Surprising Encounters

Master Course Excursion to the South of France
From 7th to 13th of June 2018
Surprising encounters

On excursion to South France with the students of the MA course “History of Christianity”, Radboud University, master of theology

From 7th to 13th of June 2018
**Short Introduction**

In 2018 the topic of the master course theology in the field “History of Christianity” was “Imagining the Inquisition”. At the end of our classes 8 students and 1 teacher, from 7th to 13th of June, went on a trip to southern France, the cradle of the Inquisition. During the trip the students brought back history into life by re-enact historical documents about faith and furor, about violence and compassion, about treason and utmost loyalty. They brought back women and men who have loved, fought and died prematurely. The students opened the door to a longtime ago epoch, showing another perspective to ourselves and how we interpret the world.

The challenge was: Telling a story about a place from out the perception of a historical person, connected to that specific place.

The students have demonstrated skills and imagination. The students tell their stories in their own specific way. The elements of these stories are facts (as far as we can know from historical documents), but the whole story as it was composed is fictional.

These are their stories…

Daniela Mueller
8th of June, Avignon

**Avignon – the papal palace (told by the poet **

*Francesco Petrarch*)

This presentation attempts a journey to the 14th-century when a very gifted human being lived and expressed his ideas. This person was Francesco Petrarch, a Renaissance Italian scholar, Franciscan friar and poet.

Above all these, however, Petrarch was a passionate person who experienced parental suppression from an early age. His personality was profoundly poetic, and this drove him to love Latin literature, especially Virgil and Cicero. But, when his father, a wealthy notary, realised his poetic inclination, he immediately burnt Petrarch’s favourite poetry books, and forced him to forget his passion for literature, and study law, instead. Given that, Petrarch went on to study law, a discipline which he detested, at Montpellier and Bologna, and when his father eventually died, he gave himself completely to his first love, namely, poetry and literature. Soon, he became a famous *Latinist*, and his approach to this field of study differed significantly from the mainline scholastic academism of his
time. For Petrarch, the study of Latin literature and poetry was not merely a helping tool for rhetorical eloquence, but rather, a door leading to “new ways of thinking and investigating oneself and the world” (Morris, 2004, [online]). One of his greatest achievements throughout his life, was the “Christianization of the humanist movement, the integration of ancient pagan learning with Christian literature”. Indeed, unlike the humanists before him, Petrarch believed that there is beneficial relation between pagan literature and the Christian beliefs and so he devoted much time to reconcile these two worlds (Candido, 2018, p. 65), and, for this reason, he is often considered the first Christian humanist.

As can easily be imagined, however, Petrarch, like many scholars of humanities nowadays, found it hard to make ends meet. This led him to France and particularly to Avignon where he “took minor orders, which permitted him to enjoy church benefices and only bound him to the daily reading of his Office” (Ford, 1911, [online]). In this way, Petrarch had both enough money which allowed him to live, and enough time to use for his studies. But, why did he go to Avignon and not somewhere else? To answer this question, we have to remember that Rome was not always the city where the popes resided. In Petrarch’s time, and more specifically from the year 1309 to 1376, the papal
residence and thus the centre of the Catholic world had moved from Rome to Avignon. During that period, “Rome was a dangerous place because of the riots and tumults there, in which the Roman aristocracy took a leading part. Moreover, the city was unhealthy in summer” (Jones, 2000, p. 653). These were some of the reasons why the pontiffs decided to change the place of their permanent residence, but also the city of Avignon had the following three extra advantages for the papacy. First, “It was adjacent to the Comtat-Venaissin, which had been in the possession of the papacy since 1274, and which was the only extensive papal territory outside Italy”. Second, “Avignon is on the eastern bank of the Rhône, which was one of the main European trade routes, above all for the traffic between the Netherlands and Italy”. Third, “The city was more conveniently situated than central Italy for most countries with which the papacy was in frequent contact” (Jones, 2000, p. 654).

For these reasons, Avignon, a rather unimportant city, became the stable seat of the papacy for some time during the fourteenth century, and this transformed its face altogether. The episcopal palace was hugely enlarged and extended to turn into the magnificent Gothic “Palace of the Popes, in the form of an imposing fortress made up of towers, linked one to another”. This grandiose palace, as well as many other churches of the
14th-century Avignon, were decorated with frescoes “entrusted almost exclusively to artists from Sienna” (Goyau & Mollat, 1907, [Online]). But, apart from the buildings, the population of Avignon also changed, and, as Zutshi informs us:

The population of Avignon grew enormously as a result of the pope’s presence. It was swelled by papal officials, *familiares*, servants and soldiers, and by the households of the cardinals. Then there were the bankers, merchants, shopkeepers and others who were attracted to Avignon, as well as the temporary population of petitioners who had business at the Curia. It has been estimated that towards the end of the Avignon period the inhabitants numbered around 30,000, while before the Black Death the figure was probably higher. Avignon became the largest town in France after Paris. Its inhabitants were predominantly French, but it was a cosmopolitan place and there was a
substantial Italian community (Jones, 2000, p. 669).

At some point during the 14th-century, Petrarch was also to be found among the inhabitants of this cosmopolitan metropolis. But, for him, Avignon was definitely not a good place to be. Our poet immediately came to dislike the luxurious aura that Avignon and its papal court had, and he soon became one of the most famous and influential critics of it. More specifically, he “referred to it as Babylon and Hell” (Jones, 2000, p. 658), and, he particularly disliked the avarice that seemed to have characterised the Avignon papacy. As Petrarch himself notes:

Here [in Avignon] reign the successors of the poor fishermen of Galilee; they have strangely forgotten their origin. I am astounded, as I recall their predecessors, to see these men loaded with gold and clad in purple, boasting of the spoils of princes and nations; to see luxurious palaces and heights crowned with fortifications, instead of a boat turned downward for shelter (Robinson, 2010, p. 502-503).
Given that, Petrarch argued passionately for the return of the papacy to Rome, which, as he thought, would help “the establishment of peace in Italy, and the restoration of spiritual values to the Roman Church” (Renna, 2010, p. 50). Furthermore, Petrarch, an Italian by birth, wanted the Holy See to return to Rome because, in this way, his fatherland, Italy, would regain the prestige and the financial benefits that had decreased by the absence of the popes (Jones, 2000, p. 657). All things considered, it becomes clear that even great historical figures, like Petrarch, were led by their own self-interests, like money, or nationality, and they weren’t necessarily the saintly figures that we sometimes believe they were. As shown above, Petrarch, was a renown poet, and the first Christian humanist, but he also had his human and vulnerable side. This perhaps explains why, on the one hand, he became a Catholic friar to ensure his financial safety, but, on the other hand, out of his nationalistic impulses, he went to criticize the excessive wealth of the church, although he had himself benefited from it. Thus, I believe that Petrarch’s example can teach us that we should not be too critical of significant figures of our own times. Instead, we always have to remember that even the most important persons in history have their drawbacks, without this making them less important.
Bibliography


Christos Veskoukis
Good afternoon, on this beautiful day in the year of our Lord 1329, and welcome to the prison tower. I spend a lot of my time here. Don’t worry, I’m not an inmate, I’m a prison keeper. I just came back here with one of our prisoners. Geoffroi d’Ablis, the inquisitor, wanted to talk to him again. We are always dragging prisoners back and forth. It usually starts with the inquisitor suspecting they’re heretics, and then they deny it so they get locked up in the Wall. That’s what we call the prison by the way. Then they are brought back to be questioned again, and again, and again, until they confess. And when they do confess they have to be asked if they confessed for real or because they were fed up with being in prison. Eventually they are sentenced and guess what, a lot of them get sent back to prison again, this time as a penance. Still, there can be several months between these questionings so I’m not really here that often.
Have you already seen the prison? You probably have, if you came in through the Porte de l’Aude like people usually do, you couldn’t have missed it. The presence of the inquisition here just cannot be ignored. As you might imagine, people are not always happy about that. There’s lots of reasons for that, powerful institutions are rarely popular, but one of the main reasons is the fact that we have in our cells quite a lot of people from important families of this city. And they’re not there for just a short while. No, they often stay for a couple of years and some have even been sentenced to perpetual imprisonment.

By the way, did you know it was the inquisitor’s idea to use imprisonment as a punishment? Of course, locking people up when they got in trouble with the law isn’t new. But that was just to keep them handy until they could be tried or undergo their punishment. The idea that locking people up could be a punishment in itself was thought up by the inquisitors. The inquisitors actually came up with two different versions: *murus largus* and *murus strictus*. At first glance the first one is not too bad, and that’s actually what most people have. Okay, you’re locked up but you’re not shackled or anything, and you can go wander around the jail, talk to the other inmates and even have visitors. Still, I hear all of them complaining that they are bored out of their mind.
If you want something really bad, you should see the *murus strictus*. It is not used as a punishment often, only for the worst, unrepentant heretics. Most of the people we see in the *murus strictus* regime are actually not convicted as heretics at all. They are strongly suspected of being heretics but they just won’t confess. Working here, I learned the reason why those people in particular get the hardest deal. Where most judges rely on torture to get confessions, the inquisitors seem to prefer doing this by locking people up. People just confess to escape the circumstances they are in at that time. The inquisitors have a lot of experience with this. I heard that in their manuals there are long discussions about the effectiveness of solitary confinement, food deprivation and shackles. They don’t bother with torture all that often. It does happen occasionally, though. Then again, having seen what people in the *murus strictus* go through, I would say they *are* tortured. Physically it’s bad enough but the inquisitors seem to be well aware of how desperate people can become for someone to talk to. It is not unusual that we see someone working for the inquisition going to visit them, pretending to feel sorry for them but in the meantime telling them stories about witnesses who testify against them. People are so happy someone will talk to them they will believe, and confess, anything.
As I said, physically the *murus strictus* is pretty bad. That actually was the subject of some official complaints, forty or more years ago. One of the older guards told me once about how the town consuls tried to appeal to the king on behalf of the prisoners. They visited the prison and sent a description to the king. They told him about the small, dark and airless cells where people can’t tell day from night. They also described how some prisoners are kept in shackles all the time. They can’t move so they poop and pee all over themselves. I wonder if they described the smell, because believe me, it’s awful.

Anyway, their description was quite accurate, at least where the *murus strictus* is concerned. But their complaints did not have the desired effect.

Funnily enough, the inquisitor at the time, Fr. Jean Galand, defended himself with an inquiry he had done himself a few years earlier. He completely agreed that conditions in the Wall were terrible: they were way to easy. That was because Raoul, the warden at that time, was a pretty accommodating guy for his prisoners. For himself too by the way, he was only accommodating when some modest sums of money were coming his way. But, as I told you, a lot of our inmates come from rich or influential families so that could be arranged. My old colleague who was there at the time told me how inmates
would get better food and clothing, be invited to dine with the
warden and his wife, or participate in the warden’s gambling
sessions. He said most of the complaining in those days came
from the heavy losers in those sessions. He even told me that he
had escorted some of the prisoners out of the Wall so they
could visit their family or just enjoy the fresh air. This applied
mostly to the inmates of the murus largus. Although, if you
could give the warden a sufficiently large bribe, he could also
make life easier to those in strict confinement. Once the
inquisitor found this out though, they knew it couldn’t last.
Raoul got off with a warning at first but he was soon back to
his old games and indeed, 3 years later he was dismissed.

His replacement, Jacques de Poloniac, was not nearly so nice.
He was corrupt too, but his corruption did not benefit the
prisoners. He took their money alright, but not in exchange for
favors; he just took it. Imprisonment also includes having your
properties confiscated. The warden takes his salary of 20 livres
from these confiscated goods. I wish I got that much, that is
quite a nice salary. For de Poloniac, however, it was not
enough. Apparently he played around with the books until he
got far more than that. He was not alone. De Poloniac was
happy to let others profit from his position as well. His nephew
for example usually took a portion of the money to be used for
the prisoner’s food. He also managed to “borrow” enough building supplies meant for the prison to build himself a house. So not only do our prisoners go hungry, they also have a leaking roof.

I started working for de Poloniac in 1302, and boy, did I pick a bad time. The inquisition had not been very popular for quite some time, but only a year later things got completely out of hand. There was this Franciscan friar, Bernard Delicieux who had it in for the inquisition. Actually for the whole of the Dominican order – the two orders don’t always get along too well – but he disliked the inquisition in particular. He accused them of falsifying the records that hold the names of heretics and suspected heretics. People really do not want their names to be in those records. He even claimed they had completely made up two heretics out of thin air. He held this really rousing and emotional sermon here in Carcassonne and riots soon started breaking out. Eventually we even had a full scale military attack on the Wall. De Poloniac was in trouble. The royal sergeants who usually took care of such matters for him were actually part of the attack. So it came down to me and my colleagues to defend the Wall and De Poloniac, well, he’s not really the sort of guy you are willing to die for. So, long story
short, we lost. The Wall was taken, prisoners were freed and the inquisition was severely embarrassed.

It could have been the end of the inquisition, and my job, but things did not turn out so well for Delicieux. He wanted the freed prisoners to be seen by the king, to demonstrate how awful conditions in prison were. Unfortunately for him, things were delayed and by the time his message reached the king, we had a new pope. This one, Benedict XI, was someone the king really wanted to get along with, and that meant keeping the inquisition it was. So, soon enough, things were back to normal, and, 16 years later, Delicieux again faced the inquisition. This time it was him who was under attack as he had to stand trial for his crimes. He was accused of all sorts of things, from sexual misbehavior to the murder of the pope – you know; the one who wanted the inquisition to stay as it was. Eventually he was convicted, but only for the things he had confessed to: obstructing the inquisition. He was sentenced right here, to strict confinement. He was an old man by then and for a while, the inquisitors said to go easy on him, give him better food than normal and remove his shackles. Still, after a few months he died, defeated and forgotten. And that is another reason why the inquisition found prison so useful. People who
were sentenced to death might become martyrs, people who were imprisoned just disappeared.

Actually, I think this imprisonment thing is going to catch on. In times to come, a prison sentence could be the normal punishment, not just for religious crimes but also for theft and even murder. The advantage is of course that if you think you have been a bit harsh – or wrong, but you wouldn’t want to admit that – you can always release people a bit sooner.

If I’m right and imprisonment as punishment does take off, there could be a problem. Being bored sounds like something minor, but when I see how people change when they are in here, I wonder what the effect of boredom is on a person’s mind. Their brains don’t seem to work so well anymore. People say and do things without even considering the consequences. That’s useful if you want a confession, but what are they going to be like when they are released?

Imagine thieves and murderers – who usually aren’t the best in thinking ahead and considering the consequences – being put in a situation where they become even less able to do so. Unless you plan to lock them up for life, you will be releasing people who are even more likely to commit crimes. And thinking ahead is not the only problem here. There’s no way of
measuring it of course – maybe someday there will be – but I am convinced that people in prison care less and less about others. It even seems to me that they lose the ability to understand what other people are feeling. Imagine that; a thief who does not care what might happen to him if he commits a crime, but also doesn’t seem to care about other people’s feelings.

Bibliography


Juliette de Valk
Chateau de Puivert and Azalais de Porcarragues

The Castle

Chateau de Puivert is a 14th century fortification built on top of an older, Cathar fortress. Currently, Chateau de Puivert refers to the newer castle built near the original site. The original, Cathar castle is first to exist towards the end of the 12th century and was replaced by Thomas de Bruyere, grandson of the man who placed the original castle under siege.

There does not seem to be much information about the Cognosts nor the castle prior to its Catholic conquest. There is one legend which states that a nobleman, Alphonse VIII de Castile, came to the castle to meet his future wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine. At some point during his visit in 1170 A.D., swaths of troubadours met there to sing their love songs. The entertainers worked and sang, inspiring each other to create more music. Though the historical accuracy of this story is

---

1 Vinaigrette, “Puivert Castle: A Deadly Legend and Eleanor’s Troubadours.”
certainly suspect, it nevertheless does impact the actual castle by giving the location a happier story to stand juxtaposed to the story of the siege.

The newer castle, the one which we will visit, has its own legend. This one, however, is much darker than the previous story. Jean de Bruyeres was working on the new castle in 1280 when his dearest wife complained about her sitting spot. She liked to go and sit by the lake, but it stood too high and her sitting spot would sometimes flood. Jean, like any sensible man, began to lower the dam which created the lake rather than build a new sitting spot for his wife. This failed spectacularly and destroyed the nearby village of Mirepoix.

**The Trobairitz**

Azalais de Porcairagues was a trobairitz from Occitan and active during the late 12th century. Though less known and studied than some of her contemporaries (the Comtessa de Dia seems to have been more widely studied), the few pieces of Azalais’ story are nevertheless compelling. Many troubadors’ lives were written down in *vidas* (biographical works), and Azalais was no different. Though not as prolific as some of her male contemporaries, she nevertheless has a *vida* in the Bezier
chansonnier (song book). The excerpt tells of the trobairitz’s life, saying that

Lady Asalais de Porcarages was from the region of Montpellier, a noble lady and learned, and she fell in love with Sir Gui Guereiat, who was brother of Sir Guillem de Montpellier; and the lady knew how to write poetry, and made for (and about) him many good love-songs.²

Though short, that is the majority of information available for Azalais de Porcairagues. She was no mere peasant, having been born into nobility. She is known for having fallen in love with a married man, Gui Guereiat. Azalais wrote poems and songs in a time when men were the major players in artistic circles. She had opinions and argued, as is seen from her one surviving poem, when women largely remained quiet.

A few lines in other troubadour’s works, specifically those of Raimbaut d’Aurenga, speak of Azalais. It is argued that he and the trobairitz had loved at one point, but for some reason she ultimately rejected him for Gui Guereiat.³ Beyond that, one poem and an unflattering illustration are all that is left of

² Paden and Paden, Troubadour Poems from the South of France.
³ Thiebaux, The Writings of Medieval Women: An Anthology.
Azalais de Porcairagues. As for the illustration, it comes from the Beziers songbook and depicts her a prostitute lifting her dress for the reader. For all her work, she was rewarded with disdain.

Though there is not much left of this trobairitz, there is still enough to connect her to the Chateau de Puivert. First, she was a troubadour and likely had connections with other troubadours. These artists often found themselves in poetic and lyrical debates, trading blows and battling with word rather than weapons. Second, Puivert Castle was within her home region and a few days walk from what is possibly her hometown (Portiragnes, France). Troubadours are known to have traveled extensively, and though Azalais is a trobairitz, it seems entirely possible that she would have traveled at least to the castle at some point. Third, Occitan was much more open and accepting towards women stepping out of their previous social boundaries (though not truly feminist, as some of the troubadours’ writings would attest), and the owners of the Chateau would have felt similarly due to their Cathar beliefs. Finally, a legend states that there was a large gathering of troubadours at the castle in order to help a nobleman find a wife. None of these reasons directly tie Azalais to the castle, but they do give her reason and possibility to have been there at
some point. This possibility of connection makes for exciting stories, though they would have to lean heavily on fiction rather than history.

**Conclusion**

Chateau de Puivert is a contradictory place, and the story of Azalais de Porcairagues is fitting story to know alongside. The castle saw its own joys before being subjugated to a violent crusade. It was then rebuilt into a place of happiness for its new owners before once again bestowing violence on those it was supposed to protect. Happiness is fleeting here, much like with our trobairitz. She had love, but he died and left her nothing. Gui took holy orders, leaving only a small amount to his wife. Instead of leaving her set up, it seems that she left her affair with nothing but a broken heart.

Beyond the joy-sadness cycle, the two were also in a state of struggle during the time period. Puivert was home to the Cathars before being driven off by the Catholic crusaders. Azalais, however, was not so easily conquered. Raimbaut d’Aurenga chased her with his poetry and engaged with her debates through his own works. The trobairitz did not relent, unlike the castle.
These are two fascinating subjects, and it is unfortunate that so many of the resources are in French. This left me in a difficult spot, largely due to the lack of time for translation work. What I was able to find, however, was interesting and slightly strange history. Love triangles, unwitting husbands, and a makeshift troubadour convention are always welcome stories in the greater fabric of history, I think.

Azalais de Porcairagues
I am Azalais de Porcairagues and my story is one of perpetual loss.

Ever since my birth in the small village of Portiragnes, I have caused a great many problems simply because of my sex. Women, being the lesser sex, are meant to be seen rather than heard and speak only when addressed. I, in spite of my womanhood, have long since spoken my mind and let my voice be heard. As a noble, many tried to teach me how to be a lady. As an artist, I rejected their preconceived notions of gender and sex. As a prostitute, I am remembered.

Rather than await to be chosen, marry the wealthiest man to come courting, and birth a family, I became a trobairitz. Music filled my chamber and poetry filled my days. Desire filled my
heart until I thought it would burst, then I met Raimbaut d’Aurenga.

He was one of the greatest troubadours in all of Occitan, and he was the first to hold my attention. Poem upon poem, song upon song, each demonstrating his knowledge of love. Every verse, every line brimmed with feeling and emotion. He thought of me as more than an object or a fertile field. I was me, a person with agency and decision-making capabilities and the capability to create wondrous works of art.

At least, I thought he saw who I was for what I was – a person, whole and lovely. Instead, he too treated me like an object. Raimbaut, that rat, visited only when it was convenient and regularly missed our secret meetings. I stood waiting in the dark on too many nights waiting for my lover’s embrace. It was loneliness instead that held me close till the mornings came.

The troubadour, he chased me still, and left messages in so many poems. Again and again he willed me back, yet I always rebuked him so. I left him as he left me – waiting and wishing for something that could not be.

The last time I saw him was at Chateau de Puivert, the castle of family Congost, on the night of Queen Eleanor’s betrothal. He was there to celebrate, as so many other troubadours were.
They filled the castle as the young Queen-to-be was given over to Alfonso of Castile. I, too, was there, yet I was not remembered by any of my male counterparts. Still, at least the castle yet stood and filled the valley with its Cathar faith.

What a faith those Cathars had. It was their Cathar faith that allowed me to sing, to write, and to perform. They saw me as a soul, a spirit, as God’s child. Not as a lesser being. I was safe to travel and move from place to place, living out the trobairitz’s journey-filled life. I was safe in their faith and in their ways, to be the person I so desired.

It was in that faith and on that betrothal night that I met Gui Guerrejat. He had sang and played many great songs, winning me over with his voice and words. That night, in the shadow of Chateau de Puivert and its Cathar faith, I fell in love for a second time. I had met my muse, the one for whom I would write. He became the object of my affection, though only for the shortest of moments.

Our secret nights and little trists were too few, too uncommon. We kept our joy a secret from his wife, from his family. We were happy. Then he grew ill, and in his sickness he remembered his faith. Too soon after our meeting Gui joined a
nearby monastery, Valmagne, praying until his death. He left me nothing. Nothing to hold, nothing to remember.

I thought that losing him would be my last great loss. I was wrong. Within a decade of my dear Gui’s death, the Chateau de Puivert fell to the Crusaders. With it’s fall, so fell my freedom. The Crusaders brought with them their Catholic faith. They took the castle, and so took my freedom. With the Cathar faith cleansed from the land, I was no longer an artist. I was just a woman, once again without my own voice.

As if that were not enough, the sands of time took what little dignity I had left as they buried me. That songbook, the one of Beziers, showed me as a prostitute who lifts her skirt for all the world. I had lost, it seems, even my final shreds of dignity, never to regain them. Even in death I was subject to loss, never knowing the freedom I had as a trobairitz during the time of the Cathars.

Bibliography


- Thiebaux, Marcelle. *The Writings of Medieval Women*: 


Matthew Tracy
A Story of the Castle of Montségur (told by a Soldier of the Crusade)

I welcome you all to the blessed place of Montségur, the historic site where over 200 of the damned Cathars met their death in the evening of the 16th day of March 1244. Their death came as a necessary revenge for the massacre they had carried out against our holy men, Guillaume Arnaud, Etienne de St. Thibéry, and others from the Dominican Order in the night of the 28th of May 1242. Let me tell you how it all came about.

Before the destruction, the Castle of Montségur (le Château de Montségur) was probably the best known of all Cathar Castles. It was famous as the last Cathar stronghold, which fell after a ten-month siege in 1244. And the story of the siege of Montségur is one of the most moving of all tragedies associated with the war against the Cathars. Montségur was a safe place for the Cathars, and it was also considered the seat of the Cathar church. The Cathar era in Montségur lasted from 1204 to 1244. It was in 1209 that the first Crusade against the Cathars was launched. The first years of the Crusade dealt a big blow to the Cathars, but by 1229 they regrouped. When the Cathars began to regroup,
their heretical so called Bishop Guilhabert de Castres (the leader of the group) sought permission from the landlord, Raymond de Pereille, to designate Montségur as the centre of the Cathar Church. This being granted, Cathar refugees and clergy arrived Montségur in their numbers and, in 1232, a further request was made by the Cathars asking Raymond de Pereille for a permission to live within the Castle. Thereafter, walls were constructed along the northern and southern spheres, and Montségur became gradually fortified.

With the official institution of the Inquisition in 1233, the Dominicans and later also the Franciscans were empowered to prosecute heretics. But in the evening of 28th May 1242, a great abomination occurred. Those faithless Cathars organized the assassination of some of our holy and devoted Inquisitors in Avignonet. This was followed by widespread revolts in the Occitania against the French crown and Catholic authorities. It lasted for about six months, and by January 1243 it all ended. The rebellion was a failure. This action of the Cathars was adjudged to be an evil of the highest order. They touched the tiger’s tail and had to pay dearly for it. The annihilation of the Cathars became all the more evident. Now Montségur was to be destroyed. It was at a conclave held in Beziers in the spring of
1243 that a call was issued to bring down the “Synagogue of Satan” at Montségur. Thus, on the anniversary of the assassination of the Inquisitors (on Ascension Day in May 1243), we launched an attack and created a great fortress around Montségur. There was resistance on the part of the Cathars, but with our military intelligence, we got the upper hand and overpowered them.

The initial strategy was to besiege the Castle with the hope that food supplies or water would run out. But the defenders were well supplied and were able to keep their support lines open, supported especially by the local population. We then decided to attack the place directly. Attacking the Castle directly was very difficult because it was a well protected location on a massive limestone rock. Then Mercenaries were later deployed to gain access into the construction. Due to intense bombardments and the deteriorating living condition in the Castle, the Cathars gave a signal that they had decided to negotiate for surrender. Both parties quickly decided on conditions for the surrender. All those who would renounce their Cathar faith were allowed to leave the Castle. A number of the their damned adherents decided to join the *perfecti* and received the *consolamentum*. Some, however,
renounced their faith and were allowed to leave before the castle was destroyed.

The inhabitants of Montségur who refused to denounce the Cathar faith were, on 16th March 1244, burnt at the foot of the mountain. Led by their bishop, Bertrand Martyr, over 200 Cathars walked out of Montségur fortified village and marched down the hilltop to a field where a big bonfire was prepared for them. All of them walked voluntarily into the Pyre, rather than renounce their faith. The exact number of victims burned on that fateful day remains uncertain; the general consensus puts the figure between 200 and 224. Today a stone stele marks the spot where the scene took place. The landscape is imprinted with this memory as its name: Field of the Burned. The fall of Montségur marked the end of all hope for Catharism.

I will end my story by saying that the increasing influence of heresies in the 13th and 14th centuries was a great threat to the Catholic Church. To curb this menace, the Church considered it necessary to put an end to the Cathar radicalism in a dramatic and coercive way. On theological grounds, the Cathars were in no way synonymous with the teachings of the Catholic Church. For example, the teaching that there are two “gods” (a good one
and an evil one) was dangerous for the doctrine of monotheism. On the political level, the Cathars were in opposition to the Church. This is because, according to their teaching, the Church is part of the material world, and thus inherently evil. The Church then used the Crusade as a means of silencing the Cathars in order to maintain its political and theological influence. The Crusade might have appeared acceptable, justifiable and reasonable at the epoch. But standing on this very ground today, at the foot of the hill where the massacre took place (about 774 years after the horrible event), I consider the Crusade organized against the Cathars as a typical example of genocide. The massive destruction of human lives in no way justifies the pursuit of any theological or political relevance. There could have been a more diplomatic and humane way of resolving the tension and the differences, but choosing the path of coercion goes against every sense of respect for human lives.

**Bibliography**

- *Atlas Obscura*: An Online Magazine and Digital Media Company, Brooklyn NY
- *Groupe de Recherche Archeologiques de Montségur et Environs* (GRAME), Lavelanet: 1981, p.76

• Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe, *The World’s Greatest Unsolved Mysteries*, Dundurn, 30 September 1997, p. 100


Charles Ajogi
10th of June, Montaillou

Pierre Clergue of Montaillou

As the visitors gathered at the ruins of the old castle at the top of the village of Montaillou, they were addressed by the local priest, who was eager to tell them his fascinating story.

“Welcome dear strangers, to my village. My name is Pierre of the domus Clergue and I am the priest of this flock of good Christians. Feel free to roam about this beautiful place, but I must warn you. These are dangerous times for us and for unfamiliar faces, since the villages in this area of upper Ariège have changed enormously in the last decades. It seems that you cannot trust anyone anymore. Even the trees have ears nowadays, so you cannot be too careful of what you say and to whom you say it.

Do not get me wrong, we are merely a village of hard working peasants, loyal to the count of Foix and his representatives here in Montaillou, who live in the castle behind you. Here lived the keeper and lord of the castle, the late Berenger de Roquefort, who unfortunately died a while ago from some decease, and there is his bailiff, my good brother Bernard of the domus
We pay homage to the king of France, yet to us he is only king in name, since we people of Occitania, specifically here in upper Ariège, have never seen any of these French foreigners of the North. Me and my brother are the main persons responsible for the welfare of this village, but the real power came with the arrival of the new bishop of Pamiers and his judicial court of inquisitors. It is this vicious wolf, called Jacques Fournier, and his dogs of inquisitors out of Carcassonne who have haunted our village and completely changed everything in this area [the priest spits on the floor out of anger]. My dear flock of good Christians are not save anymore.

I remember my father talking of the glorious days of his father and his fellow good Christians who lived in this beautiful mountainous area, particularly in the village of Montségur, and how they were able to save the spirits of so many sinful people. It was a time when their light shone bright in this dark and corrupted world of bodily sin made by the Devil. However, unfortunately they were viciously hunted down, tried, persecuted and murdered for their good deeds by the wolves of the Church. Today only a very few of these good Christians are left and it wholly depends on your discretion whether you could still meet a couple of those that we call *perfecti*. Please do, for
they will save you from the pain of this cruel world. They still live somewhere in these woods that you see around you.

Many of my flock, who are still dependent of the works of these good people from the woods, are now also being hunted down and persecuted. Not long ago many have been taken to Carcassonne and questioned and tortured by dogs. That is why you must be careful of what you say for it can be used against you. Oh, how the gossip of this village has teared its good people apart and I fear my good name will soon be in the hands of those dogs in Carcassonne as well.

You might wonder what my role is in all this. Well, my life has been one of great responsibility. As chief confessor of Montaillou, I had to tell the people about the true ways of the Devil and bring them in contact with the good Christians in order to save their spirits. The women of Montaillou have particularly held great confidence in me showing them the true path. For many years I have had the privilege of guiding many beautiful women through their lives of sin. You see, in order to retain their good names for the Church they had to succumb to marriage. However, marriage is one of the biggest sins of this world. It is a lie and falsehood of the Church. To know a man carnally is a sin before God which cannot be confessed to a
priest or any other man. It can only be confessed to God. The Church however tells you that marriage absolves you from confessing the sin of knowing your husband carnally, which makes your ignorance in not confessing it and being united without shame even a greater sin. All life is sin. Knowing a man carnally, even your priest (many of the women of Montaillou knew me carnally), is a sin, but to deny that it is a sin with your husband is unquestionably a greater sin. There was one woman in particular whom I was able to convince this undeniable truth and whom I loved intensely. Her name is Béatrice de Planissoles, widow of Berenger de Roquefort, and I remember our intellectual conversations and passionate nights together vividly. I still hold the memories of her beauty dearly in my heart. I believe she too has been arrested and was questioned by that malicious Jacques Fournier and I fear her confession to him will someday bring my life to a terrible end. If not her confession, than probably the confession of another person of this village.

Jacques Fournier…that wolf in sheep’s clothes…he will one day be the death of me. Even after all I did for him. As priest and chief confessor of Montaillou, the judicial court of inquisitors in Carcassonne have asked me to spy on my flock, to point out the main persons of interest connected to the good
Christians in this area. For a couple of years I did what they asked and served as a double agent. I pointed my finger towards those I knew held a grudge against my domus, the Clergue. It felt like a good opportunity to get rid of those clans that never respected my ways and the authority of me and my brother in the village. Even though I have managed to help escape many of the good Christians from the clutches of those dogs in Carcassonne, I realize now that all my efforts have been in vain. The power I had in this village felt good, but was as sinful as this cruel devilish world. All the bribes in the world could not convince Fournier to stop hunting down every last good Christian in this area and I feel me and my flock are doomed for imprisonment and persecution. If they ever catch me, it will certainly mean my death, since I will not confess anything to them. Confessing to those dogs will not save my spirit. I can only hope I can flee into these woods and meet a perfecti to perform the consolamentum and save my eternal spirit before I die. May they be able to outlive these horrible times and save our spirits until the end of time for they are the only ones who know how. May this village flourish again as it once did in the time of songs and poetry.

I must leave you now and bid you farewell. I hope you too will have a change to meet the good Christians I have spoken of and
may you never fall into the hands of that vicious wolf of Pamiers. It was nice to see some unfamiliar friendly faces. Farewell!

Bibliography

31-08-2018, from
http://www.sjsu.edu/people/nancy.stork/jacquesfournier
/Guillemette-Clergue-5-4-09.pdf.

Ward Derks
11th of June, Toulouse

Petrus Cellani and the House of the Inquisition in Toulouse

I, Petrus Cellani and my life

Dear all, I warmly welcome you here in my house, the House of the Inquisition. First of all, may I introduce myself? As some of you do already know, I’m Petrus Celanus, a Dominican Friar, proud of my fame. Some call me Petrus Cellani or Pierre Seilhan in French or Peter Seila.4 I among the very first disciples of Dominic of Guzman during the time of the foundation of the Order of Preachers in Southern France and precisely in Toulouse.

I joined the Order throughout my profession done on the hands of Dominic himself in 1215. Then, I have served my Order as Prior/Superior of the Dominican Convent of Limoges about 250 km to the north of Toulouse from 1230 and 1233.5 However, I became famous in the history of the Order of the Preachers, because of one specific fact which is the Inquisition. Talking

---

precisely about that, I would like to remind you of some very crucial points concerning my life and this house. The first aspect is that it is here, in this house, where you are presently sitting, it is here that this vital Order had been born. The second one is that this house is my gift to the Order. And the last point I would like to elaborate with you is that this place deserves its title of the House of the Inquisition.

_The birthplace of the Dominican Friars_

This house mostly known as The House of the Inquisition, a beautiful house, my house, has to be respected because it is the birthplace of the Order of the Preachers. It is here that Saint Dominic set up the first community of the Dominican Friars, yes, here in this house. From here, the Order spread from place to place and all over the world to teach people, to enlighten the nations and to fight for the Catholic faith. That is why I will always proudly say that it is not the Order that received me, instead it is me who received the Order here in 1215. In this house, my house it is now possible to see “La Salle Haute” that was used as the dormitory by the first Preachers Friars. I, therefore, ask you to respect this place for its significance in

---

Dominican history and the care that people took to preserve and reconstruct it.

Because, this house, my house that is called the House of the Inquisition, I freely offered it to the Dominican Order as my part of the family legacy after the death of my dear father. In the 13th century, it was situated on the wall of the city near the “Porte Saint Michel” and the Castel of Narbonne which was the official residence of the Counts of Toulouse. It is in this house that the Dominican community first settled as said above.⁷

*The House of the Inquisition*

Since 1233, it will be the headquarter of the Inquisition until 1589. The inquisition’s hall has been later transformed into a chapel. In 1771, in order to take some distances with the lousy souvenir connected to the Inquisition, the Friars sold it to the brothers Combes who turn it into a shop.

The proximity of this house with the political authority was like a kind of challenge to me. This house was like the centre from which the Inquisitors spread all over around like in Quercy. The name of the house (house of the inquisition) is well chosen,

---

because it clearly says something of the truth about the history of this place and the important role it plays from that time till now. Moreover, many religious communities will settle here throughout the years such as the Soeurs du Bon Pasteur in 1791, the Cistercians in 1821, the Fathers of the Mission in 1830, the Jesuits until 1860 and the Soeurs Réparatrices in 1933. In the meantime, in 1908, the buildings belonged to the diocese of Toulouse. In 1969, the Friars repurchased it for the sake of their foundational history.

*The Inquisition*

Now, sincerely, let me tell you something, it is somehow thanks to the Inquisition that we have this house till now. I worked very hard in my whole life to defend and protect the Catholic faith and the Catholic church, the only church, the true church! I preferred to be a Dominican for that reason and not someone else, although I had a lot of possibilities and opportunities. My life is associated with this house in some respects. Yes, my house became a high place of the Inquisition in the 13th, and I himself became a respectable inquisitor.

On the Inquisition, too many people are talking without a clear understanding of what it was really about. The work of the inquisitor is not easy. I'm talking about because I myself have
been an inquisitor, a true one. It is not an easy job to bring back people to the right way and the true religion which is the Catholic one. I know that many authors about the inquisition wrote that it was a killing machine, an oppression system and so on. Do you know how many of my dear confrères have been killed, cruelly assassinated, tortured and attacked because they were inquisitors? Can you imagine the difficulties to be an inquisitor? We as inquisitors have laboured for justice even in unsafe places. Dear visitors, the inquisition was a court where everyone could defend his or her opinion. In many books, my name has also been famous because of the detailed and huge amount of penances I used and prescribed for heretics, whether Cathars or Waldensians. As every good inquisitor, I kept records of my job and a lot of data are still available. For example, during my inquisition in the region of Quercy, Montauban, Gourdon, Moissac, Montcuq, Almont, Montpezat, Beaucaire and Sauveterre, I prescribed about 653 penances to heretics.\(^8\) Also according to my record, my inquisition in Quercy in 1241-2 “included 646 names.”\(^9\) During that time, I received many

\(^8\) See https://www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/rezbuecher-10761.
voluntary confessions of heretics. I didn’t use the torture to get them.

As a conclusion

From what we learned in the history on my life, there can be some issues such as the importance of places in the understanding of the History. Here, for example, is the birthplace of an important Institution namely the Order of the Preachers, and the activities undertaken in this house like the prosecutions helped to search for the truth in faith and belief. Another dimension can be that of the acceptance of the whole history, rather than only focussing on the bad or the good aspects. I can also quote the concern of money. Yes, the money is significant because after me, this house has been sold again and again, the proprietors did not care about the preservation and its restoration needed a lot of money. You also paid in order to be here in this House of the Inquisition. While returning into the ashes of the past, I wish you a pleasant stay and a nice visit to my house, the House of the Inquisition.

10 See Idem, 166.
Bibliography


Francois Manga
11th of June, Toulouse

St. Etienne told by Peire Autier (Cathar preacher and last ‘hero’ of the Cathars in the Midi)

Hello, my name is Peire Autier and we are standing at the place of my death over 700 years ago.

This cathedral in front of me, St. Etienne, was constructed among many different time periods. While it was originally chartered in 844, it didn’t begin construction until the 11th century and it was already in ruins by the beginning of the 13th. The main aspects of the current church can be seen from that time period, but one interesting note is that parts of it are atypical because it is asymmetrical, which could be seen earlier as we exited. This is because construction began twice during this time period, in the 1230s and 1270s, but both times it was left incomplete. I was able to view it during my childhood when my father took me to Toulouse for the first time.

However, it does not have the same splendorous quality then as it does now since the original vision of the cathedral was never realized until the 17th century when a lesser version was conceived of and construction was revived. The majority of it
was built in the first reconstruction; however, it was mostly completed later that century according to a different building plan. The second benefactor of that century, the Bishop of Toulouse, wanted the church to become a large cathedral, but he died too soon.

For myself, I was known as the leader of the Cathars in the Languedoc region in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. However, I started from wealthy origins. I was a notary from Ax, which is a few days travel away from Toulouse, but in the 1290s, my brother and I went to north-western Italy to be rid of our disillusioned view of the Catholic church and to gain a new lease on life and learn the teachings of the Cathars. We did this for two or three years until we received the consolamentum, and then we took back these teachings to our homeland. In the south of France, I taught for many years concerning the Cathar faith and why it is the correct choice over the Catholic one. To convince some of the locals, I used to say, “There are two Churches, one which flees and forgives, the other which fetters and flays. The Church which flees and forgives takes the right path of the Apostles. It neither lies nor deceives. And the Church which fetters and flays is the Roman Church.”

---

Clearly, I had very strong opinions about the church and I absolutely believed them to be true because I could see how the “holy” church was treating us outsiders. The Catholic church of my day, from my point of view, was endlessly persecuting heretics. There was very little love shown for us if we did not renounce our beliefs and even for those who did renounce them, they and their kin were always suspected of falling back into heresy. This church was not a forgiving beast, but one who remembered all, and we and our children and children’s children were the ones who suffered this “act of forgiveness.” However, we are the “real” Christians. I would always say, “We are hated and persecuted because we firmly uphold His law. Those who are good and wish to remain true to their faith must let themselves be crucified and stoned to death when they fall into their enemies’ power, just as the apostles did.”\textsuperscript{12} My brethren and I were attempting to live a godly life, but the Catholic church has not made it easy for us to do so. Surely, this is why a classic martyrlogical identity began to form within our church, which can be seen by so many Good Men and Women being burnt at the stake before and after me, yet the religion itself still thrived for many years after my passing.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 175.
One other aspect that I think would be good for you to know is how the Cathars, as represented by myself, made jokes about the Catholics. I cannot remember many of them now, since I was always making jokes about the Catholic Church, but a friend who made witness against me stated that when I was asked about making the sign of the cross for proof against heresy, I would say, “Oh no, it’s a fine thing. In summer it’s a very good way of shooing the flies away from your face. As for the words, here’s what you can say: ‘This is my brow, this is my beard, this is one ear and this is the other.’” While you and I can laugh about it now, this was just another piece of incriminating evidence used in the trial against me, which later led to me being burnt at the stake in front of St. Etienne in 1310.\textsuperscript{13}

With this preponderance of evidence coming against the church for past cruelties, I believe it is one of the reasons why the Catholic church today is attempting to be very compassionate to all people. Clearly, there is a long history of excesses, in this case violence and homophilic points of view, that have been attempted to be rectified in today’s church.

\textbf{Derek Hoover}

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 182.
11th of June, Toulouse

The Church of the Jacobins told by Geoffroi de Vayrols (Archbishop of Toulouse)

Short instruction of the person
In what year I, Geoffroi de Vayrols, was born isn’t really clear, but I grew up in a noble family of Cahors, in Quercy. Before I became bishop of Lausanne in 1342, I started my ecclesiastical career as Cathedral cantor in Barcelona and Cathedral capitular in Cahors, where I grew up as a young boy. Then, from 1342 till 1347 I was bishop from Lausanne, from 1347 till 1357 I became bishop from Carpentras, from 1357 till 1361 I was bishop in Carcassonne and from 1361 till I died in 1376 I was the Archbishop of Toulouse.

Telling a story about the place
We are standing here at the Church of the Jacobins; a Roman Catholic convent church in the heart of Toulouse. This place now gets 4,5 stars on Tripadvisor, but it was already quite a big, and famous church when I was archbishop in this city. The name ‘Jacobins’ was used in my time as a nickname for the
Dominican friars for the first Dominican convent is located in Paris in the rue Saint-Jacques which is ‘Jacobus’ in Latin so that’s how they got their name. Saint Dominic (who lived from 1170 till 1221) lived in the period when the heretical Albigensians were making their way in Southern France and therefore Dominic founded with some fellow monastic brothers a small community. Here in Toulouse they started with the building of a small, pink-bricked church which was half as high and half as long as the church building you see here now. It had some major restorations from that moment on because the congregation grew bigger and bigger, but also other Gothic churches were built, so and immense expansion of the little church took place, serving as a transformation campaign. But before that, it was a very small, simplistic church as was fitting for the vow of poverty according to which the Dominican brothers wanted to live. I have never seen the church in its original state for there were a lot of constructions during the beginnings of the 14th century, before I came to Toulouse in 1361. This church played a major role in the creation of the first university of Toulouse in 1229, for the classes took place in the city’s monasteries and convents. Dominicus considered teaching and preaching really important and therefore intellectual work was the most
important for the friars. It is because of this that they had an important role as inquisitors against the heretical Cathars. Saint Dominic felt the urge to fight against heresy and although he is very clear about what he thinks of heretics, he didn’t support the use of violence but as a weapon he used humility, poverty and love and laid emphasis on the importance of preaching.

But the reason that we are standing here, at this particular place, isn’t only because of the history of the Dominican brothers, and how this church was built but there has been this remarkable event during the time I was archbishop here. This has everything to do with the most famous Dominican Saint, Thomas Aquinas, who lived from 1225 till 1274 and who died in abbey of Fossanova, nearby Rome. Thomas Aquinas became a Dominican friar when he was nineteen years old, and became one of the most important Catholic Theologians. His teachings were mainly focussing on the synthesis of believing and rationality for the one can’t exist without the other, he explained. In the year of 1368, pope Urban V who went back to Rome just a year before, decided to give the relics of Thomas Aquinas back the Dominicans in Toulouse. The master general of the Dominicans, Elias Raymundis or Master Elias, have had a hand in this decision. The reason that the body was ‘brought back’ to Toulouse, was
because of their dedication to Thomas Aquinas as a Dominican monk but also because of his link with university in Toulouse; the University of Toulouse is linked with the creation of the faculty of theology to fight against the Albigensian heresy. It was therefore a great idea to get our Dominican saint here in Toulouse. A major procession took its start from the abbey in Italy all the way to here, in Toulouse. It took 1971 kilometres, travelling a distance from about 30 kilometres a day. I already knew then that this was a major, historical event and I am glad that Dominican Raymundus Hugonis, secretary of Master Elias, has recorded this procession quite extensively. Because of that I heard what kind of remarkable things have happened during the procession; during the stops in Saint Maria de Prouilhe or their stop in Avignonet lots of people were healed because of these holy relics. But you can imagine of course, that these particular stops didn’t have only a religious motivation; also politically seen it was a smart move. We can understand the translation of the relics to Toulouse as part of Urban V’s efforts to strengthen the position of the faculty of theology at the university in Toulouse in its ongoing campaign against the Cathars. But besides that, Thomas brought healing to the people. Praise the Lord! And then, on the 28th of January in 1369, Thomas reached his final destination. But before he would come to this
Church of the Jacobins, his body was brought to a small chapel outside of Toulouse, ‘Del Faretrai’. Of course I, Geoffroi des Vayrols, was there with other Bishops and lots of other clerics. I remember the masses of people standing there, to get a glimpse of the relics. It was an extraordinary day.

But I have to say, as happy I was as an Archbishop to have such holy relics in my own city, I felt the tensions there were between the French and the English. Since 1360 it had been quiet for quite some years, but since Charles V from the House of Valois became the King of French in 1364 you can feel the tensions again. The Church had a good relationship with our King who really wanted that the papacy would stay in Avignon, not returning to Rome. It was a tough time, living in a period were the feudal system was not really working anymore with higher nobility trying to gain more power themselves. I can imagine that Charles V needed a strong monarchy, ‘using’ us as a Church to establish a firm and stable monarchy but it also worked the other way around; strengthening our tires with the King would make us both stronger. The ceremony of the arrival of the relics demonstrated this union, formed by the monarchy, the Dominican order and also the various dioceses in Languedoc. When I look back now, I think we can say that the
whole procession was a conjunction of political and spiritual power. And I also had my own part in this. One week after the body of Thomas arrived in Toulouse, I went back to Cahors to preach to the people there. I encouraged them to have a great preaching tour through the province, while instructing the inhabitants in the legal rights and prerogatives of the King of France.

King Charles V really wanted to increase his sacralised position, trying to highlight the special relation between the French monarchy and the papacy. This was pretty important for pope Urban V actually wanted the papacy to go back to Rome, but Charles V did his best to keep him here. And Thomas’s relics were helpful to reach that goal, for the more holy relics you had, the more power you gained and it gave Avignon, and therefore Charles V its papal, and sacred authority. The monarchy and the ecclesiastical powers were pretty intertwined we can say so it was a major shock that Gregory XI, who became pope in 1376, decided to bring the papal court back to Rome which was the start of the great schism which would divide Europe for decades.

So, this place did become a symbol of the famous Thomas Aquinas, having the relics on a place where it seems to be logical to house them, but it would be naïve to say that it was
only out of religious motivations to bring them to Toulouse. More than the avail having the holy relics here, it has been a pretty smart, political move from Charles V, using the procession as a mirror (or a cloak) for his political motivations: when the procession was on its way, the King sent his best army to the city of Albi, to attack the English. No institute, not the church, not the monarchy, not the nobility stood on its own; they were all related, having their own motivations and interests, ‘using’ others to reach those interests. As an Archbishop, being head of all the bishops in my area, I found myself right under the authority of the pope, but I was also closely involved with the king of France; sandwiched by to major authorities. What was the right thing to do?

So, we are standing here at the place where the body of Thomas Aquinas found its definitive resting place. Except for his right arm, which was given to Charles V to bring it to the place where the Dominican order found its origin: the convent church Saint Jacques in Paris. The small, simplistic, pink-bricked church of the 1230’s isn’t that small anymore. There has been major restorations; it’s a pity that it has lost its charming simplicity, but it has become a beautiful church. When you walk into this church nowadays, you will see the famous ‘palm tree’ in the middle, with ribs
radiated in all directions, looking a bit like a palm tree. You even have some mirrors on the ground so you don’t have to overstretch your neck to see the roof.
And for those who are enthusiastic about treasure hunts: somewhere in this building there seems to be a strange little carving of a person seemingly crushed by a pillar, only seeing his hands and feet coming from under this pillar.

Bibliography


*Juliette de Valk*
**Special Thanks To**

- Our faculty board (for royal subsidies)
- Marleen Ruiters (for layout and technical support)
- Last but not least these fantastic students, who worked hard, discussed passionately, thought sharply and were always motivated and in good mood!