*. However, in the twelfth century the chronicle underwent a transformation that was to set it apart from the *chansons de geste*. At this time prose came to be the favored medium for chronicles because it was associated with truth, whereas verse came to be seen as contrived. The reemergence of an interest in the veracity of the text mirrored that of the Latin chronicles which predated vernacular French chronicles by hundreds of years. The ultimate goal of the vernacular chronicle became to "preserve for posterity what was worthy of record" using information collected from eye-witness testimony.[31] This period also saw an increase in the production of vernacular chronicles detailing the events of the crusades in the Levant by both noblemen and soldiers. Thus the twelfth century can be seen as a cultural turning point that saw the rise of the vernacular chronicle as the preferred medium for recording history.

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[29] *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, "Troubadour, Trouvère." *A* trouvère was the northern French counterpart of the Occitan troubadour. Both composed lyric poetry, the trouvères in Old French and the troubadours in Old Provençal. The trouvères are commonly seen as having developed their poetry later in an attempt to copy the poetry of the troubadours.

[30] *Medieval France an Encyclopedia*, "Anglo-Norman Literature," 35. The Anglo-Norman *Estoire des Engleis* (ca. 1140) is the earliest extant chronicle written in French.

[31] *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, "Chronicles, French," 330.

Thus, when William of Tudela decided to write *The Song of the Cathar Wars* in the early thirteenth century, he could have written a *chanson de geste*, a vernacular chronicle, or a Latin chronicle, the medium used by William of les Vaux-de-Cernay. At first glance, it is surprising that William of Tudela chose to write a *chanson de geste* in the langue d'oc, a language that Simon de Montfort likely did not know and probably detested.[32] Eliza M. Ghil suggests that William's choice of the langue d'oc likely reflects the language spoken by his intended audience of Occitan nobles who, like Baldwin of Toulouse, had joined Simon de Montfort. Also, he may have chosen this form because it had been widely used to glorify the deeds of Charlemagne, a Christian king who fought against the Muslim Saracens. Thus, this form would allow him to cast Simon de Montfort as a thirteenth century Charlemagne and the opposing Occitans as another type of infidel.

What is of more interest to this paper is why our poet chose to append his narrative of the Albigensian Crusade to William of Tudela's incomplete account, which also forced him to write in the form of the *chanson de geste*. This decision seems remarkable, given the fact that the two poets had entirely different stances on the crusade. One possible answer is that our poet perceived that he did not have much time to complete his account of the crusade. By using William of Tudela's account to cover the earlier events our poet would have sacrificed a cohesive point of view in order to finish his narrative quickly. However, it is also possible that our poet benefited from this lack of a cohesive point of view. For, by keeping William of Tudela's version of the crusade our poet could better undermine William's entire message and replace it with one of his own

[32] Eliza M. Ghil, "Ideological Models and Poetic Modes in the 'Song of the Albigensian Crusade,'" *The Romantic Review* 75 (1984): 131-146, 134. The following discussion of William of Tudela's choice of the *chanson de geste* will draw upon this source.

creation. As Eliza M. Ghil writes, our poet was then able to take William's account and "demolish it from within."[33]

Additionally, our poet may have welcomed the prospect of writing a *chanson de geste* as it gave him the opportunity of using a French genre to decry abuses made by French crusaders. The form of the *chanson de geste* would have also offered a better medium in which to narrate the events of the Crusade as opposed to lyric poetry, developed in Occitania and favored by the troubadours, which was much shorter than the *chansons de geste* and primarily associated with courtly love rather than epic battles.[34] Perhaps the most significant reason why our poet may have welcomed the form is because, by definition, a *chanson de geste* is meant to be sung in public. Thus, our poet's version of the Crusade, which was heavily biased against the crusaders, could reach a wider audience. This would enable *The Song of the Cathar Wars* to function as a potent piece of propaganda in favor of the Occitan resistance.

Although William of Tudela and our poet chose to write a *chanson de geste*, they departed from the traditional form in two key ways. First, neither poet inserts myth or legend into *The Song of the Cathar Wars*. Rather, there is an attempt on the part of both to provide an accurate account of the events of the Albigensian Crusade, which may show the influence of the vernacular chronicle.[35] However, this dedication to veracity does not stop the two poets from the usual literary embellishments. At times both poets sacrifice accuracy to write dialogue or speeches that they probably never heard, and they

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[33] Ghil, "Ideological Models," 139.
[34] *Dictionary of the Middle* Ages, "Troubadour, trouvère." Lyric poetry written by the troubadours rarely exceeds sixty lines.
[35] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 4. Both William of Tudela and our poet's accounts are reliable when compared to contemporary chronicles such as the ones authored by William of Puylaurens and William of Les Veaux de Cernay and charters.

also exaggerate some figures, like the amount dead in a battle. Despite these minor inaccuracies, the account remains a reliable source. In another departure from French *chansons de* geste, at least the section of *The Song of the Cathar Wars* composed by William of Tudela was written down just after the described events had taken place. This raises an important question. When did our poet write his account of the Albigensian Crusade and why did he feel compelled to write?

Although scholars have posited various dates for our poet's composition, it may be impossible to determine when our poet wrote his part of *The Song of the Cathar Wars.* The last event described in the text is Prince Louis' march to Toulouse and the narrative ends with an exhortation to all fighting men to join in a fresh effort against the crusading army. However, this does not necessarily mean that our poet finished his poem in 1219. Instead, the poem could have survived in the memory of a generation of jongleurs before being written down later. If this is the case, then the answer to the question "*why* was the poem written down" could be that, after years of exhaustive fighting and the eventual capitulation and humiliation of Raymond VII of Toulouse, someone may have wanted to preserve an account that praised the dignity, honor, and unity of the Occitan people.

Conversely, the poem may have been written down soon after the last events it describes in 1219. This view is supported by the fact that there is no hint of the outcome of Louis' campaign in Occitania which, because it was ultimately unsuccessful, would have given our poet another chance to describe an Occitan victory. Now the question of why the poem was written down has a different possible answer. Faced with Louis' advancing army of fresh crusaders from the north, the prospect that Toulouse would be sacked and the culture extinguished was very real. After a city was taken, Simon de

Montfort would often replace the Occitan ruler with a northern French noble of his choosing, and if this were to happen in Toulouse, the performer of *The Song of the Cathar Wars* would no longer be able to perform there. Putting the *chanson* in writing may have been a way of preserving it against a time when it would be much more difficult to pass the song on orally.

Lastly, our poet could have written his account early in 1228 when Raymond VII's prospect of regaining all of his inheritance was particularly strong. Rémi Pach writes that at this time the Count of Toulouse[36] had successfully begun to re-conquer parts of Occitania.[37] The Occitans were also heartened by Frederic II's pledge to aid Occitania in 1226. Finally, at this time it had become clear that the crusade was a thinly disguised attempt to conquer Occitania for the French crown. These factors combined to produce a new optimism in Occitania which may have motivated our poet to write his continuation. However, the factors which had produced this optimism in early 1228 were gone by the end of the year. As 1229 approached, the King of Aragon pulled his support from Occitania to fight the Saracens, Henry III of England lost most of Aquitaine to the French crown and could not offer aid, and Emperor Frederic II left the Holy Roman Empire to crusade in the Levant. Additionally, the archbishop of Narbonne and the Bishop of Toulouse had signed separate peace treaties with many of Count Raymond's allies and Pope Gregory IV was pressuring Raymond to sign a peace treaty himself. Finally, Blanche of Castile[38] was gathering an army to invade Occitania and other northern lords had already arrived with armies. With the possibility of victory destroyed,

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[36] Raymondet had officially become the Count of Toulouse upon his father's death in 1222.
[37] Pach, "Poème patriotique," 6-8. The following discussion of the hypothesis that our poet wrote his part of *The Song of the Cathar Wars* in 1228 draws upon this source.
[38] Upon the death of her husband King Louis VIII, Blanche of Castile ruled France for her son the future Louis IX (Saint Louis) who was a minor.

Raymond VII signed a peace treaty with Blanche of Castile in Paris the following year. If indeed our poet had begun his composition in 1228, by the next year he would have had neither the will nor the means to complete his work, a task that would probably have become quite dangerous.

Nationalism, Patriotism or Imagined Community?

As previously stated, the Treaty of Paris (1229) cleared the way for Occitania's absorption into the French crown in 1271. Thus, any feelings of Occitan "nationalism" brought about as a result of the crusade would have been short lived. However, the anonymous poet captures the brief time in which this sentiment was alive in his contribution to *The Song of the Cathar Wars*. In our poet's portion of the text, the Occitans are well-fed during sieges, their morale never seriously falters, they are sure of the cause for which they fight, and they are united under the leadership of Raymond VI of Toulouse and his son Raymondet. The positive portrayal of the Occitan army serves two purposes. On a basic level, it pleases a southern audience that viewed the resistance as its army against the Northern invasion. It also suggests the possibility of a preexisting or emerging sense of identity that is distinctively Occitan; an identity based upon common goals, fears, and values. While it is easy to discover evidence of cohesion amongst the Occitan nobility in their actions as well as the speeches attributed to them, it is more difficult to determine the precise nature of this cohesion in the context of the thirteenth century and whether that cohesion extended to the broader population.

Although Occitania was not politically united under one ruler in the centuries preceding the Albigensian Crusade, medieval scholars agree that a distinct Occitan

culture existed during that time that was both uniform across the region and different from surrounding cultures, including that of the French. [39] Medieval Occitan culture put a high value on hospitality towards guests, conspicuous consumption, gaiety and sociability. Occitan culture also benefited by its exposure to foreigners through trade which, coupled with the precocious development of urban centers, brought about a tolerance for ethnic and religious diversity that was not present in the north. It was this culture that produced the cult of courtly love, as well as providing a fertile ground for Catharism. This distinct culture may have given rise to a set of Occitan values, including *paratge*, that were not fully recognized at the time as something which set Occitania apart from its neighbors. However, as the aristocrats were confronted with the disastrous results of the Albigensian Crusade, some members of the previously divided Occitan nobility worked together in order to achieve the common goal of defeating the Crusader armies. With Occitania politically as well as culturally unified, did the nobles think of Occitania as a nation in the post modern sense of the word? Did the people themselves feel a type of proto-nationalism? Or did they feel a sense of patriotism which took priority over a preexisting regional identity?

Because patriotism is an ancient political virtue while nationalism is of more recent coinage, one can seek to apply the term to medieval Occitania without fear of anachronism.[40] G. Schochet maintains that patriotism appeals to the emotions rather than to reason, defining the term as, "Political allegiance (and, of course, loyalty), commitment, and dedication. In briefest compass, it means love of one's country or

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[39] Linda Paterson, "The South," in *France in the Central Middle Ages* ed. Marcus Bull, 102-133 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
[40] *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, ed. Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (New York: Elsevier Science Ltd., 2001), s.v. "Patriotism."

nation."[41] As such, it is often invoked in times of duress as a call for sacrifice or service in protection of the *patria* or fatherland. Thus, the circumstances that give rise to patriotism match those of Occitania during the Albigensian Crusade and it would appear that patriotism may be the best term to describe Occitan cohesion. However, another important aspect of patriotism is that it is all inclusive, a sentiment that transcends gender, class, and ethnicity. Conversely, this paper argues that the Occitan cohesion or identity evinced in *The Song of the Cathar Wars* is limited to the Occitan nobility and the residents of Toulouse. Therefore if patriotism existed during the Albigensian Crusade it would not be in the modern sense of the word, but a limited patriotism instead.

Any examination of Occitan cohesion in the thirteenth century will necessarily be colored by recent Occitan movements, some of which have invoked the memory of the Albigensian Crusade in their attempts to inspire a new feeling of Occitan nationalism in modern Occitans.[42] Due to the fact that Occitania had never achieved political unity under a single ruler and had never existed as a nation-state, the proponents of an Occitan nation could not use the idea of a lost nation to unify modern Occitans. Instead, they invoked the memory of the Albigensian Crusade; a shared tragedy in which the ancestors of every Occitan had been a victim of French aggression. A quote from François Fontan, the founder of the *Parti National Occitan*, illustrates this point. "For us the most important event in the history of the French state is the conquest of Occitanie. This 'Crusade against the Albigensians' was without doubt the greatest attempt at genocide perpetrated in Europe for a thousand years."[43] Thus, the Albigensian Crusade was the common thread, unifying Occitans across linguistic and cultural lines and giving them a

[41] *International Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Patriotism," 11116.
[42] Gildea, *Past in French History*. The following examination of Occitanism draws upon this source.
[43] Ibid., 213.

shared history that was separate from that of France. What these leaders assumed was that the Albigensian Crusade had brought together Medieval Gascons, Provençales, Toulousans, and perhaps Aragonese in resistance and that the experience of being the target of a crusade had erased their regional differences, transforming them into Occitans. Thus, a seemingly distant historical event has very real implications in modern French politics.

Setting aside modern Occitania, the question of whether a type of nationalism existed during the crusade remains. One obstacle to answering this question is that there is no single definition of nationalism or the nation. Rather, there are many definitions which reflect the time and culture in which they were conceived. However, Benedict Anderson's work on nationalism has been influential and highly respected by other scholars. Thus, this paper will use his definition of the nation as, "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."[44] According to Anderson, the nation is imagined because, despite the fact that it is impossible for each member to know all the others, they still hold an, "image of their communion."[45] In addition, the nation is imagined as limited to a finite number of members who, regardless of inequality or exploitation, share a "deep, horizontal comradeship."[46] While the first two criteria could be used to describe the Occitan cohesion in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, the last criteria, that the nation is sovereign, is more problematic. In Anderson's view, the nation is sovereign because, as an idea, it was a product of the Enlightenment when each nation dreamt of being free under God, unfettered by divinely-appointed

[44] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991) 5-6. The following discussion of the nation and nationalism draws upon this source.
[45] Ibid., 6.
[46] Ibid., 7.

royalty. Thus, the birth of the idea of the nation occurred several hundred years after the Albigensian Crusade, and to apply this concept to the thirteenth century would be to force an anachronism upon the past.

Although Anderson and other political scholars insist that the nation was first conceived of in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries, the French historian Colette Beaune writes that many historians believe that the birth of the French nation occurred in the medieval period.[47] In her book, *The Birth of an Ideology*, Beaune focuses on the period from 1300-1500, analyzing how medieval French people saw themselves and their country. Although she admits that one may find evidence for the birth of the French nation during this time, she resists framing her argument with a single definition of nationalism, preferring instead to examine, "how people thought of France, what they said about it, and how they expressed their love for it."[48] Significantly, French nationalism was inextricably tied to a preexisting Christian identity because, during this period, "the sacred was the only feasible source of identity."[49] Although Colette Beaune gives a thorough analysis of French nationalism, she does not address the preexisting regional or provincial identities or patriotism of newly acquired regions or the problems of amalgamating these regional identities with a single national identity. Instead, she writes that the Catholic Church posited a hierarchy of allegiances of a fifteenth century Frenchman.

> The Church continued to remind the individual that his first duty was to love and serve God. Next came love of all men, especially all Christians. On the scale of virtues, love for humanity and for one's neighbor was intermediate between love

[47] Colette Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late-Medieval France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
[48] Ibid., 4.
[49] Ibid., 8.

> for God and love for one's country...And below the value of national duty stood various regional attachments...[50]

Both the Catholic Church and the French king maintained that a French subject could identify with both their region and with the nation as long as his primary allegiance was to the nation.[51] The analysis of regional vs. national identity stops here without examination of the problems that arise when the nation and the region are at odds and each calls upon the subject to proclaim his allegiance to one over the other. This paper will examine the issue of nationalism that Colette Beaune addressed, moving it back a century or two and restricting it to a particular region in which some people claim there is evidence of medieval nationalism. It will focus on how people thought of what is now the region of modern day France that some ideologues call Occitania, what they said about it, and how they expressed their love for it.

Sharon Kinoshita also examined the possibility of an emerging sense of unity during the Albigensian Crusade in a chapter of her book entitled, "Uncivil Wars: Imagining Community in La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise."[52] The term "imagined community," which Kinoshita borrowed from Benedict Anderson and which will also be used in this paper, encompasses all of the residents of Toulouse, significantly including people of all classes and both genders. Kinoshita argues that, whereas before the Albigensian Crusade Raymond had become increasingly estranged from the citizens of Toulouse who, by the eve of the crusade almost ruled themselves, the threat the Crusaders presented effectively united the Toulousans under a single cause. This newfound unity manifested itself in passages of *The Song of the Cathar Wars* in which

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[50] Beaune, *Birth of an Ideology*, 323-324.
[51] Ibid., 324.
[52] Sharon Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

people of all levels of society pledge to defend Toulouse and in later passages in which the residents build walls to aid in the defense of the city. Kinoshita's study focuses primarily on the residents of Toulouse without addressing how they experienced *paratge* or their relationship to the Occitan nobility. She also does not address where this imagined community fit in Raymond VI's hierarchy of identities and allegiances which could have included Catholicism and aristocracy.

This paper draws on Anderson, Beaune, and Kinoshita but discerns a slightly different imagined community in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*. This community consists of the Occitan nobility and the residents of Toulouse who felt themselves united through a common desire for the restoration of *paratge*, a complex and ambiguous term which carries noble connotations. The members of the Occitan imagined community also share a similar culture, belong to the same ethnic group, and come from the region of Occitania. However, the conglomeration of these members does not add up to the modern concept of a nation for, unlike the nation, the imagined community of *The Song of the Cathar Wars* is not all-inclusive. Rather, it excludes the residents of other towns and villages in Occitania as well as the peasantry who composed the majority of the population, but who do not mention *paratge* in the text.

Introduction to *Paratge*

According to our poet, the members of the Occitan imagined community were united through their common reverence of *paratge*; a distinctly Occitan value which was threatened by Simon de Montfort's forces and championed by the Counts of Toulouse. Whereas William of Tudela makes no mention of it, the word occurs fifty times in the

second part of the *Canso*,[53] highlighting its strong tie to Occitania and the Occitan cause.[54] While scholars agree on the importance of the term *paratge*, there is some controversy over its exact meaning as well as who could claim it. The following paragraphs will examine the existing scholarship on *paratge* as well as posit a definition of the term which will be used in the rest of this paper.

The term *paratge* is Old Occitan and related to the English word parage. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, parage's derivation from *pair* implies that "the original sense…was 'equality of condition or rank' and the sense 'noble lineage or extraction' is secondary."[55] However, one cannot prove this suggestion as the earliest recorded use of parage is from a later time when the definition had changed to include, "high lineage," "the qualities of courtesy, generosity, etc., held to be proper to a person of noble lineage," and "equality in high hereditary rank or status."[56] The difference between these two definitions exists in who can claim parage. In the earlier case, a wider range of people could associate themselves with parage. Conversely, the later definition evinces noble connotations and a strong tie to the aristocracy, effectively limiting those who could claim parage. Thus, there exists some ambiguity between which of these definitions best describes who had access to the "*paratge*" of *The Song of the Cathar Wars*.

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[53] C.P. Bagley, "Paratge in the Anonymous Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise," *French Studies* 21, no. 3 (1967): 195-204, 195.

[54] "L'importance de cette notion est confirmée par le fait que le terme de *Paratge* n'apparaît jamais dans la première partie de la *Chanson*, qui est l'oeuvre d'un écrivain favorable à la Croisade, Guillaume de Tudèle : c'est un argument *e silentio* pour établir son lien intime avec la cause méridionale prônée par l'auteur de la continuation." Francesco Zambon, "La Notion de paratge, des troubadours à 'La Chanson de la croisade albigeoise,'" *Heresis*, no. 8 (1995): 9-27.

[55] *The Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "Parage," http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.macalester.edu/cgi/entry/50171034?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=parage&first=1&max_to_show=10 (Accessed March 15, 2008).

[56] Ibid.

By the time the Albigensian Crusade occurred, the term *paratge* was already widely used in Occitania. There are three general cases in which *paratge* occurs, the first of which has to do with inheritance rights. In this case, *paratge* is defined as, "the feudal institution that, in certain regions, regulates inheritance and the parceling of fiefs."[57] Thus, *paratge* has a strong tie to land ownership and inheritance which is retained in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*.

Paratge also appears in courtly poetry in which it takes on connotations of personal valor, nobility, and high birth.[58] In his article *La Notion de Paratge*, Francesco Zambon cites a poem by the Occitan troubadour Bertran de Born in which *paratge* signifies noble birth. "Once entered in the melee, each well born man [Occitan: om de parage] only thinks of splitting heads and arms, for it is better to die than to live defeated."[59] These men, defined literally as "men of *paratge*," bear a similarity to the characters in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, who crave battle and insist that it is better to die than to be deprived of one's inheritance. *Paratge* also appears in courtly love poetry, a genre conceived by Occitan troubadours. In these poems, *paratge* retains its meaning of high birth and is also paired with noble virtues which help to define the connotations of the term. In the following passage, Guiraut de Bornelh describes a noble lady using the term *paratge* as well as other virtues. "She is gentle, good, and humble despite her noble

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[57] "...l'institution féodale qui réglait dans certaines régions l'héritage et le morcellement des fiefs." G. Cropp, *Le Vocabulaire courtois des troubadours à l'époque classique* (Geneva: Droz, 1975), 149 (translation mine).

[58] Eliza Miruna Ghil, *L'Age de parage: Essai sur le poétique et le politique en Occitanie au XIIIe siècle* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1989), 183, Zambon, "Notion de paratge," 10 (translation mine).

[59] E qand er en l'estor intratz,
Chascus om de parage
Non pens mas d'asclar caps e bratz,
Que mais val mortz que vius sobratz
"Et une fois entré dans la mêlée, que tout homme bien né ne pense qu'à fendre têtes et bras, car mieux vaut être mort que vivant et vancu."
As cited in Zambon, "Notion de paratge," 11 (translated from French by the author).

birth [*paratge*]. She has beautiful manners, makes pleasant conversation, and is gracious to me in front of everyone."[60] While these virtues are not paired with *paratge* in *The Song of the Cathar Wars* due to their perceived femininity, this passage proves that there was a precedent for associating *paratge* with noble virtues.

Lastly, the term *paratge* appeared in Occitan *sirventès*, a genre of writing in which a troubadour wrote from the perspective of a paid soldier, or "*sirven.*" According to Francesco Zambon, it is likely that our poet was aware of these poems, especially those written by Guiraut de Bornelh, and that they influenced the way in which he conceived of and employed *paratge* in his work. In one significant *sirventès*, a troubadour accuses the Occitan nobility of forgetting "the virtues and obligations of their class and of betraying their raison d'être."[61] In this poem, the term *paratge* represents an overarching aristocratic ideal which has been degraded by the neglect of the nobility:

> The joyous times when the nobility was chosen and created were very sweet and pleasant, for *paratge* was bestowed upon those who were just and wise, loyal, frank, mild, generous, sincere and compassionate, who had a noble heart and good faith.[62]

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[60] Dols'e bona, humils de gran paratge
En fatz gentils, ab solaz avinen,
Agradiva vas me a tota gen.

"Elle douce et bonne, humble malgré sa noble naissance, de belles manières, agréable dans la conversation et gracieuse envers moi en présence de tout le monde."
As cited in Zambon, "Notion de paratge," 11 (translated from French by the author).

[61] "Dans un de ses sirventès, *Mot era dous e plazens*, le *mastre dels trobadors* accuse les seigneurs d'avoir oublié les vertus et les devoirs propres de leur rang et d'avoir ainsi trahi leur raison d'être elle-même. Le terme désignant ici l'idéal aristocratique dont les *malvatz rics* se sentent éloignés." Zambon, "Notion de paratge," 11 (translated from French by the author).

[62] Mot era dous e plazens
lo temps gays cant fon eslitz
paraties, et establitz ;
que.ls drechuriers conoisens
lials, francx, de ric coratie,
plazens, larcx, de bona fe,
vertadiers, de gran merce
establi hom de paratie

In this passage, Guiraut de Bornelh defines the type of person who may be associated with *paratge*. The first prerequisite is noble birth for, according to the troubadour, the time in which *paratge* flourished was when the nobility fulfilled their cultural role as protectors and perpetrators of the ideal. The second prerequisite is a noble spirit, as defined by the terms listed above. According to Zambon, our poet expanded upon the ideal of *paratge* as defined by Guiraut de Bornelh. The result was a synthesis of the highest virtues of the Occitan civilization which were threatened with destruction by the French.[63]

Given how *paratge* was used in earlier texts, one can develop a possible definition of the term as it was used in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*. This definition of *paratge* would take into account its link to land ownership and inheritance as well as its more abstract connotations. For example, one could define *paratge* as being bestowed upon a person who had full access to his/her inheritance and who evinced the characteristics associated with a noble spirit: generosity, mercy, wisdom, valor etc. However, this definition is incomplete because it fails to define *who* could be associated with *paratge* and who could not. This point, being controversial among scholars, deserves further attention.

Before examining whether *paratge* could only be claimed by the nobility or whether it was available to the general population, it is important to state that in both cases *paratge* remains a concept exclusive to Occitania. In *The Song of the Cathar Wars*

"Il était très doux et plaisant le temps joyeux où la noblesse fut choisie et créée ; car *paratge* fut conféré à ceux qui étaient justes et sages, loyaux, francs, au coeur noble, plaisants, généreux, de bonne foi, sincères, compatissants." Ibid., 15 (translated from French by the author).

[63] "C'est bien des pièces moralisantes de Guiraut de Bornelh qu'a dû s'inspirer le poète anonyme de la *Chanson de la Croisade* lorsqu'il a élaboré sa notion de *Paratge* comme synthèse des valeurs les plus hautes de la civilisation occitane menacée de destruction." Ibid., 16.

paratge is only used by southern lords, our poet, and three foreigners who disagree with Simon de Montfort's oppressive treatment of the Occitan people. Moreover, *paratge* is only applied to Occitans and, when it is said to reside in a place, it only resides in Occitania.[64] It is worthwhile to mention again that, while our poet mentions *paratge* fifty times in his narrative, William of Tudela, a pro-crusade clergyman from Navarre, does not seem aware of its existence.[65] Thus, as *The Song of the Cathar Wars* makes abundantly clear, our poet maintains that *paratge* is a virtue exclusive to Occitania and conspicuously absent from France.

Who May be Associated with *Paratge*

As stated above, there is less consensus as to who can be associated with *paratge*. Some scholars maintain that *paratge* is a noble concept which is intimately tied to land ownership and, as such, is restricted to the nobility. C. P. Bagley writes, "For the poet, to desire *Paratge* is to desire the restoration of one's lands, to be prepared to defend one's rights and to seek a return of prosperity..."[66] Linda Paterson also draws attention to the link between *paratge* and noble inheritance: "The notion of 'patrimony' is equally present in the *Song of the Albigensian Crusade*, if not in the word *terra* than in its synonym *eres*, 'inheritance', and the poem's vigorous defense of *Paratge*, the right of a nobleman to own his inherited lands."[67] The importance of land ownership was frequently stressed by our poet, for owning land meant that a nobleman could be independently wealthy. This wealth put him in a position of power and honor,

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[64] Bagley, "Paratge in the Anonymous Chanson," 197.
[65] Ibid., 195.
[66] Ibid., 199.
[67] Paterson, *World of the Troubadours*, 20.

represented by the fact that he could *give* alms instead of *receiving* them. Owning a fief also allowed a nobleman to claim and exhibit other virtues that would be impossible without wealth:

> It is only by extension from the idea of rightful ownership that *Paratge* comes to mean honor...the virtues and qualities traditionally associated with a lord make no sense if he is deprived of his fief. For the anonymous poet, the essential components of honor seem to be independence and generosity, for both of which the possession of a fief is a first condition.[68]

This passage suggests the important role that land ownership played in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*. For, if a nobleman is "deprived of his fief," he becomes a *faiditz*, a wandering landless noble.[69] The fear of becoming a *faiditz* is voiced by several different Occitan noblemen in the text. These men insist that they would rather die than lose their inheritance, for the implication is that a loss of land is paired with a loss of independence, the ability to be generous and honorable, and *paratge*. The terrible consequences of losing a fief are voiced by Pope Innocent himself as he argues with his advisors against depriving Raymond VII of his "fief, rents and revenue."

> Consider too his lineage, of the best blood that can or does exist. And since this youngster has a courteous heart...what voice will sentence him to be lost, and to live on other men's riches? Shall not God, reason and mercy stand by such a one, who ought to be giving alms, not taking them? For a man who depends for his life on another's wealth is better dead or never born at all. [70]

Thus, if significant wealth is needed in order to exhibit the values associated with *paratge* and *paratge* itself, it would appear that only a handful of Occitan noblemen could be

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[68] Bagley, "Paratge in the Anonymous Chanson," 200.

[69] "'Faidit' – meaning 'exiled' and (by extension) 'miserable' – was a resonant cultural term in Occitania. In the case of the hapless Gaucelm Faidit, who (according to one thirteenth-century *vida*) became a troubadour after losing "all his wealth" in a game of dice, it refers to his various misfortunes and amorous sufferings. Boutière and Schutz, *Biographies des troubadours*, 167. After the Albigensian Crusade, it comes to signify the whole generation of nobles disinherited by Simon de Montfort." Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries*, 283.

[70] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 79.

associated with the term. Moreover, this connection between the nobility and *paratge* is in keeping with how the word was used before, in courtly love poetry and sirventès addressed to the nobility.

While scholars acknowledge the tie between *paratge* and the nobility, some argue that, in the hands of our poet, the meaning of *paratge* changes, allowing more people access to the term. René Nelli describes *paratge*'s transformation. It was, at first, "a chivalrous nobility; the collection of moral virtues of aristocratic origin," which, when defined more broadly in the *Canso*, constitutes the Occitan civilization.[71] Other scholars likewise insist that, in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, *paratge* is broadened to represent more classes of people than it had in the past. Linda Paterson writes, "*Paratge* can perhaps best be defined [in the *Canso*] as the right to one's inheritance: the right not only of a noble lineage but also of a whole society. The ethos is that of fighting for one's rights and those of one's allies..."[72] C. P. Bagley likewise stresses that *paratge* was valued by the entire Occitan society:

> The idea of lineage (*Paratge*) is not anchored in the interests of one family or even two or three. The theme of dispossessing the rightful heir, though centered round the Toulouse dynasty, is splintered into as many fragments as there are families and townships on Raymond's side. The clan of the feudal epic is extended until it embraces a group of counts, barons, bourgeois and *lo pobles grossiers* [Occitan: rich merchants] that takes on the appearance of a whole society.[73]

According to the scholars mentioned above, our poet transformed the use of *paratge* into a value that every Occitan knows and understands. What they neglect to explore is

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[71] "[la] noblesse chevaleresque ; l'ensemble des valeurs morales, d'origine aristocratique, qui ont constitué, en s'élargissant, la civilisation occitane." As cited in Pach, "Un Poème patriotique," 9 (author's translation).
[72] Paterson, *World of the Troubadours*, 70-1.
[73] Bagley, "Paratge in the Anonymous Chanson," 203.

whether or not our poet portrays the Occitan people as valuing and understanding *paratge* similarly.

Before examining who was associated with the *paratge* of *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, it is important to establish how *paratge* functions in the text. On this issue, the scholar C. P. Bagley offers the most insight. According to Bagley, in the hands of our poet *paratge* comes to represent the idealized state of Occitania that existed before the French invasion.[74] During this time Occitania was under the legitimate rule of the Counts of Toulouse and other noblemen, each of whom was able to enjoy his rightful inheritance in peace. The rivalries and land-grabbing among the nobility that actually existed at that time in history are ignored in favor of an ideal. Francesco Zambon likens this idealized pre-invasion Occitania to the Christian myth of earthly paradise, or the Garden of Eden:

> The symbolic implications of all of these images are easily ascertained. The poet describes the attributes of *paratge* in almost Biblical language which brings to mind a world similar to Eden, brightened by eternal springtime. He expresses these patriotic sentiments and his dream of social and cultural restoration in an elaboration of the myth of the return to earthly paradise.[75]

While Bagley does not associate our poet's idealized world of *paratge* with the Garden of Eden, she maintains nonetheless that *paratge* was linked with prosperous times. What is perhaps most significant about the association of *paratge* and prosperity is that the prosperity is collective. Thus, when noblemen express a desire for the return of *paratge* they are not referring solely to the restoration of their own inheritance, but for the restoration of the correct social order under which everyone has their fair share. By

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[74] Bagley, "Paratge in the Anonymous Chanson," 203.

[75] "Les implications symboliques de toutes ces images ne sont pas difficiles à saisir : les attributs de *Paratge* relèvent du langage biblique et se rapportent à un monde édénique égayé par un éternel printemps. Le poète de la *Chanson* exprime ses sentiments patriotiques et son rêve de restauration sociale et culturelle en élaborant...un modèle d'origine religieuse : le mythe du retour au paradis terretre." Zambon, "Notion de paratge," 23.

having his characters refer to their own material interests in terms of *paratge*, our poet provides his audience with a picture of a unified Occitania in which each person fought for a common good.[76]

So who were these people? In the case of *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, asking who has access to *paratge* is tantamount to asking who is in the Occitan imagined community. The simple answer would be that the Occitan imagined community is comprised of every Occitan who desires the restoration of *paratge*. Implicit in this statement is that people of all classes can be members of the imagined community as long as they have a concept of *paratge*, and that is indeed the case. However, this does not mean that people from different classes understood *paratge* similarly. The fact that the Occitan nobility had more wealth and privilege than the residents of Toulouse meant that they also had more to lose if Simon de Montfort succeeded in conquering Occitania. For these men, the outcome of a battle or siege could determine if they would live a comfortable life as a landed noble or the dangerous and ignoble life of a *faiditz*. Conversely, the residents of Toulouse would experience relatively little change under Simon de Montfort's rule unless he turned them out of the city. Nonetheless, our poet does not downplay the enthusiasm of the lower classes of Toulouse who also yearn for *paratge* and who hate the French invaders with the same zeal as their noble counterparts. The following paragraphs will discuss how each group of Occitans experienced *paratge* and contributed to the imagined community of *The Song of the Cathar Wars*.

[76] Bagley, "Paratge in the Anonymous Chanson," 203-4.

Paratge and the City of Toulouse

Before examining the different relationships that specific groups of people had with *paratge*, it is important to establish that the city of Toulouse itself had a privileged relationship with *paratge*. Even without taking the concept of *paratge* into account, Toulouse would still figure prominently in our poet's narrative for, to our poet, the Albigensian Crusade was actually a war of conquest waged by French invaders.[77] One result of this war was that Pope Innocent III declared Simon de Montfort as the new Count of Toulouse during the Fourth Lateran Council.[78] Thereafter the re-conquest of Toulouse held special symbolic weight, for if Raymond VI regained Toulouse and his inheritance then *paratge* would be restored and legitimate rule upheld. The importance of Toulouse to Raymond VI and his followers is nowhere more apparent than when the men first enter Toulouse after having been exiled in Spain.

> When they saw the town the eyes of even the boldest among them filled with heartfelt tears. Each in his own mind said, "Virgin Empress, give me back the home where I grew up! Better I should live or be buried here than wander any more about the world in danger and disgrace."[79]

Far from focusing solely on Raymond VI, this passage establishes an emotional bond between each man and Toulouse. Upon seeing their old home their eyes fill with tears and they vow that it would be better to die than be driven out again to live in exile as a *faiditz*. The importance of regaining Toulouse is also commented upon by the Count of Comminges who encourages Raymond VI to retake the city. "Listen to me, my lord. If you can regain Toulouse and keep it, *paratge* will shine in splendor once again, you will

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[77] Costen, *Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade*, 139.
[78] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 78.
[79] Ibid., 122.

shed glory upon yourself and on all of us, for if you recover your heritage we shall all have enough land."[80] Once again our poet maintains that retaking Toulouse from the French crusaders will benefit everyone in Raymond VI's camp. For, in regaining his inheritance their own status as land-owners is assured, "we shall all have enough land." Thus, each Occitan in Raymond's group has a stake in retaking Toulouse, a city of absolute importance.

Because of its prominent position as a collective symbol of lost inheritance, our poet establishes a special and exclusive connection between the city of Toulouse and *paratge*. According to our poet, *paratge* is a phenomenon which resides in Toulouse when the city is under legitimate rule. Sir Alan, a French critic of Count Simon, cites Toulouse's connection to *paratge* as a reason why the city is worthy of honor. "There inside [Toulouse] are *paratge*, courage and wealth; it is the head of the lordship, long possessed of rich lands."[81] Because *paratge* can only thrive in Toulouse when the city is free from foreign tyranny, Count Simon's forces threaten both Toulouse and *paratge*. When Simon de Montfort sacked Toulouse in 1216, taking hostages and razing the walls, both Toulouse and *paratge* suffer, "Toulouse and *paratge* were in the hands of traitors..."[82] Likewise, a victory for Toulouse is also a victory for *paratge*. Thus, when Occitan soldiers make plans to destroy the "cat," a siege machine outside the defenses, they frame their concept of victory in terms of reuniting Toulouse and *paratge*. "We'll go and attack the cat, for that must be done. Together we shall take it, and Toulouse and *paratge* will never be parted again."[83] While other defeats and victories outside of

[80] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 120.
[81] Ibid., 137. Count Simon and his French critics will be discussed later.
[82] Ibid., 116.
[83] Ibid., 170.

Toulouse are also described in terms of *paratge*, no other city is as consistently associated with *paratge* as Toulouse.

The Residents of Toulouse and *Paratge*

The close association between Toulouse and *paratge* grants the general population of Toulouse a privileged understanding of *paratge* that is denied to other lower-class Occitans in different towns and villages. Although our poet depicts every Occitan from Marseille to Avignon to Beaucaire as loyal to the House of Toulouse, he never has the common people of these towns state their desire for the return of *paratge*. Rather, the only people who mention *paratge* and who are not part of the military or nobility are the residents of Toulouse. This occurs just after Simon de Montfort's death outside the city walls. As the news is delivered to the Toulousans, celebrations erupt:

> ...a messenger brought the news into Toulouse and such was the joy that all over the town they ran to the churches and lit candles in all the candlesticks and cried out, 'Rejoice! God is merciful and *paratge* shines forth, victorious forever! The cruel and murderous count is dead, dead unshriven because he was a man of blood!'[84]

Like their noble counterparts who will be discussed later, these people appreciate the threat *paratge* faced in Simon de Montfort. With his death *paratge* is saved because Toulouse will once again be ruled by a legitimate lord. Therefore, because the people of Toulouse express an understanding of and desire for *paratge*, they may be considered members of the Occitan imagined community.

Our poet also depicts all of the residents of Toulouse aiding in the defense of their city. In these passages the Toulousans bring whatever they can to help rebuild the city's defenses or build barricades, sometimes under enemy fire. When Raymond VI returned to

[84] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 172.

Toulouse after his exile in Spain, the Toulousans unanimously welcomed him and began to rebuild the city's defenses which Simon de Montfort had destroyed earlier. Our poet describes the scene as one of great unity and celebration:

> ...the counts were hard at work there, with all the knights, the citizens and their wives and valiant merchants, men, women and courteous money-changers, small children, boys and girls, servants, running messengers, every one had a pick, a shovel or a garden fork, every one of them joined eagerly in the work. And at night they all kept watch together, lights and candlesticks were placed along the streets, drums and tabors sounded and bugles played. In heartfelt joy, women and girls sang and danced to merry tunes.[85]

In this scene, servants work alongside counts, money-changers with noblewomen, and all work together willingly and joyfully. Astonishingly, this scene depicts women working alongside men to defend their city and leading nighttime celebrations.[86] In these passages, the work done by women is valued and idealized just like that of their male counterparts, suggesting that the imagined community could, in some cases, include women.[87] This is a scene both of perfect unity and of absolute conviction in a shared cause, that of defeating the French and restoring the Counts of Toulouse.[88] These are the people who, when Simon de Montfort was killed, mentioned *paratge* in their celebration despite the fact that the term had only been put in the mouths of soldiers or noblemen in the rest of the text. The passages that describe the Toulousan's heroic efforts to defend their city elevate them to the status of soldiers. The term "elevate" is used because, in a *chanson* that takes

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[85] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 124.

[86] "One may argue that in mentioning these social categories the poet may have been purely and simply accurate. After all, the citizens of Toulouse did fight to defend their city against Simon de Montfort, and some women seem to have indeed been responsible for launching the fatal stone that killed the crusaders' commander-in-chief in 1218." Ghil, Ideological Models, 142.

[87] Although our poet describes the contributions of Toulousan women, he never mentions Occitan noblewomen.

[88] "We encounter here a memorable image of the Southern society as viewed by the Anonymous' *Canso*: united in its defensive effort at every level of the social hierarchy, and heartened by the pursuit of a common purpose." Ghil, "Ideological Models," 141.

war as its focus, the people who are featured and honored in the narrative are men who bear arms. Thus, by their status as residents of a privileged city, their invocation of *paratge*, and their effort to aid in the defense of Toulouse, the common people of Toulouse are depicted as members of the imagined community of *The Song of the Cathar Wars.*

It is worthwhile to mention here that, whereas our poet's focus on the residents of Toulouse ensures their status as important characters in the text, the peasantry and residents of other towns are almost completely absent. This may be due to the nature of *The Song of the Cathar Wars* for, as a narrative that details the events of war, the text focuses on warriors and soldiers rather than villagers or peasants. Doubtless these people felt the effects of the Albigensian Crusade, probably tragically, but as characters they seldom enter into our poet's world, and they never voice their desire for the restoration of *paratge*. One could conclude that this does not necessarily mean that they were not members of the Occitan imagined community. However, the fact that our poet did not include these people in his narrative or have other people mention them is significant. Therefore, this paper argues that, although these people support Raymond VI when they do appear in the text, they were not members of his Occitan imagined community.

The Occitan Nobility and *Paratge*

Whereas the residents of Toulouse evince a desire for the return of *paratge*, it is the nobility and the wealthy citizens of Toulouse who speak of it at a greater length and whose fortunes are more closely bound to the restoration of *paratge*. The intimate connection between the nobility and *paratge* was already established at this point in other genres of writing of which our poet must have been aware, thus the nobility and *paratge* were a natural pair. Additionally, the noblemen of *The Song of the Cathar Wars* both make military decisions in councils together and fight the French on the battlefield. Through these actions Occitan noblemen influence the status of *paratge*, for the only way to restore *paratge* is through military defeat of the French. The Count of Foix makes the connection between the Occitan nobles and *paratge* in his speech to a group of nobles, knights, and citizens[89] during the siege of Toulouse:

> Barons, men of Toulouse, hear my true word: How you must rejoice in your ancestors who were loyal to God and their lord, and in yourselves who have done honor to their name and your own! Through you a flower has blossomed, has restored light and made the darkness shine, through you worth and *paratge* have been brought into the light of day instead of wandering the world, uncertain where to go, while you good men wept for them.[90]

In this passage our poet draws a pointed comparison between the state of *paratge* without the aid of the noblemen and the experience of being a *faiditz*, or landless noble. In each case, *paratge* and the *faiditz* "wander the world, uncertain where to go" as a result of the French invasion. This comparison draws the fate of the noblemen and *paratge* together,

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[89] "The count of Toulouse conferred with his supporters: the count of Comminges...the great count of Foix...and his sister's son Sir Roger of Comminges, as well as the brave and clever Roger Bernard, with Sir Bernard of Comminges...Sir Dalmas of Creixell...and many distinguished barons and counselors. Present too were the best and most powerful lords of the town, both knights and citizens, and the members of the Capitol." Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 139.

[90] Ibid., 140.

for a victory for one is a victory for the other. By fighting the French during the siege of Toulouse, these assorted barons and other noblemen have both helped to secure the city and their own survival as well as brought *paratge* "into the light of day."

What is also important to note about this passage is that the Count of Foix calls the men of Toulouse gathered in the meeting "Barons."[91] By doing so, he suggests that these men are part of the nobility by virtue of being Toulousan. This serves to further elevate the status of Toulouse as a special city with "noble" residents, cementing the tie between the Occitan nobility and the residents of Toulouse and reinforcing the imagined community of which both groups are a part. However, while it is tempting to conclude that our poet implies that *all* of the residents of Toulouse are "barons," the people who attended this meeting were from the upper classes of bourgeois society. These people did not have the status and privilege of being landed nobles, but they were doubtless wealthy citizens who possibly sought to improve their status further. Thus, this greeting could imply that our poet grants these men the elevation in status they desire as a reward for supporting Raymond VI and defending their city.

Although the Occitan nobility have more power than the residents of Toulouse to influence the fate of *paratge*, the two nobles who have the greatest power to save *paratge* are Raymond VI of Toulouse and his son Raymondet. Our poet frequently states that the fate of *paratge* is directly tied to the Counts of Toulouse, so much so that other nobles

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[91] E lo rics coms de Fois, ab la fresca color,
Parlec après lo comte e dossament ditz lor :
« Baros, vos de Toloza, entendetz est auctor :
"Le puissant comte de Foix, au teint frais, prit la parole après le comte et leur dit avec douceur : 'Barons, vous les Toulousains, écoutez cet avis...'" Eugène Martin-Chabot, ed. and trans., *La chanson de la croisade albigeoise*, vol. 3 (Paris: H. Champion, 1961), 52-3.

maintain that to aid one is to aid the other. During the siege of Toulouse, Master Bernard[92] addresses an assembly of Occitan nobles:

> My lords, free knights, be pleased to listen to me. I am one of the Capitol and our consuls are ready day and night to do all you can wish. Friendship is flourishing, it is bearing fruit, for together you and we are defending the count [Raymond VI], defending *paratge*.,.[93]

In this passage Master Bernard asserts that defending Raymond VI is tantamount to defending *paratge* itself. However, Raymond VI's special connection to *paratge* does not undermine *paratge*'s ability to unify the members of the Occitan imagined community to which every Occitan nobleman belongs. Rather, before Master Bernard mentions Raymond VI he remarks upon the healthy friendship that is flourishing among the Occitan nobles. The result of this friendship is the competent defense of *paratge* which, as has already been established, benefits each member of the imagined community.

While our poet establishes a special connection between *paratge* and Raymond VI, he is much more enthusiastic in his depiction of the relationship between *paratge* and the "young count," Raymondet. As the heir of the Count of Toulouse, Raymondet embodies the struggle for *paratge* for, whereas his father was fighting to regain lands that he had once held, Raymondet fights for the right to regain a stolen inheritance. Additionally, the young count was promising military leader. The siege he commanded at Beaucaire was the first military victory the Occitan resistance gained against Simon de Montfort since the beginning of the crusade.[94] Thus, Raymondet represented the future of the Occitan resistance and the best hope for the restoration of *paratge*. Our poet sets up

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[92] Master Bernard was a Toulousan who served many times as consul of Toulouse. Our poet often introduces him by remarking on his eloquence. Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 140.
[93] Ibid., 168.
[94] Jacques Madaule, *Albigensian Crusade: An Historical Essay* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1967), 79.

this relationship by commenting on it himself, as well as having both nobles and Raymondet himself reinforce the connection. In our poet's descriptions of Raymondet, the young count is often associated with renewal, liveliness, bravery, and of course, youth. "Everywhere a new flower is blossoming, one which will re-establish worth and *paratge*, for the brave young count, alert and valiant, has taken up arms against the ravagers and disinheritors..."[95] Other passages repeat this springtime imagery, reinforcing Raymondet's youth. "My lord the young count, bravery itself, who lifts up *paratge* and vanquishes the proud, who brings color and gold to defeated and suffering men..."[96] In each of these passages our poet portrays young Raymond as the savior of *paratge*, who lifts it up and re-establishes it single-handedly. Other noblemen remark on Raymondet's vital potential as the savior of *paratge* as well. In each case the men speak of Raymondet without jealousy. Rather, they seem to understand his power to restore *paratge* and thus encourage him in his campaigns against the French or try to protect him in battle. In one significant passage, Guy of Cavaillon urges Raymondet to defend Occitania for the sake of *paratge*:

> Now is the time when *paratge* urgently requires you to be bad [to your enemies] and good [to your allies]. The count de Montfort who destroys men, he and the Church at Rome and the preachers are covering *paratge* with shame, they have cast it down from its high place, and if you do not raise it up, it will vanish for ever. If worth and *paratge* do not rise again through you, then *paratge* dies, in you the whole world dies. You are the true hope of all *paratge* and the choice is yours: either you show valor or *paratge* dies.[97]

Along with establishing a connection between Raymondet and *paratge*, this passage suggests the absolute importance *paratge* holds in the narrative. *Paratge* is literally "the

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[95] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 91.
[96] Ibid., 192.
[97] Ibid., 84.

whole world," the pre-invasion Occitania that every member of the Occitan imagined community longs for. The young count is so vitally important to the cause of re-establishing *paratge* that noblemen seek to protect him from harm on the battlefield. Before the battle of Marmande, Peter Navarra tells the assembled noblemen to protect Raymondet. "'My lords…knights, guard the young count all of you, don't let him be wounded! Worth and *paratge* return in him, valor would perish if he were injured.'"[98] While this passage may suggest that Raymondet was not exposed to danger on the battlefield, our poet establishes the opposite, that the young count is a brilliant soldier who is eager for battle.[99] What's more, he recognizes his duty to *paratge* and does not hesitate to pledge himself to its restoration. After Guy of Cavaillon urges Raymondet to raise *paratge* up, the young count responds, "If Jesus Christ keeps me and my companions alive and gives me back Toulouse, which I long for, *paratge* shall not suffer poverty or disgrace…" The importance of Toulouse, never far from the foreground, is implied here. If Raymondet can recapture the city of Toulouse from Count Simon then he will be in a position to ensure the high status of *paratge*. Thus, as admonishments from noblemen, asides by our poet, and Raymondet's own words suggest, the young count is the guardian of *paratge* and thus of the interests of all the Occitan noblemen as well as the residents of Toulouse.

[98] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 184.
[99] Ibid., 183-4, 185.

A New Alliance

Thus far, this paper has established that the desire for the return of *paratge*, present among the Occitan nobility and at every level of society in Toulouse, provides a powerful unifying factor in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*. By depicting the residents of Toulouse as soldiers and elevating the citizens of Toulouse to the status of "barons," our poet strengthens this sense of community. The alliance between the residents of Toulouse and the Occitan noblemen, which Eliza M. Ghil terms military/urban, is incredibly important in the text because it replaces the more traditional military/clerical alliance.[100] The former alliance would have been impossible to establish in *The Song of the Cathar Wars* as our poet does not mention any clerics who remained loyal to the house of Toulouse.[101] Thus, by creating an Occitan imagined community comprised of Toulousans and nobles our poet was able to direct attention away from the troubling absence of Catholic clergy while creating a new society based upon *paratge*.

Catholicism in the Imagined Community

Along with the desire for the return of *paratge*, the most important characteristic of our poet's Occitan imagined community was the unwavering and unquestionable Catholicism of its members. This may, at first, seem counterintuitive, for the official object of the Albigensian Crusade was to root out the Cathar heresy believed to be supported, if not practiced, by the Occitan nobility. In addition, Catharism was a distinct facet of Occitan culture and its defense could have provided the nobility with a motive to unify and fight. However, it would be wrong to assume that the Occitan people had

[100] Ghil, Ideological Models, 142.
[101] The absence of clergy in the text will be discussed later.

entirely rejected the Catholic Church in favor of Catharism. While there is some debate concerning the state of the Church before the Albigensian Crusade, many scholars argue that it was not as degraded as previously believed, and that the region itself remained predominantly orthodox. Jacques Madaule writes, "What stands out very clearly is that the Church had retained immense prestige in the South. It would seem that the Southerners wielded their arms half-heartedly to say the least when confronted with the soldiers of Christ."[102] Thus, while the Catholic faith was not universally accepted in Occitania, it had a large population of people loyal to the Church who found it difficult to fight against a crusading army sanctioned by the pope. Our poet doubtless realized this, and in response he portrays the Occitans not as defenders of the Cathar heresy, but as good Catholics whose faith was in fact purer than that of the allegedly orthodox crusaders.

In *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, the absence of heresy at all levels of Occitan society provides the illusion of religious unity by ignoring a divisive issue and rendering a problematic minority of religious dissidents invisible. According to our poet, there are no heretics in Toulouse. Rather, it is a town where everyone professes their Catholic faith freely and vigorously at every opportunity. This is particularly apparent after a successful battle during the siege of Toulouse. As they return to their homes in the city, the "men of Toulouse" thank God for their victory and reaffirm their unwavering faith in Christianity:

> Jesus Christ directs us, he gives us good and ill and we must thank him for it and bear it patiently...We believe in the God who saves us from wrongdoing, who made heaven and earth bear flower and fruit, who made the sun and moon shed light on the world, created man and woman and gave life to souls, entered into the Virgin to fulfill the Law, accepted bodily death to save sinners, gave his precious blood to lighten the darkness and made himself an offering to his Father and the holy Spirit.

[102] Madaule, *Albigensian Crusade*, 79.

> And by receiving and fulfilling holy baptism, by loving and obeying holy Church, we must indeed win Jesus Christ and his love.[103]

In this passage, which Janet Shirley terms "The Toulousain's Creed," the men of Toulouse state in no uncertain terms that they believe in the Christian God. Significantly, the Catholic Church and its sacraments are still essential to their faith, for it is only through obeying and loving the Church that the Occitans can "win" Jesus. The men do concede that their relationship with the Church is troubled. "But the lord pope, who ought to care for us, and the prelates of the Church who condemn us to death – may God give them the sense and courage, the knowledge and judgment to understand what is right, to repent, for they are ordering our death…" However, they do not suggest a break with the Catholic Church. Rather, they express the hope that God will intervene and convince the clergy to lift their interdict and end the crusade.

God, *Paratge*, and the Imagined Community

According to our poet, although the Catholic clergy are on the side of the crusaders, God himself supports the Occitans. In *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, as in other medieval sources, God plays an active part in the narrative, granting victory to those whom he supports and punishing others with defeat. This belief is voiced by many different people in the text for, "[God] was expected to take a direct hand in events, and that not just by devout persons but by bloody – minded soldiers."[104] Using this logic, our poet argues through speeches attributed to both Occitans and Frenchmen that God is on the side of the Occitans, and manifests his preference by granting the Occitan army victories over the French. During the siege of Toulouse, the Occitan resistance fighters

[103]Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 150.
[104] Ibid., 6.

successfully repulse an attack made by Count Simon's army. Our poet expresses this victory less as a military triumph as a judgment handed down from God:

> Many long years have [Raymond VI] and his kin been here, and clearly it is God who has given the place back to him. Unprovided, weaponless, with only a few men and a handful of foreign troops [mercenaries], but with steadfast hearts, Count Raymond with God's help has driven out the Normans and the French. The Lord God is merciful to sinners who show mercy, he has given the town back to Raymond...[105]

Our poet repeats his conviction that it was God who delivered Toulouse to Raymond VI three separate times in this short passage, almost obsessively reiterating that God favors the Occitans. It isn't hard to see why, for whereas Raymond VI is described as a man with a "steadfast heart" who shows mercy, our poet equates Count Simon to "pride and vainglory" in an earlier passage.[106] This faith in God's support is echoed by Sir Roger Bernard, the son of the Count of Foix. After reinforcements arrive for Count Simon from France, Sir Roger speaks to the Council of Toulouse, "...don't be discouraged, for we have every reason to be cheerful, as we have a good town, a good right, a loyal lord and Jesus Christ to defend us. He guides and directs us and proves it to us constantly."[107] Implied in this passage is that everything that the Occitans have is missing from the crusader camp. Whereas the Occitans have Toulouse, the crusaders are camped outside its walls. While the Occitans have a "good right," a legitimate claim to their land and a valid reason to fight, the crusaders are foreign usurpers. The Occitans have a "loyal lord" in Raymond VI, while the crusaders are led by the proud and cruel Count Simon. Lastly, the Occitans can rely upon the defense, guidance, and direction of God himself which

[105] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 126.
[106] Ibid., 126.
[107] Ibid., 153.

carries the significant implication, which is repeated often in the text, that God has abandoned the crusader army.

By aiding the Occitan army, God also elevates the status of *paratge*. This is significant for, by supporting the Occitan resistance God indirectly supports *paratge*. This in turn implies that *paratge* is compatible with Christianity. After a series of substantial defeats from 1216-1217 in which Simon de Montfort sacked Toulouse and the fortress of Montgrenier, our poet writes that God intervened by bringing Raymond VI out of his Spanish exile.

> These were serious setbacks for the Provençals, but then God caused a kindly light to shine upon them from Toulouse, one that blazed across the world, restored vigor to *paratge* and splendor to worth, for their lord the count, so much endangered, so wrongly disinherited by the mighty pope and the other clergy, arrived in a fief where he found loyalty...[108]

Through bringing Raymond VI back into Occitania, God aided the Occitan resistance and "restored vigor to *paratge*." Similarly, our poet suggests that God had an influence in Simon de Montfort's death which also aided *paratge*. Upon hearing word that Count Simon was dead, the residents of Toulouse exclaim, "Rejoice! God is merciful and *paratge* shines forth, victorious forever! The cruel and murderous count is dead, dead unshriven because he was a man of blood."[109] According to our poet, God's mercy manifests itself in the death of the hated Simon and the elevation of *paratge*. Significantly, these passages show that the phenomenon of *paratge* did not replace Christianity in Occitania. Rather, our poet depicts *paratge* and Christianity as existing in tandem and reinforcing each other.

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[108] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 119.
[109] Ibid., 172.

The Catholic Church and *Paratge*

Although our poet establishes that God was on the side of the Occitans and thus that the Occitans are Christian, he could not ignore the fact that the Catholic Church was not so enlightened. However, rather than stating that corrupt clerics and a lethal crusade turned the Occitans away from Catholic Church, our poet maintains that they desired reconciliation. The Count of Comminges expresses this desire to an assembled group of barons during the siege of Toulouse.

> Holy Church and her preachers may damage us, but let us never injure them, let us rather ask Jesus Christ, our father and redeemer, to give us an advocate before the pope who will win peace for us from holy Church, and we will appoint Jesus Christ to enquire and judge of the right and wrong between us and them.[110]

Significantly, the Count of Comminges addresses the "damage" that the Catholic Church has inflicted on the members of the Occitan imagined community. However, instead of inciting his companions to seek revenge, he espouses a "turn the other cheek" attitude consistent with Christian dogma.

Although the meeting between an Occitan advocate and the pope does not materialize, the desire to reconnect to the Catholic Church is clear. Furthermore, the possibility that the people of Occitania and the Catholic Church could be reconciled is not completely out of the picture for, according to our poet, the pope both believes that the Occitan noblemen are Catholic and supports *paratge*. During the Fourth Lateran Council, Pope Innocent III calls a private council with his prelates in which they discuss who is to hold Raymond VI's fief. Although his advisors are almost unanimous in their support of Count Simon, the pope argues against them, stating that Raymond VI is a good Catholic. "This is the problem: how without right or reason can I do so great a wrong to the count,

[110] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 139-40.

a true Catholic, as to disinherit him unjustly, how can I take away his fief or transfer his rights? I see no justification for such an action."[111] Although Innocent III later decides to let Simon hold the conquered territory, he never betrays any doubt concerning Raymond VI's Catholic faith.[112] After the ruling, Raymond VI approaches the Pope to express his shock and anger as well as to remind the pope of his duty as a ruler:

> How just is my anger when I think that I who used to give alms must now receive them! And the boy [Raymondet], not capable of doing wrong, you order his fief to be taken from him and want to drive him out! You who should rule by mercy and *paratge* – be mindful of *paratge* and of God![113]

In this passage our poet suggests that Pope Innocent III is familiar with *paratge* and if Rome was operating correctly the pope would "rule by mercy and *paratge*." The rebuke is effective, for after listening to Raymond, our poet maintains that Innocent was immediately sorry for his decision. "The pope listened, looking at him [Raymond VI] with compassion and feelings of self-reproach."[114] In the following passage the pope makes a vague promise that, although he disinherited Raymond VI, God will reinstate him. The pope also pledges to "make good your right and my own wrong" by getting revenge on his evil counselors.[115] Thus, although Pope Innocent III never says *paratge* himself, the passage suggests that he regrets how he ignored *paratge* and that he aspires to rule by it. Therefore, in an ideal situation, *paratge* and the Catholic Church would be united under the rule of a just pope.

Although Pope Innocent III believes in the Catholicism of the Occitan nobles and the importance of *paratge*, the rest of the Catholic clerics are not so enlightened. Whereas

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[111] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 77 (emphasis mine).
[112] "'My Lords,' said the pope, 'judgment is made. The count [Raymond VI] is Catholic and has behaved honestly, but Sir Simon is to hold the fief.'" Ibid., 78.
[113] Ibid., 81.
[114] Ibid., 81.
[115] Ibid., 82.

Count Simon had many clerics who acted as his advisors, our poet does not mention any clerics who stayed with the Count of Toulouse. This is either because there were no Catholic clergy of high social status who were loyal to the Counts of Toulouse or because there were no Catholic clergy at all on the Occitan's side. Our poet counters this worrisome absence of clerics with the assertion that every cleric in the crusader camp is corrupt and thus does not act according to God's will. Instead, the clergymen have entered into a partnership with Count Simon in order to destroy Occitania. In Guy of Cavaillon's speech to Raymondet, the nobleman mentions the lethal partnership between Count Simon and the Catholic clergy. "The count de Montfort who destroys men, he and the Church at Rome and the preachers are covering *paratge* with shame, they have cast it down from its high place, and if you do not raise it up, it will vanish for ever."[116] Additionally, the common people of Toulouse also express their fear that the combined efforts of Simon de Montfort and the Catholic Church will destroy *paratge*. They convey their concern after winning a victory over the French crusaders during the siege of Toulouse. "The lord pope, who ought to care for us, and the prelates of the Church…condemn us to death…If God and Toulouse had let them, they would have buried worth and *paratge* deep, past recovery."[117] Significantly, even as the residents of Toulouse admit that the combined powers of the clergy and the crusaders could be lethal to *paratge*, they never doubt that God is on their side, "If God…had let them, they would have buried *paratge*." While this does not diminish the danger of the threat, it suggests that the common people of Toulouse had faith in God and in the strength of Toulouse to defend itself.

[116] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 84.
[117] Ibid., 150.

Of the many clerics who support Count Simon, Foulques, the Bishop of Toulouse, poses the greatest threat to *paratge*. Ironically, before entering the Catholic Church Foulques himself had been a successful troubadour whose songs of love and women were widely celebrated. After experiencing a religious awakening, Foulques entered the Cistercian abbey of Toronet in Provence, eventually becoming the Bishop of Toulouse in 1206.[118] During the Albigensian Crusade, Foulques' staunch support of Simon de Montfort earned the hate of his fellow Toulousans and our poet. In a speech made by the Count of Foix during the Fourth Lateran Council, this sense of betrayal is coupled with an impassioned invective against Foulque's previous career as a troubadour.

> And I tell you that the bishop, who is so violent that in all he does he is a traitor to God and to ourselves, has gained by means of lying songs and beguiling phrases which kill the very soul of any who sing them, by means of those verbal quips he polishes and sharpens, by means too of our own gifts through which he first became an entertainer, and through his evil teaching, this bishop has gained such power, such riches, that no one dares breathe a word to challenge his lies. Yet when he was an abbot and a cowled monk, the light was so darkened in his abbey that there was no goodness or peace there until he was removed. And once he was elected bishop of Toulouse, a fire has raged throughout the land that no water anywhere can quench, for he has destroyed the souls and bodies of more than five hundred people, great and small. In his deeds, his words and his whole conduct, I promise you he is more like Antichrist than a messenger from Rome.[119]

According to our poet, Foulques is a traitor who amasses power and wealth by employing verbal tricks he learned as a troubadour. Moreover, he is a toxic presence in the church, expelling goodness and light, killing innocent people, and damning their souls. So deep is his hatred of the bishop, that our poet likens him to the Antichrist, thus completely negating any spiritual authority that Foulques could have. Although our poet's denouncement is incredibly strong, it may have been partially earned. When Toulouse

[118] Madaule, *Albigensian Crusade*, 68
[119] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 75.

was on the brink of revolt, Simon acted quickly, razing the walls and, with the help of Bishop Foulques, taking many prominent citizens hostage. According to our poet, Foulques lured the men into a false sense of security before delivering them to Count Simon. According to our poet, this toxic betrayal put both the citizens of Toulouse and *paratge* in danger. "If God does not help and succor [the captive Toulousans], they will find they have walked into the trap and into the jaws of death, for the count [Simon] and the bishop [Foulques] have planned secretly together to conquer worth and *paratge*."[120] Thus, not only has Bishop Foulques betrayed the Occitan people by delivering them to the crusaders, he has betrayed *paratge* by plotting against it with Count Simon.

Defining the Imagined Community by What it is not: the French Crusaders

Thus far, this paper has examined our poet's portrayal of the Occitan resistance fighters and the Catholic Church in order to ascertain the nature of the Occitan imagined community. However, it is also important to examine our poet's portrayal of the crusaders, for the Occitan imagined community that grew out of the Crusade was defined both by what it was as well as what it stood in opposition to. Against the Occitans ranged Simon de Montfort and the crusader army who, through their invasion of Occitania, had provided the impetus that caused the Occitans to band together and whose presence in Occitania threatened the continued existence of the imagined community. By juxtaposing the Occitan resistance fighters and the crusaders, our poet both sharpens the definition between the two sides and invites the audience to compare the one to the other.

Whereas our poet portrays the Occitan fighters as having an unwavering and pure faith in God, Count Simon occasionally betrays a telling lack of faith in the Catholic

[120] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 111.

Church despite the fact that he has the unanimous support of the Catholic clergy. Simon reveals this lack of faith when he is extremely angry and, according to our poet, Simon goes into a rage when confronted with defeat, humiliation, or uncooperative allies. Simon's spiritual ineptitude is particularly apparent in a meeting between the Count, Cardinal Bertrand, and Bishop Foulques of Toulouse convened after the crusaders were defeated in a battle during the siege of Toulouse. Confronted with the loss, Count Simon turns on his spiritual advisors.

> Bishop…sure as I am that God raised me up, I am just as sure that you and the clergy have betrayed me! I won this great city with the cross, now by bad luck and the sword I have lost it.[121]

By accusing Foulques and the other clergy of betrayal, Simon attacks his greatest allies and the only institution that can legitimize his presence in Occitania. By doing so he betrays his ill-faith and weakens his image as a crusader whose relationship to the Catholic Church should be a model beyond reproach. Bishop Foulques reproaches the Count for his lack of faith and Simon quickly apologizes.

> 'My lord,' said Count Simon, 'I am wrong, forgive me. I am in such fury, such a rage, I don't know what I am saying. I have every right to be out of my mind with anger, thrust out of my lordship by this puny people!'[122]

At best Simon's inappropriate rage reveals that he is an unqualified leader of a holy crusade. At worst, it suggests a division in the crusader camp between Count Simon and the clergy that undermines the cohesion of the crusade. Either way, Simon de Montfort's near blasphemy is effectively shocking and adds to the negative portrayal of his character.

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[121] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 145.
[122] Ibid.

During these periods of weakness when he is controlled by fury, Count Simon's distrust of the Catholic Church extends to God himself. After another unsuccessful attempt to regain Toulouse, Simon explodes in front of his men.

> In a frenzy of rage the count de Montfort cried out, 'God, why do you hate me? ... The Church is no help to me, nor the wisdom of learned men, the bishop and legate are useless, my valor and competence are of no avail, weapons, intelligence, and generosity make no difference, I am thwarted by wood and stone!'[123]

The implications of this outburst are very serious. If indeed God turned his back on the Crusaders then he has also rejected their mission. If this is the case, then Count Simon has no legitimate reason to remain in Occitania. Even if Count Simon only *thinks* that God has betrayed him, he has revealed a disturbing lack of faith which calls his ability to lead a legitimate crusade into question. Also damning is the fact that this is not an isolated outburst, but one of a few in which Count Simon reveals his mistrust of God. After the Occitans repulse an attack on Toulouse led by Simon, he again becomes angry.

> The count withdrew, angry, raging and sad. In his fury he said, 'Christ Jesus, glorious Lord! Where is my good star, my kind, strong, lucky star that's famous by land and sea? Never did I think I could be so accursed that neither weapons, saints nor prayers were any use! Holy Church defends neither herself nor us, she blackens her glory and her precious name.'[124]

According to our poet, Count Simon implies that God has deserted him because prayers are not answered and saints cannot be counted upon to intervene. Thus, God is unreachable, distant, and possibly conferring his favor upon someone else. As in the previous passage, this lack of good faith also extends to the Catholic Church who,

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[123] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 168.
E lo coms de Montfort es tan fel e iratz,
En auta votz escrida : « Dieus ! per que m'aziratz ? »

"Aussi le comte de Montfort est-il si irrité et si furieux et s'écrie-t-il à haute voix : 'Mon Dieu ! Pourquoi m'avez-vous en haine ?'" Martin-Chabot, *Chanson de la croisade*, vol. 3, 188-9.
[124] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 150.

according to Count Simon, sends useless ambassadors and does not aid in its own defense.

For our poet, the final act that confirms the belief that God has abandoned the crusaders is the death of Simon de Montfort. Just before his final battle, Count Simon attends a mass in which he directly addresses God. "Jesus Christ the righteous, now give me death on the field or victory!"[125] By attributing this speech to Simon de Montfort, our poet suggests that Simon's death was an act of God who, when given the choice to grant Simon victory or death, chose to let him die. God's abandonment of the crusaders seems complete when Foulques remarks upon Simon's fate, saying:

> Indeed, I think a human father would suffer to see his son die, but God appears quite unmoved by the count's death! It is them he ought to be killing, but it is us whose defeat he orders! As Toulouse is causing us such pain, let us go and find a doctor who can heal us. God is paying no attention, so we must do all we can.[126]

In this passage Bishop Foulques of Toulouse, one of the most important spiritual leaders of the Crusading force, concedes that God seems to be completely indifferent to Simon's death. Another message implied in the text which may be still more disturbing for the crusading army is that God has left the crusaders to join the ranks of the Occitan resistance fighters, showing his favor by granting them victories. With this argument our poet once again calls the legitimacy of the crusade into question and also attacks the notion that the crusaders are closer to God than the Occitans.

Whereas Count Simon only reveals his fear that God favors the Occitans when his fury makes him lose control, other French crusaders voice the same belief upon witnessing Count Simon's behavior and several Occitan victories. During the siege of

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[125] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 171.
[126] Ibid., 177.

Toulouse Simon's own brother, Guy de Montfort, condemns Simon's actions, saying his cruelty has turned God against them.

> It's clear that God does listen to grievances, for my brother Count Simon is such a harsh tyrant that he has always refused to take them back into favor, and so they have a strong claim...Whatever anyone may swear to the contrary on the bones of the saints, I shall always believe that our sins have turned God against us.[127]

Guy appears to conclude that the "grievances" of the unfairly-treated Occitans has caused God to switch sides. Moreover, if Simon had done the wise thing and forgiven the Toulousans when they had come to Simon begging for mercy, then they would not have had cause for complaint and God would still be on the side of the crusaders. Thus Simon's irresponsible cruelty gave the defeated Toulousans a legitimate cause for complaint. Although Simon plays a major part in God's decision to support the Occitans, Guy de Montfort does not lay the blame solely on his brother. Rather, he says, "*our* sins have turned God against us." Our poet writes that Guy made this pronouncement in front of several major figures in the crusading force as well as "others, more than I know."[128] Thus, the people who have driven God away through their sins are the members who belong to all ranks of the crusading army.

As the group that directly threatened the newly-realized Occitan community, the French crusaders were not ascribed many flattering characteristics beyond those which made them worthy adversaries. Significantly, the attributes that our poet assigns to his enemy are not limited to the French crusaders with whom the Occitans come into direct contact. Rather, these attributes are extended to encompass all Frenchmen, both the contemporaries of our poet and past. As such, they become a type of national

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[127] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 127.
[128] Ibid., 126.

characteristic, one of which is pride. In a speech our poet attributes to the French mercenery Robert of Picquigny, pride becomes the fatal French flaw responsible for the death of the hero Roland.

> A Frenchman [Occitan: *Frances*] must *by his very nature* conquer immediately, and he goes on conquering till he soars higher than a hawk. There he stands on Fortune's wheel and behaves with such arrogance that his pride smashes the ladder and tosses it away; and the man himself falls, tumbles and lies level with the rest...It was French pride and pettiness that killed Roland and Oliver in Spain.[129]

Before examining this passage, it is significant to note that there is an Occitan equivalent for the term "Frenchman," indicated in brackets above. Thus, in following passages from *The Song of the Cathar Wars* cited in English translation, the term represents something very close to the original Occitan and is not a stand-in for a lengthier phrase such as, "the men from de Montfort's army," or, "soldiers of the Count of Soissons" which would not necessarily describe all Frenchmen.

According to our poet, a Frenchman's behavior is determined by characteristics which are ingrained in his ethnicity. *By his very nature* he is arrogant and proud, and these traits cause him to act in a way that brings about his own ruin just as he reaches the apex of his fortune. To strengthen this claim, our poet cites the famous example of Roland, who was too proud to call for help when he was outnumbered by Saracens. By mentioning Roland our poet is both ridiculing a French hero as well as establishing a lineage for this distinctly French sin, pushing its pedigree back into the Carolingian past.

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[129] Shirley, Song of the Cathar Wars, 143 (emphasis mine).
« E *Frances, per natura,* deu conqueror primers

"*Le Français, telle est sa nature,* ne peut manquer de faire tout d'abord des conquêtes..." Martin-Chabot, *Chanson de la croisade*, vol. 3, 69.

Other stereotypes of Frenchmen abound in our poet's portion of *The Song of the Cathar Wars*. The fact that our poet assigned this group certain generalizations indicates that a self-awareness was present, for if the French are proud, then another group of people must exist who are not proud. This ability to conceptualize the French as a separate people with their own behaviors and characteristics turns up in other contemporary sources. In the dialogue poem between the southern troubadour Albertet and the northerner Monge (Monk) written around the time of the Albigensian Crusade, the two poets compare the qualities of Frenchmen and Occitans. While Albertet condemns French surliness and inhospitality, he extols Occitan generosity, sociability, gaiety, and manners,[130] indicating an awareness of "southerners" as a group of people who exhibited distinct characteristics and shared a distinct culture. Likewise, Linda Paterson writes that the Albigensian Crusade brought about a "political awareness and sensitivity to foreign occupation" that manifested itself in the stereotype of the drunken Frenchman who was, "hostile, vicious, covetous, sadistic and tyrannical."[131]

Significantly, our poet uses this stereotype in his depiction of a battle during the siege of Toulouse in which Simon de Montfort is killed. As Sir Raymond Isarn, an Occitan soldier from either Toulouse or Fanjeaux[132] rallies the Occitans for the approaching battle, he cries, "Have at these drunkards!"[133] Likewise, during a meeting

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[130] Paterson, *World of the Troubadours*, 5-6.
[131] Ibid., 5.
[132] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 171n.
[133] Ibid., 171.
En Ramons Yzarns crida : « Dem lors als taverners ! »

"Raimond Isarn crie : 'Sus à ces piliers de taverne !'" Martin-Chabot, *Chanson de le croisade*, vol. 3, 200-1.

between Raymond VI and the Capitol,[134] the consuls approve Raymond's plan to recapture Pujol, saying, "Let us move fast before those drunkards can find out and get away."[135] These stereotypes help define the French people as a foreign race whose values and behavior clash with those of the Occitan imagined community.

In *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, these stereotypes both define the French people as well as render them ineligible to understand *paratge*. This lack of understanding of or desire to attain *paratge* manifests itself in the fact that the crusaders are largely silent on the phenomenon. With the exception of a handful of Count Simon's critics, no one in the crusader camp ever mentions *paratge*. However, while most of the French crusaders seem unaware of *paratge*, they nonetheless pose a great threat to its existence and well-being through their oppression of the Occitan people. Before engaging in fresh battle with a small group of crusaders, Sir Bernard of Comminges calls upon other Occitan noblemen to remember their shared experience living under the rule of Simon de Montfort:

> My lords, remember how they oppressed us! They intruded false lords into all our fiefs, they killed fathers and small children, they slew gentlewomen and murdered husbands, they overthrew *paratge* and puffed themselves up, they drove us out grieving into the dangers of the world and daily they hunted us down in the flowering woodlands.[136]

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[134] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 66. Twenty-four consuls comprised the Capitol of Toulouse. These men were responsible for the administrative and judicial affairs of the city.

[135] Ibid., 66.

« E pos em tuit garnit pessem de l'espleitar
« Ans que n'aien saubuda ni s'en puscan tornar
« Li vilan taverner. »

"Puisque nous sommes tous équipés, occupons-nous de mener à bien l'affaire avant qu'ils n'en aient vent et n'aient le temps de se retirer, ces vils piliers de cabaret !" Martin-Chabot, *Chanson de la croisade*, vol. 2, 6-7.

[136] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 179.

In this passage, Sir Bernard is relating the suffering and indignity that the crusaders inflicted upon Occitan noblemen. In fact, it is a recollection of being a *faiditz*, a noble who had been deprived of inheritance and forced to survive on the road or in the forests, a violent existence, "daily they hunted us." Meanwhile, while the rightful rulers were banished, the crusaders had chosen other people, "false lords," to govern their fiefs. Thus, the complaint of the Occitan noblemen is that the crusaders disinherited them.

The residents of Toulouse recall Simon de Montfort's tyranny differently. During the siege of Toulouse, the city's defenders express a desperate hope that the pope and Catholic clergy will call off the crusade. "They [the pope and clergy] are ordering our death and destruction at the hands of foreigners who quench the light, from whose dominion we want to be free. If God and Toulouse had let them, they would have buried worth and *paratge* deep, past recovery."[137] Like their noble counterparts, the complaint made by the residents of Toulouse reflects their social status and the manner in which they experienced Simon de Montfort's rule. Instead of lamenting lost fiefs, these people express a strong desire to escape from under the dominion of "foreigners who quench the light." Without a doubt the residents of Toulouse and the Occitan nobility experienced the Albigensian Crusade differently. However, in both of these passages the speakers also mention the degradation of *paratge* along with the suffering that was specific to their class. Thus, concern for *paratge* transcends class, uniting the residents of Toulouse and the Occitan nobility and strengthening the imagined community of which they are a part.

[137] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 150.

Paratge's Most Dangerous Enemy: Simon de Montfort

As the commander of the crusading forces, Simon de Montfort has the most power to do *paratge* harm and is thus portrayed as *paratge*'s greatest enemy. Each of his actions against the Occitans, from sacking their cities to killing their nobles, puts *paratge* in danger. According to our poet, although Count Simon never mentions *paratge* directly, he nonetheless plots against it and rejoices in its injury. After sacking Toulouse, Count Simon makes plans to take several prominent residents hostage which affects both the noblemen and *paratge*: "If God does not help and succor them, they will find they have walked into the trap and into the jaws of death, for the count and the bishop have planned secretly together to conquer worth and *paratge*."[138] After taking the men hostage, Count Simon triumphantly leaves the city. "Straight into Gascony he rode, full of joy at having wreaked his fury on Toulouse, where he had slain *paratge*, destroyed and banished it, driving all the town's best men out into danger and holding the rest captive in sorrow and dismay."[139] As these two passages suggest, through treating the residents of Toulouse badly Count Simon can also injure *paratge*, a power which he enjoys exploiting. Moreover, he can also damage *paratge* through his actions toward the Occitan nobility. During the Fourth Lateran Council, Raymond of Roquefeil[140] entreats the pope to protect the fief of the young Trencavel child who had been disinherited by Count Simon after the count had taken his father captive:

> My lord, true pope, have pity on the orphan child, young and in exile, son of the honored viscount whom the crusades and Sir Simon de Montfort took charge of and then killed. Wrongfully and shamefully he was martyred and *paratge* brought low, brought down by a third, by a half, and

[138] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 111.
[139] Ibid., 117.
[140] Ibid., 76n. Raymond of Roquefeil was a vassal of the Trencavels. In this scene he is making a complaint on behalf of the young Trencavel child.

> yet you have no cardinal or abbot in your court who believes more truly in the Christian faith than he did.[141]

In this passage Raymond of Roquefeil argues that Count Simon murdered Raymond Roger Trencavel who had been in his custody at the time of his death. By killing Raymond Roger, a Catholic, without just cause, Count Simon has seriously injured *paratge* and made himself into a villain. Conversely, Raymond Roger Trencavel attains the status of a martyr, a true Catholic of pure faith who was killed by a deceptive count. Thus, through both his actions against the residents of Toulouse as well as the Occitan nobility, Simon de Montfort is portrayed as a dangerous enemy both to the Occitan people and to *paratge*.

As the enemy of *paratge*, not only is Count Simon devoid of any understanding of the term, he is the champion of the opposite ethos: pride. In *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, Count Simon is the figurehead of an army of proud French crusaders. Thus, he is the archetypical Frenchman, the epitome of pride and arrogance run amok. Our poet consistently points out these vices through speeches he attributes to Sir Alan of Roucy and the Count of Soissons, Frenchmen who criticize Count Simon. Whereas French pride is continually invoked by our poet, in Simon de Montfort pride becomes one of his defining characteristics, a flaw that controls his behavior, causing him to commit acts of cruelty. During the siege of Toulouse, Count Simon's advisors comfort him for the loss of his men by telling him that he will soon be able to kill all the Toulousans who opposed him.[142] Sir Alan of Roucy responds to this with an attack on Count Simon's pride, telling him that it is this sin that irrevocably turned the Toulousans against him.

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[141] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 76.
[142] Ibid., 134-5.

> I know you are a conqueror, but you are not looking at this matter as you should. God sees men's conduct and their hearts. It was pride, it was anger and arrogance that turned the angels into serpents. And since it is pride and cruelty that control you, since you do not love mercy or find pity sweet but delight in causing pain, this great fang has grown up, a fang which both you and we will find hard to grind down.[143]

According to Sir Alan, Count Simon is completely governed by pride and cruelty which have caused him to behave so terribly to the Toulousans that they have risen against him as a "great fang." Thus he is the creator of the problem that he rails against. Perhaps more shocking is Sir Alan's allusion to the expulsion of the angels from Heaven described in Genesis. These angels, which included the serpent that tempted Eve and caused original sin, were thrown out of Heaven for the sin of pride. The clear parallel between Count Simon and the expelled angels leads the reader to believe that Simon de Montfort has also been expelled by God, in this case from his holy office as the leader of a legitimate crusade.

Pride versus *Paratge*: an Allegory of War

The associations that our poet builds between Count Simon, the French crusaders, and certain vices as well as the Occitans of the imagined community and certain virtues are so strong and consistent that our poet often refers to the two armies by these positive or negative characteristics. In his description of the siege of Beaucaire in which Raymondet and Count Simon battled for control of the town, our poet reframes the conflict as a battle between vices and virtues. "In this war it is clear that God will restore the fief to those who truly love him, for pride contends with lawfulness, deceit is at grips

[143] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 135.

with loyalty, the conflict is imminent."[144] In this passage as well as others our poet has chosen a handful of traits that exemplify the two sides of the conflict as he saw it: legitimacy against arrogance, righteousness against cruelty. Likewise, our poet describes Raymond VI's struggle to regain his inheritance in the same terms. Immediately after his return from Spain, Raymond VI confers with his "close friends:"

> "My lords," he said, "advise me, for you know very well how wrong and how shameful it is that I have been disinherited for so long. But pride has been cast down and humility raised up, blessed Mary and the true Trinity do not want me to remain disgraced and brought low forever."[145]

Unlike in the first passage in which pride and loyalty actually fight deceit and pride, in the passage above it is Raymond's return which elevates humility and degrades pride. Significantly, our poet never uses *paratge* to refer to the Occitan army. Instead of directly battling pride or arrogance, *paratge* benefits when French vices are put down by Occitan virtues. Thus, after the Occitans win a battle against the crusaders during the siege of Toulouse, a group of Gascon barons exclaim, "We are all saved! Ah, noble Toulouse, full of goodness, *paratge* blesses you, mercy gives you thanks, for you have used righteousness to drive out pride!"[146] By depicting the crusade in these terms, the war between the French crusaders and the Occitan resistance becomes a clash of the fundamental characteristics which define each side. For our poet, *The Song of the Cathar Wars* is a story about the proud versus the humble, sinners versus faithful Catholics, greedy usurpers versus legitimate lords who rule by *paratge*.

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[144] Shirley, *Song of the Cathar Wars*, 91.
[145] Ibid., 119.
[146] Ibid., 134.

Conclusion

By analyzing *The Song of the Cathar Wars*' portrayal of the residents of Toulouse, the Catholic Church, the Occitan nobility, and the French crusaders, this paper has attempted to prove that our poet constructs an Occitan imagined community in his part of the *Canso*. Membership in this imagined community was extended to the Occitan nobility, headed by Raymond VI of Toulouse and his son Raymondet, as well as the residents of Toulouse. By describing the Toulousans as if they were soldiers and elevating the status of the citizens of Toulouse to pseudo-nobility, our poet creates an urban/military alliance between the two groups of people that replaced the traditional clerical/military alliance. This helped to distract attention from the conspicuous absence of clergy who remained loyal to the house of Toulouse. The Occitan nobility and the residents of Toulouse were also united by their pure and unwavering orthodoxy as well as their desire for the restoration of *paratge*. Although *paratge* had been previously been used only in conjunction with the nobility, in the hands of our poet the term came to represent the Golden Era in Occitania before the arrival of the crusaders. The Occitan imagined community can also be understood by examining the people to which it stood in opposition. These people are both the French crusaders, who our poet portrays as proud and greedy usurpers, as well as the corrupt Catholic clergy who supported the crusade, especially Bishop Foulques of Toulouse.

This paper adds another perspective to preexisting scholarship which has addressed the idea of Occitan nationalism and the function of *paratge* in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*. In her highly influential article "Paratge in the Anonymous Chanson de la Croisade Albegoise," C. P. Bagley offers one of the most thorough analyses of *paratge* as

it is used in *The Song of the Cathar Wars*. Although she posits the idea that *paratge* functions as a 'national' identity, she does not fully explore this possibility, leaving the topic open to discussion. Writing nearly thirty years later, Rémi Pach and Francesco Zambon expand upon the notion, posited by Bagley, that the use of allegory in *The Song of the Cathar Wars* turns the *Canso* into a national poem, but like Bagley they leave the issue of Occitan nationalism largely unexamined. Sharon Kinoshita's work on imagined community in *The Song of the Cathar Wars* is the most recent scholarship on the subject and her argument that Raymond VI, Raymondet, the Occitan nobility and the residents of Toulouse, Beaucaire, and other towns were members of an imagined community is similar to that of this paper. This paper adds to Kinoshita's work by arguing that not all Occitans were members of this imagined community and by attempting to define the characteristics of this community as well as its relationship to Christianity more clearly.

This Occitan imagined community, constructed by a brilliant and unknown man in the interlude after Occitania was invaded and before it was finally conquered, illustrates one depiction of a society faced with destruction. He could not have known then that his hero, the young count, would be forced to agree to a humiliating treaty in which much of the land he had fought hard to keep would be signed away to the French crown. He would also not have known that the language of 'oc which he employed with such genius would be degraded as "patois" in later centuries, or that each Occitan child would have to learn to read and write French in school instead of their native language as the result of a distant revolution. [147] However, as European countries are confronted with rising regional identities, manifested in the violent clashes between Spaniards and Basque

[147] William R. Beer, *Unexpected Rebellion: Ethnic Acrivism in Contemporary France* (New York: New York University Press, 1980), 2-3, 4, 10.

separatists, perhaps the successors of Frédéric Mistral will inaugurate a non-violent revolution of Occitan culture. For, by rediscovering and reclaiming a lost identity and forming a new imagined community, modern Occitans may be able to regain their own inheritance.

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