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LIFE AMONG GOOD WOMEN: THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS IMPACT OF THE CATHAR PERFECTAE IN THE THIRTEENTH-CENTURY LAURAGAIS

by

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts History Western Michigan University December 2017

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This Master’s Thesis builds on the work of previous historians, such as Anne Brenon and John Arnold. It is primarily a study of gendered aspects in the Cathar heresy. Using inquisitorial registers from the mid-thirteenth century to the early-fourteenth, as well as a few poetic and prose sources, it seeks to understand how the Cathar “Good Women” were perceived by their lay believers. The methodology of prosopography is utilized throughout to measure witness testimonies against one another and to compare the connections between the Cathar constituency and the female ministers.

Two main inquiries are investigated: the sacerdotal and pastoral roles of the Good Women. In chapter one, an investigation of a single village of the Lauragais, Fanjeaux, shows how the perfectae interacted with the lay population. In chapters two and three, their preaching is underscored. In both areas, it becomes evident that while men and women equally participated in their audiences, this equality is restricted to the nobility. Non-nobles within the Lauragais are repeatedly shown to have undervalued the Good Women’s ministry. Ultimately, the thesis concludes that a single interpretation of female Cathar spirituality, and the Good Women themselves, fails to adequately explain their origins and activities.
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There are many scholars to whom I owe thanks for inspiration in writing this thesis. Surely, without Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison’s article “The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism,” this thesis would not exist. The work of Anne Brenon, John Arnold, and Peter Biller, as well, greatly influenced my own; and it is to them, above all others, that I owe the most. Perhaps someday I will be able to express to them my gratitude in person.

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INTRODUCTION

The Cathar heresy of the Occitan counties of Toulouse and Foix has captivated audiences for well over the last century and a half since modern scholars began to investigate its history. A part of the reason for this fascination is due to nature of the faith, as it was in direct opposition to Catholicism, an attribute some Protestant scholars found endearing in the later nineteenth century. As adherents to an absolute dualist religion, the Cathars of Languedoc believed God and Satan to be in perpetual conflict; that the material world, including the human body, was the work of the Devil; that spiritual or corporeal reincarnation was a myth; and that only the soul was derived from God. The Roman Church was even thought of as the church of Satan, with its focus on the material world, and adorning its cathedrals with ornate riches. The Cathars were of course rooted out systematically by both crusade and inquisition, topics that have engrossed many historians. As early as the 1270s, the heresy that had flourished for two centuries had nearly disappeared from the region as the langue d’oc was absorbed into northern French rule.

Medieval historiography has accorded a large place to the Cathars. Starting in the mid-nineteenth century with publications like Charles Molinier’s *Histoire et doctrine de la secte des cathares ou albigeois*, or Napoléon Peyrat’s *Histoire des albigeois: les albigeois et l’Inquisition*, the memory of the heretics began to reemerge into an Occitan consciousness emphasized by their self-declared Protestant descendants.¹ Today, modern tourists scour the castle ruins of

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¹ Emily McCaffrey, “Imaging the Cathars in the Late-Twentieth-Century Languedoc,” in Contemporary European History 11, 3 (August, 2002), 412.
the Pays Cathare searching for a supposed past. Novelists and historians alike have written countless pages on various aspects of the lives and influence of the heretics. From fanciful legends of occult connections (perhaps remnants of thirteenth-century ecclesiastical propaganda) and the Holy Grail, to more scholarly treatments of the impact of Catharism upon Occitan society and culture, a duel between history and popular understanding is ongoing.

This profound interest has engendered biases, however, and preconceived notions—leading to the misinterpretation of sources—have produced erroneous conclusions. Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison, in fact, argued in their seminal 1979 article “The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism” that specific gender roles within the heresy had been misunderstood. They criticized Walter L. Wakefield for his unsupported claim about the susceptibility of women to heresy in Languedoc, and for perpetuating a long-held belief of female prominence in the faith.² Old ideas have stubbornly persisted, however, as Malcolm Barber still asserted in 2000 that women were integral to the diffusion of heretical beliefs.³ It is in the influence of gender within the Cathar faith, especially regarding the heretical ministers known as the perfected, that this thesis will explore.

In the pages that follow, I investigate the social and religious impact of the female Cathar perfectae in the region between the cities of Toulouse and Carcassonne, known as the Lauragais, primarily during the mid-thirteenth century. The perfected, both male and female, were itinerant quasi-monastic clergy who, through their austere life-styles, were considered as

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exemplars of purity. Due to their peripatetic activities, the perfected, like their mendicant contemporaries, traveled in small groups in following the communal life. The subordinate member was called a socius/socia, or companion, the same title conferred upon mendicant friars. In the Cathar hierarchy, the “perfected” were at the bottom of the religious order, below the bishops, filii maijori, the filii minori, and the deacons. But both male and female perfected, having undergone the ritual baptism and ordination of their faith known as the consolamentum, in which they forsook the material world, became ministers of their faith. They had direct contact with the lay communities that they served; and individually, they often came from within the ranks of this local society as well.

It is worth mentioning that, in this thesis and in the historical sources concerning the perfected, many terms are used interchangeably in reference to them. In Catholic sources, they were typically called the heretici/hereticae, and occasionally the perfecti/perfectae. As a general rule, scholarship from the 1970s and earlier, tended to prefer the latter Latin forms, or by translation into the vernacular (perfects in English, parfaits/parfaites in French). This is all somewhat misleading, however, as the Cathars themselves referred to the baptized individuals of their faith as “Good Men” and “Good Women,” or collectively as “Good Christians.” These terms were occasionally captured within testimonies given to the inquisitors, although they are not as prevalent. Since the 1980s and 1990s, there has been a trend among scholars to refer to them by these Cathar forms. I have chosen to use both here, rather than choose only one

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4 Jean Duvernoy, *Le catharisme: la religion des cathares*, vol 1 (Toulouse: Privat, 1976), 236-240. Duvernoy, citing Rainier Sacconi, the converted Cathar, stated that upon the death of a bishop, the fils majeur was elevated to the bishopric, while the fils mineur took the place of the fils majeur, and a new fils mineur was nominated from among the clergy and ordained by the new bishop (238). In this manner, a seat would never be vacant for long.
tradition, largely in an attempt to avoid overly repetitive phrases. Readers should not be confused by this practice, as in every case the people meant are the same.

This thesis will deal with the relationships between the perfected and the rural Cathar community of the Lauragais to further investigate issues about gender raised by other scholars. Though the equality of the genders within Catharism, as a broad theme, is discussed throughout, more specific issues concerning the *perfectae* themselves are the primary concerns. Other scholars have tested these topics generally, but this thesis will reexamine some of the existing evidence. The main concern here instead is the interaction between the laity and the Good Women. By delving into the records that involve these women, gendered aspects of their constituency will be relevant for a larger understanding, namely the communal perceptions about the place in society of these female ministers. A certain fundamental question acts as the impetus for the following investigation: Were both sexes of the Good Christians regarded as equal, or, at least, were they held to similar standards? In other words, the activities of the laity act as a lens through which the true focus of the thesis is revealed: how life among Good Women was perceived and experienced.

Though differences between the male and female Good Christians certainly existed regarding religious and social function, this thesis will show that the audience of the Good Women was more-or-less equally divided between the genders. Both men and women sought their spiritual guidance out in equal numbers. A second, and larger theme within the thesis, however, is in understanding how this perceived equality extended across all levels of society. I argue that the minor nobility of the Lauragais, the knights and ladies of this rural region, accepted the Good Women as fully functioning ministers more so than those of the lower
classes (peasants, laborers, and merchants), based off interactions between the *perfectae* and members of different social groups. When concerning the equality of the genders within Catharism and the perception of the Good Women, it becomes apparent that it is only a hollow equality, one that is only relevant to the nobility.

These arguments will be supported by reinvestigating old sources through a new methodology. Throughout the thesis, prosopographical analyses of testimonies given by witnesses called to appear before inquisitorial courts will tie individuals and groups to the Good Women. Understanding these relationships, as detailed in case records, is the fundamental contribution of my study. The main primary source used in this investigation is the inquisitorial register of Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre archived in the Bibliothèque Municipale de Toulouse, MS 609 (hereafter referred to as MS 609). This text was chosen for a variety of reasons. It is, first of all, a widely used and contested source. The details it records about the activities of the *perfectae*, aside from the rarity of their pastoral abilities, have vast implications for the understanding of women within the heresy. Another, partial register, that of the Dominican Friar Ferrer, volume twenty-three of the Bibliothèque nationale de France’s Collection Doat (hereafter referred to as BnF Doat, vol. 23), as well as the prose and poetic sources *La Chanson de la croisade albigeoise* by Guillaume de Tudèle, the *Hystoria albigenisa* by

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5 In addition to the digitized images of the manuscript found at the municipal library’s website ([http://numerique.bibliotheque.toulouse.fr/](http://numerique.bibliotheque.toulouse.fr/)), I made use of two edited versions of this inquisitorial register. One was entitled *Interrogatoires subis par des hérétiques albigeois par devant frère Bernard de Caux, inquisiteur, de 1245 à 1253* found on the HathiTrust Digital Library as uploaded from the typescript microfilm held at the Institut de Recherches et d'Histoire des Textes à Paris and at the library of Columbia University. The other was an abbreviated transcription by Jean Duvernoy on his website dedicated to publishing texts concerning heresy already housed at the Centre d’Études Cathares (CEC) de Carcassonne ([http://jean.duvernoy.free.fr/text/listetexte.htm#sinquisit](http://jean.duvernoy.free.fr/text/listetexte.htm#sinquisit)). The typescript was preferred to Duvernoy’s edition, and was utilized more frequently, because of the faithfulness to the original. But the Duvernoy transcription was used on occasion to verify anomalies found in the typescript—such as smeared ink, missing pages, etc. The digitized manuscript was consulted in verifying both the typescript and abbreviated edition.
Piere des Vaux-de-Cernay, and Guillaume de Puylaurens’ *Chronica* will be consulted for similar reasons. Contextualizing the accounts of those who witnessed the sacerdotal and pastoral activities of the Good Women, as well as those mentioned to have been with them, is paramount to the two main themes in this thesis.

The first inquiry aims to gain a perspective on how the *perfectae* operated within a communal setting. In chapter one, the depositions from a single village within MS 609, the *castrum* of Fanjeaux, will be analyzed. These arguments are tied to an earlier scholarly debate about the role of women, especially the Good Women as a whole, within Catharism. Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison in their 1979 article “The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism” sought to investigate these issues. One of their conclusions was that though the *perfectae* in theory had the same status as the male *perfecti*, having undergone the same ritual baptism known as the *consolamentum*, they, “only rarely, if ever, performed the functions that were theoretically theirs....” While they cited three instances in which *perfectae* did in fact perform the *consolamentum* (the ritual baptism and ordination of their faith) in BnF Collection Doat, volumes twenty-two and twenty-three, none were reported doing so within MS 609. Thus they claimed that “the activities of female Cathars did not ordinarily include sacerdotal functions.”

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6 BnF Doat vol. 23, the partial register of Friar Ferrier, has been transcribed and translated into French (Latin and French side-by-side) by Ruben de Labastide, and has been uploaded on the website, “Catharisme d’Aujoud’hui,” [https://www.catharisme.eu/](https://www.catharisme.eu/). As the Collection Doat has not been digitized by the BnF (there are microfilms in the Bodleian Library of volumes twenty-six through thirty), this online edition was the only transcription used in this thesis.


claim that “there was no female principle in their religion,” concerning teaching and preaching.10

Not all scholars have agreed with such notions. Anne Brenon, in her “The Voice of the Good Women: An Essay on the Pastoral and Sacerdotal Role of Women in the Cathar Church,” attempted to explain the lack of evidence concerning female sacramental activity. While Good Women were often present for consolamenta, in that they gave the kiss of peace to female suppliants as well as offered prayers, they were doctrinally prohibited from touching a man. Furthermore, there is no evidence even to suggest that their hands were raised above the open book when it was placed upon a male postulant’s head during the ceremony.11 This practical explanation, however, does not mean that perfectae could not perform this duty. Citing BM Toulouse, MS 609 itself, from the testimony of Raimon Raseire of Auriac, Brenon indicated that such sweeping statements by Abels and Harrison were not in fact correct. Raimon’s mother, a perfecta who lived in the woods near Cambiac, wished that her son would bring his sister to her so that “she [could] confer on her the consolamentum and make her her socia, her ritual companion.”12 Brenon argued that this indication that perfectae could, and did, perform these activities proved that they had an equal range of function with their heretical brothers—despite the low frequency of reported cases.13

This first chapter is intended to be a continuation of this scholarly debate and directs attention to the activity of the *perfectae*. The equality of involvement between the genders suggested by Abels and Harrison forms the foundation of its arguments. Men and women both interacted with the female heretics, and they will be shown to have done so in a variety of ways. When social statistics are considered, nevertheless, a divide becomes apparent. The extension of Abels and Harrison’s arguments to the rank of the *perfectae*, as purported by Brenon, thus, guided the research within. Using MS 609 to investigate the sacerdotal activity of the female perfected in the village of Fanjeaux, it makes use of the depositions from that locale to understand how the rural inhabitants perceived the Good Women. The studies of Walter L. Wakefield into various villages of the Lauragais will be a model for this chapter in that it will strive to depict Fanjeaux as a complete and substantive unit—taking care not to treat the deponents as puppets, as Leonard E. Boyle had accused Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie of doing in his *Montaillou: Village Occitan de 1294 à 1324*.

Rather than focus on the effects of the inquisition upon rural society like Wakefield, or to restructure village life as Le Roy Ladurie, the intent of this chapter is to understand the *perfectae* as the deponents did. Through prosopographical methods, the audience of the female heretics will be portrayed in terms of their interpersonal relationships. By analyzing the sacramental activity of the perfected, this chapter tests Abels and Harrison’s statements about the Good Women and Brenon’s rebuttal.

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The second main inquiry of the thesis is both more extensive and narrower in scope. One under-researched aspect of the pastoral activities of the perfected, for Good Men and especially so for Good Women, is that of their preaching. Within MS 609 traces of the ministerial activities of the Good Women were exposed by their deposed believers. But the topic of preaching, an integral part of religion, whether heretical or orthodox, deserves more attention than has been given and is the central focus of the second chapter. From such sources as the *Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise* by Guillaume de Tudèle, or Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay’s *Hystoria Albigensis*, historians have known of the foundational importance preaching had within the Cathar community.\(^\text{15}\) From small, intimate gatherings to large public spectacles, preaching was fundamental in maintaining their livelihood; and, as such, uncovering the extent of this activity was paramount to Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre in their investigation.\(^\text{16}\) Following the Statutes of Paris (1204) and the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) unsanctioned preaching was a crime in and of itself, regardless of its message.\(^\text{17}\) Thus, from the first investigations, inquisitors were very keen to uncover (and their notaries to record) every indication of heretical preaching—although without much detail as to what was said.

Though it was central in sustaining heresy, the topic of Cathar preaching had been under researched until the 1990s. In the article “The Preaching of the Cathars” by John Arnold in Carolyn Meussig’s edited volume *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, he claimed to be surprised


\(^{17}\) Arnold, “The Preaching of the Cathars,” 185.
when he realized that “the context and practice of Cathar preaching has not been examined thus far in any great detail.” Jean Duvernoy, for example, had only devoted a few pages to the practice in his Le Catharisme: La Religion des Cathares. Others, like Peter Biller, had investigated certain aspects of preaching, such as the Cathar reliance on written texts and rational thinking in constructing their arguments, but not the act itself. It was Arnold’s goal to begin the process of reexamining inquisitorial documents to ascertain the true meaning of Cathar preaching, whether preaching and theology were synonymous for example, in writing his article. Still, gaps in scholarship remained.

Despite useful key themes that Arnold strove to discuss, like the context and atmosphere of preaching itself, the novelty of his endeavor became clear when his subjects and source material were considered. Not only did he exclude MS 609 and other early inquisitorial records from his analysis for their perceived lack of detail—claiming them to be “impossible to quantify”—he also neglected a sizeable portion of the Cathar ministry by focusing solely upon the male perfecti. Abels and Harrison had, nevertheless, already made extensive use of MS 609 in their own article. While they briefly allude to the rarity of female preaching (citing ten named Good Women, and two unknown heretical pairs), an analysis of the context of their preaching

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20 Peter Biller, “The Cathars of Languedoc and Written Materials,” in Heresy and Literacy, 1000-1500, ed. Peter Biller and Anne Hudson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 63-82. Aside from discussing the many uses of scripture Cathars used and the extant copies of texts that were not destroyed, Biller also quite effectively noted that while Catholic sympathizers often ridiculed Waldensians and other heretics as being illiterate in Latin no such opprobrium was directed toward the Cathars.
21 Arnold, “The Preaching of the Cathars,” 185. When discussing the content of a list of early inquisitorial sentences (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Doat 21), he said, “An early record of inquisitorial sentences provides a great deal of evidence for the high occurrence of preaching, but gives almost no detail whatsoever, and I have therefore excluded it from my analysis as impossible to quantify.” Indicated in the citation (note 10) he wrote, “I have also excluded from my count the evidence contained in Toulouse, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 609, the basis for Abels and Harrison’s article mentioned below.”
was missing. Jean Duvernoy, as well, had only briefly alluded to the pastoral abilities of the perfectae within his terse section on preaching by stating “[male] perfects and [female] perfects held every occasion to spread the good word.”

Anne Brenon, in her book Les femmes cathares, and her article, “The Voice of the Good Women: An Essay on the Pastoral and Sacerdotal Role of Women in the Cathar Church,” attempted to address this lacuna of female preaching with some success. In acknowledging that the extant source material was limited, she focused heavily on the lives of the perfectae prior to the crusade in an effort to uncover how influential they were in a sacerdotal position. She noted that the Good Women had a far less active role in lay society because they lived in cloistered homes. Yet she claimed that they must have been able to teach novices because of the existence of these catechistic houses and thus had to have had a practical knowledge of theology—giving them a logical reason to have preached as an educational tool, if at least to other women. Like Arnold, she noted that Cathar preaching, male and female, was almost always conducted in the privacy of the home of a believer, or in small crowds. Yet, outside of one abundantly detailed case, she neglected to fully analyze individual perfectae with their audiences.

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23 Duvernoy, La Religion des Cathares, 219: “parfaits et parfaites retiennent toute occasion de répandre la bonne parole.”
26 Brenon, “The Voice of the Good Women,” 128. Arnaude de Lamothe garnered great attention from her inquisitors due to her life as a perfecta, and as such her depositions are far more detailed than many others. Like the inquisitors themselves, Brenon gave Arnaude’s story a lot of attention in both her book and her article mentioned above.
Thus, by combining Arnold’s attention to the context with Brenon’s focus on the *perfectae*, the second chapter will treat female preachers and, in a similar vein to chapter one, the people they interacted with. In using prosopographical methods, and cross-referencing deponents’ testimonies, the goal is to understand the purpose of their preaching. If the Good Women were only sought for their sacramental abilities when other members of the Cathar hierarchy (namely men) were missing, as has been suggested by many scholars such as Abels and Harrison, then what about the specific instances when these women were reported to have expressed their full religious authority? Furthermore, did Good Women rarely preach, or did deponents rarely claim to have heard them do so? Though an answer to the latter question may be difficult to ascertain, the analysis in the second chapter shows that *perfectae* preached to various groups of people, all with different levels of personal connections to one another. A good portion, though, had familial ties, however distant, to the Good Women themselves.

While the second chapter deals with explaining the context of the preaching of the Good Women within the Lauragais, the third chapter seeks to analyze the compiled evidence. In particular, chapter three addresses the larger debate about the spirituality of women within the Cathar faith. As the historiography of this debate is integral to a sizeable portion of the third chapter, a discussion of it will be found there rather than introduced here. But it will suffice to say that there are three main strands of scholarly interpretation regarding women in the heresy, each championed by a modern scholarly representative whose work has been the most influential. Some see Catharism as a haven for women in a repressive society, allowing them a modicum of individualism and agency. A long-held belief stemming from this line of thinking is

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the notion that women, rather than men, were integral for its diffusion because of their roles within Occitan families. Others have disagreed, and argued for a more neutral understanding where neither gender dominated the other in the demographics of the Cathar constituency. Most recently, is the claim that women were actively repelled by the misogynistic undertones prevalent in the theology of the faith, where the material world, so often associated with the female sex in dualist conception, persuaded many to abandon the heresy.

While all three interpretations are introduced and measured for their strengths and weaknesses, none of them are accepted entirely within the third chapter. It is the aim instead to indicate the complexity of the situation. The analyses of the preaching of the Good Women found within MS 609 accomplishes this well. In a similar manner to the prosopographical investigation on the ministerial activities of the Good Women at Fanjeaux in chapter one, the examination of the preaching of the perfectae from across the Lauragais reveal that the nature of their audiences was multifaceted. While men and women heard their preaching equally, the evidence is skewed by social position. Other passages, additionally, pertaining to female spirituality found in the registers of Jacques Fournier indicate that conflicting concepts existed. Overall, a single approach or interpretation might not be adequate to describe the perception of women both within and outside the heresy. Considerably more problematic, it may also be that the Catholic origin of many primary sources may obscure Cathar perceptions beyond the point of recognition.

The present thesis is, then, in many ways the continuation of other scholars’ work. Though it does not agree completely with every historian’s ideas from which it draws inspiration, a number of diverse themes have been useful and various methods and approaches have been
repurposed. The social approach of Walter L. Wakefield, John Hine Mundy, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison have been joined to the cultural approaches of John Arnold, and Anne Brenon. Of course, gender in the society and culture of the Lauragais has been a central focus, and in this way the thesis draws inspiration from the work of Brenon, and Abels and Harrison, and Peter Biller. Although the subject of the thesis, the social and religious impact of the Good Women, has been treated before, the prosopographical methods it employs to ground its arguments, and to contextualize their pastoral and sacerdotal activities, is novel in itself. By exploring this context, as best as the source material can allow, it is hoped that a glimpse into the social and religious perceptions of the Good Women by their Cathar constituents can be achieved.
CHAPTER I

THE LAY PERCEPTION AND SACERDOTAL ROLE OF THE CATHAR
PERFECTAE IN THIRTEENTH-CENTURY FANJEAUX

May 1, 1245 marked the beginning of the investigation of Dominican Inquisitors Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre into the state of heresy in the plains of the Lauragais—south-east of Toulouse and north-west of Carcassonne (see map, Appendix D).28 After the murder of their predecessors, William Arnald and his Franciscan companion, Stephen de Saint-Thibéry, within the castle of Avignonet on the night of the Ascension of the Lord, 1242, inquisitorial pressure was increased within the region.29 Friar Ferrer, a Catalan Dominican, had begun an earlier investigation into the area, and his deponents were often cross-referenced and their confessions verified, by Bernard and Jean in their own—initiating a new standard in inquisitorial procedure.30 Ten volumes of their registers had been recorded, but only two have survived within a single tome that was copied from the originals on the orders of Guillaume Bernard and Renaud de Chartres, inquisitors themselves, sometime between 1258 and 1263.31 Known as Toulouse Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 609 this manuscript contains 5,604 depositions from the inhabitants of some ninety-four parishes. While the details contained within the register give an

interesting insight into rural Occitan society, they are not a complete record of Catharism in the first half of the thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{32}

Scholars such as Walter L. Wakefield and John Hine Mundy have used this source in reconstructing the society of the mid-thirteenth-century Lauragais.\textsuperscript{33} Such studies give a glimpse into how the inhabitants of the Lauragais lived, and how their lives were effected both by the Cathars and by the inquisition. While these scholars aimed for a broad understanding of Occitan society—Wakefield used three villages of the Lauragais and Mundy the city of Toulouse—the focus of this chapter will be much narrower in scope and direction. Using the depositions from one village of the Lauragais, the castrum of Fanjeaux, I will endeavor to analyze how the Cathar Good Women were perceived by the faithful. A prosopographical methodology will allow for a reconstruction of religious perception based on both the gender and social status of their audiences. Understanding how the \textit{perfectae} were received by all levels of society is the primary goal.

This chapter will be divided into four parts. As a means of an introduction to Fanjeaux itself, a general statistical outline of the \textit{perfectae} will be traced as they appeared there. The following two sections on the interaction of the Good Women with the nobility and lower classes will attempt to understand the religious environment of the Lauragais. Determination of

\textsuperscript{32} Abels and Harrison, “The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism,” 221; they claimed that while the inquisitors went to great lengths to bring every male older than 14, and female over 12—even bringing in the sick—before them, only 31.8% of the deponents were female and thus it is unlikely to be a full representation.

the social status of individuals was largely done by surname, if no other qualification could be gleaned. Frequent associations between the classes suggests that the circles in which individuals operated cannot serve as a means of identification of rank in and of themselves, but, as will be shown, they are useful in contextualizing social perception. Lastly, the ministerial activity of the Good Women will be summarized in the final section. These various sections will indicate if Good Women and Good Men were regarded equally both in their lay perception and sacerdotal function.

The village of Fanjeaux is situated roughly twenty kilometers south-east of Castelnaudary and twenty-five west of Carcassonne at the south-eastern extremity of the Lauragais (see map, Appendix D). Between 1207 and 1215 it was the home of Saint Dominic himself, and a few of the older deponents recalled confessing to him before, and during, the Crusade. It was directly in the shadow of the early Dominicans that the troubadour Pèire Vidal wrote of the brilliance of the Cathar court within the castle of Fanjeaux, equating it to paradise itself. As Malcolm Lambert noted, weaving was a popular local trade testified by the number of workshops, and during the crusade years local perfecti even taught noble children how to sew. Between May 5, 1245 and June 1, 1246, from the surviving records, 101 of its inhabitants were called to appear before the inquisitors at the Abbey Church of Saint-Sernin in Toulouse. Of

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34 See for an example Toulouse, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 609, fols. 160r-160v. The elderly woman, Guillelma Martina, recalled confessing her sins to Dominic himself nearly forty years before, and she originally had the papers confirming her reconciliation to the Church via the penance of wearing two crosses upon her clothing until they were lost (or destroyed) when the Count of Montfort burned the castle.
37 MS 609, fol. 154r.
these one hundred and one deponents, the vast majority were men (numbering eighty-five in
total) while only sixteen were women (Appendix A.1).

Thirty-five of these depositions contained specific mention of an interaction of some
kind with the *perfectae* (34.6%). The conclusion of Abels and Harrison that women reported
sighting Good Women more often than men holds true in this regional focus, as exactly half of
the female deponents did so, compared to twenty-seven of the men (31.8%). Traveling with
companions like their heretical brothers, only the leading *perfecta* was mentioned by name if it
was known by the deponent at all—leaving the *socia heretice* unknown. On three occasions,
however, both women of the pair were indicated. Some thirty-eight instances, counting these
three examples, were recorded in which specific names, or identities, were known. This
excludes a single situation in which only one unnamed *perfecta* was seen. Twenty-three
heretical pairs were mentioned without the witness recognizing or recalling who they were—
only that they were in fact *perfectae*. Thus, some forty-seven women were noted without any
evidence left to uncover their identities. Yet this is not to say that they were different
individuals in every case. Although theoretically possible, it is far more likely that some of these
women, unknown to a couple (or perhaps several) deponents, were observed by the same
Fanjuvéens. Furthermore, their names could have been intentionally withheld in an attempt to
conceal a family member, or a friend; perhaps even to mitigate the deponent’s own guilt. It is
simply impossible to know their identities.

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38 Abels and Harrison, “Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism,” 226.
39 MS 609, fols. 153v, 155v, and 163v.
40 MS 609, fol. 168v; Richarda, the wife of Bernart Faure, told Inquisitor Jean de Saint-Pierre that she once
held a single *perfecta* as a guest in her home—a woman she claimed to have adored and eaten with.
Certain limitations with the source material are apparent, but there is evidence to note that a few named *perfectae* were seen on a reoccurring basis within Fanjeaux over the seventy years covered by the depositions.\(^{41}\) Of the thirty-eight identified women, five individuals were sighted by more than one deponent (Appendix A.2). Not only were these heretics reported to have been seen several times, all of them also had familial ties to minor noble families within the village. Two of them, Turca and Brunissen, periodically even had the word *Na* affixed to their names (an abbreviation of the Latin *domina* in Occitan sources).\(^{42}\) Na Brunissen was the most mentioned *perfecta*, which is not surprising as her activities were in the recent past (post 1240).\(^{43}\) The second most sighted, nonetheless—although only by two deponents compared to Na Brunissen’s five—was Esclarmonda, the mother of a nobleman of Fanjeaux, Bernart Huc de Festa.\(^{44}\) She was first mentioned in regards to events that transpired around 1225, and did not reappear in the Fanjuvéen depositions after 1231. A *perfecta* named Lombarda was mentioned a total of four times. While three instances can be shown to refer to the same woman—evidenced again by familial connections—this does not offer enough information to establish her identity.\(^{45}\) It should be noted, however, that an additional deponent mentioned a Lombarda who was active in the same period (1237-1243) as the other known *perfecta*.

\(^{41}\) MS 609, fol. 159r; Bernart Gasc remembered living next to *perfecti* when at his mother’s house around seventy years earlier—thus the furthest chronological period mentioned in a deposition from Fanjeaux was roughly circa 1175.

\(^{42}\) Anne Brenon, *Le petit livre aventureux des prénoms occitans au temps du catharisme* (Paris: Éditions Loubatières, 1992), 16. The first-names of all individuals, and last-names when possible, mentioned within this chapter—and the whole thesis—will be modeled after the Occitan variants of the Latinized names written by the inquisitorial notaries indicated within Brenon’s book.

\(^{43}\) MS 609, fol. 154r.

\(^{44}\) MS 609, fol. 160r; three men with the name, or variant of, Bernart de Festa are indicated—Bernart de Festa, the son of Bomacip, also known as Filhol; Bernart de Festa, the son of the deceased Bernart de Festa; and Bernart Huc de Festa, the son of Esclarmonda.

\(^{45}\) MS 609, fols.151r, 156v, and 165r; this Lombarda was mentioned by the noblewoman N’Ava (fol. 156v) to be the granddaughter of the knight Pèire Rotger, who was mentioned by Guilhem de Fois (fol. 151r) as being in
All told, there were seventy-eight individual sightings of perfectae in Fanjeaux. Na Brunissen, the most sighted female heretic, was seen on twelve occasions by five deponents. One man, a steward of Fanjeaux, Arnaut d’En Terren, claimed to have been in her presence a total of eight times.\(^{46}\) Though he specifically mentioned seeing only two perfectae (the other being Na Turca) and four perfecti, based on the frequency of his interaction with Na Brunissen he was involved with the female heretics more often than the male. While only mentioned by one deponent (Bernart Calveti), Orbria, the mother of another man from the Festa family, the knight Gailhard de Festa saw her on five separate occasions.\(^{47}\)

Twenty of the thirty-five deponents who related seeing perfectae only mentioned a single occurrence (both known and unknown women), while the remaining fifteen confessed to seeing two or more. Of those who mentioned only one interaction with perfectae, 62.5% were women (five of the eight), and 55.5% were men (fifteen out of twenty-seven). The corresponding statistics for those who mentioned more than one interaction with the perfectae yield more interesting results, however. Three of the eight women, or 37.5%, claimed to have seen multiple pairs of Good Women within their testimonies compared to twelve of the twenty-seven men (44.4%). Thus, while women had an overall higher percentage of sighting the perfectae in general, men reported to have been involved with several more often (Appendix A.3). As Abels and Harrison did not cite a similar statistic for the entire Lauragais, perhaps this is only indicative of Fanjeaux itself. This fact seems to suggest, however, that both genders

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\(^{46}\) MS 609, fol. 154r.

\(^{47}\) MS 609, fol. 163v.
perceived the *perfectae* to be the “Good Women” they were recorded as being; and especially so when considering Arnaut d’En Terren’s relationship with Na Brunissen. But did this perception extend through all levels of Fanjuvéen society?

In the following two sections on the interaction of the *perfectae* with the nobility and the lower classes of Fanjeaux, the same organization will be employed. The most reported activity for both social groups was the housing, or concealment, of the *perfectae*; and it will accordingly be the first theme discussed. Next will be the physical activity of guiding the women, usually from outside to inside the village. Those who accompanied the perfects were called *ductores* in the manuscript. The bestowal of gifts, or offering provisions, between the *credentes* and the *perfectae* was typically regarded as a sign of heretical belief on the part of the deponent. Thus, it is not surprising that there were fewer admissions of this crime to the inquisitors by either group. It will be, nevertheless, the third and final theme.

Lordship in Southern France, as argued by Hélène Débax, was not completely the same as its practice in the North. Occitan castles not only could be shared within a given family, due to partible inheritance, but could also be jointly owned between nobles of the same status.48 In fact, the hierarchy of nobles within a castle itself was Débax’s definition of a southern fief.49 These concepts are applicable to Fanjeaux during the thirteenth century. According to Suzanne Nelli two nobles acted as the shared proprietors of the castle at Fanjeaux. The noble troubadour, Guilhem de Durfort, and Na Cavaers, the politically savvy noblewoman, were the


highest-ranking nobles of the rural court.\textsuperscript{50} Perhaps due to the confiscation of his land by Simon de Montfort, Guilhem de Durfort does not himself appear within the depositions from Fanjeaux, and in fact only a few members of the Durfort family are mentioned.\textsuperscript{51} As for Na Cavaers herself, only one deponent related an event in which she was involved.\textsuperscript{52}

In a position just below these co-seigneurs in the hierarchy of the castle, three families appear within the register as being the most influential: the Boccadase, the Festa, and the Fanjaus. This is especially so considering the disenfranchisement of Guilhem de Durfort.\textsuperscript{53} While many knights are noted within the depositions, it is noteworthy that Guilhem Pèire de Boccadase was mentioned as having one knight by the name of Pèire Cerdani loyal to him specifically.\textsuperscript{54} The Festa family seemed to have considerably more influence than the Boccadase. The \textit{perfecta} Esclarmonda, herself the daughter of Guilhem de Durfort, was married into the Festa family prior to her religious life.\textsuperscript{55} The overall number of knights and other nobles affixed to several of their family members also emphasized their higher position.\textsuperscript{56} The Fanjaus family appeared to be even wealthier still. The man seemingly at its head was named Bec de Fanjaus; and around 1235 he received the \textit{consolamentum} becoming a \textit{perfectus}. Bec was, nevertheless, still referred to as a \textit{miles} despite the prominence of his family. The \textit{perfecta} Na

\textsuperscript{50} Nelli, \textit{Les Durforts de Languedoc au Moyen Age}, 59 and 73.  
\textsuperscript{51} Nelli, \textit{Les Durforts de Languedoc au Moyen Age}, 60; Sicart de Durfort and Pèire de Hylia, both sons of the \textit{perfecta} Fays de Durfort (see p. 58 of Nelli’s book), and the knights Raimon (possibly Guilhem’s brother, p. 87) and Huc de Durfort (p. 91) are the only de Durforts mentioned from the Fanjuvéen depositions.  
\textsuperscript{52} Nelli, \textit{Les Durforts de Languedoc au Moyen Age}, 73; she was mentioned by Bernart Teuler (MS 609, fol. 169r.  
\textsuperscript{53} Nelli, \textit{Les Durforts de Languedoc au Moyen Age}, 60.  
\textsuperscript{54} MS 609, fol. 150v.  
\textsuperscript{55} Nelli, \textit{Les Durforts de Languedoc au Moyen Age}, 56.  
\textsuperscript{56} MS 609, fol. 150v; for example, Guilhem Huc Fornier was mentioned as being the knight of Bernart de Festa.
Brunissen was his sister.\textsuperscript{57} He and other relatives had additional property outside of Fanjeaux,\textsuperscript{58} as well as having several other nobles loyal to them, such as his steward, Arnaut d’En Terren.\textsuperscript{59} All in all, of the deponents who were recorded as having interacted with \textit{perfectae}, twenty can be identified as being minor nobles in some fashion.

Within this group, seven directly admitted to housing Good Women in their own homes. Guilhem de Fois and N’Ava (a noblewoman married to a man of the non-noble class, Pèire Roca) both did so on four or more separate occasions. It was far more common, however, for a deponent to confess to having provided shelter only once. After her previous statement that had been given to William Arnald was read back to her, Na Helis, the wife of Guilhem Faure, confessed to not having stayed true to the Catholic faith. The heretic Lombarda, her sister, had visited her twice since then and she willingly gave her bread and wine.\textsuperscript{60} Richarda, the wife of Bernart Faure, was pressured in a similar manner causing her to confess to Jean de Saint-Pierre that she had lied in earlier depositions to other inquisitors about the fact that she housed, and ate with at the same meal, an unnamed heretical woman.\textsuperscript{61} It is interesting that while she appeared before both inquisitors at Toulouse along with thirteen other deponents, the four women who confessed that day, June 1, 1246, only did so to Brother Jean. Though all thirteen were called to reaffirm or deny older confessions, this does not explain why Brother Bernard

\textsuperscript{57} MS 609, fol. 154r. \\
\textsuperscript{58} MS 609, fol. 152r; Bec had a portion of his \textit{dominium} at the village of Laurac, some ten kilometers to the northwest of Fanjeaux. Also see MS 609, fol 164r; a man named Isarn de Fanjaus, who interacted with Bernart Huc de Festa, owned land in the walled village of “Cuelha.” \\
\textsuperscript{59} MS 609, fol. 152v. \\
\textsuperscript{60} MS 609, fol. 165r. \\
\textsuperscript{61} MS 609, fol. 168v.
was present only for the men—especially considering that one deponent, Rixen, the wife of Andreas, was a former perfecta.\(^{62}\)

Besides these seven deponents, an additional twelve noblemen and two noblewomen were cited within the confessions as having at one point harbored female heretics over the previous twenty years. It is noteworthy that all three leading knightly families were condemned as having certain members spotted with perfectae in their homes. Guilhem Père de Boccadase was named twice,\(^{63}\) two men of the Festa family were indicated,\(^{64}\) and Isarn de Fanjaus—a lord in a neighboring village—was specified by Guilhem Rotger d’Orsans, a knight of Bernart Huc de Festa’s retinue.\(^{65}\) These instances, when coupled with declarations from the deponents about the regularity in which heretics were seen within the castle, are quite telling.\(^{66}\) It is well known that the nobility of the Lauragais, and those from Fanjeaux in particular, were devout believers. But the frequency in which nobles were reported to have harbored Good Women suggests that they held them in high regard.

Another popular activity among the Fanjuvéen nobility was the action of guiding heretics from one locale to the next—from one sanctuary to another. It is important to note that while one noblewoman mentioned observing this process (N’Ava),\(^{67}\) and another received perfectae at the terminus of the transaction, this was an activity done exclusively by men.\(^{68}\)

\(^{62}\) MS 609, fol. 168v.
\(^{63}\) MS 609, fols. 150v and 151v.
\(^{64}\) MS 609, fols. 163v and 164r.
\(^{65}\) MS 609, fol. 160r; Guilhem also noted other noblemen of this neighboring town, mentioning that within its walls many perfectae could be found between 15 and 20 years before.
\(^{66}\) MS 609, fol. 164r; Guilhem Garsias, a knight of Bernart Huc de Festa’s, made the claim that everyone within the castle had seen Bernart’s mother, the perfecta Esclarmonda, at some point around 15 years before.
\(^{67}\) MS 609, fols. 156v-157r.
\(^{68}\) MS 609, fol. 163v; a woman named Honors, the wife of Luo de Fuxo, received the perfectae Orbria and her socia at her own home in the town of Montaut—diocese of Narbonne.
Seven noble deponents confessed as much themselves. As an operation, it could be as simple as involving only a few people: the ductores and the perfected themselves. Bernart de Calhavel declared that a man named Pèire de Flaira had led India and her socia to Bernart de Podio and himself in Mirepoix; after which they safely guided the two women to the home of Guilhem de Palagac back in Fanjeaux.69 As for Bernart de Podio, he neglected to mention this experience when he was confronted by the inquisitors.

On five out of the eleven mentioned occasions, however, parties larger than four men led the perfectae to their destinations. The knight Bernart Calveti (Gailhard de Festa’s man) described two events in which he was a member of a company exceeding eight individuals.70 Leading his lord’s mother Orbria and her socia into and out of the diocese of Narbonne on these expeditions, there are a number of possible reasons that could have necessitated such large parties. Bernart believed that both of these events transpired around the year 1228; and if so, passing crusaders may have been a threat. The distance between Fanjeaux and Narbonne is roughly 80 kilometers, and thus traveling for such a distance might have called for more men to evade dangers on the road. A third reason, albeit less pragmatic, could simply have been because of the perfectae being led. Bernart’s lord, Gailhard de Festa, sparing no expense, might have simply wished to keep his mother safe.

Another instance of a large traveling party (seven specifically named, with unnumbered assistants) was recorded in the deposition of Guilhem Garsias, the knight of Bernart Huc de Festa. Guilhem mentioned that around the year 1231, his lord specifically came to him asking

69 MS 609, fol. 152v.
70 MS 609, fol. 163v.
that he might accompany him to a certain place called Gardamielh near the village of Limoux.\textsuperscript{71} In addition to Guilhem and Bernart Huc there were two mounted knights, three crossbowmen, and many footmen. They uncovered Esclarmonda, Bernart Huc’s mother, and her \textit{socia}, when they arrived at their destination, after which they escorted them to a wood called Las Agas. Two men from Limoux were ordered to stay behind.\textsuperscript{72} The date of this event is both after the end of the Albigensian Crusade and potentially before—or at the onset—of the initial increase of inquisitorial pressure after the Dominican Order was vested judicial powers by Pope Gregory IX in 1231.\textsuperscript{73} The distance between Fanjeaux and Limoux is also not as great (some twenty-five kilometers) as that of Fanjeaux and Narbonne, although still far enough that it might take a day of riding in a company of knights. Perhaps similar to Bernart Calveti’s case, the personal relationship between lord and \textit{perfecta} could be another compelling reason to ensure the safety of the expedition.

Whatever the true motivation for such large, and well-armed traveling parties, a brief comparison to the activities of the lower class \textit{ductores} ought to be made here. It is interesting to note that among the nobles, the \textit{perfectae} were always accompanied by at least two men, whereas occasionally one non-noble performed the task suitably. The identity of the given \textit{perfecta} was just as relevant as the act of guiding them.

The last activity concerning the nobles of Fanjeaux to be discussed is the exchange of gifts between believer and heretic. Four nobles confessed to doing this personally, as an interceder between the giver and receiver, or to have seen others doing so. Nine such

\textsuperscript{71} MS 609, fol. 164r.
\textsuperscript{72} MS 609, fol. 164r.
exchanges can be accounted for. Most in fact, involved two men specifically: Arnaut d’En Terren and Pèire de Garmassia. On three occasions, Arnaut ferried gifts between various noblewomen and the perfecta Na Brunissen—recalling that he interacted with her on a total of eight separate occasions. His efforts earned him Na Brunissen’s blessing,\(^74\) giving her such items as the practical bread and oil, as well as the nondescript *encaenia.\(^75\) As for Pèire de Garmassia, his actions are both interesting and puzzling. At the end of his deposition he made the assertion that he never believed the heretics were *boni homines*, but he did recognize their good works. Though he never fully believed in them, if his testament is accepted, his understanding of the holiness of the perfected led him to give more gifts to the *perfectae* than any other deponent. Another intriguing aspect of this man is his possible social status. Given his toponymic surname, and the fact that he spent a lot of time in the castle of Fanjeaux, he might be included in the ranks of the nobility.\(^76\) His trade, however, involved in tanning, would suggest a lower status marked by labor. Thirty years prior, during his youth, he even attended a sewing workshop (typically attended by other male noble children) instructed by the *perfecti* of the village.\(^77\) Interestingly enough, he put the skills he learned as a boy in the hands of the heretics to use as an adult in making pelts, dresses, and cloaks for many *perfectae*—despite only ever knowing one of them specifically.

The vast majority of cases of gift exchange concern items given to the *perfectae*, nevertheless, on one such occasion the heretics themselves bestowed a gift upon a believer.

\(^74\) MS 609, fol. 154r.  
\(^75\) MS 609, fol. 154r; translated as “gifts.”  
\(^76\) MS 609, fol. 157r.  
\(^77\) MS 609, fol. 157r.
One of the explanations for the high number of *perfectae* housed or concealed by the noblewoman N’Ava could account for the fact that she leased her own property.\(^{78}\) Accustomed to the arrival of new tenants, she claimed that “when war was in the land” (approximately 1242), two unknown women came to her asking for a place to stay.\(^{79}\) It was only after they departed that she learned they were heretics—and for the trouble caused, they left her clothes as recompense.\(^{80}\)

Of the thirty-five deponents who mentioned involvement with the *perfectae*, fifteen can be ascribed to the lower ranks of society. Many have no qualifiers in their own confessions to suggest their status; but more than a few can be tied to other family members mentioned sporadically by others. Merchants, weavers, shoemakers, and inn-keepers are but a few of the occupations these individuals held. Cross-referencing the depositions themselves across social rank reveals that there was substantial interaction between the nobility and the lower classes. The knight Bernart de Calhavel, for example, mentioned being in the homes of Guilhem Auriol and Bernart Recort on a few occasions, noting the presence of other nobles and the heretics as well.\(^{81}\) Pèire de Garmassia, who could be seen as an example of the mélange of the classes by virtue of his occupation, even noted that a barber by the name of Fuxus lived in the castle, and heretics were often spotted in his vicinity.\(^{82}\) Like the nobles, the men and women of the lower classes can be found on numerous occasions to have housed *perfectae* within their own homes.

\(^{78}\) MS 609, fol. 156v.  
\(^{79}\) MS 609, fols. 156v-157r: “cum fuit guerra in terra illa.”  
\(^{80}\) MS 609, fol. 157r.  
\(^{81}\) MS 609, fol. 152r.  
\(^{82}\) MS 609, fol. 157r. The barber’s name, Fuxus, was not within Brenon’s *Le petit livre aventureux des prénoms occitans au temps du catharisme*, and so has been left in its Latinized form present within MS 609.
Such activity in fact constituted the most common form of interaction between them, at least as can be surmised from the register.

A total of six deponents admitted to housing *perfectae* personally, and an additional seven were denounced by others; curiously, often by nobles. Two men of the Arveu family, Guilhem and his brother Peitavi, were cited by Bernart de Podio for harboring female perfected;\(^83\) a claim Guilhem Arveu failed to mention in his own deposition, if it was indeed true.\(^84\) Bernart de Festa, the son of the deceased man of the same name, reported to have seen Na Turca and her *socia* within an inn of Fanjeaux ten years before his deposition; the inn was owned by Peitavi Arveu.\(^85\) Both of Peitavi’s brothers, Guilhem and Martin, were also present, but again, Guilhem did not mention this.

Guillelma, the wife of Raimon Bonet, was cited by Raimon de Villabus for housing Guillelma Papavam and her *socia*.\(^86\) Unlike Guilhem Arveu, Guillelma Boneta (as she was occasionally referred to without her husband) did admit to allowing these *perfectae* to stay at her home before her first confession was given to the inquisitor William Arnald. She stated that they were often there in fact because the heretic Guillelma Papavam was her own mother; and they would often eat together from the same blessed bread.\(^87\) Her heretical sympathies did not dissipate after she confessed to Brother William, however, as she claimed to have housed two unnamed *perfectae* sometime afterward. The authorities must have been informed because these women were both arrested within her home.\(^88\)

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\(^83\) MS 609, fol. 150v.  
\(^84\) MS 609, fols. 150r-150v.  
\(^85\) MS 609, fol. 152r.  
\(^86\) MS 609, fol. 156r.  
\(^87\) MS 609, fol. 156r.  
\(^88\) MS 609, fol. 165r.
Aimersent, confessed to having harbored the *perfecta* India and her *socia* for four days; but only after the insistence of the steward Guilhem Huc, who reappeared with his brother, Guilhem de Palagac, to adore the *perfectae*.\(^89\)

Out of all the non-noble families of Fanjeaux, the Recort family had the most heretical exposure. Three of its men—Arnaut, Bernart, and Pèire—were frequently sighted *perfecti* in the village.\(^90\) Bernart Recort the younger was deposed by Bernart de Calhavel for housing Na Brunissen; his daughter, Bernarda, and the steward Arnaut d’En Terren were both present as well.\(^91\) Although this exact meeting was not one of the eight instances in which Arnaut claimed to have seen Na Brunissen, in several of his interactions other members of the Recort family were often prominent figures—both heretical and lay. One such example took place in the home of Peirona Recorda, where Na Brunissen was seen speaking to the *perfecti* brothers, Arnaut and Pèire Recort.\(^92\) The deponent Raimon Recort, shoemaker and brother of both Arnaut and Pèire, confessed to having received numerous *perfecti* and *perfectae* before he testified to William Arnald.\(^93\) Although a brief statement, his involvement is unsurprising considering his family’s participation within Catharism.

The first major distinction between the nobles and the lower classes concerning their interaction with the female heretics of Fanjeaux can be seen in the position of the *ductores*. Only two non-nobles confessed to providing such a service. One man, Pons Rigaut, claimed to have done so twice—making a total of three occasions. As stated above, it is interesting that

\(^{89}\) MS 609, fol. 161r.  
\(^{90}\) MS 609, fol. 149v.  
\(^{91}\) MS 609, fol. 153r.  
\(^{92}\) MS 609, fol. 154r.  
\(^{93}\) MS 609, fol. 167r.
unlike the nobility, the *ductores* of the lower classes did not always need to have a companion. In fact, in the majority of the cases, it was a single *ductor*. Pons Rigaut admitted that once around 1242 when he was returning to Fanjeaux he found Alazaïs Fernanda and her *socia* Peirona in a ditch alongside the road.\(^{94}\) From there he led them into the village to the home of a man named Rigaudet. In the very same ditch around a year later he found Na Brunissen with her *socia*, and he led them to Na Montreiala’s inn at Fanjeaux.\(^{95}\) Perhaps because both occasions occurred near the period of inquisitorial intensification after the murder of William Arnald and Stephen de Saint-Thibéry, inconspicuousness was desirable and large parties would attract unwanted attention.

Another deponent to act as a guide for female heretics was Raimon Roca. He stated that Pèire Recort the younger, the weaver Pèire Amielh, and himself led the *perfecta* Raimonda de Cac with her *socia* from an inn within Fanjeaux to a town called Barssa.\(^{96}\) Once they arrived, a man named Guilhem Boier from that village received them. A date was not ascribed to this expedition, unfortunately, and Raimonda de Cac did not reappear in any other deposition from Fanjeaux to cross-reference. Raimon Roca did admit to receiving Na Brunissen in his own home for six days around 1242; and the other verifiable accounts within his testimony all date to the period around 1238.\(^{97}\) He stated that he first believed the heretics in 1231, and that he stopped believing them seven years afterward; if this were true, he would have acted as a *ductor* after

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\(^{94}\) MS 609, fol. 155v.  
\(^{95}\) MS 609, fol. 155v. Na Montreiala’s name did not appear in Brenon’s *Le petit livre aventureux des prénoms occitans au temps du catharisme*, and so has been left as it appeared in the register.  
\(^{96}\) MS 609, fol. 158v.  
\(^{97}\) MS 609, fol. 158v.
rejecting Catharism. Sadly a more precise connection cannot be explained. But perhaps the distance was all that was needed to require three men.

In an even more striking contrast to the actions of the nobility, no non-noble deponents of Fanjeaux confessed to (or were mentioned by others as) bestowing gifts upon the *perfectae*. For those who housed them, it might be suspected that they also fed them; but there is no evidence left to suggest this. Perhaps economic strain on the lower classes did not allow them to freely donate their assets like Pèire de Garmassia had done so frequently. It should be noted, however, that Pèire did state that he sold certain pelts to the *perfectae* in the home of Na Carcassonna around 1229.98 Curiously, none of the other laborers of Fanjeaux mention similar activity in regards to the female perfected (Appendix A.4).

A brief comparison of the roles of the nobles and non-nobles of Fanjeaux is useful here. More members of both social groups were found through other testimonies to have harbored *perfectae* than those who admitted doing so. But of those who did, about 35% of the nobles (seven out of twenty) and 40% of the non-nobles (six out of fifteen) informed the inquisitors of their actions. Such close, relatively equal numbers indicate that both groups willingly provided shelter for the Good Women, even though nobles were much more prone to act as *ductores* and to give them gifts.

The number of times in which a deponent claimed to have adored, or not adored, the *perfectae* reveals a similar discrepancy. Of the seventy-eight individual sightings, in fifty-seven cases (forty-five for the nobles and twelve for non-nobles) the deponent discussed the adoration of the heretics in regards to their own conduct as well as those also present. When

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98 MS 609, fol. 157r.
only considering the deponent’s activity, the statistics are relatively equal for the nobles: 48.9% (twenty-two out of forty-five) affirmed and 51.1% (twenty-three out of forty-five) denied adoring *perfectae*. For the lower classes, the proportion is more skewed: 33.3% (four out of twelve) affirmed while 66.7% (eight out of twelve) denied (Appendix A.5). While several reasons could explain the higher interaction between the Good Women and the nobility (such as economic factors or simple omissions on the part of the witnesses), this evidence suggests that one possible explanation could be due to an unequal perception of the female perfected throughout both levels of Fanjuvéen society.

The final section of this chapter concerns a more direct aspect of the sacerdotal function of the Good Women. As many scholars have already written about the disparity between the recorded evidence of male to female sacramental activity (some of which can be found in the introduction of this thesis), it will not be repeated here. My purpose, though, because of the historiographic importance, will be to indicate the sacerdotal range of Good Women at Fanjeaux, at least as can be understood from the register. Four aspects will be considered: the *consolamenta*, the *aparelhamenta*, the *melioramenta*, and preaching.

Within the depositions from Fanjeaux, thirty-nine *consolamenta* ceremonies were mentioned as being performed, either outright by the witness, or as interpreted from the context.99 The vast majority of these occasions were for the terminally sick and dying. Typically, when heretics were sought for the purposes of the *consolamentum*, the sick individuals were

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99 Six deponents claimed to have been heretics in their youths; and for the purposes of detailing all *consolamenta* performed, they are counted among the thirty-nine total.
received into the ranks of the perfected. Of the thirty-nine cases, twenty-six were men and thirteen were women. Within those thirteen instances in which the ceremony was performed for women, six were conducted by named perfecti—Pèire Border was cited for four, and Raimon Rigaut for two. In the seven other ceremonies, the heretic was unnamed. In none of these thirty-nine events reported within the Fanjuvéen depositions were perfectae described as performing the consolamenta. Additionally, only one perfecta was seen at a ceremony at all.

It is interesting, however, that of these seven cases in which the performing heretic was unnamed, five of the deponents were referring to the ceremonies when they themselves had been received as young girls. N’Ava, Rixen (the wife of Andreas), and Guillelma Lombarda all claimed to have been perfectae for two years or less before leaving. The other two women reported to have been compelled to enter by family members. Arnalda de Freminiac claimed that her uncle, Isarn Bola, encouraged her to become a perfecta, and she remained one for six years before abandoning her vows. As part of her penance, St. Dominic told her that she had to wear her two crosses until she was married. Covinens, the wife of Bernart Mairanel, had been encouraged by her brother, Pèire Columba, when she was ten or twelve years old. Although she returned to her old life after a few years, her brother remained steadfast and his piety led him to become a perfectus himself—even though she had confessed to St. Dominic,

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100 MS 609, fol. 159v; a man named Pèire Fornier was sick and desired a consolamentum; however, the perfecti to administer it, Pèire Border, refused to do so because the infirm failed to give them what his parents had promised—Pèire Fornier cursed the heretics as they left.
101 MS 609, fol. 152r; the former wife of Pèire Faure, a Bona Femina, was mentioned as being present for the consolamentum performed by Pèire Border for the first wife of Bernart Mir, named Raimonda.
102 MS 609, fols. 157r for N’Ava, and 168v for Rixen and Guillelma Lombarda.
103 MS 609, fol. 160v.
104 MS 609, fol. 160v.
she continued to feed her brother. If Anne Brenon’s evidence about the female ability to perform the *consolamentum* is recalled, there is no reason why these five ceremonies could not have been presided over by *perfectae*. There is no evidence, however, to prove this; but it remains a possibility.

The *aparelhamentum* was another Cathar rite, in which once a month the perfected confessed their sins to a member of the Cathar hierarchy—usually a deacon—while laying prostrate. This ritual was performed before lay audiences as well, giving the *credentes* an opportunity to seek prayer through the supervising deacon (or other high-ranking official, like a bishop). On two occasions, deponents mentioned witnessing *perfectae* at such events. Around the year 1238, the nobleman Raimon Belissen the younger, in the home of Joan de Cofinal, saw Pons Oliba and Pèire Border (two *perfecti*) perform the *aparelhamentum* in which, besides the nine laymen and women in the audience, two unnamed *perfectae* were also present. The knight Bernart Teuler mentioned in his deposition that around the year 1236 he witnessed (along with seven other people) an *aparelhamentum* performed by the Cathar bishop, Bertrand Marti, within the home of Guilhem de Calhavel in which several other *perfecti* and *perfectae* were involved. In addition to this public ritual, Bertrand Marti also led the witness and the owner of the house to make amends from a personal conflict they had been embroiled in by placing their hands within his own in a gesture of peace.

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105 MS 609, fol. 161r.
107 MS 609, fol. 153v.
108 MS 609, fol. 169r.
Called the *adoratio* in Catholic sources, the *melioramentum* is another ritual in which “one testifies to the perfect, carrier of the Holy Spirit, of the ‘Good,’ respect, and one asks him the benediction and intercession.”\(^{109}\) Exchanged between the perfected during solemn circumstances, or on the occasion when they would meet for the first time, it was also an obligation for the *credentes* to perform.\(^{110}\) The process involved, generally speaking, genuflecting or prostrating three times, followed by the benediction and appeal for intercession, and finalized by a kiss of peace.\(^{111}\) It should be noted again that there were thirty-one total instances in which the deponents affirmed their adoration of the *perfectae*. Six of these cases, however, bear special attention as the actual appeals of the deponents were recorded. All followed a similar pattern; yet they still have certain variations and are worth mentioning in detail. Bernart de Calhavel said to India and her *socia*, “Bless, Good Women, pray the Lord for us,” although he could not recall if the other *credentes* in the audience actually adored them like he did.\(^ {112}\) Arnaut d’En Terren, and everyone else he was with, adored Na Turca with her *socia* on bended knees, saying, “Bless, Good Ladies, ask God for us.”\(^ {113}\) Aimersent Boneta genuflected by herself toward India and her *socia*, stating, “Bless, Good Ladies, pray God for that sinner.”\(^ {114}\) The knight Bernart Teuler, and everyone within the home


\(^{111}\) Duvernoy, *Le catharisme: la religion des cathares vol.1*, 208-209. Also, Brenon, “The Voice of the Good Women,” 124, for the prohibition against the touching of women and men.

\(^{112}\) MS 609, fol. 152r: “benedicte, bone mulieres, orate dominum pro nobis.”

\(^{113}\) MS 609, fol. 153v: “benedicte, bone domine, rogate Deum pro nobis.”

\(^{114}\) MS 609, fol. 161v: “benedicte, bone femine, rogate Deum pro ista peccatrice.”
of Na Cavaers, said to Bishop Bertrand Marti and two unnamed *perfectae*, “May God bring you good graces.”

Out of the entire register of Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre, Abels and Harrison found eleven occasions in which named *perfectae*, and an unknown twelfth pair, were said to have preached. Considering that they found 318 total female ministers (those who received the *consalmentum* within their lifetime and not at their deathbed), the percentage of those who could be certifiably labeled as active preachers was low—nearly 4%. While it does not shift the statistics in any meaningful way, two unnamed *perfectae* (unnoted by Abels and Harrison) were said to have exercised their pastoral ability in the home of Na Cavaers, the co-seigneur of Fanjeaux. The knight Bernart Teuler, and his father-in-law (another knight named Guilhem Cavaers) were ordered by the Cathar bishop, Bertrand Marti, to act as *ductores* for two women held within the home of Gailhard de Varahola. Once they returned with these women, everyone present (some eight people in all) “heard the preaching of the said heretics.” Clearly, these *perfectae* were fully functioning ministers. Although this occasion should be taken as an outlier, it does show that Good Women could preach even in the presence of the *perfecti*.

The Good Women of Fanjeaux, although less sighted than their brothers, seem to have been fully capable of expressing a variety of sacerdotal functions. They were adored with great

115 MS 609, fol. 159r: “Deus referat vobis bonas gratias.”
118 MS 609, fol. 169r.
119 MS 609, fol. 169r: “audieverunt predicationem dictorum hereticorum.” It should be noted that while the genitive masculine plural form of the noun is used, only three heretics were mentioned (one being Bertrand Marti) and would require the masculine ending as they were of mixed genders.
devotion, and likewise they were spotted confessing their own sins to their superiors in the *aparelhamenta*. While not seen to have performed the *consolamentum*, they were certainly not barred from attending as some women were.\(^{120}\) Like men who willingly chose to live the austere lifestyle of the perfected, they elevated their lives to the spiritual maintenance of themselves and Cathar *credentes* in general. But despite this seeming equivalence, there remains the question of lay perceptions regarding these women, and their ability to intercede.

In the first section of this chapter, on the evidence for lay interaction, there appeared to be no overwhelming difference among the genders concerning perception of the *perfectae*. Based upon the number of deponents who mentioned observing the Good Women within Fanjeaux, it is true (like Abels and Harrison noted for the entire Lauragais) that more women than men testified to having sighted *perfectae* to the inquisitors. Less than a third of the male deponents admitted to such, compared to half of the women. Considering those who did fully confess to interacting with them, however, more men than women (44.4% to 37.5%) were openly involved with several *perfectae* as opposed to mentioning a single minister. While percentages and statistics vary, both genders appear to have had an equal (or moderately equal) perception of the moral and religious probity of the Good Women, at least as can be discerned from the register. The real differences in lay perception lies in the social groups rather than the genders.

Out of the sixty-eight confessions regarding known and unknown *perfectae* made by thirty-five Fanjuvéen deponents, five of those *perfectae* had been sighted by several people. All

\(^{120}\) MS 609, fol. 162r; Lady Mabelia was not permitted to witness the *consolamentum* of her first husband, Huc de Vilhaigle, around the year 1215 because she was pregnant at the time, a state viewed as impure by Cathar doctrine.
of these women—as well as other frequently sighted *perfectae* by single individuals—were members of the local nobility prior to their renunciation of worldly possessions. Their social origins also are reflected by those who interacted with them habitually. These Good Women were housed and protected in travel by members of both the noble and lower classes; however, only the nobility can be proven to have bestowed them with gifts. The personal relationships between many of the higher-ranking nobles and these women are thus reflected in the activities that were performed. Two of the leading knightly families (the Festa and Fanjaus) had *perfectae* from their own ranks—Esclarmonda and Orbria were mothers of two knights of the Festa, and Na Brunissen was the sister of Bec de Fanjaus. It is not a coincidence that they were also some of the most observed female ministers.

The discrepancy between the interactions of the *perfectae* with members of both social levels is quite puzzling considering the extent in which these classes mixed with each other. Frequently, nobles and non-nobles alike were engaged in communal expressions of faith within the same homes, for example. While definitive explanations are elusive, the analysis done here suggests a possible reason can be found in lay perception of the female heretics. The nobility of Fanjeaux accepted the female sacramental activity more readily than the lower classes because of the practical association they had through their common social origins. Perhaps this was simply a product of the recent itinerant existence of the *perfectae* due to the inquisitorial pressure placed upon the Cathar church. Or perhaps it was because of how the Good Women were recruited; however, the social origins of many female ministers still cannot be properly discerned.
This theory can be summarized anecdotally through the testimony of a Fanjuvéen commoner, Guilhem Ribeira. Around the year 1239, Pèire Auter came to Guilhem instructing him to go see two unnamed perfectae who were in the village.\textsuperscript{121} Because he had just recently confessed to William Arnald, however, Guilhem was hesitant and even convinced Pèire to have the prior of the local Dominican house of Prouilhe capture them.\textsuperscript{122} So enraged by this perceived slight, the nobleman, Aimeric de Alzona (son of a perfecta named N’Ainha), threatened to kill the witness during the night by decapitation.\textsuperscript{123} While this testimony related the violent nature of Aimeric de Alzona—and the timidity of the witness himself—it also indicated a difference in attitude toward the Good Women by men of either social class. Guilhem Ribeira, frightened by his recent acquaintance with the inquisitor William Arnald, sought to have the heretical women arrested. Aimeric de Alzona, angered by this deception, sought revenge for these unrelated perfectae (his mother had been specifically mentioned, and thus could not have been one of the unnamed heretics). Clearly, as a noble, he was willing to protect the livelihood of the Cathar Church in general, but especially the Good Women of Fanjeaux.

\textsuperscript{121} MS 609, fol. 167v.
\textsuperscript{122} This was the first Dominican priory ever established.
\textsuperscript{123} MS 609, fol. 167v.
CHAPTER II

THE PREACHING OF THE *PERFECTAE* IN THE THIRTEENTH-CENTURY LAURAGAIS

The female perfects equally wore a particular outfit, types of black coats. They were not required to travel like men; sometimes they lived alone in cabins, sometimes several between them lived together in communal houses, occupying themselves with manual work, or the education of young girls, or also the care of the sick and poor. They had the power to administer the *consolamentum* in extreme cases; but there is not a single example that they also had the right to preach to the people; the Cathars, different under this respect than the old Waldensians, left women well more within their natural sphere.¹²⁴

Charles Schmidt, the French protestant historian from the University of Strasbourg (quoted above), wrote in the mid-nineteenth century that the Good Women of Languedoc were never recorded as preaching. When writing his *Histoire et doctrine de la secte des catha"res ou albigeois* he was the first historian to use trial records from inquisitorial tribunals as primary sources in constructing his narrative about the famed Albigensian heresy—seen as a precursor, in those days, to the eventual Protestant Reformation.¹²⁵ In such a novel pursuit, he had to choose what to emphasize, but he missed (or undervalued) crucial information. As seen in the analysis of the inquisitorial records from Fanjeaux (chapter one), the *perfectae* certainly did preach to the faithful.

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¹²⁴ Charles Schmidt, *Histoire et doctrine de la secte des catha"res ou albigeois*, vol. 2 (Paris and Geneva: Libraire de J. Cherbuliez, 1848-49), 95: “Les femmes parfaits portaient également un vêtement particulier, des espèces de manteaux de couleur noire. Elles n’étaient pas tenues de voyager comme les hommes; tantôt elles habitaient seules dans des cabanes, tantôt plusieurs d’entre elles vivaient ensemble dans des maisons communes, s’occupant de travaux manuels, ou de l’éducation de jeunes filles, ou bien aussi du soin des maladies et des pauvres. Elles avaient le pouvoir d’administrer le consolamentum en des cas extremes; mais il n’y a pas un seul exemple qu’elles aient aussi eu le droit de prêcher au peuple; les Cathares, différents sous ce rapport des anciens Vaudois, laissaient bien plus les femmes dans leur sphère naturelle.”

Schmidt’s erroneous view was not unchallenged for long. Writing his “L’Église et la société cathares” in 1907, Charles Molinier stated that, “From texts, in large enough number, they tell us the [female] perfects were engaged in preaching, that is to say exhorting the faithful of the sect and exercising before them the ministry of speech.”\textsuperscript{126} He claimed, further on, that the Good Women were also privy to many other Cathar rites and received just as many believers as supplicants compared to Good Men. As evidenced from the first chapter, this “même régularité” that Molinier claimed the Good Women had in the adoration of their believers was not as regular across all social levels of the Lauragais.

These two historians, although their conclusions were wrong in certain respects, are remarkable on several points. Together with a few other late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century French medievalists, such as Célestin Douais or Jean Guiraud, they pioneered the historical use of inquisitorial registers, sources that are now heavily used by scholars. Additionally, the discourse between these two men, highlighted in the above quotations, indicates the beginning of the historical debate about the participation of women in Catharism. Arguably the most influential and seminal piece of modern scholarship on this debate is the article “The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism,” by Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison, discussed in the introduction. Among many facets of their argument, which included the role of both lay and clerical women, one subject that they touched upon in deconstructing the myth of Molinier’s “même régularité” was the pastoral output of the \textit{perfectae}.\textsuperscript{127}


Within MS 609 Abels and Harrison found ten named women, and two unidentified heretical pairs, recorded as either preaching or admonishing their small crowds of credentes. I have found three more occasions which can be added to this list: one additional group of unidentified women at Fanjeaux (mentioned in the previous chapter) and two more occurrences of named women. One of these perfectae was already cited as preaching in “The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism,” and a second new instance has been found. The third event was mentioned by a deponent who Abels and Harrison had already used for one of their twelve women; they seemingly missed, however, the second half of her testimony where she reported to have heard another female sermon. This chapter will largely revolve around such events of female preaching.

The following narrative will be split into three sections. First, to set the scene for the preaching of the perfectae, the lives of two famous women will be discussed: Esclarmonde de Foix, the sister of Count Raimon-Roger of Foix during the Albigensian Crusade, and Arnaude de Lamothe, the converted perfecta who had greatly intrigued the inquisitors who had questioned her. Extraordinary for the detail known about them (although not to suggest their lives were typical for all perfectae), the stories of these two women, often researched by others, were chosen to give an idea of what life was like for the fourteen pairs of obscure women who make up the bulk of the chapter below. In each case their pastoral activities will be analyzed

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128 The names of Esclarmonde de Foix and Arnaude de Lamothe, as famous as they are in the secondary literature, will remain in their French spellings here so as not to confuse readers. The names of more obscure individuals discussed below, however, will be modified from the Latin to the contemporary Occitan forms indicated within Anne Brenon’s Le petit livre aventureux des prénoms occitans au temps du catharisme (Paris: Éditions Loubatières, 1992).

129 Anne Brenon, Les Femmes Cathares (Paris: Éditions Perrin, 1994), 15-37. According to Brenon, Arnaude de Lamothe was chosen, among many possible women (such as Esclarmonde de Foix), as a leitmotif to better give a sense of the existence of a perfecta during the early thirteenth century because, “elle est à la fois la femme
directly from the primary sources in which they appear so as to allow for the least possible distortion of information.

Following this analysis, the last two sections, although uneven in length, will both adopt a similar approach. After splitting the fifteen cases of female preaching documented within MS 609 into either known or unknown women (not accounting for the often unnamed sociae), I will employ prosopographical analyses. First, the event itself will be described. Then, I will explain the interactions of the audience members to reconstruct their associations. Finally, I will explore possible connections between the audience and the perfectae, suggesting reasons for the event itself, before moving on to the next case. The cases will be dealt with in sequential order as they appear within the manuscript, rather than ordering them chronologically or geographically. It is hoped that this close reading will reveal the full context of their preaching, and address lacunae in modern scholarship.

Esclarmonde de Foix

Born within the castle of Foix in 1155, Esclarmonde was the second child of Roger-Bernart, Count of Foix, and Cecilia Trencavel (descendant of Raimon Trencavel, Viscount of Béziers). Her elder brother, Raimon-Roger, and his son, Roger-Bernart II, were heavily involved with the counts of Toulouse during, and after, the crusade. Steeped in a heavily Cathar upbringing, she herself had been married to the staunchly Catholic Jordan III de l’Isle-Jourdain,

cathare la mieux connue et la plus ordinaire,” (p. 33). Arnaude’s story was recorded in two registers: before Friar Ferrer in August 1244 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Doat XXIII, fols. 1r-49v), and inquisitors Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre ten months later in June 1245 (Toulouse, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 609, fols. 201v-203v). The vast amount of detail, compared to other depositions, was what gave Brenon enough material to reconstruct much of Arnaude’s twenty-year tenure as a perfecta.

Viscount of Gimoez, in 1175 for political solidarity, as was so typical among the nobility of Languedoc.\textsuperscript{131} From this union Esclarmonde and Jordan had six children: Escarone, Obisca, Bernart, Jordan, Oth, and Félipa; but in 1204, Jordan met a violent end at the hands of his enemies.\textsuperscript{132} After the death of her husband, Esclarmonde served as a regent for her thirteen-year-old nephew (when her brother had been imprisoned by the Count of Urgell), surrounding herself with Cathar dignitaries.\textsuperscript{133} It was during her time reigning at Foix that she, together with two local co-seigneurs, Raimon de Perelhe and Raimon de Blasco, refortified the fortress atop Montségur—the very same sanctuary that played such an integral part for the Cathars of Languedoc during the early inquisition.\textsuperscript{134} Once her brother returned to Foix in 1206, Esclarmonde was elevated to the ranks of the Good Christians by the Cathar deacon (and later bishop), Guilhabert de Castres, in a solemn ceremony at the castle of Fanjeaux alongside three other women: Auda de Fanjaus, Fays de Durfort, and Raimonda Miro.\textsuperscript{135} In an expression of familial unity, her brother was in attendance.

Her status as a noble woman, one who not only had ties to some of the highest ranking local lords but also actively governed herself, imbued a strong sense of authority. In her life as a \textit{perfecta}, she had moved to Pamiers, where she acted as the head of the local house of \textit{perfectae}—akin to a prioress—that was bequeathed to her by her own brother, Raimon-Roger.\textsuperscript{136} According to Guillaume de Tudèle’s \textit{La Chanson de la Croisade Albigoise}, it was during the first decade of the thirteenth century, just before the beginning of the crusade, that

\begin{footnotes}
\item[131] Coincy-Saint Palais, \textit{Esclarmonde de Foix}, 56.
\item[132] Coincy-Saint Palais, \textit{Esclarmonde de Foix}, 58 and 62.
\item[133] Coincy-Saint Palais, \textit{Esclarmonde de Foix}, 66.
\item[134] Coincy-Saint Palais, \textit{Esclarmonde de Foix}, 67.
\item[135] Coincy-Saint Palais, \textit{Esclarmonde de Foix}, 69.
\item[136] Coincy-Saint Palais, \textit{Esclarmonde de Foix}, 70.
\end{footnotes}
the people of Languedoc were said not to have “made more of a case of sermons than a rotten apple,” and this, just like the war itself, was the cause of much death and misery.\textsuperscript{137} Although not directly held responsible for the Languedocian aversion to Orthodoxy, Guillaume de Tudèle claimed that Esclarmonde “converted a lot of people to her false beliefs,” during her time in Pamiers.\textsuperscript{138} Was this due to her preaching? In Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay’s \textit{Hystoria Albigensis}, he claimed that the vile Count of Foix housed within the castle of Pamiers many heretics, including his wife and two sisters. Of these unnamed sisters he said specifically that, “they preached heresy privately and they divided the people from the faith of Rome.”\textsuperscript{139} While not definitive, it seems likely that she might have encouraged people, those from Pamiers at the very least, to uphold the Cathar faith by preaching. Nevertheless, in a more concrete case, she did play a significant role in a public debate where her vocal presence was keenly felt.

Convening in the city of Pamiers in April 1206, three groups assembled along the Ariège for the seventh, and penultimate, contradictory conference: Catholics, Cathars, and Waldensians came to openly debate their beliefs.\textsuperscript{140} For an entire month representatives from all three groups, each given a full day to argue their positions, debated against one another.\textsuperscript{141} For the Catholics, local prelates from the canons of Saint-Antonin in Pamiers were accompanied by such influential clergymen as Bishop Foulques of Toulouse and Diego de Osma, the

\textsuperscript{140} Coincy-Saint Palais, \textit{Esclarmonde de Foix}, 72. The last conference before the onset of the crusade was held at the castle of Montréal in the Lauragais a year later in 1207.
\textsuperscript{141} Coincy-Saint Palais, \textit{Esclarmonde de Foix}, 72.
companion of Saint Dominic. The Waldensians were represented by Durand de Huesca, famous for his later conversion. The Cathars had their own clergymen, such as Guilhabert de Castres, along with Esclarmonde herself.\textsuperscript{142} Guillaume de Puylaurens recorded in his \textit{Chronica} that Brother Étienne de la Miséricorde said to her after she openly protected the heretics, “Go, madam, to spin your distaff. It is not appropriate for you to speak in a debate of this kind.”\textsuperscript{143} Not simply offended by her presence, Brother Étienne’s ire was in response to her speaking in defense of her faith. Certainly, Esclarmonde exercised her right to preach that was given to her the day she became a \textit{perfecta}; moreover, she was effective enough not only to convert locals but to debate with some of the most influential Catholic clergymen in Languedoc.

Arnaude de Lamothe

While Esclarmonde’s case bestows an understanding of the situations in which \textit{perfectae} could preach (at least those of such exalted birth and influence), it is through the story of another woman—as recorded by inquisitors—that the experiences of more common Good Women become apparent. In the year 1243, within a wood near the village of Saint-Foix, in the northwest corner of the Lauragais, Arnaude de Lamothe was captured, along with three of her \textit{sociae}, by agents of the inquisitors.\textsuperscript{144} Threatened with fire, Arnaude renounced her vows as a \textit{perfecta} and converted to Catholicism months before she gave her first deposition to


\textsuperscript{144} Toulouse, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 609, fol. 201v.
Friar Ferrer in August 1244. She had a long, and occasionally turbulent, history with Catharism. Ultimately, however, it was a history that ended in disavowal and apostasy before the very authorities she had been hiding from for her entire adult life.

In her youth, around the age of seven or eight (in 1207 or 1208), she and her sister, Peirona (herself ten years old), first interacted with heretics when their mother, Austorga de Lamothe, allowed them to adore two visiting *perfectae* in their fortified village of Montauban once they had finished preaching. It was there that they learned how to genuflect before the heretics, asking for their benediction and intercession. Around that same time, their mother left them in the care of Raimon Méric and Bernart de Lamothe (the cousin of Austorga’s husband), both heretics. Subsequently, within Raimon’s home in Villedur, Arnaude and Peirona were baptized by the imposition of hands in the *consolamentum* ceremony. Their quiet, austere lives were interrupted soon after, however, when Simon de Montfort and his knights stormed the country under the sign of the cross. As cities fell, and the perfected were burned, Arnaude and Peirona fled from village to village, always furtively and in the company of male *ductores*. Between the siege of Lavaur in 1211, where 400 Good Christians were burned alive and eighty knights were hanged, and the Battle of Muret in 1213, where Simon de Montfort defeated the army of the Southern lords resulting in the death of Peter II of Aragon and the capture of the city of Toulouse, Arnaude and Peirona abandoned their vows for fear of persecution.

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147 Doat 23, fols. 3v-5v.
149 Doat 23, fols. 6v-7r. Brenon, *Les femmes cathares*, 18, took some poetic license in claiming it was Austorga, their mother, who, fearing for her daughters’ lives, sought for them to return to her in Montauban. However, in Doat 23, fols. 6v-7r no such claim was described; instead, it would appear to have been Arnaude and Peirona’s own decision to leave the sect of the perfected.
Their fear was short lived, however, as only a few years later reveal they were still practicing Cathars. When their mother was sick, the sisters accompanied her to Linars, north of their home in Montauban. They waited there with the local perfectae where they and their relative, Bernart (and his socius), had previously arranged. These Good Women of Linars were said to have been living “under the habit of nuns,” complete with their own prioress. After a few weeks’ time, Raimon de Manso and another perfecti, sent by Bernart de Lamothe, escorted the three women to the home of Pèire Mello in Lavaur where Bernart and his socius hereticated them.

Abels and Harrison cited this testimony in constructing two of their arguments, one of which built off of the other. They suggested that perfectae were more akin to female Catholic religious than to preachers, using Arnaude’s comments about the “nuns” of Linars and their prioress. In addition, they drew on this same event to argue that men, especially those within the hierarchy, were seemingly preferred to women in performing pastoral functions—noting that the women were consoled by Bernart and not by the perfectae. The whole context was not engaged with, however, considering that volumes twenty-three through thirty of the Collection Doat are seventeenth-century copies of thirteenth-century originals, which

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150 Doat 23, fol. 7v.
151 Doat 23, fol. 7v: “sub habitu monialium.”
152 Doat 23, fol. 7v.
153 This idea that the perfectae were analogous to Catholic nuns was first posited by Gottfried Koch in his Frauenfrage und Ketzerform in Mittelalter: die Frauenbewegung im Rahmen des Katharismus und des Waldensertums und ihre sozialen Wurzeln (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), and was further supported by Abels and Harrison. Their comparisons diverge, however, on the topic of feminine acceptance of the faith. While Koch contended the perfectae were like Catholic religious in that they allowed women spiritual expression, he believed women could reach a higher status in Catharism due to the ordination of the consolamentum. Abels and Harrison, however, claimed Good Women rarely performed their pastoral duties, and thus were far more similar to nuns than Koch posited.
themselves were notarial translations from the vernacular to bureaucratic Latin, and are not without their own impurities.\textsuperscript{155} Left unmentioned was the fact that the three women pretended to want to receive the habit of the nuns, thus suggesting that the \textit{perfectae} were feigning a Catholic life; the date, around 1224, would explain a desire for secrecy.\textsuperscript{156} Furthermore, more recent studies, like that of Yvette Paiement DeBergue, have even discredited this notion of a similarity by highlighting the ways in which Cathar Good Women and Catholic nuns differed in their social functions.\textsuperscript{157}

Abels and Harrison claimed, additionally, that the three women decided to visit the \textit{perfectae} of Linars out of their own volition, ignoring the fact that they were in an earlier correspondence with Bernart and his \textit{socius}, during which they all agreed on the course of action. When they were with the heretical women, a visiting \textit{perfectus}, Guiraut Abit, and his \textit{socius} came to Linars where they performed the \textit{aparelhamentum}.\textsuperscript{158} In considering the distance between Montauban and Linars (nearly 100 kilometers to the north), perhaps it was Bernart’s wish that the women attend the ceremony, far from the crusaders, to confess their sins before being consoled in Lavaur—the same village that had been violently besieged a dozen years before. Additionally, while the appeal of Bernart’s rank as a Cathar deacon is

\textsuperscript{155} Mark Gregory Pegg, \textit{The Corruption of Angels: The Great Inquisition of 1245-1246} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 20. Pegg noted that, although their work was invaluable for the reproductions of otherwise missing materials, the copyists of Jean de Doat respelled the thirteenth-century Latin into the \textit{style classique}, and the marginalia of the original registers was left uncopied.

\textsuperscript{156} Doat 23, fol. 7v: “ipsa testis et Peironna soror ipsius testis et Austorgua mater earum finxerunt se quod volebant recipere habitum monialium.”

\textsuperscript{157} Yvette Paiement DeBergue, “Good Women as Nuns? A Re-Investigation of the Sources,” \textit{Heresis} 42-43 2005: 55-76. Paiement DeBergue analyzed the houses in which Good Women were mentioned as residing in by inquisitorial deponents (claiming there to be three different varieties) and found them to be more inclusive of the communities in which they stood compared to convents—suggesting that Good Women and nuns served different purposes for their communities.

\textsuperscript{158} Doat 23, fol. 7v.
undeniable, and that he did console the women rather than the “priess,” the fact that he was related to the them—let alone his role in Arnaude and Peirona’s first baptism—should not be overlooked.

Arnaude continued her life as a perfecta over the next twenty years, interacting frequently with families within and without the Lauragais. Sometimes she stayed in the homes of credentes, other times her and her sociae lived secluded within forests—being provided for by the faithful.159 No matter where she stayed, it was never permanently. Occasionally, for long periods over several years, she stayed in one place, like within the home of her parents in Montauban; although mostly it was never more than a few days or weeks, perhaps a couple of months.160 The life of the perfected, male and female, during this period was one of constant movement—all done in an effort to serve the community in a period of ever-growing difficulty. Yet, as Abels and Harrison rightly pointed out, throughout her many years as a perfecta she only confessed to having preached herself once to Friar Ferrer.161

Over a period of three weeks, in the home of Pons Huc at Massac near Lavaur, Arnaude reported to have “preached many times,” without the help of her sociae.162 She claimed that five people came to hear her sermons: Pons Huc, his wife Raimonda, his brother Ermengaudz Huc and his wife (whose name she did not know), and their brother Pèire Arnaut—all belonging to the same family.163 It should be noted that Guilhem Alia, one of the two men who led Arnaude, Peirona, and their mother to Massac, was the brother of Florensa, the wife of Pèire

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159 MS 609, fol. 201v.
160 MS 609, fol. 203r.
162 Doat 23, fol. 10r: “et ibi ipsa testis pluries predicavit.”
163 Doat 23, fols. 10r-10v.
Mello, who was the owner of the home in Lavaur where the three women had been consoled. It was in that home, which was often frequented by many heretics, that Arnaude spent the first year of her new life as a perfecta. Considering the year in which Arnaude claimed to have been preaching, around 1224 or 1225, her three week visit to Massac appears to have been one of, if not her first, assignment to serve the faithful. Not only did she preach, but she also blessed the bread from which her audience ate, consuming it with them, and often performed the melioramentum with her sociae. If this is true, and it was her first assignment as a leading perfecta, it is quite telling that she preached at all—perhaps signifying that women needed to be as accustomed to constructing sermons as men. Furthermore, it is interesting that she never claimed to have done so again throughout the rest of her deposition to Friar Ferrer, as well as to Bernard de Caux when she was recalled to Toulouse ten months later in June, 1245 to add to her previous testimony. Did she truly never preach again, or could she have omitted later events to prevent being more severely punished?

Lying within official statements was probably common, as testified by the numerous occasions within MS 609 of entire communities swearing oaths of secrecy purposefully to mislead the inquisitors. Interestingly, Arnaude recalled events throughout her tenure in great detail, remembering as many as twenty-nine individuals who had visited her at Aurin when she

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164 Doat 23, fols. 8v-9v.
165 Doat 23, fol. 10r.
166 Walter L. Wakefield, “Heretics and Inquisitors: The Case of Auriac and Cambiac,” in Journal of Medieval History 12, 3 (1986), 233, notes that in the villages of Auriac and Cambiac, aside from orchestrating an elaborate plot to rescue the captured deacon Raimon Fort, the populous of both towns had agreed to purposefully lie to the inquisitors when they were summoned to Toulouse in 1246. Also, see MS 609, fol. 30v, in the deposition of Guilhem Gozencs where another village-wide plot for secrecy was upheld at Saint-Martin-de-Lalande.
was there for a few days in 1241 for example. But when speaking about members of her own family her statements became unusually vague. In her deposition to Bernard de Caux given on June 1, 1245, she related thirty-six occasions (occurring on one day or over several) in which she mentioned the adoration of her credentes. In five of those statements she differentiated between those who did and those who did not adore her within the same group; but only in two did she claim that no one had done so at all. With such detail, it is interesting that in two of the five cases in which she claimed certain members of the faithful did not adore her or her sociæ, these were her own family members—the same family that, by her own testimonies, were devoutly Cathar. Furthermore, considering that when she admitted to preaching Arnaude claimed to have done so by herself despite the fact that her mother and sister had also been led to Massac with her. All of this suggests a tendency to protect her family in her testimonies. While there is no absolute proof that she had preached more than those three weeks in 1224 or 1225, it seems probable that she withheld the full truth from the authorities.

The stories of Esclarmonde de Foix and Arnaude de Lamothe, some of the most well-known perfectæ, give an impression of what life was like for heretical women both before and during the initial days of Catholic persecution. The women of Esclarmonde’s generation were far more sedentary than those of Arnaude’s, yet even before the crusade, when perfectæ were cloistered in their communities, they still had the occasion to participate actively in their faith—as Esclarmonde herself reportedly did. As the inquisitorial activity caused consternation among

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167 MS 609, fol. 202r; she claimed that all but four had adored her and her sociæ, and that she could not remember if those four had adored them or not.
168 MS 609, fol. 203r; several of her brothers, as well as her elder sister Marauda and her son Toset, were all specifically said not to have adored her.
the perfected of Languedoc, however, the *perfectae* were forced to move around and perhaps into an ever more active role. The names of eleven women who were active in the Lauragais between 1205 and 1242, recorded within the partially extent register of Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre, have left traces of evidence about this turbulent period. When taken separately, the cases of Guillelma de Campolongo, Na Bruna, Fabrissa, Raimonda Borda, Tholsana, Na Belenguèira de Seguervilla, Blancha, Brunissen, Rixen, Guillelma de Deime, Guillelma Sichard, and Arnalda appear fleeting, simply passing names and events in a horde of activity dominated by those of their brothers (Appendix B.1). But when taken together, patterns emerge that tell more than their deponents ever did.

What follows is a series of case studies into the activity of all of these women. In each, the exact events in which they had preached will be delineated. Prosopographical analyses into the audience members said to have heard the Good Women will be utilized in consultation with cross-referencing depositions of relatives and friends in order to understand the full communal and familial context in which the preaching took place. Each vignette will begin similarly. Commencing with a focus on the individual witness of the event, the discussion will then broaden to encompass all those involved, not least the Good Women themselves.

Guillelma de Campolongo

On June 11, 1245, Na Ermessen, the wife of Bernart Mir Arezat of Saint-Martin-de-Lalande, appeared before Bernard de Caux and three other clerical witnesses at the Abbey Church of Saint-Sernin to depose all that she knew concerning heresy and those connected to it, both dead and alive. Within her deposition, she claimed to have been involved with three
separate *perfectæ*—including her own aunt, Alazaïs, with whom she had stayed for seven days at her mother’s home in Fontès around eighteen years before.\(^{169}\) Her testimony is rather unusual when compared to the thousands of others in MS 609, as it reported that *perfectæ* had been preaching. For from her one appearance before Bernard de Caux evidence of two of the fourteen female preachers has survived.

The first woman mentioned by Na Ermessen was the *perfecta* Guillelma de Campolongo. Around the year 1233 in the village of Saint-Martin-de-Lalande, she reported witnessing Guillelma and her *socia* preaching within the home of Na Melia, the wife of Pèire Joan.\(^{170}\) Aside from Na Ermessen herself, the audience was comprised of two other women: the *domina domus* Na Melia, and another noblewoman from the village, Na Cerdana. Everyone who was present had adored the *perfectæ* as well. As is typical for many testimonies, the witness did not provide any further information about the specifics of the event.

Na Melia and Na Ermessen do not appear to have had a strong connection, considering that the host for the intimate sermon was only mentioned by the witness a single time. But from Na Melia’s deposition, a further interaction unstated by Na Ermessen can be found in which all three women were once again within her home where they (Na Melia excluded) adored a Good Woman by the name of Guillelma Fabrissa.\(^{171}\) Although not often seen together, the women interacted with some of the same people. Isarn de Gibel and his wife, Na Andreva, often hosted both Na Ermessen and Na Cerdana when Good Men passed through Saint-

\(^{169}\) MS 609, fol. 36r.  
\(^{170}\) MS 609, fol. 35v.  
\(^{171}\) MS 609, fol. 36r.
The same man also beseeched Na Melia, for the love of God and of himself, to nourish four visiting women in her own home around 1239. She claimed to have not known that they were heretics, only discovering their identities when she heard they had later been captured. Based on the deposition of Fabrissa Porquera, who claimed that Na Andreva had introduced Guillelma de Campolongo and her socia into her home, Isarn and his wife may be the reason why the perfecta had been spotted in Na Melia’s home at all. But for the other two women, another explanation seems more likely as to why they were present.

Like Na Ermessen, Na Cerdana was married to a man of the Mir family, a knight only referred to as En Mir de la Landa—his family name and place of origin. The two women were frequently involved with one another. Na Ermessen cited her nine times within her testimony; and, conversely, Na Cerdana mentioned her friend on five occasions within her own. The perfecta Guillelma de Campolongo, although formerly the wife of a man named Raimon Faure, was cited as being the mother of a knight named Pons Mir de Campolongo. In her deposition, Na Cerdana made several references to Pons, and in each occurrence she maintained that Na Ermessen was there as well.

Additionally, Guillelma de Campolongo’s presence was noted by a few people at an event within the home of a man named Guilhem de Saint-Nazarius near Saint-Martin. Na Ermessen described a meeting within that house in which several members of the Mir family were present, and some confusion arose about a bowl of chestnuts that she had bequeathed to

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172 MS 609, fol. 35v.
173 MS 609, fol. 36r.
174 MS 609, fol. 40v.
175 See MS 609, fol. 33v and fol. 35v, where Saurimonda, the wife of Bernart Pèire, and Na Ermessen herself claim Guillelma to be Pons’ mother.
the heretic Bertrand Marti. Curiously, she did not assert that Guillelma de Campolongo was there; yet, both Saurimonda, the wife of Bernart Pèire, and Na Cerdana claimed as much. Admittedly, the witnesses appear to have been confused about the minutia of the event—such as the date—not to mention those within the audience, as Na Cerdana stated that upwards of thirty people were in attendance. But the fact remains that both Na Ermessen and Na Cerdana were tied by marriage to the family of Guillelma de Campolongo’s son—an undeniable connection that could explain why Guillelma had preached to them. Raimon Faure, Guillelma’s former husband, was mentioned by Na Ermessen as being at the chestnut affair around the year 1230. Guillelma was mentioned as preaching three years later, suggesting that she could not have been a *perfecta* for more than three years, allowing for the death of her husband and the start of her new religious life. Perhaps like Arnaude de Lamothe, this had been soon after Guillelma’s training. Na Cerdana described an event which transpired at the home of Na Melia around the same time involving two *perfectae*; not only, however, did she not mention to have heard their preaching, she claimed to have not known who they were. While this testimony cannot be definitely said to be the same event mentioned by Na Ermessen, one must wonder about the veracity of stories provided by relatives of the culpable party.

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176 MS 609, fol. 35v; she had told Guilhem de Canast to give Bertrand Marti the chestnuts for her, but he had also been told by Raimon Mir, Na Ermessen’s grandson, to tell the *perfecti* that they were actually from Bernart Mir Arrezat, Na Ermessen’s husband, because he was not paying enough attention. Bernart himself mentioned the event (MS 609, fols. 30r-30v) and claimed to have been completely unaware of the situation.

177 See MS 609, fol. 33v for Saurimonda’s recollection of the event, and MS 609, fols. 186v-187r for Na Cerdana’s.

178 MS 609, fol. 187r.
Na Bruna

The second *perfecta* mentioned by Na Ermessen to have preached was a woman named Na Bruna around the year after the case of Guillelma de Campolongo (roughly 1234). Within the home of Guilhem de Insula in the fortified village of Laurac, Na Ermessen witnessed yet another event involving the oft-cited Cathar bishop, Bertrand Marti. With three of his *socii*, Bertrand met within Guilhem’s home with at least three other Good Women, namely Na Bruna and her *sociae*. According to Na Ermessen, the crowd of ten other people heard their preaching.\(^{179}\) Because four *perfecti* were mentioned in addition to the several *perfectae*, the fact that the masculine plural genitive personal pronoun was used regarding their preaching cannot be definitively said, as will be argued in certain cases below, to have also been including the Good Women. Yet as Abels and Harrison included this within their twelve documented cases, it will continue to be treated as such here. This dilemma notwithstanding, the audience cited within Guilhem de Insula’s home was the largest stated to have heard the preaching of the Good Women in MS 609, all of whom were said to have adored the heretics as well.

Na Bruna, the leading *perfecta*, was the sister of not only a member of the audience but the host himself, Guilhem de Insula.\(^{180}\) The audience was comprised of five women, including the witness, and six other men; while not all related to one another, they all were of the nobility of either Saint-Martin-de-Lalande or Laurac. The noblewomen Na Cerdana; Azalaïs, the wife of Pons Mir; and Miracla, the wife of Guilhem de Insula, were led there by another woman of the audience, Na Cecilia, the wife of Guilhem d’Aniort, as they were all supposedly

\(^{179}\) MS 609, fol. 35v: “omnes et ipsa testis audieverunt predicationem eorum et adoraverunt eos.”

\(^{180}\) MS 609, fol. 35v.
associated with her.\textsuperscript{181} Like Na Cerdana, the fact that Azalaïs was married to a man of the Mir family, a man who the witness was known to have interacted with, would suggest that Na Ermessen had a relationship of some kind with her as well. This could also suggest that perhaps the witness herself was among the group of women belonging to Na Cecilia’s retinue—although she did not claim to be. Many of the women nevertheless had common social connections, even if they cannot be directly linked to one another as family members.

The six men, all knights (although less documented), were also seen with one another by various other villagers of both Saint-Martin and Laurac—a few even had connections with men of the Mir family as well. While not all six had strong connections to each other, Guilhem de Insula, the host and brother of Na Bruna, seems to have acted as the mutual friend among the five others. Bernart de Saint-Martin had been present for the consolamentum of Bernart Mir, Pons Mir’s father, around 1228; and a man named Pèire de Camis had seen him with Guilhem de Insula and Guilhem de Balaguerius, another knight within the audience, at Montségur when he had been imprisoned there around the year 1241.\textsuperscript{182} Sicart de Belfort, another member of the audience, was not a man frequently cited by other deponents—but he and his wife Raimonda were often mentioned at the same events as Guilhem de Insula or those of his wife.\textsuperscript{183} The two other men, Géraut de Saint-Salvator and Raimon Isarn, both from Laurac, were not mentioned in connection to the other audience members besides their interaction at

\textsuperscript{181} MS 609, fol. 35v.
\textsuperscript{182} MS 609, fols. 38v and 39v. Pèire de Camis claimed that Bernart de Saint-Martin, upon recognizing him, had been the main cause of his imprisonment—Guilhem de Insula, Guilhem de Balaguerius, and Bernart were all spotted alongside the Lord of Montségur himself.
\textsuperscript{183} MS 609, fols. 72r and 72v. Guilhem de Calhavel reported that Guilhem de Insula’s wife and Sicart de Belfort with his wife were at his home, along with over a dozen other nobles from Laurac, when the perfecti Guilhem Vidal was visiting (72r); and Raimon Stannatier mentioned their wives being together within Bernart d’Auriac’s home as well (72v).
Guilhem de Insula’s home. Peitavina, Raimon’s wife, however, mentioned that Géraut was at her home when the *perfecti* Raimon Bernart was visiting around 1230; and that they and her husband adored him and his *socii*.\footnote{MS 609, fol. 191r.}

The event which transpired at Guilhem de Insula’s home in 1234 was a rather large gathering as far as Cathar sermons are concerned, although by no means the largest. As such, it is difficult to hypothesize about a possible reason for each individual’s presence there. Nevertheless, by following the interpersonal relationships, explanations suggest themselves. Undoubtedly, the minor nobility of Saint-Martin-de-Lalande in itself would have had complex associations among each other that were not recorded within the registers. Yet, when nobles from different villages also appear to have been associated with the same people, stronger claims can be made. Bernart de Saint-Martin’s connection to the widespread Mir family of Saint-Martin-de-Lalande was unmistakable. So, it is not surprising that he was seen around the wives of some of his fellow knights. Connection to the Mir family, although quite prevalent for these two first cases of female preaching, was not, however, the only common factor. Guilhem de Insula himself stands as the most likely source for connecting all of the audience members. Not only was his wife Miracla among the group of women in Na Cecilia’s retinue, all of the men in attendance were tied to him by various degrees, no matter how tenuous. Thus, it appears that every guest of Guilhem de Insula’s was present by virtue of their relationship with the host. The Cathar bishop, Bertrand Marti, likely could have attracted many of them to attend. Considering their ties to Guilhem, the appearance of Na Bruna, his sister, should also be reflected on.
Fabrissa

Around 1240, again within the village of Saint-Martin-de-Lalande, another perfecta, by the name of Fabrissa, was said to have preached. The witness, Raimonda Jocglar, the daughter of Raimon Jocglar, had an interesting past with Catharism herself. By her own admission (and corroborated by others), her father Raimon had expelled her from his home around the year 1242. According to Raimonda, she had been cast from her home because her father had accused her of being a prostitute. Moreover, her father admitted that in a fit of anger, after discovering that she had allowed Guillelma de Campolongo to stay within his house, he cast out his daughter naked, beating her as she fled. Based upon the testimonies of several others, this had not been the first time the perfecta had been sighted within his home either—Raimonda’s presence was often noted as well. The interaction had so upset Raimon that he claimed to have never spoken to his daughter again after hearing that she had become a heretic. His statement appears all the more credible considering the fact that Raimonda, by her own admission, had in truth never been consoled despite agreeing to spend 120 days being trained in the customs of the heretics. Her father was completely unaware. Despite his

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185 MS 609, fol. 40v.
186 MS 609, fol. 40v.
187 MS 609, fol. 32v: “Et tunc ipse testis, nimia ira premotus, verberavit filiam suam et ejescit eam de domo, nudam, sine omni veste.” According to Raimon, Isarn de Gibel had convinced his daughter and his son to allow the perfecta to stay in his home. Isarn and his wife, Andreva, took in Raimonda as well as escorted the perfectae back to their home. Curiously, this was yet another case in which Isarn and Andreva were connected to events involving the protection of Guillelma de Campolongo.
188 MS 609, fol. 36v: The bastard son of Bernart Mir Arrezat (named Bernart Arrezat as well) had been present for one such occasion in 1239 where he claimed the two perfectae seen in Raimon’s home were unknown to him—the other deposed audience members, however, all mentioned her presence. Considering his familial ties to Guillelma, it seems incredibly unlikely for him not to have at least been aware of her name.
189 MS 609, fol. 41r. She had in fact been captured in 1242 or 1243 with two perfectae in Gaja. Both of the Good Women had been burned at the stake in Toulouse, and Raimonda had only been spared because she had converted after being led to the pyre.
supposed aversion for Catharism—claiming to have never been involved with the heretics at
the time of his confession to William Arnald in 1241—he was nevertheless said by his daughter
to have heard Fabrissa preaching three years before their dispute in 1240.

Six people, including Raimonda and her father, had been present for the event which
had transpired within their home. Guilhem de Gozencs and his wife Aimengart were both
responsible for leading Fabrissa and her socia to Raimon’s home.\(^\text{190}\) They had remained to hear
the “preaching or rather the admonition” of the perfectae along with Martina Vilaudina, and
Amada del Garric Dueg.\(^\text{191}\) All six within the audience had reportedly adored the Good Women
as well.

Not much is known, however, about Fabrissa’s own familial ties to the community. She
had only been cited twice within the depositions from Saint-Martin-de-Lalande; and both by
Raimonda Jocglar, once in 1240 and again in 1242. Although not a witness to her preaching,
Raimon Arnaut of Laurac, was noted by Raimonda to be Fabrissa’s brother.\(^\text{192}\) Regarding the
first event deposed by Raimonda (that of 1242), the full extent of the testimony cannot be
recovered because the paper of the copied register is irreparably damaged.\(^\text{193}\) Although, by
what remains, a perfecta named Fabrissa had some contact with other Good Women of Saint-
Martin, such as a Bertranda and Guillelma, along with some of its inhabitants. As for those who
witnessed her preaching, much more has survived.

\(^{190}\) MS 609, fol. 41r. It is worth noting that the verb used to describe their activity was the plural perfect
active form (\textit{adduxerunt}), and is unusual in that it clearly implicated a woman participating as a \textit{doctor}—an activity
usually occupied solely by men.
\(^{191}\) MS 609, fol. 41r: “\textit{Et omnes et ipse testis ... audieverunt predicationem seu monitionem dictarum
hereticarum}.”
\(^{192}\) MS 609, fol. 41r.
\(^{193}\) MS 609, fol. 40v. Aside from the fact that the ink had bled through the fibers of the paper, a large hole
disrupts much of Raimonda Jocglar’s first confessions—eliminating much of what she had said.
Guilhem de Gozencs had confessed to the inquisitors that around the early 1220s he had lived for five years with his uncle Pèire de Gozencs and his wife, Doça, the perfecta, and claimed to have eaten, drank, and slept with the heretics throughout those years.\textsuperscript{194} Due to his surname, a status within the aristocracy must be assumed; however, he was never called a knight himself, and he did not associate with many people of that class. The only man of the Mir family of Saint-Martin-de-Lalande that he was spotted with for example was Bernart Arrezat, the illegitimate son of Bernart Mir Arrezat.\textsuperscript{195} He and his wife, Aimengart, were seen by several witnesses on a few occasions with the perfecta Guillemelma de Campolongo.\textsuperscript{196} Unsurprisingly due to his affiliation with her, Isarn de Gibel was noted each time to have also been present.\textsuperscript{197}

Martina Vilaudina and Amada de Garric Dueg, by comparison to the previous four, are much more obscure. Little remains about either woman from the depositions of Saint-Martin-de-Lalande beyond the testimony of Raimonda Jocglar. Estève Faure, a relative of the former husband of Guillemelma de Campolongo, noted that Martina had housed Guillemelma and her socia around 1240 within her own home.\textsuperscript{198} Her daughter Finas had been present as well, although Estève did not mention whether either woman adored the perfectae. As for Amada de Garric Dueg, her own deposition—not even a whole line of text—does not reveal much. From her husband’s name, Estève de Garric Dueg, it can surmised that she was a noblewoman. Raimonda

\textsuperscript{194} MS 609, fol. 30v.
\textsuperscript{195} MS 609, fol. 38r. Bernart Mir Arrezat, the husband of Ermessen.
\textsuperscript{196} MS 609, fols. 34r and 38r.
\textsuperscript{197} MS 609, fols. 34r and 38r. In the deposition of Estève Faure (34r) Guilhem de Gozencs and his wife were reported to have been with the perfecta in Isarn’s own home; while Raimon Jocglar the younger (38r) claimed that Isarn led Guillemelma de Campolongo to his and his father’s home.
\textsuperscript{198} MS 609, fol. 34r.
Jocglar had mentioned that after her father had banished her from his home, Amada and several others (curiously including everyone who had heard Fabrissa preach) had encouraged Raimonda to join the heretics. But little else remains.

What can be definitively said, however, is that all six people clearly were tied in some fashion to the Jocglar family. At the very least they were tied to Raimonda, especially considering that she had contact with Fabrissa’s brother, Raimon Arnaut of Laurac. With the exclusion of Amada, they all can be linked to Guillelma de Campolongo and Isarn de Gibel as well. In approaching the question of why these six had heard Fabrissa preaching, little can be stated. The event was not described by any of the other witnesses, and so it cannot be cross-referenced with other depositions. One aspect that is curious about this particular case, however, is how Raimonda described the event. Rather than simply note that she heard Fabrissa preach, the notary had written that what she said she heard was more akin to an “admonition.” Is this a glimpse into the specificities of the event?

Raimonda Borda

The next witness to have heard female preaching was from the village of Laurac, southwest of Saint-Martin-de-Lalande. Guillelma Verduna had confessed to Bernard de Caux and his clerical witnesses on November 27, 1245 that she had heard the preaching of Raimonda Borda and her socia within the home of Joan de Na Arnauda in Laurac around the year 1237. The affair had been a small one, as only two people, Guillelma and Joan, had been in

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199 MS 609, fol. 40v.
200 MS 609, fols. 76r-76v.
Curiously, Guillelma did not claim to have seen Joan adore the *perfectae*. Only she had honored them so. The two witnesses did not interact with each other often. In fact, the only event mentioned within the testimonies from Laurac at which they were both present was that of Raimonda Borda’s preaching. Nevertheless, they were involved with many of the same people. Two of their mutual acquaintances, however, appear to be integral in explaining their presence at Raimonda’s sermon: the knights Guilhem de Calhavel and Bernart Garsias. Guilhem de Calhavel and his wife Rixen often hosted traveling heretics for the benefit of the faithful of Laurac. From his own deposition, Guilhem had admitted on three occasions to providing such a service.\(^{201}\) Although never reported to have been in attendance at the same event, both Joan and Guillelma made appearances at these gatherings to hear the preaching of the *perfecti* and to adore them as well. For many of these sermons, the local nobility of Laurac were prominent members of the audience.

One family, though, is of particular importance here. Not only did Guilhem host Raimonda Borda herself around the year 1239, but both her mother Alamanda and her half-brother Bernart Garsias were there as well.\(^{202}\) In that specific event, they were part of a crowd of over thirty people who all convened to witness the Good Man Guilhem Vidal perform the *aparelhamentum* in which his *socii* and three unnamed *perfectae* were involved. It is interesting that Raimonda Borda was not mentioned as being a heretic at this point. But in a later event within the same confession, Guilhem de Calhavel claimed as much when he cited her presence

\(^{201}\) See MS 609, fols. 71v-72v for the deposition of Guilhem de Calhavel.

\(^{202}\) MS 609, fol. 72r.
within her brother’s home when he had housed the *perfecta* Guillelma del Mas and her *socia* around the same year.\(^{203}\)

Bernart Garsias, like Guilhem de Calhavel, also frequently hosted heretics at his own home. Guillelma Verduna herself had been present on one such occasion in 1238 when she and three other men (including the host) had adored and heard the preaching of three unnamed heretics.\(^{204}\) Joan de Na Arnauda was deeply connected to the nobility of Laurac in general. He had been present in Guilhem de Calhavel’s home with Bernart Garsias and his half-sister Raimonda mentioned above; and was even present for the sermon of the *perfecti* Raimon Ymberti at Bernart’s home around 1240.\(^{205}\) His connection to Raimonda Borda was even more direct as evidence by their interactions; such as one such occasion within the home of Pons Copa around the same year when he and Sicart de Belfort had adored her as well as her *socia*.\(^{206}\)

It is not surprising that Joan de Na Arnauda and Guillelma Verduna were present for Raimonda’s sermon based on their personal connections to her, her family, and also to those who associated with them. The earliest reference to Raimonda Borda from the depositions of Laurac, interestingly, was that of Guillelma Verduna’s when she was cited as preaching in 1237. Guilhem de Calhavel, as mentioned above, had not declared that she was a *perfecta* when she had been present at his house with her mother and half-brother around 1239. Perhaps a notarial or copyist mistake omitted this qualifier. Or perhaps Raimonda had not been a *perfecta*

\(^{203}\) MS 609, fol. 72r.
\(^{204}\) MS 609, fol. 76r. One of the men in attendance was Raimon Jocglar, although no information was added to say if it was Raimon the elder or younger.
\(^{205}\) MS 609, fol. 79r.
\(^{206}\) MS 609, fol. 77r.
for a long period before, and Guilhem still knew her from her earlier life: as the daughter of Alamanda. Not enough detail was recorded to say definitively, but, nevertheless, this might be yet another case of female preaching in which the act was performed early in their careers.

Tholsana

In the village of Gaja-la-Selve, south-west of Laurac, a local noblewoman reported to have heard the preaching of the next Good Woman. Na Aimengart, the wife of Pèire de Mazerolas, appeared before Bernard de Caux on November 16, 1245. Due to repeated denunciations made by other villagers, as well as for her key position within the local nobility, the inquisitors made her a primary target under suspicion of heresy. Pèire de Mazerolas was the lord of Gaja, and from his repeated appearances in Saint-Sernin the names of many nobles inculpated in heresy were recorded in the registers.207 The statements of his wife were equally valuable as well, not least because she reported that the perfecta Tholsana had preached with three of her sociæ around the year 1240.208

Within the home of Pèire Guilhem in Gaja, Na Aimengart, and her sister-in-law, Na Aimersent, the wife of Arnaut de Mazerolas, gathered before the four Good Women led by Tholsana. Pèire Guilhem may have been present as well, but Na Aimengart could not honestly recall.209 While she was not entirely certain about those in attendance, there was no doubt in her testimony that everyone there did in fact adore the perfectae. Perhaps because the next

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207 See MS 609, fols. 124r-125v for Pèire de Mazerolas’ deposition. Despite being cited by several deponents as being the instigator for the transportation of many heretics, Na Aimengart (his wife) was not mentioned a single time within his four appearances before Bernard de Caux.

208 MS 609, fol. 123v.

209 Although it is not completely certain, for the purposes of this chapter Pèire Guilhem’s presence at the sermon of Tholsana will be assumed as true.
item following Tholsana’s sermon also involved the same heretics, as well as her sister-in-law, it may have led to some confusion. If female preaching was as rare as a reading of the source material would suggest, however, it is suspicious that the event was not more memorable.

Little is known about the perfecta Tholsana, as she was spotted in Gaja-la-Selve only on two occasions around 1240, both mentioned by Na Aimengart. It should be noted, however, that it is interesting she was reported to have been in a group of three other Good Women. Typically speaking, the perfected traveled with a single companion. Within MS 609, there are exceptions to this rule. Whenever Cathar deacons or bishops are mentioned, they have more than the standard single companion common to their brothers and sisters. While it is not unheard of for one perfecta to have a few sociae traveling with her—take for example Arnaude de Lamothe—it is most common when the perfected gathered for an aparelhamentum. Although unsubstantiated, perhaps Tholsana was an elderly matron, like Arnaude had been, and as such she was awarded several women to accompany her.

No matter how obscure the preacher remains, plenty of evidence can be found concerning her audience. As can be imagined, Na Aimengart and Na Aimersent, being sisters-in-law, had an obvious connection. Bernard de Caux was interested in investigating both women, likely based on the many local testimonies which denounced them; perhaps their roles within the de Mazerolas family garnered more attention as well. The names of several Gajanais nobles were cited by both women. From Na Aimersent, the involvement of their mother-in-law, Na Helis, extended the connection of the local seigneurial class to other villages of the Lauragais—such as to Na Helis’ hometown of Fanjeaux.²¹⁰ Na Aimengart, more so than her sister-in-law,

²¹⁰ MS 609, fols. 123v and 165v.
had been repeatedly denounced by other locals of Gaja. According to many of these depositions, she was largely responsible for organizing the Cathar church around the village. She was cited as ordering *credentes* to guide the perfected,\(^{211}\) of having villagers house them,\(^ {212}\) and even for gathering victuals to be sent to a *perfectae* house in a neighboring village.\(^ {213}\) Both of these women were highly involved with the heretics; and they even, along with their husbands, were known to have repeatedly visited the home of their friend Pèire Guilhem.

Na Aimersent and Na Aimengart were both present for a gathering within his home to honor the *perfecta* Arnald and her mother (her *socia*) around the year 1241.\(^ {214}\) Pèire de Mazerolas, although not accompanied by his wife, was at Pèire Guilhem’s home when the *perfecti* Guilhem Richart came to visit.\(^ {215}\) In addition to the handful of events within his home, the two noble women were also spotted with him (and his wife Raimonda) at other gatherings as well—such as at Pons de Cales’ home, when the *perfecti* named Arnaut came to Gaja around 1239.\(^ {216}\) There is no doubt that the three witnesses to Tholsana’s sermon were friends, based upon the level of interaction between themselves and their families. Although a strong connection cannot be made between the *perfecta* and her audience, because Na Aimengart and Na Aimersent were not strangers to Pèire Guilhem’s home it is not surprising that they witnessed the event there. When recalling Na Aimengart’s role in orchestrating the activities of

\(^{211}\) MS 609, fol. 123r. According to Pons de Cales, Na Aimengart ordered heretics to be led to the home of Pèire Guilhem.

\(^{212}\) MS 609, fol. 121v. Arnaut Domenc claimed that Na Aimengart commanded him to house Raimon de Nogaret and his *socius*, as well as Trobalda and her *socia*, for eight days.

\(^{213}\) MS 609, fol. 122r. Pèire Gausbert testified that Na Aimengart had sent provisions to the *perfecta* Raimonda de Cuc, and to the other Good Women of Cuelha.

\(^{214}\) MS 609, fol. 123v.

\(^{215}\) MS 609, fol. 122v.

\(^{216}\) MS 609, fol. 123r.
the faithful in Gaja, the full extent of her involvement in the event is thought provoking. It is even more intriguing considering that Pèire Guilhem’s home was the location where she had commanded Raimon Aychart and Guilhem Asner to lead the perfecti Arnaut and his socius.\textsuperscript{217}

Nevertheless, this is all conjecture, as the manner in which Tholsana and her three sociae were introduced there was not recorded.

Berenguèira de Sequervilla

Avignonet, the village in which William Arnald and Stephen de Saint-Thibéry had been murdered in 1242, was the site of the sixth female sermon recorded within MS 609. It was one of the smallest events considering the only person mentioned to have been present was the witness herself. Na Vierna, the wife of Raimon d’Avinho, declared to Bernard de Caux on November 23, 1245 that around sixteen years before (roughly 1229) the perfecta Berenguèira de Segervilla had preached to her within her and her husband’s home.\textsuperscript{218} She did not claim to have adored Berenguèira, nor her socia, but she did supposedly feed and house them for a night. Although she specifically stated that she did not see anyone else there, her brother-in-law, Bernart d’Avinho, deposed a very similar event. He claimed that in the same year (also within the home of Na Vierna) he saw Berenguèira, and he did not recall adoring her nor her socia.\textsuperscript{219} Elements from both of their depositions, namely the assurance with which they denied

\textsuperscript{217} MS 609, fol. 123r.

\textsuperscript{218} MS 609, fol. 137v. The manuscript reads, “Et audivit predicacionem eorum, et tenuit eas per noctem unam.” The masculine plural genitive personal pronoun was used in regards to the preaching, while the feminine plural accusative personal pronoun was used regarding who the witness housed for one night. It is clear that only perfectae were mentioned by the witness, so only women could have preached. These scribal errors are frequent regarding female preaching within MS 609.

\textsuperscript{219} MS 609, fol. 138r.
performing the adoration, appear suspicious, but if Bernart truly had been present (and Na Vierna neglected to mention him), it is curious that he did not claim to have also heard Berenguèira preach.

Because Na Vierna only interacted with Berenguèira de Seguervilla on that single occasion, claiming to have done so alone (however truthfully), not much can be said about the event prosopographically. Berenguèira, however, had been spotted by others from Avignonet, and was even seen preaching by another deponent, and this was unnoticed by Abels and Harrison in their article. Aimersent, the wife of Donat de Vilanova, appeared before the inquisitors on the same day (November 23, 1245) as Na Vierna. Her husband had been found guilty, along with much of the Avignonet nobility, for his involvement in the murder of William Arnald—for which he was executed.\textsuperscript{220} Twelve years before her deposition (1233), Aimersent was in the home of her mother, Blancha, with two of her sisters, Guillelma and Aimengart, where Berenguèira and her socia had stayed for three weeks.\textsuperscript{221} It was only after her brother had returned from a war in Provence, and was angered over the presence of the perfectae, that the Good Women finally left. But they did not leave before Aimersent, Blancha, and Guillelma heard their preaching.\textsuperscript{222} She was specific to mention, however, that this, as well as their adoration, had happened only once. Aimengart, the sister who had not adored the perfectae or had been present for their preaching, claimed in her own deposition to have seen Berenguèira twice during this three-week interval, so Aimersent’s insistence appears to be credible.\textsuperscript{223}

\textsuperscript{220} MS 609, fol. 136v.
\textsuperscript{221} MS 609, fols. 136v-137r.
\textsuperscript{222} MS 609, fol. 137r. Once again, the masculine genitive plural personal pronoun was used in a situation where no perfecti were present. The manuscript reads, “Et omnes et ipsa testis, excepto dicto Bernardo fratre et Aymengardi sorore ipsius testis, audieverunt predicationem eorum et adoraverunt eas semel.”
\textsuperscript{223} MS 609, fol. 137r.
Aimersent’s deposed family members frequently mentioned this event as well, if not entirely similar to hers. Guillelma, her sister and wife of Guilhem Baudric, although had sworn an almost perfectly identical account as Aimersent.\textsuperscript{224} The greatest difference between their collective renditions can be found in the deposition of the third sister. Aimengart, the wife of Raimon Benech, stated that in addition to her mother, sisters, and brother, the two servants of the house, Richarda and Pons de Nemore, were also present. While she had resolutely claimed not to have adored the *perfectae*, she did mention that they had taught her how to do so, since she had never bothered to learn.\textsuperscript{225} As might be expected due to his late arrival, Bernart de Quiders, the brother and co-owner of the home, did not match the details of his sisters’ depositions within his own. He claimed Berenguèira had been introduced there by his mother, and unbeknownst to him she had stayed there for at least eight days.\textsuperscript{226} His sister Aimengart was never mentioned. According to him, however, it was Berenguèira’s own brother, Bernart de Seguervilla, who extracted the *perfectae* from the home of the Quiders. As for Blancha de Quiders, mother and hostess, she never mentioned the gathering at all in her deposition—choosing instead to discuss her brother-in-law, Guilhem de Quiders, the Good Man.\textsuperscript{227}

With the exclusion of Blancha, everyone involved (whose depositions survived) mentioned the event. Despite subtle differences, the four versions told to the inquisitors were largely the same. The three sisters all claimed to have seen each other, along with their mother. They also all unanimously claimed that Aimengart did not adore the Good Women. Bernart de

\textsuperscript{224} MS 609, fol. 137r.  
\textsuperscript{225} MS 609, fol. 137r.  
\textsuperscript{226} MS 609, fol. 139v.  
\textsuperscript{227} MS 609, fol. 137v.
Quiders was the only witness to have mentioned a different date—claiming it to have transpired around 1230 rather than 1233 like all three of his sisters. The most misplaced detail of the event was the preaching, which Aimersent claimed that Blancha, Guillelma, and herself had heard. Could this have been a fabricated addition? Considering that Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre were highly interested in uncovering instances of heretical preaching, they undoubtedly asked every deponent if they had ever heard anyone do so. Confessing to this transgression was a highly serious offense, and so it is incredibly unlikely for a deponent to have condemned themselves needlessly, along with family members. In this case, the reverse seems more likely—only Aimersent told the truth. Or, at the very least, she told the most unadulterated version.

Blancha and Brunissen

Within the castrum of Castelnaudary, roughly fifteen kilometers east of Avignonet, the seventh named perfecta had preached around the year 1206. Well before the beginning of the inquisition, Blancha and her socia were within the same generation as Esclarmonde de Foix. Like Esclarmonde, they had fully expressed their pastoral abilities that were bequeathed to them at the time of their baptism and ordination. On July 3, 1246 Doça, the late-wife of Pèire Faure (a man possibly related to Raimon Faure, the husband of Guillelma de Campolongo), appeared before the inquisitors at Toulouse to confess all that she knew about heresy. She claimed that around forty years before, when she was fleeing the home of her husband in the village of Villeneuve-la-Comtal, she went to the perfectae house led by Gailharda for
sanctuary. She apparently was being instructed in the ways of the heretics, and for further edification the Good Women of her village led her to Blancha and her *sociae* the short distance to Castelnaudary, where stood yet another refuge for the *perfectae*. Doça lived there for a full year, eating, drinking, and participating in the daily austere activities of her sisters. She claimed that while she was there, she often witnessed many of the locals adore the Good Women as well as listen to their sermons.

Doça’s training as a *perfecta* did not, however, stop at Castelnaudary. At an undisclosed time following her year spent with Blancha (at least after 1207) she was brought to the home of the *perfecta* Brunissen in Laurac. She spent another year there training as a novice with the Good Women, but she was not baptized in the *consolamentum*. From her testimony, she had every intention to do so but the *perfectae* forbade it because “she was not able to do, on account of youth, that which heretics do, or learn, to be observed.” Nevertheless, despite not becoming a *perfecta* herself, Doça once again testified to the inquisitors that during her year in Laurac she often adored Brunissen along with her *sociae*, and she heard their preaching as well. In both the houses of Castelnaudary and Laurac, she did not specify the frequency of the sermons that she heard. Perhaps it was implied several times over the course of the two years she spent there, like her adoration of Brunissen and the other Good Women. It is

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228 MS 609, fol. 184r-184v.
229 MS 609, fol. 184v. The manuscript reads, “et pluries audierunt predicationem eorum,” when speaking only of women. In reference to the adoration of the *perfectae* as well, Doça was recorded as claiming the faithful often adored the women on bended knees by saying, “Benedicte, boni homines, orate Deum pro me.” Either unstated *perfecti* were present for both the adoration and preaching, or there was yet again scribal confusion about the gender of the heretics mentioned.
230 MS 609, fol. 184v: “et potuerat facere propter iuventem illa que heretici faciunt vel percipient observari.”
231 MS 609, fol. 184v. The passage reads, “et ibi pluries adoravit hereticas, et audivit predicationes eorum.”
interesting that while the verb used for those who heard Blancha’s sermon was plural
(*audierunt*), it was singular for Brunissen’s (*audivit*). Not much more can be said about the
context of the audience for either event, only that clearly preaching was an important part of a
*perfecta*’s training.

The whole of Doça’s deposition was focused around these two events from her youth
(although she was old enough in 1206 to have been married), and after her testimony about
Brunissen and the Good Women of Laurac, her confession followed the standard format of
those brought before Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre. Asked about what, if anything,
she had heard heretics saying concerning theology, Doça responded that (while not believing it)
she had heard them discussing the Catholic sacraments of baptism, marriage, and the Eucharist,
along with the dualist understanding of the creation of the Earth. What is interesting
specifically about this testimony, by Doça’s own admission, was that she had spent several
years not only living with the *perfectae* but actively endeavoring to become one herself. Anne
Brenon had even cited Doça’s testimony in suggesting that *perfectae* had preached to their
sisters within the catechistic houses like those described in Villeneuve-la-Comtal,
Castelnaudary, and Laurac.²³² It would appear that Doça very likely heard these specificities of
Cathar dogma from her heretical mentors. While this information may not necessarily have
been passed on to her from Blancha or Brunissen due to their preaching, Doça at the very least
was instructed in how to do so.

Bruna and Rixen

The next case, that of the preaching of the perfectae Bruna and Rixen, throws light on the content of female Cathar sermons. On July 12, 1246, Pèire de Safaia of Laurac testified before Bernard de Caux and three other clerical witnesses in Toulouse. His deposition, although relatively terse, was focused around two occasions in which he had been in the presence of both Bruna and Rixen. One man who appeared in both events cited by Pèire was the knight Guilhem de Insula—the brother of the previously discussed perfecta, Bruna, above. Although unstated, the Bruna mentioned by Pèire seems likely to have been the same woman, based upon her association with Guilhem and because the only other instance in which a Bruna was cited in Laurac (also with a socia named Rixen) was by Guilhem de Calhavel, a known associate of Guilhem de Insula.233 Perhaps what is more noteworthy, however, was the fact that the witness who sighted these women was a man, and the first male deponent mentioned thus far.

Around the year 1237, Pèire de Safaia interacted with Bruna and Rixen on two occasions: once within his own home, and once within the home of Guilhem de Insula.234 He claimed that when they were in his home, the two women stayed there for eight days, eating and sleeping, after the knights Sicart de Belfort and Guilhem de Insula had introduced them there. Pèire reluctantly allowed them to stay. He and his wife, Peirona, ate from the bread that they had blessed, and they both had adored them. As for the second sighting, he only mentioned he had seen them in Guilhem’s home, claiming neither to have seen others there (although, presumably Guilhem was) nor to have adored them.

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233 MS 609, fol. 72r. Vilarzel, Willelmus de Insula’s wife, was at Willelmus de Calhavel’s home around 1239 to see the perfectus Willelmus Vitalis.
234 MS 609, fol. 192v.
Pèire only mentioned Bruna and Rixen’s preaching at the end of his deposition, curiously; a section typically reserved for describing a given individual’s understanding of the Cathar *errores*. As such, it cannot be tied to either of the two events precisely. It was recorded, nonetheless, that he said he heard them speaking about many of the same things Doça reported in her deposition: God had not made the physical world; the Catholic sacraments of baptism, marriage, and the Eucharist had no true purpose; and once dead, people would not be resurrected. While Pèire adamantly asserted that he did not believe (nor had he ever) what was told to him, he nevertheless heard this theological discourse from the two Good Women (*dictas hereticas*). Although the evidence does not again state directly that the women had preached on these subjects, it seems that Pèire was informed about Catharism through their pastoral activities.

As neither event in which Pèire de Safaia had interacted with Bruna and Rixen can be fixed to the specific moment (or moments) when their preaching was heard, an explanation for Pèire’s presence is elusive. Guilhem de Insula, however, can be tied to both events, and he is the likely reason for Pèire’s attendance. If the same Bruna mentioned by Pèire was in fact the Bruna declared to be Guilhem’s sister, this suggestion becomes even more credible, but it is unclear. By taking Pèire’s adamant denial of any heretical belief as true, the incident in which Guilhem and Sicart de Belfort had led the *perfectae* into his home with his forced consent could likely have been when he learned the tenants of Catharism. The eight-day sojourn was the longest period of exposure which he had confessed to having undergone. If the first deposed

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235 MS 609, fol. 192v-193r. The manuscript reads, “Et audivit dictas hereticas predicantes quod Deus non fecerat visibilia, quod in baptism et matrimonio non est salus, quod hostia sacrata non est corpus Christi, et quod mortuorum corpora non resurgent.”
interaction was in fact when Pèire heard Bruna and Rixen’s preaching, the presence of the other audience members are more-or-less easily explained. Sichert de Belfort and Guilhem de Insula, as was discussed above, were associates and both knights from Laurac. It is of course no surprise that Peirona, Pèire de Safaia’s wife, was spotted within her home. As Pèire and Peirona themselves were only mentioned within Pèire’s deposition within the records of Laurac, it is more puzzling to hypothesize why Guilhem and Sichert had led Bruna and Rixen there at all. Perhaps their connection to the local nobility, no matter how distant, was all that was needed.

Guillelma de Deime

In the northwestern corner of the Lauragais, east of Toulouse, the village of Lanta was the setting for the tenth case of female preaching by a named perfecta. On August 1, 1245, the knight Raimon Azemar of Lanta came before Bernard de Caux, and testified to dozens of heretical events that he had witnessed over the previous twenty years. Around 1230, Raimon said that within the barn (botarium) of a man named Pèire Forner he and at least six other people adored the heretics Guillelma de Deime and her socia. Everyone there heard the admonitions of the perfectae as well.\(^{236}\) Just as Raimonda Jocglar had said about Fabrissa and her socia, rather than preaching, Raimon Azemar reported that Guillelma had advised or warned her audience in some manner, hinting at an untold element of the message itself. What exactly this admonition was in reference to, however, was unfortunately not recorded.

\(^{236}\) MS 609, fol. 201r. The manuscript reads, “Et ipse testis et omnes aliiis adoraveunt ibi dictas hereticas et audierunt monitiones ipsarum.”
The witness himself had willingly admitted to the inquisitor Bernard de Caux his vibrant past within the heretical sect. Raimon Azemar had not only interacted with both Bernart and Arnaude de Lamothe, but he had also been involved with the famous Cathar bishop, Guilhabert de Castres—the very man who had baptized Esclarmonde de Foix in 1206. Aside from witnessing some of the most sighted perfecti, he also confessed to witnessing several consolamenta—his own father had been baptized on his deathbed by Bernart de Lamothe. He even admitted to have rather daringly led two perfecti to the gallows of Toulouse around 1229 in order that they could console the arrested Lantanais knight, Guilhem de Garnes, who was going to be hanged. Altogether, the amount of damning evidence Raimon provided, events that even inculpated himself, suggests that his deposition may be more credible.

The total testimonies from Lanta do not exceed three full manuscript pages—the records of only twenty-four deposed individuals remain, but Raimon’s testimony was by far the longest. In consequence, the testimonies from that village leave many gaps. All seven of the named people within the audience, for example, including the witness himself, are only found in Raimon Azemar’s confession. He had also seen several others (plurios alios) who he did not know attend the gathering within Pèire Forner’s barn in 1230. But for those that were known, two of the six were cited abundantly within his deposition, and they were likely among his close associates.

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237 MS 609, fol. 200v.
238 MS 609, fol. 200v-201r: “Item dixit quod cum Willelmus de Garnes de Lantario esset captus apud Tholosam et postea esset adductus ad furcas ut suspenderetur, ipse testis et Ramundus Unaut iunior et Alamandus de Roaxio adduxerunt ad dictas furcas Willelmum del Soler et Ramundum d’Agremon, et antequam dictus Willelmus suspenderetur dicti heretici hereticaverunt eum videntibus ipso testi et Ramundo de Agremon et Alamando de Roaxio et totus populus qui erat ibi viderunt omnia illa, sed nesciebant quod essent heretici. Et sunt XVI anni vel circa.”
Raimon Unaut the younger, cited seven times by Raimon Azemar, was clearly one of his closest friends. The two had clandestinely escorted the two perfecti into Toulouse for the condemned knight, Guilhem de Garnes’ consolamentum in 1229. When Na Bruilhes de Bellomont refused to be consoled on her deathbed around 1230, instead desiring to become a nun, Raimon Unaut and Raimon Azemar escorted the two perfecti who were going to administer the ceremony to a secret carriage near the Chateau Narbonnais itself, the castle of the Counts of Toulouse. Gailhard de Seguervilla was cited a total of six times by Raimon; and for many of these events, Raimon Unaut was also present.

The other three witnesses—Bernart Guilhem de las Varennas, both Pèire Forner the younger and the elder, as well as Alamanda, Pèire Forner the elder’s wife—were only mentioned a single time by Raimon Azemar. The presence of the Forner family (including Alamanda) does not require much of an explanation, as the sermon was given within their barn. For Bernart Guilhem, however, another possible factor could explain why he was in attendance. Both Raimon Azemar and Gailhard de Seguervilla were occasionally spotted with other members of the Guilhem family, which might explain why one of their kinsmen was seen there with them. But there is not enough evidence to say definitively.

Aside from the interesting fact that Gailhard de Seguervilla shared the same noble family name as Na Berenguèira (the perfecta mentioned above who had preached at Avignonet around 1229), a further point to make concerning Guillelma de Deime’s case still remains.

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239 MS 609, fol. 201r.
240 MS 609, fols. 200v-201r.
241 MS 609, fol. 201r. Take for example when Raimon and Gailhard were with a Bernart Guilhem (not the same man as Bernart Guilhem de las Varennas) in Raimon Unaut’s home for the consolamentum of a woman named Comdors.
Raimon Azemar had on three occasions been involved with another noble from Lanta, a man by the name Guilhem de Deime. Although their relation was not stated, this familial tie is the only link left within the register that can explain why Guillelma de Deime was sighted preaching in Pèire Forner’s barn. While it cannot explain why she was there, Raimon Azemar’s connection to the Deime family does give a possible reason for why he deposed this event at all.

Arnalda and Guillelma Sicharda

Roughly six kilometers to the southwest of Lanta, within the village of Odars, Pèire Grandis, the son of Jacme d’Odars, reported to have heard the last case of the preaching of named Good Women within MS 609. Appearing at Saint-Sernin in Toulouse on June 25, 1245 to give his deposition, Pèire testified to Bernard de Caux and three other clerical witnesses that he observed Arnalda and her socia, Guillelma Sicharda, within the home of Pons Ribeira on two occasions. Together with four others, Pèire adored the perfectae and listened to their sermons around the year 1241.

Excluding Pèire, every other witness at these events belonged to the same immediate family. Pons Ribeira, the owner of the home, and his brother, Bernart, had both become perfecti afterward—and both had also been burned for their beliefs. Bernarda, the wife of Pons Ribeira, and Raimonda Ribeira, the mother of Pons and Bernart, were also present. There is of course no surprise in understanding why the majority of the audience had attended these

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242 MS 609, fol. 200v.
243 MS 609, fol. 203v: “Et omnes et ipse testis adoraverunt dictas hereticas et audierunt predicacionem earum.”
244 MS 609, fol. 203v. According to the testimony of Guillelma, the sister of Pons and Berart Ribeira: “Dixit etiam quod Bernardus Ribeira frater ipsa testis fuit hereticus, sed non vidit eum postquam fuit hereticus. Item, dixit quod frater eius Poncius fuit hereticus similiter et ambo sunt pro heresy combusti.”
sermons. Pèire Grandis, while not having the same surname as that of the other witnesses, was himself tied to the Ribeira family. According to the deposition of Arnaude de Lamothe, Jacme d’Odars, Pèire’s father, was married to a woman named Sebèlia Ribeira. While it is not clear if Sebèlia was Pèire’s mother, his connection to her family on the other hand is; and thus, his presence within Pons’ home does not appear out of place.

The two Good Women, Arnalda and Guillelma Sicharda, were mentioned by more than one deponent from Odars. Guillelma, the sister of Pons and Bernart Ribeira, stated in her testimony that she had seen both women in Pons’ house during the same time in which Pèire had claimed they were preaching. She reported that while she and Bernart had adored them, her mother, Raimonda, Pons, and his wife Bernarda, had not been there while the Good Women were in hiding. It does not seem likely that her statement and Pèire’s refer to the same events—specifically because Pèire never mentioned Guillelma—but it is interesting that she indicated Pons, Bernarda, and Raimonda had no knowledge of the perfectae. This could be yet another case of willful mendacity on the part of the deponent. Perhaps they actually were aware, and she also neglected to mention the preaching. There is simply not enough evidence to suggest this as a possibility, however, and thus for the sake of the argument here, her statement will be considered a separate sighting.

It is worth noting that the following two items mentioned in Pèire Grandis’ deposition after Anralda and Guillelma’s sermons also pertain to the same perfectae. In both events Pons and Bernart Ribeira also played significant roles. Around 1242, the Good Women had been

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245 MS 609, fol. 201v.
246 MS 609, fol. 203v.
spotted in the home of Pèire de Rival where both Ribeira brothers (as well as the witness and home owner) adored them. The following year, Pèire Grandis, the Ribeira brothers, and Pons d’Odars led the two *perfectae* from the home of Pons d’Odars to Montauriol. Once there, Pèire reported that he dismissed them (*eos*) at the entrance of a nearby wood.²⁴⁷ It is not clear if Pèire had left the women in the care of all three other men; but, based off their frequent interactions, a relationship of some kind existed between them and Pèire Grandis—and the Ribeira brothers by extension.

In the last section of this chapter, that of the preaching of the unnamed Good Women mentioned in MS 609, three events will be analyzed. Abels and Harrison found female preachers within the villages of Laurac and Cambiac, and an additional case in Fanjeaux (briefly dealt with in the previous chapter) will also be considered. As in the previous section, the event itself will be described followed by a prosopographical examination of the audience members. Because the identity of the *perfectae* was unknown, possible connections between them and the witnesses will be impossible to prove. Yet understanding the proper context of the environment in which they operated will reveal the social perceptions of their preaching. Again, each case will be addressed based on sequential order in the manuscript rather than a geographic or chronological preference (Appendix B.2).

²⁴⁷ MS 609, fol. 203v: “Item, dixit quod ipse testis et Poncius den Odarz, et Poncius Ribeira et Bernardus Ribeira duxerunt et associaverunt propedictas hereticas de domo Poncius den Odarz predicti usque ad Montem Auriol, ubi ipse testis dimisit eos introitu nemoris. Et omnes et ipse testis adoraverunt eas. Et sunt duo anni.”
Unnamed *Perfectae* of Laurac

The deponent Guillelma Garrona, a noblewoman from the *castrum* of Laurac, appeared in Toulouse before Bernard de Caux on July 12, 1245. Not only did she describe an event in which nine witnesses including herself (the second largest gathering discussed here) had been present, her testimony can be compared to those of several other deponents also in attendance. The Good Man Guilhem Vidal and his *socius* had gathered within the home of the knight Guilhem de Calhavel around the year 1242 where four unnamed *perfectae* had also been seen. Curiously enough, the home owner was not mentioned as being present. The language used to describe what had transpired is quite interesting. Guillelma claimed that all the witnesses had adored only the *perfectae*, but they had heard the preaching of the whole assembly—or at least that of the *perfecti*. Because Abels and Harrison had concluded this was an example of female preaching, it will also be counted as a possible incident here, though it seems like yet another example of scribal confusion.

Some of the other witnesses deposed by Guillelma Garrona were frequently cited within the manuscript, and will be familiar here due to some of the previous events within the *castrum*. Raimon Jocglar and Raimonda Borda were both present, for example. Others like Raimon Guilhem, Raimon Paul (Guillelma Garrona’s brother), and Arnaut Mazeler have yet to be discussed in relation to other pastoral activities of the *perfectae*, but they were nonetheless repeatedly discussed Lauracois nobles, along with most of their wives. They were mentioned by

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248 MS 609, fol. 72v. The manuscript reads, “Et omnes et ipsa testis adoraveunt ibi dictas hereticas et audierunt predicationem eorum.” It is interesting that Abels and Harrison accepted this as an example of female preaching when a similar event described by Guilhem de Calhavel (fol. 72r) which involved both *perfecti* and *perfectae* was not.
Guilhem de Calhavel (who was not indicated by Guillelma to have been present), and many of them had been frequently spotted together, such as the knights Arnaut Mazeler and Raimon Jocglar. While they were certainly not all related to one another, most of the witnesses had family members present. Guillelma Garrona’s brother was Raimon Paul; Raimon Guilhem and his wife Raimonda were together; and Arnaut Mazeler was with both his mother (another Guillelma) and his sister Na Dias. Raimon Jocglar was in fact the only person without a family member in attendance; but due to the connections all nine had with the host Guilhem de Calhavel, it is clear that everyone present shared a common social and personal relationship with one another.

The exact reason for the gathering, as far as Guillelma Garrona had testified, is not clear. In Guilhem de Calhavel’s deposition, a similar event—although perhaps not the same—was related, in which the perfectus Guilhem Vidal and his socii had conducted an aparelhamentum. At this event, which was said to have happened around 1239, three unnamed Good Women (rather than four) were mentioned along with all of the same individuals except Raimon Guilhem, although his wife was in attendance. Recalling the discrepancy between Raimonda Borda’s identity as a Good Woman in Guilhem de Calhavel’s testimony discussed above, perhaps she was the fourth unknown perfecta deposed by Guillelma Garrona, but it is impossible to say definitively. In addition, some twenty other nobles were also present, such as Guillelma’s husband, the knight Guilhem del Eissart. Raimon Sedasser, another knight of Laurac, unstated by Guillelma Garrona, deposed an event which

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249 MS 609, fol. 76r.
250 MS 609, fol. 72r.
appears to corroborate Guilhem de Calhavel’s testimony—except he neglected to mention the
presence of any *perfectae*. Because the dates attributed to these confessions are not all in
accordance—though they are within a year or two—it is impossible to know if Guillelma
Garrona had described an *aparelhamentum*; even if it would explain a gathering of several
Good Men and Good Women. Even if they were in fact several separate events, nevertheless,
this would attest to the strong communal bond they all shared.

Unnamed *Perfectae* of Fanjeaux

As discussed in the previous chapter, the *castrum* of Fanjeaux was one of the most
devoutly Cathar communities of the entire Lauragais, evidenced by chroniclers and troubadours
alike, as well as by over 100 deponents within MS 609. The knight Bernart Teuler from
Fanjeaux, who appeared before Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre on May 1, 1245 had
testified to a unique event which transpired within the castle around the year 1235.²⁵¹ Na
Cavaers, the co-seigneur of Fanjeaux, had a gathering of eight people—of which Bernart was
one—within her castle. The Cathar bishop, Bertrand Marti, was undoubtedly the main
attraction and was the only named heretic. Bernart Teuler and his father-in-law, Guilhem
Cavaers, had been instructed by this bishop to travel to the home of Géraut de Varahola where
two unnamed *perfectae* were being hidden.²⁵² From there, the two knights escorted them back

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²⁵¹ MS 609, fol. 169r.
²⁵² Guilhem’s surname *Cavaers*, meaning *knight* in Occitan, was translated from the Latin *miles*. It should not be assumed that this man bore a relation to the co-seigneur of Fanjeaux, Na Cavaers, as in her case the name appears as a first name.
to Na Cavaers’ home where they, together with Bertrand Marti, preached to their small audience. It was an audience composed mostly of friends.

The first matter to discuss is the language used to describe the preaching itself. As has so often been the case regarding the preaching of *perfectae* within the manuscript, the Latin used can at first glance be misleading. The manuscript reads:

> And then the witness himself and the said Raimon Viels,\(^{253}\) his father-in-law, went, by the order of the said Bertrand Marti, then the bishop of the heretics, all the way to the home of Gérault de Varahola, on account of two *perfectae* who were there, and they led them to the said heretic. And everyone and the witness himself heard the preaching of the said heretics, and they bowed to them so far their own heads, saying, ‘May God render to you good graces.’\(^{254}\)

The only heretic mentioned within Na Cavaers home prior to the introduction of the two unnamed women was Bertrand Marti himself. The two men had led the *perfectae* toward the, “dictum hereticum”—a lone man. Therefore, when Bernart claimed to have heard the preaching of “the said heretics,” although using the masculine plural form of the noun, he could only be referring to all three heretics, including the two *perfectae*.

The people reported to have been present by Bernart had for the most part been members of, and deeply connected to, the local nobility. The hostess, Na Cavaers, was, as already mentioned, the co-seigneur of Fanjeaux and as such was one of the highest-ranking nobles of the area. Her double life, much studied by Suzanne Nelli, as Catholic and Cathar makes her presence at the sermon of a joint Good Man and Good Women endeavor all the

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\(^{253}\) The name of this man, Raimon Viels, seems to be a scribal error based on the fact that a few lines above Guilhem Cavaers was cited as Bernart’s father-in-law, and a Raimon Viels is never again mentioned within the records from Fanjeaux.

\(^{254}\) MS 609, fol. 169r: “Et tunc ipse testis et dictus Ramundus Viels socer eius iverunt de mandato dicti Bertrand Martini tunc episcopi hereticorum usque ad domum Guiralde de Varahola propter duas hereticas que ibi erant et adduxerunt eas ad dictum hereticum et omnes et ipse testis audierunt ibi predicationem dictorum hereticorum et inclinerunt eis tantum capita sua dicentes ‘Deus referat vobis bonas gratias.’”
more intriguing. With the maintenance of the Durfort lands in the hands of the
disenfranchised Guilhem’s grandson, Bernart Huc de Festa, his frequent companionship of both
Arnaut Ou and Bernart de Podio Calvo, two other members of the audience, underscores the
high social status of the witnesses by-in-large. Both of these men were also associates of
another knightly witness, Amelh de Mortario, in addition to Bernart Teuler himself. In all,
only the woman França, and her daughter Amada, were of the lower class. Considering the
evidence of higher participation among the nobility in supporting the Good Women of
Fanjeaux, this fact does not come as a great surprise.

Unnamed Perfectae of Cambiac

The last case of female preaching to be discussed within this chapter had taken place in
the north-west of the Lauragais, in a village called Cambiac. On the day before Christmas Eve,
1245, Aimersent, the wife of Guilhem Viguer of Cambiac, had appeared before Bernard de Caux
and two other clerical witnesses—such as the future inquisitor and chronicler, Friar Guillaume
Pelhisson. At the time of her deposition she was a middle-aged woman, because twenty-
three years before (1222) she had been pregnant when her aunt, Gérauda de Cabuer, had led
her from Auriac to the home of N’Esquiva in Cambiac to see two unknown perfectae. Within
that home, Aimersent and her aunt Gérauda had been two of five members of the audience,
the others being N’Esquiva, her husband Guilhem Aldric the knight, and their son Guilhem the

\[255\] Suzanne Nelli, Les Durforts de Languedoc au Moyen Age (Toulouse: Privat, 1989), 73. Na Cavaers made
frequent donations to the Dominican priory of Prouilhe near Fanjeaux, as according to Nelli, in an attempt to
conceal her Cathar sympathies.
\[256\] MS 609, fols. 150v and 152v.
\[257\] MS 609, fols. 168v-169r.
\[258\] MS 609, fol. 239v.
younger. The lady of the house had taught them all how to properly adore the Good Women—on bended knees, asking for their intercession. According to the witness, on that very same day all of the witnesses had heard the perfectae preaching for a long time.\textsuperscript{259} Despite the learning experience this event must have been, Aimersent did not remember that day fondly for those very perfectae had later ridiculed her for being pregnant—claiming that the unborn child in her stomach was in fact a demon.\textsuperscript{260} From that day forward she rejected the Cathar faith.

Walter L. Wakefield and John Hine Mundy both discussed Aimersent’s story largely due to her unrestrained testimony against the locals of both her native Auriac and Cambiac. She also provided especially damning evidence against the local lord, Jordan Sais, and his son, Guilhem.\textsuperscript{261} Her staunch anti-Cathar beliefs engendered many arguments between herself and her husband, who was so devoted to the heresy that Jordan Sais tried to have him safeguard a book belonging to the Cathar deacon, Raimon Fort, when he was being persecuted by the inquisitors.\textsuperscript{262} Her reputation preceded her, as Jordan Sais, his son, and a dozen other townsfolk (both nobles and peasants) came to her when Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre began their investigation. They begged her not to implicate them in heresy, and to conceal the truth. When she resolutely denied their request, Guilhem Sais forced her into a wine cask, in which she was trapped over night while they tried to convince Aimersent’s son to do what his mother

\textsuperscript{259} MS 609, fol. 239v. The manuscript reads, “omnes et ipsa testis audierunt predicationem dictarum hereticarum diu et adoravent eas sicut superius dictum est.”

\textsuperscript{260} MS 609, fol. 239v: “Et dicte heretice dixerunt ipsi testi coram omnibus quia erat adolescentula pregnans quod demonum portabat in ventre, et alii ceperunt ridere inde.”


\textsuperscript{262} MS 609, fol. 239v.
would not. She was even forced to pay her lords for her own release. Having no love for her community nor for the Good Christians, her deposition may be one of the most revealing accounts. But her biases should not go unnoticed.

Everyone who had been present to witness the long sermon of the unnamed Good Women, including the deponent herself, had been of the nobility. It had largely been a private, family affair for the hostess N’Esquiva and her husband and son. But clearly N’Esquiva had wanted to encourage the spiritual growth of her community by allowing Gérauda de Cabuer to escort her niece to the gathering. Considering that she was pregnant at a young age, and that she had up until that point been unaware of how to perform the *melioramentum*, it seems likely that Aimersent had been brought there to learn from the austere morality of the Good Women. While her deposition in general is quite verbose, appearing before the inquisitors a total of three times, she had only mentioned the other four members of that small audience on that single occasion—and no other deponents from Cambiac had mentioned them as well. Further information about them, aside from their social rank, is as obscure as the unnamed *perfectae* themselves.

From the days of Charles Schmidt and Charles Molinier, scholars have been debating the roles, both social and religious, that women played within Catharism of Languedoc. With the

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263 MS 609, fols. 239v: “Item, dixit quod hoc anno, inter Pentecosten et festum Sancti Johannis Babtiste, venit Jordanus Saicius, et Willelmus Saicius, filius eius, et Helias Gausberti et Ramundus Vassaros et Petrus Arnaldus, et Willelmus Vicarius, vir ipsius testis, ad ipsam testem; et dictus Willelmus Saicius dixit ipsi testi quod nullo modo diceret veritatem, de his que viderat fieri ab ipsis de facto heresis, Inquisitoribus, et quod nollet destruere eos dicendo veritatem, quia nullus compelleret eam de Inquistoribus quod diceret nisi ea que ipsamet vellet dicere. Et omnes alii supradicti, comiendo, dixerunt sibi hoc idem. Et tunc ipsa testis respondit eis quod ipsa diceret veritatem de his que faciebat. Et tunc dictus W. Saicius cepit ipsam testem et posuit in quadam tonella, et filium ipsius testis similiter, quia manutenebat eam, dicendo ei: ‘Garcifer, vultis vos juvare Verulam istam que vult nos destruere omnes?’ Et hoc viderunt et audierunt omnes homines de Cambiac. Et stetit in dicta tonella per unam noctem, et in crostino redimit se de dictis dominis de Cambiaco iii solidos et vii denarius.”
rise of feminist theories in the later twentieth century, the focus of scholarly enquiries began to shift from a homogenous group of “women” to individuals. Part of this change, evidenced by the work of Anne Brenon starting in the late 1980s, has been to bring the Good Women to the fore by focusing on their place within the Cathar environment. While great strides have been taken from the earliest years of the debate, there is still further to go. Though treated recently by other scholars, still too little attention has been directed toward Cathar preaching—and especially what role the *perfectae* played in it. This chapter, and the one following it, is an attempt to include Good Women into this discussion by revealing the context of their pastoral activity.

The case studies described above, those of Esclarmonde de Foix and Arnaude de Lamothe, as well as the known and unknown *perfectae*, have provided a setting for further discussion on Cathar female spirituality. Anecdotal as they may seem, explaining the pastoral experiences of these women, enmeshed within the communal and familial ties of the rural nobility, gives an insight into contemporary social elements that were not directly mentioned by Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre’s deponents. An analysis of the larger social perception of the fifteen cases within MS 609 will be a subject of the next chapter, but a few preliminary observations are fitting here.

To begin, it should be reiterated that the first two case-studies of this chapter, those of Esclarmonde de Foix and Arnaude de Lamothe, were included to give a sense of the life experiences of the *perfectae* in two different periods. The generations of Good Women from before and after the appearance of inquisitors in the Lauragais both had the abilities to preach. Perhaps, however, only the later generations had the greater impact on their communities,
because of heightened activity caused by the spiritual crisis of the inquisition. While Na Doça had heard the preaching of Blancha and Brunissen in *perfectae* houses before the crusade, the context of female sermons shifted during the 1220s and 1230s from being directed at female initiates in heretical homes to include ordinary *credentes* on their own, lay property.

The stories of Esclarmonde and Arnaude were included as well to indicate evidence of the preaching of the Good Women outside of MS 609. Although a great resource for studying the *perfectae*, it is by no means the only such text—the partial register of Friar Ferrer (BnF Doat, vol. 23) would be another such example, from which the majority of Arnaude’s tale survives. MS 609 was the focus here because of the practical limits of a thesis, and due to the work done by Abels and Harrison, who largely used the register as their principle source in constructing their arguments on the role of women as a whole within the heresy. The evidence of Esclarmonde’s preaching, on the other hand, was derived from several narrative and poetic sources (*Hystoria Albigensis*, *Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise*, etc.); and this indicates that the pastoral activity of the Good Women was a widely understood phenomenon—at least by Catholic chroniclers. This alone possibly suggests that the extent of female preaching was under reported by the deponents of the early inquisitors. Was this, though, because of a bias of the inquisitorial scribes (or copyists), or due to the Cathar community itself? Perhaps an answer to this question is unexplainable.

Their experiences, however, no matter how helpful in understanding the activities of certain women, are not applicable to all *perfectae*. It should not be concluded that the other women analyzed in this chapter all had similar backgrounds or the same social motivations for being Good Women. Perhaps many women chose to undergo the imposition of hands simply
because of their familial affiliations, like Esclarmonde. Or perhaps others were encouraged by elderly family members to take a religious life, as Arnaude and her sister had been. In fact, as both Esclarmode and Arnaude were among the nobility, their stories cannot be applied to all of the fourteen women above. A few, for example, like Tholsana, have obscure backgrounds and could very well be from a non-noble family. Like França and her daughter Amada, two women from Fanjeaux who heard the preaching of Bertrand Marti and the two Good Women, perhaps such obscurity indicates a lower social position. Not enough evidence survives to draw from, but too exact of a comparison between the two exemplary perfectae and all the other women should be avoided.

Understanding the fifteen cases within MS 609, nevertheless, is still useful. The prosopographical investigation into all the audience members, as well as the repeated cross-referencing of witness’ testimonies involved in each case, reveals the whole context of the preaching of the Good Women. The aim of John Arnold in his “The Preaching of the Cathars,” was to reexamine inquisitorial registers and lists of sentences to ascertain the meaning of Cathar preaching. Despite shortcomings and concerns already stated in the introduction about his approach—such as ignoring the female half of the Cathar ministry—his methodology was useful and the work here is very much a continuation of his approach. For the purposes of establishing this context for the perfectae, it is enough here to let these case studies stand on their own. But when seen collectively, patterns do emerge about the perfectae and their audiences. When specific identities were known for these female ministers, connections between family members and friends can often be found among their audiences. These connections hint at the meaning of these events. They served as the reason for attendance; and
in certain cases, they also likely provided the reason for the deponent’s own testimony. The larger social meaning of the Good Women’s pastoral activity, and questions about female Cathar spirituality, will be examined in the following chapter.
CHAPTER III
AN ANALYSIS OF FEMALE CATHAR SPIRITUALITY IN THE THIRTEENTH-CENTURY LAURAGAIS

Concerning which spirits, who with the Devil fell from heaven, those who believed and joined the said Devil were made demons, of whom those who sinned the most fell in the abyss, and those who sinned least fell after them on the earth, and others in the water, and others in the sky, and others remained near heaven. Indeed, those spirits who did not join but merely came near to the said disturbance fell as well and from them were made the spirits of men and women.\(^{264}\)

Item, he [Pèire Bela, the rector of the Church of Pech] said that a year ago or around he himself was going to Tarascon with Raimon Teisseyre, with the son of the said Arnaut [Teisseyre]. And when they were near Verdun bells were rung for the dead, and then the witness himself said to the said Raimon, ‘We should stop a little while we asses if it is rung for a woman or for a man,’ to which the said Raimon responded that it was not rung neither for a man nor for a woman, because after a person died, [they are] neither a man nor a woman. To which he himself responded that he was not saying well...\(^{265}\)

The above quotations, both taken from the registers of Jacques Fournier during his investigation of the Sabarthès (1318-1325), reveal certain aspects of Cathar theology concerning the perception of gender. The first passage, a portion of a story told to Joan Maury of Montaillou by his father, Raimon, concerns a Cathar myth of the creation of Man. The second, part of Pèire Bela’s deposition against the notary Arnaut Teisseyre of Lordat, recounts


an interaction between the rector and Arnaut’s son on a trip to Tarascon. Both, however, hint at the presumed equality of the souls of all of humankind. Regardless of gender, the heavenly substance that animated a person’s corporeal self shared the same tragic origin. Deceived by the Devil, the spirits of heaven fell to the earth to inhabit the bodies fashioned by the Evil One, and were doomed to continue this process eternally. That is, of course, until a true believer, man or woman, rectified themselves spiritually through the consolamentum—as the apostles had done—ensuring the final separation of their soul from its carnal prison upon their material death. Concerning the spiritual, men and women were identical, despite other seemingly misogynistic elements within Catharism itself. It is this spiritual conception of humankind, as revealed through the actions of the perfectae, that will be the subject of this chapter.

In the previous chapter, on the preaching of the Good Women within MS 609, fifteen case studies were fully described and contextualized. The relationships between the perfectae and their audiences, whenever apparent, were explained along with the communal and familial ties between the audience members themselves. Although extensive, through these prosopographical analyses I was able to theorize about the reasons why the thirteen deponents even mentioned the perfectae preaching at all (largely due to their personal connections)—a crucial endeavor, considering the rarity in which Good Women were reported doing so. Even though the context of each case has been explained, still, the overall meaning has yet to be discussed. It is here, in this final chapter, that such an analysis will be attempted. What, if

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anything, can be said about the significance of the preaching of the Good Women as a whole within MS 609?

Because of its subject material, the following discussion will largely deal—as the previous chapter did—with the fourteen pairs of Good Women who were recorded as preaching (on fifteen occasions). More broadly, however, it will engage on the ongoing debate among historians on the spirituality of Cathar women, and their place within the heresy. Once again, the Good Women themselves, the apogee of female Cathar expression, will be the venue through which these themes will be treated. These aims will be accomplished in three sections. To begin, a historiographic section will deal with how modern historians have approached the topic. The work of three scholars will be the central focus as they each represent three popular trends of explanation over the last forty years. The section which follows will consider a contested element within modern scholarship (the evidence for female spirituality), using the fifteen case studies of chapter two as a guide. A cautionary discussion on the Catholic lens in which much of the surviving primary source material was created will be a main theme here. Finally, the third section will be directed at how the rural society perceived the pastoral activities of these Cathar women—at least based off the evidence in MS 609. By comparing the gender and social rank of the deponents who mentioned hearing their sermons, as well as those of the audience members who were claimed to have been there, further conclusions will be added to those of chapter one. It will be shown that while women were equal to men spiritually according to Cathar theology, the day-to-day perception of the Good Women in the thirteenth-century Lauragais was not as simple.
In the historical debate on women within Catharism introduced in the previous chapters, the majority of scholarship can largely be characterized within two groups. The first group, represented by Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison, who in 1979 argued against the then widely-accepted notion of a female proclivity for the heresy, claimed that men and women participated in it equally.\textsuperscript{267} In their opinion, gender was irrelevant for heretical practice. The work of Anne Brenon exemplifies a second strand of interpretation. She, conversely, has agreed with earlier assertions about the special outlet Catharism provided for Languedocian women, firmly stating that the faith gave women spiritual and individual agency.\textsuperscript{268} She even posited, in line with Charles Molinier, that male and female perfects had a similar range in function and were considered as Good Christians just as \textit{perfecti} were.\textsuperscript{269} Peter Biller, however, raised a third possibility: one in which women were especially repelled by the tenants of the heretical faith, and has urged other scholars to consider the trial records of women who had renounced Cathar beliefs.

It was in his article “Cathars and Material Women,” that Biller expounded upon his theory. He claimed, in the article’s two sections (historiographic and analytic), that historians have misunderstood the role that women played within the heresy due to the distorting “masks” that they have used to understand it. Biller lauded Brenon for her book, \textit{Les femmes cathares}, praised as the first monograph length study to approach women individually, but he also chastised her for not being critical enough towards the women who were “indifferent or


It is undeniable that styles and fashions in historical research have the capacity to influence how historians perceive a given topic. These influences can lead to drastic misconceptions. It was admirable of Biller to attempt to deconstruct the falsified versions of Catharism supported by a century and a half of research and to offer a new interpretation—still a “mask,” by his own admission. Nevertheless, problems still exist.

In the second half of Biller’s article, the analytical section, his primary goal was to illustrate not only the misogynistic elements within Catharism that might have repelled women, but also to indicate, whenever possible, the statements of Cathar women themselves discussing these less-than-flattering theological images about the female sex. In summation, it was largely an endeavor to indicate that women were not spiritually equal to men within the faith; that they were in fact always seen in a “material” lens theologically under the dualist vision of Catharism. While this article was extensive (forty-six pages), certain issues arose that might have been treated in a longer study.

The largest problems, self-diagnosed by Biller, were geographical and chronological in nature. Comparing the Italian Catholic polemicist, Moneta da Cremona’s, statements about the Cathar conception of the materiality of women in his *Adversus Catharos et Valdenses Libri Quinque* to those made by some of Jacques Fournier’s deponents in Pamiers was potentially misleading. It is well known, for example, that the dualism of Italian and Languedocian Catharism was not identical. Furthermore, although Biller argued for it, can statements made

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in the 1240s reflect the same concepts present in Languedoc during the 1320s—not forgetting the drastic social differences present in the adherents questioned by the inquisitors of either period?\textsuperscript{274} Was the Catharism known to the nobles of Fanjeaux in the mid-thirteenth century the same as that experienced by the shepherds of Montaillou in the early fourteenth?

Although commendable in its innovative approach, I believe certain aspects of Biller’s evidence need further contextual explanations. Acknowledging this, which of these three interpretations (special female involvement, gender equality, or special female repulsion) is most appropriate? Perhaps a better question is which aspects of these theories are well supported and which are not? Abels and Harrison showed, quite effectively, that statistically the Cathar adherents deposed within MS 609 favored neither gender; and in fact, the number of Good Women seen was nearly equal to that of Good Men—at 45% of all reported ministers.\textsuperscript{275} Moreover, the range of function for the *perfectae* and *perfecti* were nearly identical—as argued by Brenon, and reinforced by the first chapter of this thesis.\textsuperscript{276} As it was prohibited for women to be within the Cathar hierarchy, it is understandable that *perfectae* would not have led an *aparelhamentum* ceremony; and while no direct evidence survives from MS 609 to suggest women performed the *consolamentum*, they were capable of doing so—as evidence from volumes twenty-two and twenty-three of the Collection Doat suggests.\textsuperscript{277} The old claim, supported by Brenon, that women were especially drawn to the heresy, however, is unfounded. While it appears to have been more common for young aristocratic girls to be

\begin{footnotes}
\item[274] Biller, “Cathars and Material Women,” 94.
\end{footnotes}
encouraged to enter the ranks of the Good Christians than young boys, there is no evidence to suggest that Languedocian women as a whole found a special outlet within Catharism to express a “feminine” spirituality.\(^\text{278}\) Other historians, like John Hine Mundy, have even noticed that the Waldensians had offered women more liberties than the Cathars ever did.\(^\text{279}\)

Recognizing that both men and women were equally sympathetic to the mendicant orders in the early thirteenth century, and that female populations of catholic religious orders only began to grow markedly after 1275 (long after Catharism had nearly vanished from Toulouse), Mundy suggested that women were no more likely than men to be responsible for its early growth.\(^\text{280}\)

Another aspect of Biller’s argument that is misleading was the attention given to the context of his evidence—the very problem John Arnold saw in modern scholarship (regarding preaching) the year following the publication of “Cathars and Material Women.”\(^\text{281}\) It is understandable to see women as repelled by the tenants of Catharism when only selected, dramatic cases are considered—such as the testimony of Aimersent, the wife of Guilhem Viguer of Cambiac, whose ties with the Cathars were severed based off of one interaction in her youth.\(^\text{282}\) Biller used her well-known testimony as a leitmotif for female repulsion from Catharism. He avoided distorting the context of the scenario by reminding his readers that Aimersent not only listened to *perfectae* preaching but it was interestingly women who spoke

\(^{278}\) Chris Sparks, *Heresy, Inquisition and Life Cycle in Medieval Languedoc* (York: York Medieval Press, 2014), 53-64. Sparks noted that from the surviving evidence (claiming that more cases likely were missed by the inquisitors), the number of children who had entered the ranks of the *perfecti*, no matter for how long, one-third were male. He suggested that the practice may have been more equal among the genders than has been assumed, but it was marginal regardless.


\(^{280}\) Mundy, *Men and Woman at Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars*, 44-46.

\(^{281}\) Arnold, “The Preaching of the Cathars,” 183.

\(^{282}\) See the section “Unknown *Perfectae* of Cambiac,” in the second chapter.
against her pregnancy, calling her unborn baby a demon.\textsuperscript{283} This transparency about the context, however, was not as clear throughout the article, especially when concerning later evidence from other depositions.

Pèire and Joan Maury of Montaillou, both the sons of Raimon Maury, are well known even outside of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie’s \textit{Montaillou: Village Occitan de 1294 à 1324} for their detailed confessions given before Jacques Fournier.\textsuperscript{284} Biller, using some of their more provocative testimonies, adduced both of their depositions in attempting to prove the lived reality of Catharism. To him, it was a heresy that had a theology directed against the materiality seen to be inherent in the female sex—much like Giovanni Filoramo’s opinions about the ancient Gnostics that Biller cited as a means of a conclusion for his article.\textsuperscript{285} Thus, statements reported by Pèire and Joan about aspects of Cathar cosmology that they had heard preached—or indirect references to sermons heard by their father, and repeated to them—were taken to reflect a negative materiality of women. These are potentially dramatic cases to mention, but, for both deponents, the full context of their testimonies was not always fully related. For example, Biller interpreted Pèire Maury’s conversation with the Good Man Jacme Autier—in which the \textit{perfectus} claimed the Devil had promised the angels of heaven with wives and children on Earth in order to seduce them—as a rather benign reference to the material focus bestowed upon women (and their role in childbearing).\textsuperscript{286} Left unmentioned, however, was the situation in which Jacme had discussed these topics with Pèire. Although Jacme was reported as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{283} Biller, “Cathars and Material Women,” 61-63.
\item \textsuperscript{284} Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, \textit{Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error} (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1978), 375-376. In the highly abridged English version, both Pèire and Joan have extensive entries within the index of Montaloinais families.
\item \textsuperscript{285} Biller, “Cathars and Material Women,” 63 and 107.
\item \textsuperscript{286} Biller, “Cathars and Material Women,” 90-91.
\end{itemize}
only speaking directly to Pèire,\textsuperscript{287} he had been part of a group of men traveling with the heretic.\textsuperscript{288} The occasion in which this event took place is perhaps of great importance. John Arnold, in his “The Preaching of the Cathars,” had mentioned how Cathar sermons, like those of their mendicant contemporaries, could have been tailored to fit a particular audience.\textsuperscript{289} If this is to be believed, Jacme could have emphasized the wickedness of the Devil by underlining the attractiveness of earthly and familial pursuits from a male perspective—as he was preaching to another man, who was also only in the company of other men.

As for Joan Maury, Biller adduced several statements made about the Montalionais shepherd by his acquaintances, but only one direct quote from his own deposition in which he spoke, again, about how the Devil persuaded angels to leave heaven with wives.\textsuperscript{290} Joan had heard this said by his father, and the original context of the message cannot be known. Biller also neglected to cite other, more favorable, testimonies about women. Take for example the first quote mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, a testimony from another conversation between Joan and his father, Raimon, in which Joan was told the souls of men and women were of the same substance. Although there is a discrepancy in the evidence from Joan Maury’s deposition, the fact that he, and several others, reported gendered remarks about the


\textsuperscript{288} Le register d’inquisition de Jacques Fournier, Évêque de Pamiers (1318-1325), vol. 3, 129. The company had consisted of the heretic Jacme, along with Pèire, Pèire Montaner, and Raimon Pèire. After leaving Raimon’s home, Pèire Maury and Pèire Montaner accompanied Jacme along the road, on which the said conversation took place.

\textsuperscript{289} John Arnold, “The Preaching of the Cathars,” in \textit{Medieval Monastic Preaching}, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Publishing, 1998), 194. He indicated that in BnF, MS Doat 25, fol. 314v, the deponent Pèire de Beauville reported that he had seen the Cathar deacon Pons de Sainte-Foy preaching to Raimonda de Ranaville about Mary Magdalene, suggesting, as this is the only reference made in Cathar preaching to her, that the deacon could have found a sermon to fit the audience.

\textsuperscript{290} Biller, “Cathars and Material Women,” 91.
materiality of women and the associations of the female sex with the Devil’s machinations suggests that such ideas cannot be dismissed. A more balanced view, however, is that perhaps a single interpretation of Cathar gender equality, female proclivity, or misogyny is too simple, and the actual historical situation was much more varied.

Furthermore, another confusing problem made apparent by Biller’s article is the nature of female souls upon a woman’s death. Some of Jacques Fournier’s deponents claimed that a woman’s soul would have to revert into that of a man’s in order to ascend to heaven.291 If the second quote in this chapter’s introduction is recalled (that of Pèire Bela’s conversation with Raimon Teisseyre), however, there is evidence to suggest a deceased person’s soul was genderless. Perhaps this confusion can be tied to the corruption of a given individual’s understanding of Catharism, as a wide range of beliefs co-existed among the deponents within Fournier’s register.292 But, when analyzing Pèire Bela’s conversation, it is safe to assume that Raimon Teisseyre’s (the man who claimed the souls of men and women were the same) understanding of Catharism was more developed than the average villager’s. His mother, Guillemma, was the daughter of the Good Man Pèire Authier (the chief architect of the Cathar revival of the early fourteenth century).293 His father, Arnaut Teisseyre, was the medical notary of Lordat. He was a literate man, who held an Occitan book in his home that contained proofs and counter arguments for the “Manichean” heresy, and who debated scripture with his father-

292 Take for example the deposition of the farmer Arnaut Cogul (Le register d’inquisition de Jacques Fournier, Évêque de Pamiers (1318-1325), vol. 2, 378-381) who believed the Devil only made evil things—like wolves—or that of Raimon de l’Aire (Le register d’inquisition de Jacques Fournier, Évêque de Pamiers (1318-1325), vol. 1, ed. Jean Duvernoy (Toulouse: Privat, 1965), 118-134) who did not think heaven or hell existed at all. Both of these views actively discredit Cathar conceptions of cosmology.
in-law. Descending from a family steeped in the heresy, and having a literate father who had often housed traveling *perfecti*, it is quite reasonable to think that when Raimon told Pèire Bela that the souls of men and women were of the same substance, he did so with full confidence in its veracity. This is especially apparent when considering that Raimon was speaking with as staunch a Catholic as Pèire, who was the rector of Pech.

Having briefly reviewed the major historiographic trends over the last several decades—paying special attention to Peter Biller’s work due to its dramatic shift from the earlier prevailing theories—it has become apparent that the evidence for female spirituality has led to many multifaceted conclusions. No matter which side of the debate an individual historian falls on, nevertheless, an overarching problem exists about the nature of the trial records upon which many of these arguments were based. The issue of understanding the inquisitorial context of these sources was addressed perhaps best, and most famously, by Carlo Ginzburg in his “The Inquisitor as Anthropologist.” In this chapter, Ginzburg discussed the benefits of using such records as well as their shortcomings. He claimed that, like an anthropologist’s journal, judicial records and court proceedings could act as windows into the lives of the individuals they expose. Being second- or third-hand accounts of oral testimony—recognizing that statements were translated from vernacular to Latin, and then rewritten to fit ecclesiastical formula—trial records act as one of the closest sources a historian can use to get to the direct speech of their subjects. Many scholars are reluctant to use them, however, on account of the distortions created by the inquisitorial process. Ginzburg’s method to relieve this problem

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was always to be mindful of their dialogic nature. Understanding that the relationship between inquisitor and deponent was unequal, allows the historian to study the mentality of both sides of the interaction. While the inquisitors of Languedoc asked markedly less leading questions than those in Germany (and some individual inquisitors allowed for greater freedom for their deponents to talk at length), interpreting the Catholic lens in which the documents were written is still an important issue.

These inquisitorial registers, increasingly produced throughout the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, were products of the literate environment in which the inquisitors operated. Their authority was bound to them, and inquisitorial power and control was exerted by the maintenance and circulation of these documents. So understanding the relationship between the Catholic inquisitors and the deponents accused (or suspected) of heresy is crucial. This same problem even extends to other chroniclers who wrote about the period. For example, to return to Biller’s evidence in “Cathars and Material Women,” a fundamental portion of his argument about theological misogyny relied on how he attempted to apply the Catharism of Moneta da Cremona’s treatise to that of Languedoc (across the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries). While Biller acknowledged some of the potential problems of depending upon any polemicist’s work—notably that complete, original ideas are distorted into separated statements, and that Moneta himself quite emphatically claimed to have diligently interviewed heretics for his treatise—simply writing about Catharism from a

296 Ginzburg, Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method, 158-160.
297 Biller, “Cathars and Material Women,” 89.
298 John Arnold, “'A Man Takes an Ox by the Horn and a Peasant by the Tongue' Literacy, Orality, and Inquisition in Medieval Languedoc,” in Learning and Literacy in Medieval England and Abroad, ed. Sarah Rees Jones (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 33.
Catholic perspective raises concerns about bias.\(^{300}\) This very problem, a Catholic bias, is apparent in the evidence for the preaching of the Good Women in MS 609.

Within the register, the language used for noting the source of the heretical preaching was in some cases confusing, especially when both *perfecti* and *perfectae* were involved. In three of the fifteen cases both male and female heretics were mentioned at a single event, and in these instances it is not surprising that the Latin used was the masculine plural genitive personal pronoun: *predicationem eorum*. In two of these examples, that of Na Bruna cited by Na Ermessen, and the four unknown *perfectae* of Laurac mentioned by Guillelma Garrona, it is unclear that preaching was in fact done by these women at all. These instances were both considered because Abels and Harrison had included them in their twelve documented cases.\(^{301}\) The third occasion though, that of the *perfectae* in Fanjeaux cited by Bernart Teuler, can be affirmed to be a shared effort of the Good Women and bishop Bertrand Marti because only one *perfecti* had been mentioned. If the preaching was solely done by Bertrand, the plural noun *hereticorum* would not have been needed. The fact that *perfecti* and *perfectae* preached together is noteworthy in and of itself, considering how many scholars have suggested Good Women were only sought to perform their spiritual functions when *perfecti* were not to be found.\(^{302}\) That being said, for the twelve other cases of female preaching, only women were mentioned by the deponents and thus it would seem clear who were reciting the sermons.

For exactly half of these events, however, masculine plural endings were still applied to either the personal pronouns or the nouns themselves when no *perfecti* were reported to be

\(^{300}\) Biller, “Cathars and Material Women,” 81-82.

\(^{301}\) Abels and Harrison, “The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism,” 228.

present by the witnesses. Whether these errors can be ascribed to the original inquisitorial notaries, or the copyists who made MS 609, cannot be known. In any event, these scribal slips are quite intriguing. It would be reasonable to assume that they represent a lack of diligence on the part of the notary or copyist, who was so accustomed in dealing with male preachers that they mislabeled these rare entries. Some curious evidence with the Latin, however, indicates a rather more serious issue. In all six cases—for Guillelma de Campolongo, Raimonda Borda, Berenguèira de Seguervilla (both sermons), Blancha, and Brunissen—the shift in the genders of the Latin nouns and personal pronouns were only applied to the activity of preaching. For nearly all of these perfectae, feminine endings were used when their own adorations, by their own credentes, were recorded, but (and occasionally within the same sentence) their preaching was credited to absent Good Men. For the case of Blancha specifically, when it was recorded that Na Doça had lived in her company (and that of her sociae) for one year, it was said that she lived in the home of the Good Women (hereticarum); but immediately after, for the remainder of that testimony, the gender of the endings was reversed. It was said that she often ate with them (eis), and from bread blessed by them (eis); she adored the three heretics (hereticos) many times in saying, “Bless, Good Men [homines], pray God for me,” and she heard the preaching of them (eorum) many times as well. While this particular case is especially problematic, because exactly half of the occurrences of Good Women preaching without the

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303 This is true for the following perfectae: Guillelma de Campolongo (Toulouse, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 609, fol. 35v), Raimonda Borda (MS 609, fols. 76r-76v), Berenguèira de Seguervilla (MS 609, fols. 137r and 137v), Blancha (MS 609, fol. 184v), and Brunissen (MS 609, fol. 184v).
304 MS 609, fol. 184v.
305 Admittedly, here, the ablative plural endings of these personal pronouns are ambiguous about the gender of the heretics in question.
306 MS 609, fol. 184v.
assistance of Good Men have these scribal errors, it would appear that, from a Catholic perspective, there was a resistance, however subliminal, to thinking of women as being ministers.

More broadly even, it is necessary to discuss what exactly is meant by the term *predication*, translated in this thesis (and in the secondary literature) as “preaching.” The English terms “sermon” and “preaching” imply a formal homily in front of a congregation or before a pulpit, and lack the semantic range present in the Latin words from which they are often translated—*sermo* and *predicatio*. According to Simon Forde, these words should be thought of, in order to account for the broader range in meaning of the Medieval Latin, as “discourse” and “foretelling.”\(^ {307} \) Specifically for the context of MS 609 (where the Latin word *sermo* was never used regarding female preaching), the noun *predicatio* itself derives from two Latin verbs—the first conjugation *predicare* and the third conjugation *predicere*.\(^ {308} \) Like many parallel first and third Latin verbs, Forde claimed that the general rule was that the third conjugation verb denoted a single action (*predicere*, meaning to foretell), while the first conjugation verb meant an, “iterative, progressive or frequentative action,” (*predicare*, meaning to foretell, announce, praise, or preach repeatedly).\(^ {309} \) To Forde, the essential point of this discussion was that the “conceptual frame” historians use in translating these words needed to change; that, in acknowledging their full semantic range, the original medieval

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\(^{308}\) Forde, “Late Medieval Lay Preachers’ Use of the Bible,” 45.
\(^{309}\) Forde, “Late Medieval Lay Preachers’ Use of the Bible,” 46.
meaning could be grasped. Considering this warning, is it right to think of this pastoral action as referring to preaching at all?

Combined with this problem of translation is the understanding of the historical context and pursuit of early inquisitors. Stated in the introduction, it was decreed during the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 that lay preaching (by anyone not ordained as a priest), regardless of its message, was forbidden, and so it was of the utmost importance to early inquisitors to search out all malefactors. When this heightened sensitivity to unauthorized preaching is added to the unavoidable problem of translating the original statements of deponents from the vernacular to ecclesiastical Latin, the language of the registers becomes immediately unclear. In events that were recorded as *predicatio*, did the deponent truly testify to having heard someone preach (or a repeated foretelling, etc.), or did the notaries simply transcribe it as such to build damning evidence? Were the Occitan words used to describe the event tailored to fit the inquisitor’s agenda during translation? Based on the simple fact that testimonies were read back to deponents for final verification before the depositions were recorded in the registers, further textual evidence from the content of these female “sermons” may in fact lend some credence to the standard translation.

In the final section of this chapter, I will review the spirituality of Cathar women on a social level. Bearing in mind the constraints of the source material, the fourteen female preachers and their audiences will be analyzed in an attempt to understand their impact upon the Cathar constituents of the Lauragais during the early to mid-thirteenth century. Numerical

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312 Arnold, “‘A Man Takes an Ox by the Horn and a Peasant by the Tongue,’” 32.
examinations of the genders and social origins of both the deponents who testified, as well as the audience members that they mentioned, will be considered. By doing so, any discrepancies in the activities of the genders, or between social levels, of the credentes might be found. In this way, one can test, and weigh the evidence for, the spiritual equality or misogyny of Cathar theology. Their quotidian practices, as captured within MS 609, will hopefully give an insight into the lived reality of Catharism in the Lauragais.

In the fifteen cases of the preaching of Good Women examined in the previous chapter, in nine different villages of the Lauargais (see map, Appendix D), various percentages concerning the gender and social status of the audience members indicate quite interesting results. Eleven of the deponents who claimed to have witnessed the sermons of the perfectae, or 73.3%, were in fact women themselves, meaning 26.7%, or four of the fifteen, were men (Appendix C.1). Paralleling the conclusions of Abels and Harrison, it is interesting to note that the gender of the witness appears to correlate with the genders of the other deposed audience members.\textsuperscript{313} All four male deponents mentioned more men than women in their respective audiences; and only one of the women, Na Ermessen, reported to have seen more men than women in the audience of Na Bruna and the Good Men (Appendix B.1 and B.2). That being said, the total number of men and women in the audience for the events is more equal than those who reported witnessing them. The mean size of the audience for the fifteen cases was 4.4 individuals (the largest being eleven, and three were only attended by one person). This is in no

\textsuperscript{313} Abels and Harrison, “The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism,” 226.
way outside of the norm, as most audiences to hear Cathar preaching were small—although, on some occasions, large public spectacles did occur.\textsuperscript{314}

Accounting for five people who were mentioned at more than one sermon (three women and two men), a total of sixty-one witnesses heard the Good Women preaching.\textsuperscript{315} 49.2% (thirty of sixty-one) were women, while 50.8% (thirty-one of sixty-one) were men. While a given event might have favored one gender over the other (such as the sermon of Guillelma de Campolongo which was heard only by three women), when taken together the distribution of the sexes within the audiences was rather equal. Anne Brenon’s statement thus that “they [the Good Women] also preached to spread God’s message, mainly among women believers” is not supported by the evidence from MS 609.\textsuperscript{316} This equality, however, did not extend through all levels of society. On only one occasion (within the home of Na Cavaers of Fanjeaux) do people from a non-noble social rank possibly appear within the audience—and this is an inference because their surnames were not mentioned, and no familial ties were described to suggest otherwise.\textsuperscript{317} Put in another perspective, 96.7% of the sixty-one witnesses were nobles. Additionally, every deponent, male and female, to mention the Good Women preaching was a noble as well (Appendix C.2).

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{314}] MS 609, fol. 162v. Joan Cambiare and his \textit{socius}, the \textit{perfecti} of Fanjeaux, were reported to have preached to a crowd of 100 people or more within the home of Bernart Huc de Festa by Arnaut de Calhavel around 1230.
\item[\textsuperscript{315}] Na Ermessen and Na Cerdana were present for the preaching of Guillelma de Campolongo and Na Bruna; Na Doça witnessed Blancha and Brunissen preaching; and Sicart de Belfort and Guilhem de Insula heard Na Bruna preaching with Bertrand Marti as well as with her \textit{socia}, Rixen.
\item[\textsuperscript{317}] MS 609, fol. 169r. The two women França, and her daughter Amada, were inferred to be non-nobles.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Before concluding these analyses, it is imperative first to make a few comparisons to the pastoral activities of the Good Men. Three *perfecti* who were active in Fanjeaux from as early as 1233 and as late as 1242—Pèire Columba, Raimon Rigaut, and Arnaut Recort—will act as a sample for the larger output of the Good Men as a whole. Between these three men, they were cited preaching ten sermons within various homes of the *castrum* of Fanjeaux.\(^{318}\) Eight different men testified to hearing these *perfecti* preach, while only one woman reported to have heard Raimon Rigaut preaching twice.\(^{319}\) Arnaut even acted as Raimon’s *socius* on one occasion where they were cited preaching together.\(^{320}\) Accounting for fourteen repeated individuals, forty-three people were witnesses for these events. The gender divide among the audience members was incredibly skewed as thirty-seven of them were men, while only six were women—86% to 14% (Appendix C.3). While this is not entirely surprising considering that only one woman from Fanjeaux reported hearing Raimon and his *socius* preach, it is still intriguing. Perhaps with a larger sample size the proportions might shift—and thus it cannot be said to be applicable for all of the Good Men in MS 609.

Considering this, when compared to the Good Women, the social statistics are just as distinctive as they were for the gender divisions of their audiences. Five of the deponents who sighted these ministers (or 55.5%) were nobles, leaving four (45.5%) to be of the lower rank. While the deponents were more-or-less equal, the audience members were not. Twenty-eight nobles and fifteen non-nobles had witnessed these men preaching (65.2% to 34.8%). Although

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\(^{318}\) Pèire Columba (MS 609, fol. 157v), Raimon Rigaut (MS 609, fols. 149v, 151v, 153r, 155v, 156r, and 156v), and Arnaut Recort (MS 609, fols. 151v, 159v, and 161v).

\(^{319}\) MS 609, fol. 156v. The woman Bernarda Aimeriga, the former wife of Guilhem Faure (the heretic) heard Raimon Rigaut preaching on two occasions.

\(^{320}\) MS 609, fol. 151v.
these statistics could be somewhat misleading considering that there were so few female testimonies, the spread across the social boundaries for their audiences is quite fascinating (Appendix C.4). Though still far from equal, more non-nobles were present for these Good Men than for the Good Women. These findings are even more surprising when the backgrounds of the perfecti are considered. All three men were originally from families belonging to the lower ranks of society. Pèire’s sister, Covinens, was married to a non-noble, and Raimon and Arnaut had many relatives of a similar status. While it should not be concluded that more non-noble perfecti preached than noble, the implications that this lends to the Good Women requires a moment of reflection.

The prosopographical analyses applied within the previous chapter were done in order to fully understand the context in which these women preached. The conclusions drawn about the various familial ties between the audience members and the perfectae themselves were naturally stronger in certain situations than others. Raimon Azemar’s connection to Guillelma de Deime’s family, through her kinsman Guilhem, for example pales in comparison to that of Na Ermessen’s ties to the Mir family, the family of Guillelma de Campolongo by marriage. These common links, as shown in nearly every event, between family and friends, nevertheless, were widespread. Indeed, these relationships acted as a precursor to the events themselves.

This is not to say that the perfectae were only capable of preaching to their family members. The three unnamed pairs of Good Women at Laurac, Fanjeaux, and Cambiac, along with the activities of both Esclarmonde de Foix and Arnaude de Lamothe, are evidence enough

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321 MS 609, fols. 161v, and 167r.
322 MS 609, fol. 201r.
323 MS 609, fol. 33v.
to prove that *perfectae* were more than capable of acting as fully functioning minsters to those outside of their immediate family members. The conclusion to be drawn here is that when connections to the female preachers can be made, they are always to noble families. Other scholars have noticed the great support that the nobility of the Lauragais had for the Good Christians during the early and mid-thirteenth century, extending throughout the families of the *castra.*\(^{324}\) As was shown in the first chapter and enforced here, nevertheless, the support the nobility gave to the perfected also consisted of a greater equality of perception for the pastoral roles forced upon the *perfectae* during the early inquisition. Nobles accepted the Good Women as ministers more readily than those of lower status. It is therefore apparent and unsurprising that the nobles of the Lauragais would be the only deponents to admit to hearing female sermons. As was shown by repeated cross-references, even other nobles at these events did not unanimously agree on the performed activities of the *perfectae.* Evidenced by the numerous examples of purposeful lying, occasionally on the part of whole villages, it is not a stretch of the imagination to understand that more female sermons had transpired but were simply unmentioned.

Within Catharism, the spirits of men and women were theoretically of the same substance. They were angels who had been beguiled by the Devil, only to fall from Heaven, that inhabited the bodies of humankind. Women, like men, could be baptized by the imposition of hands (the *consolamentum*), thereby severing their souls from perpetual carnal imprisonment by living the austere lifestyles of the Good Christians. At the beginning of this investigation, the

question of the spirituality of the *perfectae* was considered. As the Good Women of Fanjeaux had already demonstrated in the first chapter, *perfectae*, although less attested, had a full operating range, more-or-less, of pastoral function within the Cathar church. In this chapter, and the previous, a certain part of that ability, that of their preaching, was analyzed to understand better their perceived spirituality. By placing each event within its proper context, the reasons for their preaching became clearer.

Understanding that context, however, and the broader meaning of it, is more difficult. Historians have disagreed about the presence of women in Catharism for nearly 200 years. Known to be a heresy strongly rooted in familial bonds, it had been assumed for some time (and continues to be to some extent\(^{325}\)) that women were the primary agents in sustaining the faith on the micro-level within Languedocian society. With the rise of feminist theories in the 1960s and 70s, though, the subject was revived and rejuvenated by new approaches. Holes have begun to appear in the old viewpoint, in consequence. Over the last forty years especially conflicting theories have sprouted about female Cathar spirituality.

The work of Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison, Anne Brenon, and Peter Biller represent the three strands in this debate. Questions, however, remain. Was Catharism equally popular among men and women, or was it a special haven for women in a misogynistic society? Even further, was that misogyny actually stronger within the heresy due to its theology, and for this reason some women were actively repelled by it? The quotations cited at the introduction of this chapter, those taken from the registers of Jacques Fournier concerning Joan Maury of

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\(^{325}\) Malcolm Barber, *The Cathars: Dualist Heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), 43. Barber insisted that women were integral to the diffusion of heretical beliefs contrary to claims made by John Hine Mundy, as well as Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison.
Montaillou and Raimon Teisseyre of Lordat, show that in Cathar theology some evidence survives to suggest that men and women were equal spiritually. Conversely, as Biller claimed, there is also evidence to suggest the opposite. Overall, it was not the point of this chapter to agree whole-heartedly with any of the popular interpretations, but instead to show that each of them have aspects that are well supported and others that are not. At least during the mid-thirteenth century, the evidence from the preaching of the Good Women demonstrates this point well. The perfectae of the Lauragais were reported to have operated in a similar manner (although not identical) as the perfecti. They were highly adored and revered by Cathar adherents, and they demonstrated their full sacerdotal roles bequeathed to them by the gender-neutral baptism and ordination of their faith. Nonetheless, while men and women in equal numbers can be found to have treated the perfectae as the austere ministers they were, a social divide existed among their credentes who heard them preaching that was not present for the Good Men. In other words, the belief that they were truly equal with their brethren was not ubiquitously extended to all levels of society: nobles were more accepting of their equal status than non-nobles.
CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis, questions pertaining to equality, both in gender and social status, served as the impetus for many of its arguments. If Good Women were as equal to Good Men as they at least appear theologically, would this equality translate to practical, lived experiences? Were the audiences of the Good Women, whether for sacerdotal or pastoral activities, populated by men and women in equal measure? Did their audiences, on a social level, consist of nobles and non-nobles alike? Were the perfectae perceived in a similar manner as the perfecti?

In chapter one, an analysis of the lay perception and sacerdotal role of the Good Women was gleaned from the trial records of the castrum of Fanjeaux in MS 609. In that village, 42.6% of the total witnesses (forty-three of 101) testified to interacting with the perfectae, both known and unknown, in some manner. Men and women were shown to have done so in near equal percentages. Nearly sixty-three percent of the total female witness from Fanjeaux testified to interacting with Good Women, and approximately fifty-six percent of the men claimed to as well. More men cited interactions with two or more perfectae, however, than women did. Statistically, while more women than men reported a single interaction and more men than women testified to two or more, this underscores their perceived equality between the male and female sex (Appendix A.3). This relationship nevertheless did not appear throughout all social levels. Noble witnesses repeatedly admitted to having greater contact with the Good Women than their non-noble counterparts in such activities as providing them shelter, guarding them in travel, and bestowing them with gifts (Appendix A.4). The adoration of the Good Women, though not always stated, in a similar vein, shows this discrepancy as well.
Non-noble witnesses both admitted to adoring the *perfectae* less often than noble witnesses, but also actively denied performing the rite more often than just omitting a response (Appendix A.5). In short, the evidence reflects a less positive regard for the Good Women from the lower levels of society.

In chapter two, the preaching of the Good Women was studied in testimonies from nine villages across the Lauragais, as well as from the experiences of Esclarmonde de Foix and Arnaude de Lamothe. Fifteen events, not including those of Esclarmonde and Arnaude, from fourteen groups of obscure Good Women, both known and unknown, were described from the trial records. Prosopographical analyses were conducted to evaluate the interpersonal connections between the Good Women and their constituents when possible; but they were primarily applied to the members of their audiences in an effort to understand the context of their preaching. These case studies, as unique and anecdotal as each of them seem, revealed similar threads. When identities of the Good Women can be known, they typically had a connection, either familial or amicable, to the audience members they preached to. In each of these cases, I argue that these very connections were the underlying reasons for the audience’s attendance, as well as for the witness’s testimony. When the accounts of the witnesses actively condemn their family and friends, because of the pattern of suspected lying that often emerges from the cross-examination of depositions, the overall reliability of their claims is more dependable.

Similar questions asked of the sacerdotal activities of the Good Women in chapter one were applied to the evidence of their preaching in chapter three. This was, however, only one of the themes that guided the discussion therein. Historiographic trends regarding the
understanding of female spirituality in Catharism, and the perception of women as a whole by contemporaries, were discussed in three strands. There are scholars who claim the heresy provided a haven for women, while some see a neutral force that acted upon society which favored neither gender. Others argue that women were repelled by fundamental Cathar misogyny that saw their sex as prone to materiality, drawing a parallel to the physical world understood by Cathars to be created by Satan. This debate spans over a century in modern scholarship, and certain ideas and concepts are older than others, often reemerging in new studies. By testing some of the evidence provided by other scholars, and redefining the context of the cited events, I argue that a uniform interpretation of women in the heresy is not possible. Evidence exists that supports various sides of the debate. The detailed analysis of the preaching of the Good Women, used as an example in this discussion, highlights the complexity of perception.

The total number of audience members for all fifteen cases of female preaching in MS 609 show that men and women equally listened to their messages (slightly favoring men at 51.6%), despite the fact that more women than men testified to witnessing these events at 73.3% to 26.7% (Appendix C.1). This evidence contradicts earlier assessments that when preaching, the audience of Good Women was primarily comprised of other women. Again, like in chapter one, this gender balance does not extend through all social levels. Every

326 Anne Brenon, “The Voice of the Good Women: An Essay on the Pastoral and Sacerdotal Role of Women in the Cathar Church,” in Women Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millennia of Christianity, ed. Pamela J. Walker and Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 129: “Authorized to administer the sacrament in an emergency, they [the Good Women] brought salvation; they also preached to spread God’s message, mainly among women believers, who represented a substantial portion of the laity in Occitan towns and castra.”
deponent who cited witnessing a female sermon was a noble, and nearly all of the named audience members (96.7%) were nobles as well (Appendix C.2). Compared to an analysis of the pastoral activities of three Good Men from Fanjeaux, this discrepancy becomes even more apparent. Though the three men chosen had an overwhelming majority from the male sex as both witnesses and audience members (Appendix C.3), the social status of these groups was surprisingly not as lopsided (Appendix C.4). The audiences of the Good Women were socially skewed even if gender balanced. This represents a difference in perception. These analyses then suggest that to apply a uniform interpretation to the Cathars, even in regard to the Good Women, does not work.

Overall, this thesis tries to nuance historical debates about the Good Women, as well as female Cathars as a whole. In chapter one, on the debate of the Good Women, its arguments are partially aligned with the position of Anne Brenon, that the *perfectae* were fully functioning ministers in their faith, in contrast to Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison, and others like John Hine Mundy, who argued that they were not in saying that they “only rarely, if ever, performed the functions that were theoretically theirs....”327 On the other hand, the chapter, and thesis as a whole, diverges from Brenon, nevertheless, in its claim that the Good Women were perceived differently in society. The Good Women were not accepted on a practical level as the Good Men were by the whole of the Lauragais.

In chapter two, two lacunae in modern scholarship are addressed. John Arnold was surprised in 1998 when he noticed that “the context and practice of Cathar preaching [had] not

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been examined thus far in any great detail." He endeavored to begin the process of correcting this gap by reinvestigating the sources and addressing the proper context of Cathar preaching. While some scholars, like Peter Biller, have addressed Cathar preaching in its practical sense, focusing on the literacy of Cathar ministers, Good Women were left out of the discussion. Anne Brenon was the first to address this second omission by bringing the pastoral activities of the Good Women to the fore, but the context of their preaching had not been fully treated. One of the most important themes of this thesis across chapter two and chapter three was that of the preaching of the Good Women. Because of the importance of these findings, a few further assessments are worthy of mention here.

The first issue is to recognize that “preaching” did occur in some form. The range of meaning found in the Latin noun *predicatio* is lost in its English translation of *preaching*. But, based upon the difference with the noun *monitio* (translated as *admonition*) occasionally found in the register referring to their pastoral activity, it is upheld that these women were in fact preachers. The extent of the preaching of the Good Women, however, is difficult to gauge. In most cases of heretical preaching related in MS 609, a typical statement did not elaborate beyond the simple fact that a sermon was heard. Peter Biller had elaborated on the content of one event in which Good Women preached, that of Aimersent in Cambiac around 1222 when

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two unnamed perfectae discussed, among other things, her pregnancy.\textsuperscript{332} This is an extremely rare event as far as the records of MS 609 are concerned, in that the specificities of the occasion survived. A typical deposition, however, was often recorded as thus:

\begin{quote}
Item, in another exchange, at Saint-Martin, in the home of Melia, of the wife of Pèire Joan, she [Na Ermessen] saw Guillelma, the former wife of Raimon Faure de Campolongo, and her socia, the [female] heretics; and she saw there with them the recently said Cerdana and the said Melia, the lady of the house. And they heard the preaching of them and adored them. And it was twelve years ago or around.\textsuperscript{333}
\end{quote}

For two of the other fourteen events, nevertheless, slightly more evidence appeared. In both the depositions of Raimonda Jocglar and Raimon Azemar, Fabrissa and Guillelma de Deime respectively were mentioned as having given “admonitions” to their audiences rather than simply preaching.\textsuperscript{334} This very fact alone, a conscious choice on the part of the notaries (or possibly the copyists) to differentiate between \textit{predicatio} and \textit{monitio}, indicates that there must have been a difference between these statements and others. In these instances, the Good Women were clearly described as discussing a warning of some kind, in all likelihood a discourse on the evils of the physical world considering that such issues defined their own existence as Good Christians, and that everyone lived among these woes.

More precisely, however, considering that Na Doça had heard the “preaching” \textit{(predicacionem)} of Blancha and Brunissen as part of her training, and that Pèire de Safaia had


\textsuperscript{333} MS 609, fol. 35v: “Item, alia vice, apud Sanctam Martinum, in domo Melie, uxoris Petri Johannis, vidit Willelman, uxor sem quondam Ramundi Fabri de Campo Londo, et socia sua, hereticas; et vidit ibi cum eis sepredictam Cerdanam et dictam Meliam, dominam domus. Et audierunt predicacionem eorum et adoraverunt eas. Et sunt xii anni vel circa.”

\textsuperscript{334} For both Fabrissa (MS 609, fol. 41r) and Guillelma de Deime (MS 609, fol. 201r) the same Latin word—\textit{monitio}—was used, and has been translated as “admonition.”
claimed he heard Bruna and Rixen preaching about Cathar theology, it would appear that
indications about the content of a few female sermons survive outside of Aimersent’s. Na Doça
was exposed to heretical preaching on the part of other women in perfectae houses during her
training. Pèire de Safia and Na Doça both mentioned certain theological points that can be
attributed to the perfectae as well. Good Women, thus, likely learned and discussed these
issues with each other, emphasizing theology and the Cathar conception of the material world.
John Arnold had claimed in his article “The Preaching of the Cathars” that Cathar preaching and
theology have often become synonymous with what secondary literature supposed, and
suggested to be wary of thinking of it in this way.\footnote{Arnold, “The Preaching of the Cathars,” 184.}
Based on these examples, however, the admonitions of Fabrissa and Guillelma could very well have been directed at refuting Catholic
theology in defending their own position, although we can only speculate.

The importance of preaching to the livelihood of the Good Women is evident in the
collective stories of Esclarmonde de Foix and Arnaude de Lamothe, as well as from a few of the
other fourteen women. A possible pattern in their lifestyles, and their expected activities, was
revealed in the evidence from the registers. Because the individual histories of Esclarmonde
and Arnaude are far more transparent than the others due to the surviving documentation, it is
interesting that in their early careers as perfectae one of their performed duties was preaching.
Esclarmonde preached within her home in Pamiers shortly after being baptized (and ordained),
and, likewise, Arnaude reported to have preached to the Huc family of Massac only a year after
her second consolamentum ceremony. In brief statements made about Guillelma de
Campolongo and Raimonda Borda, indications of their personal histories before joining the
Good Christians possibly suggest something similar. Guillelma was married to Raimon Faure of Campolongo, who was still living as late as 1230 considering Na Ermessen had seen them both at Guilhem de Saint-Nazarius’ home near Saint-Martin. Three years later the very same deponent (Na Ermessen) heard Guillelma—now the Good Woman—preaching. Raimonda Borda, seen preaching by Guillelma Verduna of Laurac around 1237, was also not mentioned to have been a heretic by Guilhem de Calhavel in 1239 when he hosted visiting perfectae—she was only known as the daughter of Alamanda, and the brother of Bernart Garsias. Perhaps her consolamentum had been in the recent past (at least two years before this event), and was unremarked by Guilhem. Although circumstantial, the evidence for these two women, and for Esclarmonde and Arnaude, suggest that Good Women were capable of being preachers early in their careers. Considering the extensive training that novices had to undergo (evidenced from the depositions of Raimonda Jocglar—who was instructed to live with the heretics for 120 days to adapt to their lifestyle—and Na Doça—who heard the preaching of both Blancha and Brunissen, and had not even become a Good Woman after two years), it is therefore likely that the ability to preach was an important part of that education.

The testimonies from MS 609 used in the analyses of each chapter varied in length, detail, and overall use. I attempted to relate the information from the records, as much as possible, without distorting the individual nuances. A problem exists, however, in the content of these accounts despite best efforts and a diligence for transparency. It is a problem that cannot be escaped, and also a reminder to think of these men and women as the people they were: the witnesses may have lied. Every man, woman, and child is capable of lying for any number of reasons, not all of which are nefarious. Whole villages, like those of Cambiac and
Saint-Martin-de-Lalande, occasionally entered in pacts of secrecy to protect their communities.

Repeatedly, as mentioned above, cross-references between witness testimonies of the same (or seemingly the same) events reveal inconsistencies. Guilhem de Calhavel, the knight of Laurac and frequent host for the perfected of that castrum, testified to one of the sermons conducted in his home which did not match with Guillelma Garrona’s, one of his guests, precisely on the occurrence of the preaching of Good Women. Other aspects in individual accounts, like Arnaude de Lamothe’s insistence of the innocence of her family members, or Bernart Arrezat’s forgotten relative (Guillelma de Campolongo), point toward reasons for withholding or manipulating the truth, if not for outright evidence of it. What, then, can be trusted, and what can be presumed as reliable?

Though the vignettes of the second chapter were organized according to their chronological order within MS 609, a quick reflection on the events of the period provides a possible insight (Appendices B.1 and B.2). The testimonies of Na Doça regarding the preaching of Blancha and Brunissen are the only accounts of such activity that occurred before the Albigensian Crusade, at around 1205 and 1207 respectively. The vast majority of the other statements occur after the crusade and primarily during the decades of the 1230s and 1240s, in the years dominated by the inquisition. Approximately 80% of the preaching of the Good Women related by the deposed occurred within this post-crusade period. Only one event, however, transpired during the crusade. Aimersent, the wife of Guilhem Viguier of Cambiac, heard the preaching of two unknown women while pregnant twenty-three years before her deposition in 1245. According to Anne Brenon:

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336 See MS 609, fol. 72r for Guilhem de Calhavel’s testified event, and fol. 72v for Guillelma Garrona’s.
Cathar nuns therefore participated actively in their church. Their establishments were part of the Cathar pastoral strategy... Until persecution forced them into hiding and a life on the run, Good Women almost certainly never traveled without good and precise reasons; visits paid to the homes of relatives and friends were also discreet but efficient pastoral missions.\footnote{Brenon, “The Voice of the Good Women,” 129.}

Considering that before the crusade years Good Women were more sedentary, and after, during the years of persecution, they were forced into an itinerant existence, it is perhaps not surprising that the majority of their cited pastoral events come from these years.

The crusade and inquisition ruptured Occitan society, resulting in a severe and drastic change in the lifestyles of the \textit{perfectae}. They were uprooted from their homes, and began to travel furtively like their brothers, extending their religious voice in new settings. But, as seen above, that change was perhaps supported only by the nobility, the very same social group which allowed the heresy to thrive in Languedoc initially. Given the mendacity of witnesses, both real and potential, one can presume that it is likely more women preached than were mentioned by the deposed. Considering the majority of the evidence survives from assemblies in which the Good Women were preaching to family and friends (and the nobility), it makes sense that more instances were not mentioned. On the other hand, if one regards witnesses as more truthful, perhaps occasions of female preaching were simply not thought to be the most important events to mention to the inquisitors.

How then should one think about Cathar women and \textit{perfectae}? Anne Brenon argues that:

\begin{quote}
The [female] Cathar believer was simply a medieval Christian woman who did not experience the desire, and who had no reason, to curse God at the spectacle of the horrors of this world, before the triumph of injustice and stupidity, at the moment of death of a small child; who could consider the religious path as the
\end{quote}
normal path to the term of a busy life; who knew that God did not care about any hierarchy of the sexes or of birth; and who never saw the religious of her Church as different or privileged beings, but as guides on the path.338

To Brenon, Cathar women, as a whole, were just like their Catholic contemporaries, except that their religion was one in which allowed them freedom from traditional social control. It is not hard to imagine, from this perspective, that Catharism offered some women advantages over the orthodox Christian faith. Unfortunately, though, for Cathar Good Women, despite having equal religious abilities and training as their brothers, society at large did not see them as the same. They were adored, valued, honored, and revered by men and women alike, from the upper echelons of society. The audiences that gathered to hear them preach were populated largely by the nobility. Though they were not seen as “different or privileged beings,” merely spiritual guides, the lowest of society still preferred, at least in so far as the evidence suggests, perfecti to perfectae. Life among Good Women was thus perceived differently depending on the social origins of the adherent in question.

338 Brenon, Les femmes cathares, 387: “La croyante cathare fut simplement la femme chrétienne médiévale qui n’éprouva pas l’envie, et qui n’eut aucune raison, de maudire Dieu au spectacle des horreurs de ce monde, devant le triomphe de l’injustice et de la bêtise, au moment de la mort d’un petit enfant; qui put consider la voie religieuse comme voie normale au terme d’une vie bien remplie; qui savait que Dieu ne se souciait pas d’une hiérarchie quelconque des sexes ou de la naissance; et qui ne vit jamais les religieux de son Église comme des êtres différents ou privilégiés, mais comme des guides sur le chemin.”
APPENDIX A

TABLES OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION CONCERNING THE *PERFECTAE* AND DEPONENTS OF FANJEAUX IN TOULOUSE, BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, MS 609

A.1) Depositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Deponents from Fanjeaux</th>
<th>Deponents who Mention <em>Perfectae</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>16 (of 101 total)</td>
<td>50% (eight of 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>85 (of 101 total)</td>
<td>31.8% (27 of 85)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A.2) Sightings and Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Sightings</th>
<th>Unknown Mentioned <em>Perfectae</em></th>
<th>Known Mentioned <em>Perfectae</em></th>
<th>Known <em>Perfectae</em> Seen by Several Deponents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A.3) Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single Interaction with <em>Perfectae</em></th>
<th>Multiple Interactions with <em>Perfectae</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>62.5% (five of eight)</td>
<td>37.5% (three of eight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>55.5% (15 of 27)</td>
<td>44.4% (12 of 27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A.4) Social Group Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Deponents</th>
<th>Housed (personally admitted)</th>
<th><em>Ductores</em> (personally admitted)</th>
<th>Gift-givers (personally admitted)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nobles</td>
<td>20 (of 35)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Classes</td>
<td>15 (of 35)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A.5) Adoration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mentioned by Deponent (57 of the 78 Sightings)</th>
<th>Affirmed</th>
<th>Denied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nobles</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>48.9% (22 of 45)</td>
<td>51.1% (23 of 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Classes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33.3% (four of 12)</td>
<td>66.7% (eight of 12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

TABLES OF THE PERFECTAE PREACHERS, BOTH NAMED AND UNKNOWN, IN TOULOUSE, BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, MS 609

B.1) Named Perfectae

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folio</th>
<th>Perfecta</th>
<th>Deponent</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>People in Audience</th>
<th>Men v Women</th>
<th>Nobles v Non-nobles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>35v</td>
<td>Guillelma de Campolongo</td>
<td>Ermessen, wife of Bernart Mir</td>
<td>Saint-Martin-de-Lalande</td>
<td>1233</td>
<td>3 / 0</td>
<td>3 / 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>35v</td>
<td>Na Bruna</td>
<td>Ermessen, wife of Bernart Mir</td>
<td>Laurac</td>
<td>1234</td>
<td>11 / 0</td>
<td>11 / 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>41r</td>
<td>Fabrissa</td>
<td>Raimonda, daughter of Raimon Jocglar</td>
<td>Saint-Martin-de-Lalande</td>
<td>1240</td>
<td>6 / 0</td>
<td>6 / 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>76v</td>
<td>Raimonda Borda</td>
<td>Guillelma Verduna</td>
<td>Laurac</td>
<td>1238</td>
<td>2 / 0</td>
<td>2 / 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>123v and 193r</td>
<td>Tholosana</td>
<td>Na Aimengart, wife of Pèire de Mazerolis</td>
<td>Gaja-la-Selve</td>
<td>1240</td>
<td>3 / 0</td>
<td>3 / 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1) 136v 2) 137v</td>
<td>Na Belenguèira de Seguervilla</td>
<td>1) Aimersent, wife of Donatus de Vilanova 2) Na Viverna, wife of Raimon d’Avinho</td>
<td>1) Avignonet 2) Avignonet</td>
<td>1) 1233 2) 1229</td>
<td>1) 3 2) 1</td>
<td>1) 0 / 3 2) 0 / 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>184v</td>
<td>Blancha</td>
<td>Na Doça, wife of Pèire Faure</td>
<td>Castelnaudary</td>
<td>1205</td>
<td>1? / 1?</td>
<td>1? / 0?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>184v</td>
<td>Brunissen</td>
<td>Na Doça, wife of Pèire Faure</td>
<td>Laurac</td>
<td>&gt;1207</td>
<td>1? / 1?</td>
<td>1? / 0?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>192v-193r</td>
<td>Rixen (with Na Bruna)</td>
<td>Pèire de Safaia</td>
<td>Laurac</td>
<td>1235</td>
<td>4 / 0</td>
<td>4 / 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>201r</td>
<td>Guillelma de Deime</td>
<td>Raimon Ademar</td>
<td>Lanta</td>
<td>1230</td>
<td>6 / 0</td>
<td>6 / 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>203r</td>
<td>Guillelma Sicharda and Arnalda</td>
<td>Pèire Grandis (d’Odars)</td>
<td>Odars</td>
<td>1241</td>
<td>5 / 0</td>
<td>5 / 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### B.2) Unnamed *Pefectae*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folio</th>
<th>Perfecta</th>
<th>Deponent</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>People in Audience</th>
<th>Men v Women</th>
<th>Nobles v Non-nobles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 72v</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Guillema Garrona, wife of Estolt de Fonters</td>
<td>Laurac</td>
<td>1242</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4 / 5</td>
<td>9 / 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 169r</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Bernart Teuler</td>
<td>Fanjeaux</td>
<td>1235</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5 / 3</td>
<td>6 / 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 239v</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Aimersent, wife of Guilhem Viguer</td>
<td>Cambiac</td>
<td>1222</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 / 3</td>
<td>5 / 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

TABLES OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION CONCERNING THE *PERFECTAE* AND THEIR PASTORAL AUDIENCES IN TOULOUSE, BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, MS 609

C.1) Gender Statistics for *Perfectae*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deponents</td>
<td>4 (26.7%)</td>
<td>11 (73.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>32 (51.6%)</td>
<td>30 (48.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C.2) Social Statistics for *Perfectae*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nobles</th>
<th>Non-Nobles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deponent</td>
<td>13 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>60 (96.7%)</td>
<td>2 (3.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C.3) Gender Statistics for Three *Perfecti*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deponents</td>
<td>8 (88.8%)</td>
<td>1 (11.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>37 (86%)</td>
<td>6 (14%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C.4) Social Statistics for Three *Perfecti*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nobles</th>
<th>Non-Nobles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deponents</td>
<td>5 (55.5%)</td>
<td>4 (45.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>28 (65.1%)</td>
<td>15 (34.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

MAP OF THE LAURAGAIS DURING THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY


The Lauragais in the Thirteenth Century
BIBLIOGRAPHY

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Collection Doat, vol. 23
Volume twenty-three, the partial register of Friar Ferrier, has been transcribed and translated into French (Latin and French side-by-side) by Ruben de Labastide, and has been uploaded on the website, “Catharisme d’Aujourd’hui,”—https://www.catharisme.eu/. As the Collection Doat has not been digitized by the BnF (there are microfilms in the Bodleian Library of volumes twenty-six through thirty), this online edition was the only transcription used in this thesis.

Toulouse, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 609
In addition to the digitized images of the manuscript found at the municipal library’s website (http://numerique.bibliotheque.toulouse.fr/), I made use of two edited versions of this inquisitorial register. One was entitled Interrogatoires subis par des hérétiques albigeois par devant frère Bernard de Caux, inquisiteur, de 1245 à 1253 found on the HathiTrust Digital Library as uploaded from the typescript microfilm held at the Institut de Recherches et d'Histoire des Textes à Paris and at the library of Columbia University. The other was an abbreviated transcription by Jean Duvernoy on his website dedicated to publishing texts concerning heresy already housed at the Centre d’Études Cathares (CEC) de Carcassonne (http://jean.duvernoy.free.fr/text/listetexte.htm#sinquisit). The typescript was preferred to Duvernoy’s edition, and was utilized more frequently, because of the faithfulness to the original. But the Duvernoy transcription was used on occasion to verify anomalies found in the typescript—such as smeared ink, missing pages, etc. The digitized manuscript was consulted in verifying both the typescript and abbreviated edition.

PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES


