

LAURENCE W. MARVIN

The Occitan War

A Military and Political History of the
Albigensian Crusade, 1209–1218



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THE OCCITAN WAR

In 1209 Simon of Montfort led a war against the Cathars of Languedoc after Pope Innocent III preached a crusade condemning them as heretics. The suppression of heresy became a pretext for a vicious war that remains largely unstudied as a military conflict. Laurence Marvin here examines the Albigensian Crusade as military and political history rather than religious history, and traces these dimensions of the conflict through to Montfort's death in 1218. He shows how Montfort experienced military success in spite of a hostile populace, impossible military targets, armies that dissolved every forty days, and a pope who often failed to support the crusade morally or financially. He also discusses the supposed brutality of the war, why the inhabitants were for so long unsuccessful at defending themselves against it, and its impact on Occitania. This original account will appeal to scholars of medieval France, the Crusades, and medieval military history.

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Crusade, 1209–1218*

LAURENCE W. MARVIN

Berry College, Georgia



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For the Raimondines
Raymond Ward Marvin, my father
Raymond Joseph Marvin, my son

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Abbreviations

- ATF Alberic of the Three Fountains. *Chronica*, ed. P. Scheffer-Boichorst. MGH SS 23, 1863, 674–950.
- Catalogue des actes “Catalogue des actes de Simon et d’Amauri de Montfort,” ed. Auguste Molinier. *Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des Hautes Etudes* 34 (1873): 153–203, 445–501.
- Chanson* *Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise*, vols. 2 and 3, ed. and trans. Eugène Martin-Chabot. Paris: Société d’Edition Les Belles Lettres, 1957–1961.
- HGL *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, ed. C. de Vic and J. Vaissète, revised A. Molinier, 15 vols. Toulouse: Edouard Privat, 1872–1904.
- Layettes* *Layettes du Trésor des Chartes*, ed. Alexandre Teulet *et al.*, 5 vols. Paris, 1863–1909.
- L’Epopée* *L’Epopée cathare*, by Michel Roquebert, 4 vols. Toulouse: Privat, 1970–1994.
- MGH SS Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores, 32 vols. Hanover and Leipzig, 1826–1934.
- PL Patrologiae Cursus Completus series latina, 221 vols., ed. J. P. Migne. Paris: 1844–90.
- PVC *Hystoria Albigensis*, ed. Pascal Guébin and Ernest Lyon, 3 vols. Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1926–1939.
- PVCE *The History of the Albigensian Crusade*, trans. W.A. Sibly and M.D. Sibly. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998.
- Potthast *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, ed. Augustus Potthast, 2 vols. (1875), reprint Berlin: Graz, 1957.

- Presutti *Regesta Honorii Papae III*, ed. Peter Presutti, 2 vols. Rome: The Vatican, 1888.
- RHGF XIX *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. 19, gen. ed. M. Bouquet, 2nd edn. Paris, 1880.
- RS The Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages. London, 1857–1996. Commonly called the “Rolls Series.”
- SCW *Song of the Cathar Wars. A History of the Albigensian Crusade*, trans. Janet Shirley. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996.
- WB *Gesta Philippi Augusti. Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, ed. François Delaborde. Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1882.
- WP William of Puylaurens, *Chronique 1203–1275*, ed. and trans. Jean Duvernoy. Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1966.
- WPE *The Chronicle of William of Puylaurens*, trans. W.A. Sibly and M.D. Sibly. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003.
- WTud William of Tudela, *La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise*, vol. 1, 3rd edn, ed. and trans. Eugène Martin-Chabot. Paris: Société d’Edition Les Belles Lettres, 1976.

Maps and plans

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Translation of names and places; calculation of distances

Until recently historians and other authors have simply anglicized most medieval personal names. Lately it has become more popular to leave names in their original form. For this book I have adopted a middle ground, perhaps pleasing no one but myself, but at least it should be clear to the reader. Just like current names, the spelling of medieval personal names often had no uniform spelling or rationale to it, so I have not imposed an absolute standard, though I have tried to be consistent in my inconsistency. French and Northern European personal names have been anglicized in the old-fashioned way. Occitan, Provençal, and Catalan names have been left in some form of the original, hence some people are called Peire and some Pere, both equivalent to “Peter.” If the reader should accuse me of purposely drawing a difference between regions, I plead guilty as charged. Too often the Albigensian Crusade is presented as if the major figures sprang from a common culture and language and inherently understood each other. This does an injustice to the variety of cultures and languages spoken by the people who crusaded and the people of the region in which the Occitan War took place. Leaving names like Peter in a more exotic spelling (at least to the anglophone eye) hopefully will give the reader a sense of the vast cultural differences that existed. Some names are rendered in so many ways that I had to adopt a standard on a case-by-case basis. Perhaps the best example of this is the name commonly translated “Fulk.” Depending on the author, either medieval or modern, Fulk is presented as “Folc,” “Folq,” “Folque,” “Foulque” or “Folquet.” I have adopted the last usage.

I have translated authors’ names on a case-by-case basis as well, but for simplicity’s sake have for the most part anglicized them. Thus two important southern authors come over as William of Tudela and William of Puylaurens, but James of Aragon is Jaume.

Place names are rendered in their modern equivalents.

I have been very careful about including distances to give the reader a sense of how difficult it must have been to traverse this region in an era

where roads were dirt and horses available only to the wealthy. Unfortunately calculating actual road distance would have been a project all on its own, and anyone who has traveled to the south of France knows what I am talking about. For those who have not, suffice to say that, particularly in places like the Black Mountains, the roads can be so curvy and full of switchbacks that places only a few kilometers apart straight line are in reality many further apart in terms of actual travel distance, not even factoring in road grades as steep as 13 percent. In order for the reader to follow easily, all distances have been calculated straight from point to point using Michelin maps # 234, 235, 240 and 246. All distances are reckoned from the medieval city center.

Preface and acknowledgments

“But hasn’t that been done before?” was the question put to me by a colleague as we sat at dinner after the last session for the day at the International Congress of Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan, a few years ago. Like her, those familiar with the Albigensian Crusade will wonder how this book adds to what anglophone scholars such as Walter M. Wakefield, Joseph Strayer, Jonathan Sumption and Michael Costen, and multi-volume accounts in French like Michel Roquebert’s, have said in the last thirty-five years. That does not even count the contributions of popular authors like Zoé Oldenbourg, Stephen O’Shea, other novelists and rapidly growing Internet sites on the Cathars and the Crusade. The Crusade is certainly not unexplored territory, which is what my dinner companion really meant.

Her question was a valid one, and she listened patiently as I explained the necessity of one more book on the Albigensian Crusade. The crusades to the Middle East have always had their long-view adherents, like Hans Eberhard Meyer and Jonathan Riley-Smith. They have also been the subject of multi-volume projects like those edited by Kenneth Setton. These long looks remain essential to understanding how the crusading concept began and evolved, the outline of political and military events, the individuals involved, and to tracing the development of East–West relationships over two hundred years. At the same time, the perennial interest both scholars and the general public have shown in the crusades has allowed historians to take the short-term approach to individual crusades such as the First, recently the Second, the Fourth, and the Fifth (the Third Crusade still eludes its monographer), events which by themselves took place over only a few years. Discussing these individual crusades in depth allows us to understand one distinct crusade as it unfolded over a couple of years without compressing the information and losing nuance in order to get through hundreds of years of history.

The Albigensian Crusade has not received the same treatment. Almost always it has been written about in the long view. The works of Wakefield, Strayer, Sumption, Costen, and Roquebert discuss the crusade from the

mid-twelfth century, long before it began, to at least 1271, when the Count of Toulouse's lands escheated to the French crown. While this is historically sound, all of these accounts miss two important things. First: their emphasis is so broad that the military campaigns appear as a sideshow to two main events: the birth, development, and description of Catharism, and the Inquisition which eventually destroyed it. Recent scholarly accounts of the Albigensian Crusade like those of Malcolm Barber and Michael Costen relegate the military aspects to little more than a chapter. The historians mentioned thus far wrote the history they thought needed to be told. Their works remain pivotal to understanding the time, era, and historiography of the Albigensian Crusade, and my debt to all of them remains considerable. Still, make no mistake: particularly between 1209 and 1218, the Albigensian Crusade was a war, and some believe a very nasty one even by medieval standards. It does not take much of an imagination to see that for the people who participated or lived through it, the war took center stage over every other consideration. Yet we tend to de-emphasize it in accounts of the crusade.

The second limitation of scholarship on this subject is of this long view and broad brush. The Occitan War was a complex series of military campaigns and not as easy to understand as some would have us believe. It is a story that deserves to be told without the obligation to tell it as part of a several-hundred-year period and in conjunction with innumerable other factors. The years 1209–1218 were by far the most militarily active, and the period when the political and military situation was most fluid. It is also for these years that the sources for the war are at their best. In other words, just as individual crusades to Outremer have their “numbers” or phases, so does the Albigensian Crusade. The beginning of active military operations, in 1209, to Simon of Montfort's death in 1218 definitely constitute a distinct phase. Although warfare continued for some years after the sustained entrance of the French crown into the mix, the war changed from what it had been since 1209 into a more purely secular political struggle. This book then, is the history of a nine-year span, when war and all its attendant misery engulfed a region and captivated historians and novelists forever after. The Cathar heresy, the darling of those who study “the other,” plays a very small role in this account, just as it did once the broadswords were withdrawn from their sheaths and the first crossbow bolt shot before the walls of Béziers in 1209.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a great pleasure to acknowledge the various people and institutions who made both direct and indirect contributions to this work. A Berry College international travel grant allowed me to travel to southern France and walk

most of the places described in this book, while later a small faculty development grant helped me complete it. Jonathan Harwell, Judy Thompson, Xiaojing Zu, and Casey Roberson, the interlibrary loan librarians at Berry College, procured things I never thought possible to stick in the mail. I thank Cambridge University Press for agreeing to take on the project, especially Michael Watson and Simon Whitmore, as well as the anonymous readers who read the manuscript for the press. One reader in particular was generous with their criticisms and saved me from some embarrassing errors.

Louis Haas, Thomas F. Madden, the late Donald E. Queller, Kristine T. Utterback, and Roger L. Williams have served as mentors, friends, and inspiration for many years. John A. Lynn and Kelly De Vries first suggested a military history of the Albigensian Crusade might make a good book. I never forgot their suggestion and thank them for their support in a tough spot. Michael Frassetto graciously agreed to read the entire manuscript late in the writing and offered both encouragement and criticism on this and earlier projects. Diane Land of Berry College and Rosemary Williams of Cambridge University Press provided invaluable copy editing assistance. C. Derek Croxton critiqued some of the early chapters. Heather Henderson and Alex Fordney made many copies and ordered dozens of books for me. My friends and colleagues in the Berry College department of history, Jonathan M. Atkins, Christy J. Snider, and the late Amy J. Johnson supplied constant support, read the early chapters and forced me to address my ideas to a wider audience. Amy's editorial expertise was particularly helpful, and I still mourn her loss to Berry and the profession. I also thank the First Floor Evans lunch group, especially Peter Lawler, Michael Papazian, and Kirsten Rafferty for providing many years of socializing, laughter, and gossip. Joseph Gaygi, Louis A. Le Blanc, David J. Snyder, Daniel A. Swan, and Sean M. Tyson earn my gratitude not only for their long friendship with me but also for never taking me too seriously.

I offer my greatest thanks for the support and example of my family. I dedicated this book to two people though I acknowledge three here. My father showed me the nobility of hard work no matter what the task. My son showed me the virtue of pursuing a noble goal even in the face of adversity. Not only did my wife Alicia draw the maps for this book but more than twenty years ago she took a leap of faith to follow me from a small town in Wyoming to the Ivory Tower. I thank her for more than two decades of marriage and the love and confidence she has given me.

Maps and plans

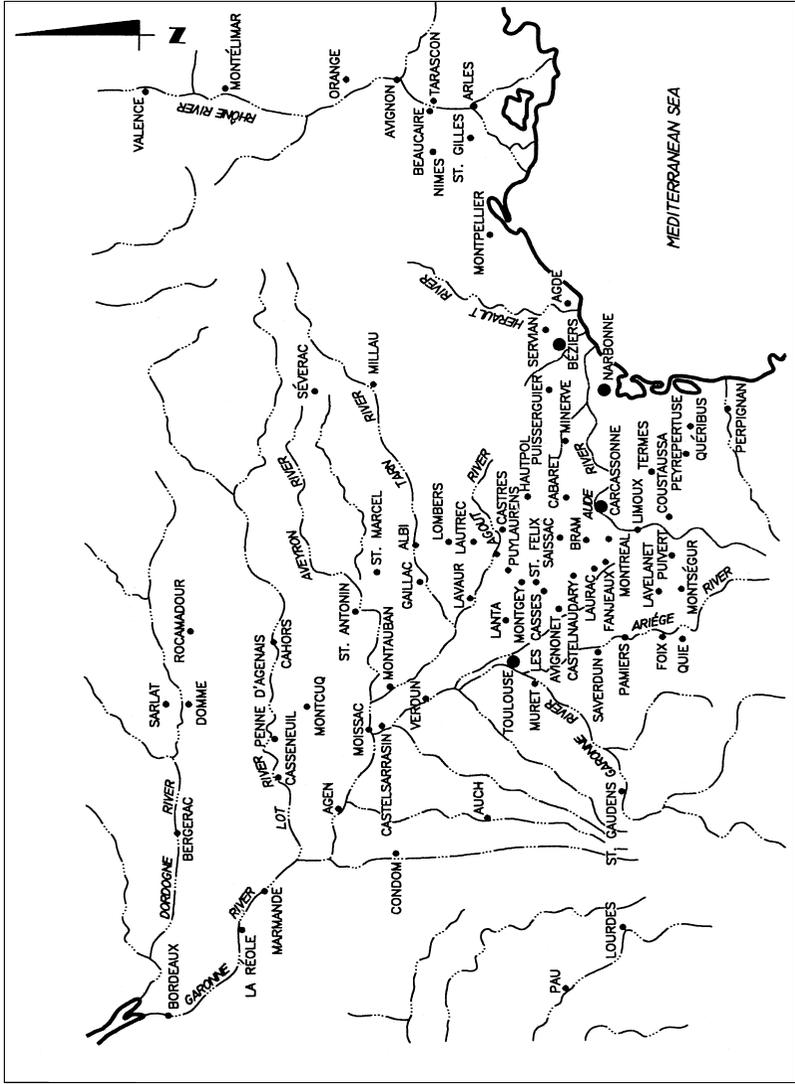


Figure 1. Occitania, 1209

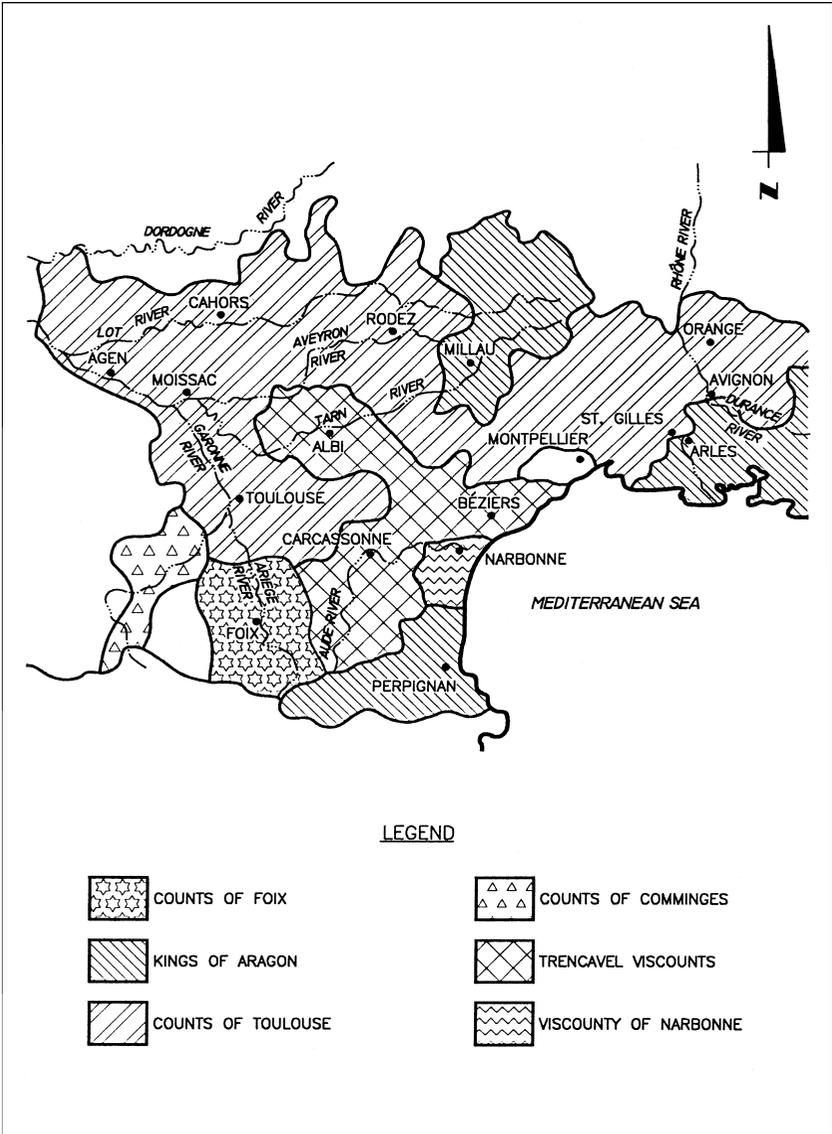


Figure 2. Noble zones of control, 1209

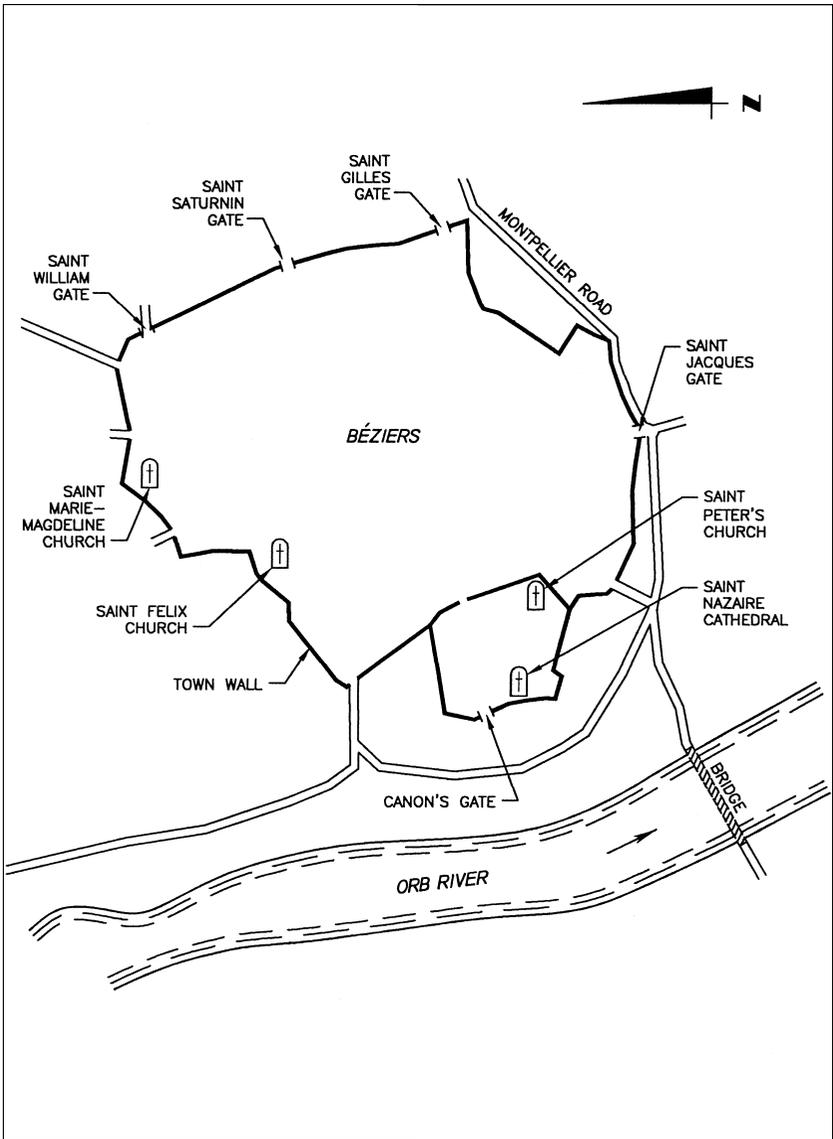


Figure 3. Béziers, 1209

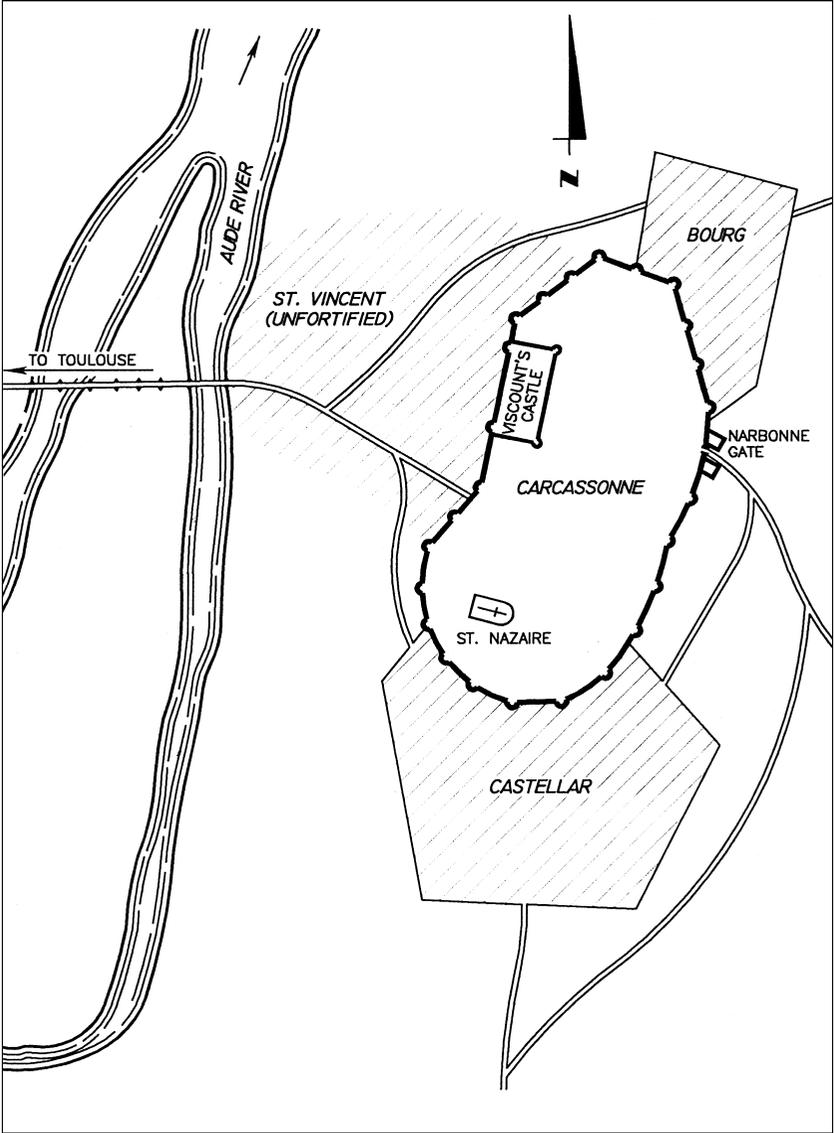


Figure 4. Carcassonne, 1209

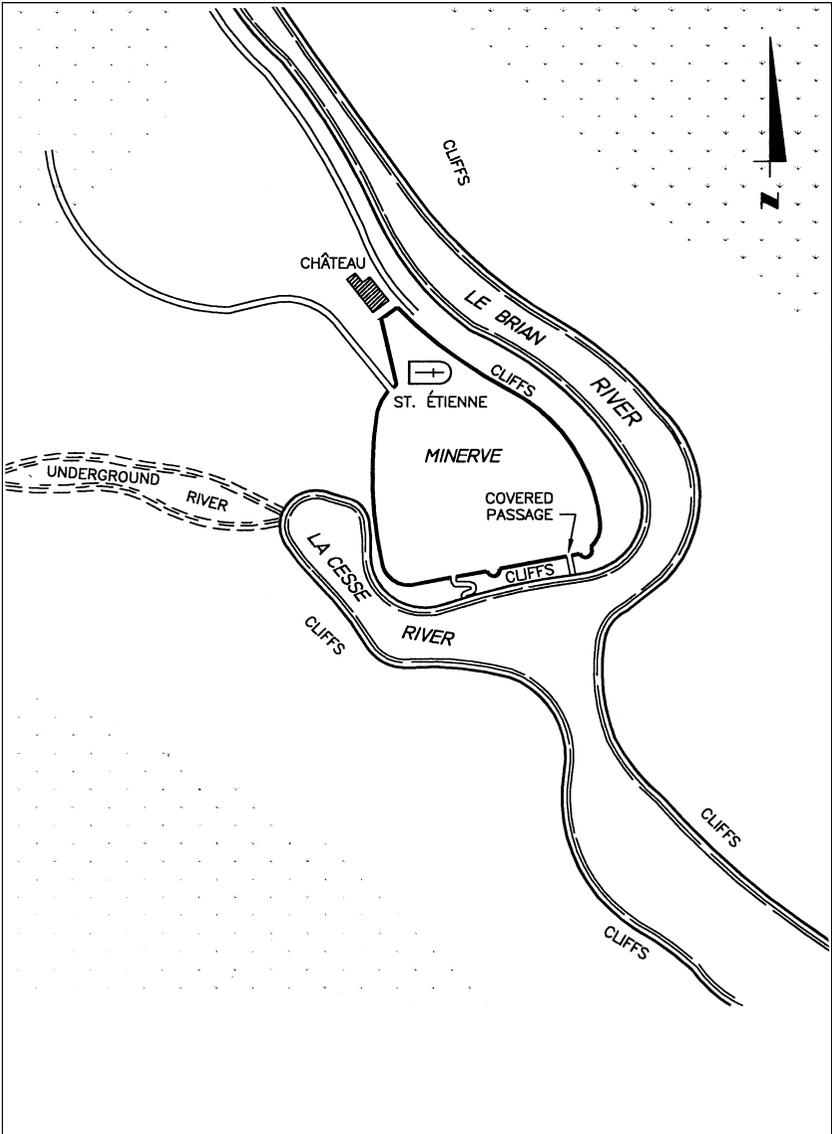


Figure 5. Minerve, 1210

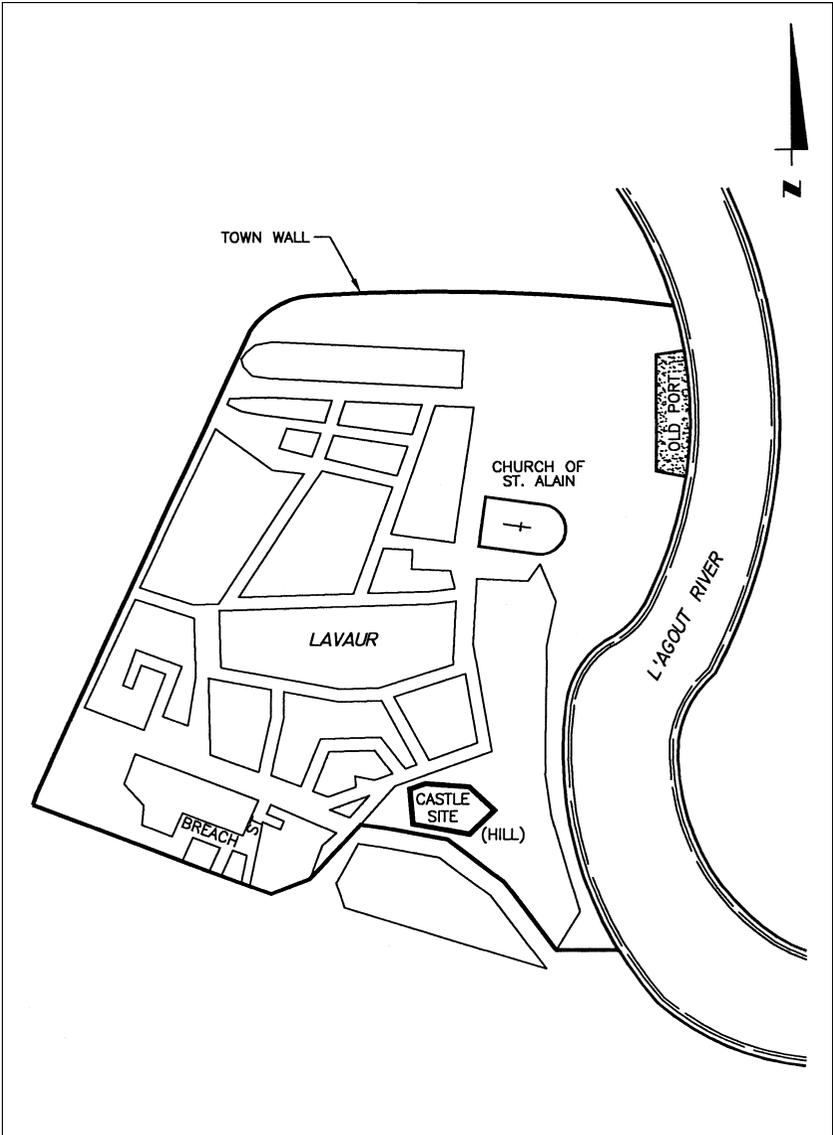


Figure 6. Lavaur, 1211

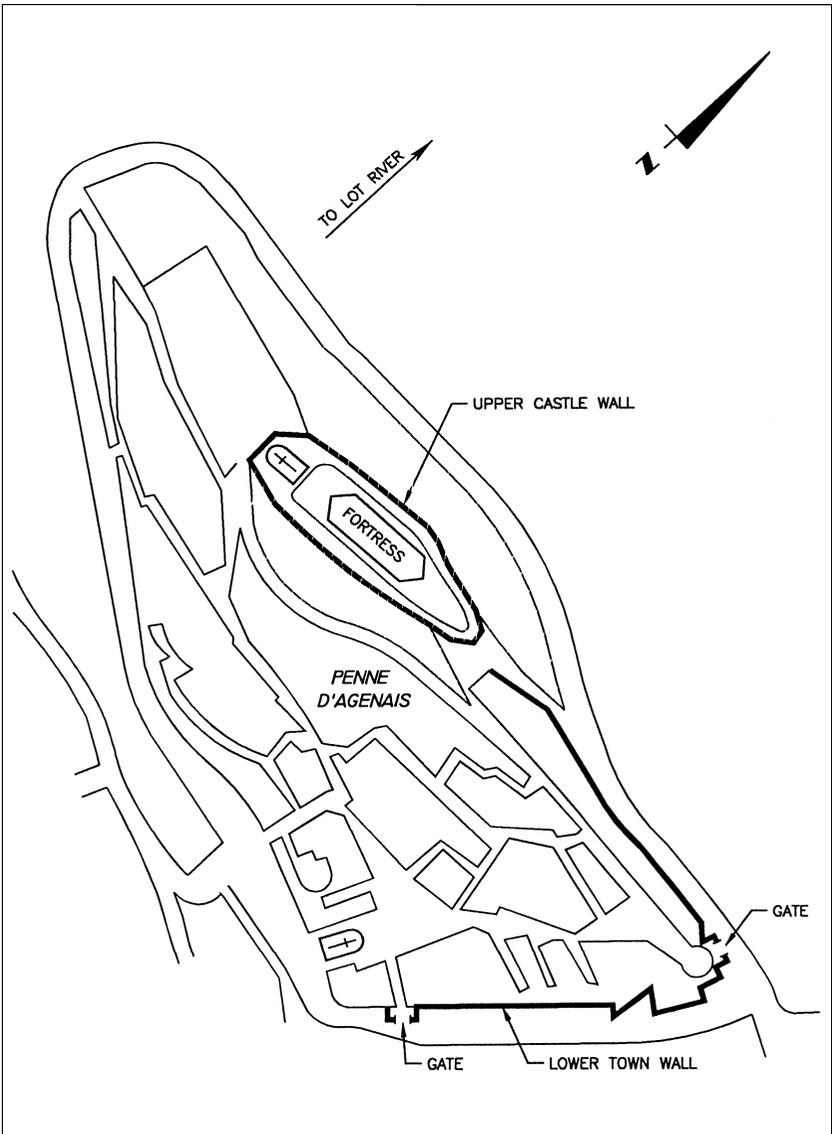


Figure 7. Penne d'Agenais, 1212

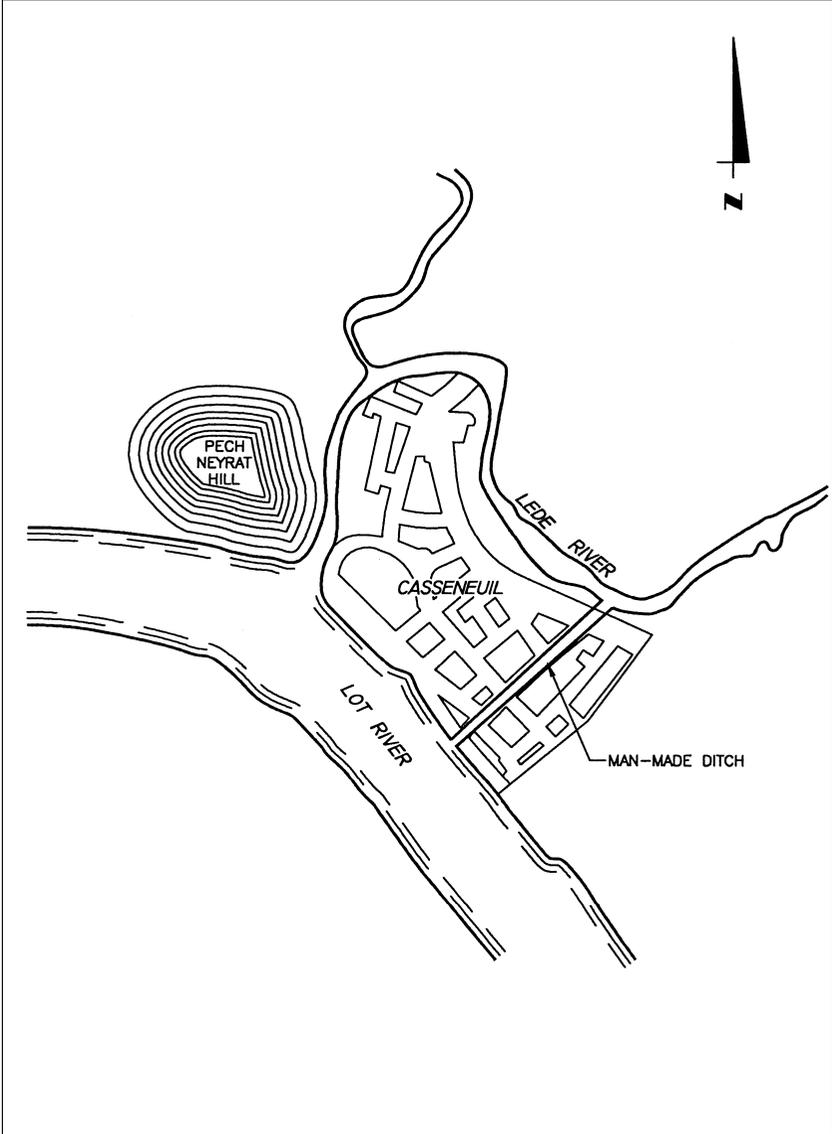


Figure 8. Casseneuil, 1214

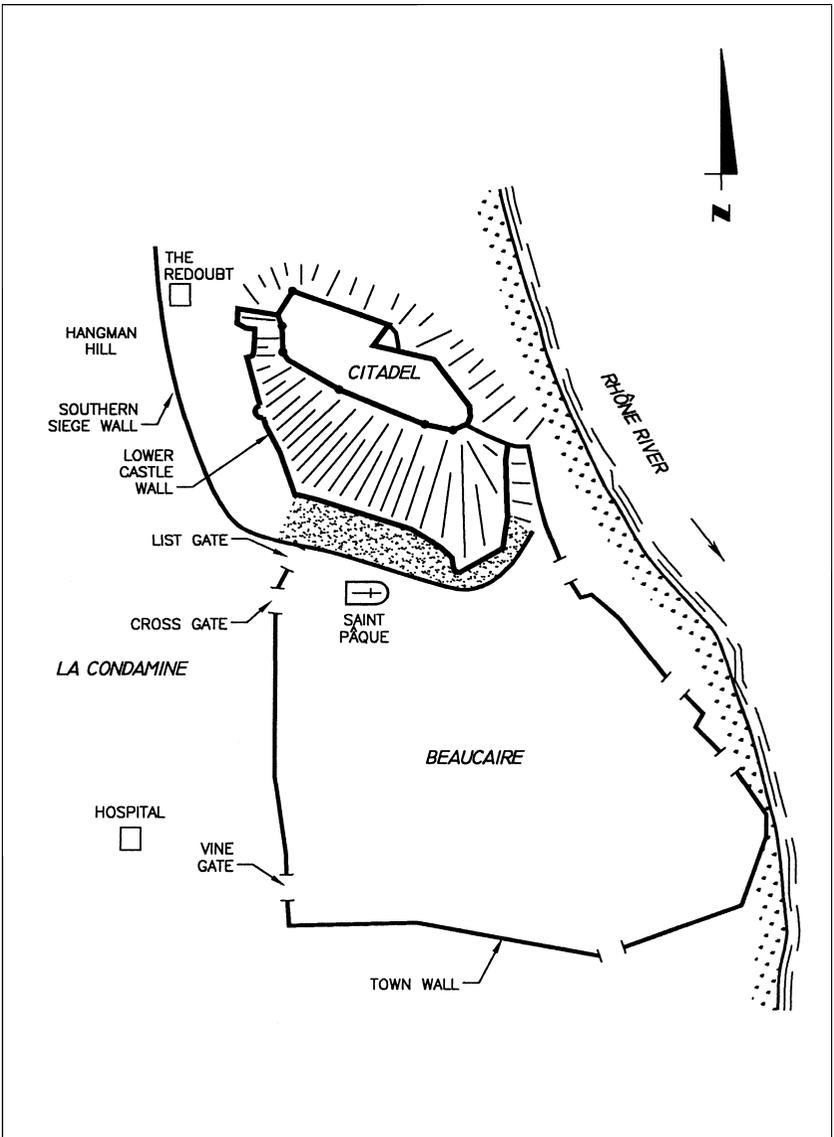


Figure 9. Beaucaire, 1216

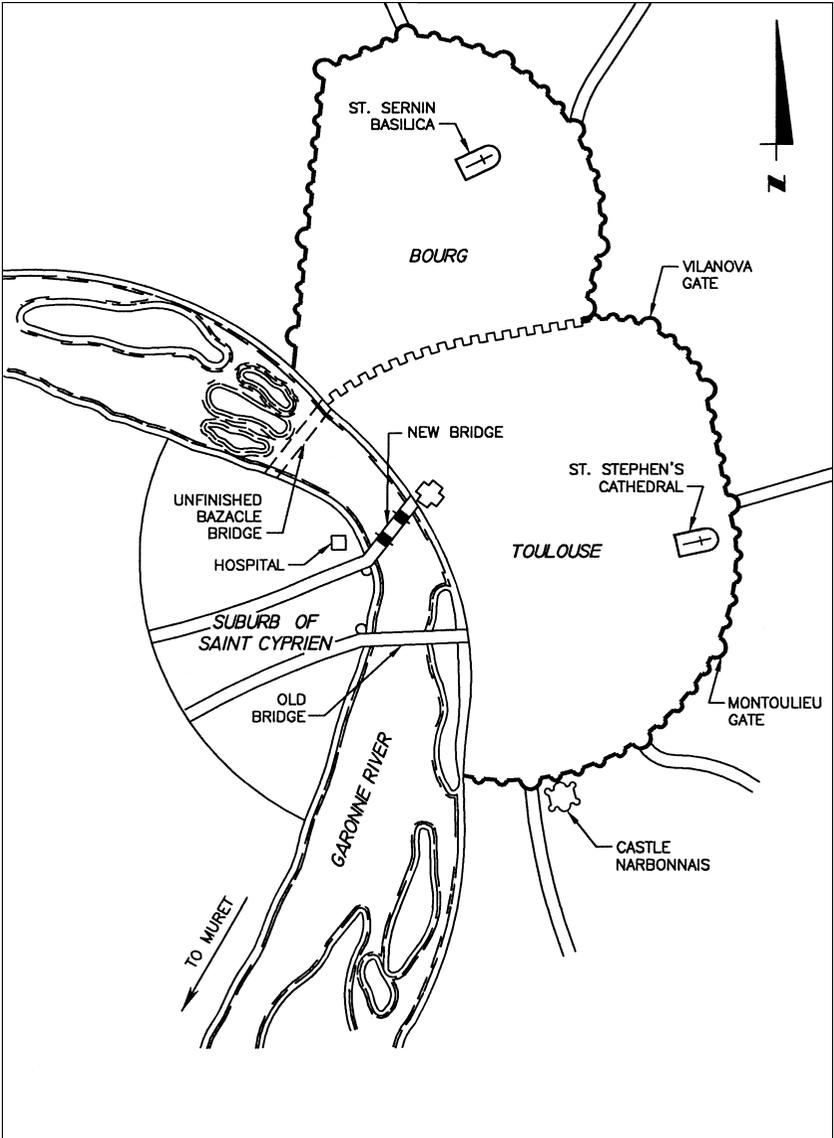


Figure 10. Toulouse, 1217-1218

CHAPTER I

Introduction

In 1209, in what is now southern France, a war over heresy began. This war quickly mutated into a struggle over political control of the region, something its originator, Pope Innocent III, never intended. At the time the war began, this region was neither culturally nor linguistically French. Long after 1218 the region became known as “Languedoc,” for its people said “oc” to answer in the affirmative as opposed to those of the north who spoke Languedoil, oil being the Old French “oui.” In recent years historians, literature specialists, social scientists, and indeed people of the region itself have begun to refer to this territory as Occitania, another made-up name but one that is easy on the English tongue.¹

The heresy, whose adherents were called “Cathars” or “Albigensians” by their detractors, had co-existed alongside orthodox Christianity for over half a century in Occitania.² Although the exact nature and origins of Catharism continue to be debated, the Cathars postulated a dual godhead, one of light and one of darkness. Heaven, the spiritual realm, and the human soul belonged to the god of light, while everything physical, including the bodies in which souls were trapped, belonged to the god of

¹ Joseph R. Strayer, *The Albigensian Crusades. With a New Epilogue by Carol Lansing* (1971) (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 1–14; Fredric L. Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 3–4, and Winnie Lem, “Identity and History: Class and Regional Consciousness in Rural Languedoc,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 8.2 (June 1995), 198–220, prefer the term “Occitania”; James Given, *State and Society in Medieval Europe. Gwynedd and Languedoc under Outside Rule* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 20, uses “Languedoc” and “Languedocian.”

² On the origins of the heresy, the terms “Cathar” and “Albigensian,” and descriptions of the heresy see Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages: Selected Sources Translated and Annotated. Records of Western Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 127–32, 164–7, 171–3, 214–17, 231–5, 302–23; PVCE, 6, 10–15; R. I. Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent* (1977) (reprint Toronto: Medieval Academy of America, 1994), 168–96; Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 19–44; Malcolm Barber, *The Cathars. Dualist Heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages* (London: Longman, 2000), 1–2, 7–12, 21–33.

darkness.³ Cathars believed that by undergoing a rigorous purification ceremony known as the *consolamentum*, after death their souls escaped the physical world to reunite with God. Without the ritual, souls were reincarnated in another human body or even an animal and had to undergo another lifetime of the evils of the physical world. The Cathar hierarchy consisted of bishops and holy men known as “perfects” or “goodmen,” who had undergone the *consolamentum* and could administer it to others.⁴ Perfects formed the core “priestly” class of the Cathar church. Except for fish, perfects could not eat anything derived from coition lest they dine on a reincarnated soul, which meant that for practical purposes they were vegetarian. They practiced celibacy as well, since they did not wish to create another physical vessel to trap a soul. Perfects lived simple lives and depended mostly on the alms of *credentes*, rank and file followers who believed in the tenets of Catharism but did not undergo the *consolamentum* until their deathbed.⁵ Since the Cathars used the New Testament as a source for their religion and lived among Christians, telling the difference between a Christian and a Cathar who wished to remain concealed was an immense problem.

As great a challenge was the perfects’ reputation for being more simple, humble, poor, and caring than the existing church. A heresy so attractive that nobles were seduced by it and therefore protected its followers did not sit well with Rome. Popes had sent churchmen to Occitania to preach away Catharism from the mid-twelfth century on. But even as great a religious figure as Bernard of Clairvaux experienced only momentary success at halting the spread of the heresy, let alone destroying it.⁶ At the Third Lateran Council of 1179, Canon 27 thundered against the Albigensians, anathematizing not only them but also those who

³ Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 230–5, 302–6; PVCE, 10–15 # 10–19; PVC 1, 9–20; Lambert, *The Cathars*, 20–32; Barber, *The Cathars*, 6–12.

⁴ Some do not agree that the heresy was as organized or sophisticated as many scholars portray it. The most recent arguments against this can be found in Mark Gregory Pegg, *The Corruption of Angels. The Great Inquisition of 1245–1246* (Princeton University Press, 2001), 96, 130; “On Cathars, Albigenses, and Good Men of Languedoc,” *Journal of Medieval History* 27 (2001), 181–95, and “Heresy, Good Men, and Nomenclature,” *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages. Essays on the Work of R. I. Moore*, ed. Michael Frassetto (Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2006), 227–39.

⁵ Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 465–83; Walter L. Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition in Southern France 1100–1250* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 30–43; Lambert, *The Cathars*, 73–81.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 40; Beverly Mayne Kienzle, “Tending the Lord’s Vineyard: Cistercians, Rhetoric and Heresy, 1143–1229. Part 1: Bernard of Clairvaux, the 1143 Sermons and the 1145 Preaching Mission,” *Heresis* 25 (1995), 29–61 and *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145–1229. Preaching in the Lord’s Vineyard* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2001), chapters 3 and 4.

supported, harbored, or even traded with them.⁷ Within two years of this pronouncement a papal legate led a small military force to briefly besiege and capture the town of Lavaur, compelling it back into the fold.⁸ This one small and temporary religious success via a military solution showed the possibilities of that option, but no subsequent martial expeditions followed. Clerics and popes could fulminate about the situation in Occitania, but without further pretext support for violent solutions was simply not there. So the situation remained for the next couple of decades.

With the accession of Pope Innocent III the situation in the south began to change. Innocent is universally seen as the greatest crusading pope of them all, since he sponsored the Fourth and Fifth Crusades and presided over intensified crusading activity from the Iberian peninsula to the Baltic. Determined to win back Christian land abroad and keep people Christian at home, the pope enlisted as many crusaders and expended as much treasure as he could to meet what were deemed by many at the time to be praiseworthy goals. In the years leading up to 1208, Innocent corresponded with Bernard, Archbishop of Auch, a southern prelate, and Raimon VI, Count of Toulouse, urging action against heresy and threatening the count if he did nothing.⁹ In 1204 and 1205 the pope exhorted the King of France, Philip Augustus, or his son Prince Louis to act against the heretics, but the king was too involved with taking and holding on to his Angevin adversary's continental possessions to be bothered with events in the south.¹⁰ In 1207 the pope went so far as to offer an indulgence, a remission of sin, to those who would follow Philip south to exterminate heresy, just like the ones offered to crusaders to the Levant. Still the French king expressed no interest in taking up the cross.¹¹ In 1208, the pope's legate in the south, Peter of Castelnau, was mysteriously murdered after a heated meeting with Raimon VI, a murder for which the count was blamed by

⁷ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Vol. I. Nicaea I – Lateran V*, ed. Norman Tanner, Giuseppe Alberigo et al. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 224.

⁸ Robert of Auxerre, *Chronicon*, MGH SS 26, ed. O. Holder-Egger, 1882, 245; WPE, chapter 11, 11–12; WP, 28–30; Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*, 132–3; Michel Roquebert, *L'Épopée* 1, 91–2; Elie Griffe, *Les Débuts de l'aventure Cathare en Languedoc (1140–1190)* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1969), 126–8; Achille Luchaire, *Innocent III. La Croisade des Albigeois*, 2nd edn. (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906), 45–6.

⁹ To the Archbishop of Auch in 1198, PL 214 col. 71; to Raimon VI, Count of Toulouse in 1201, Pothast 1, 135 #1549; to Raimon VI in 1207, PL 215 cols. 1166–8 and partial translation in PVCE Appendix F, 304–5; Luchaire, *Innocent III*, 49–61. Essential discussion to this correspondence is in PVCE, Appendix G, 313–17.

¹⁰ In 1204 PL 215 cols. 361–2; in 1205, PL 215 cols. 526–8. ¹¹ PL 215 cols. 1246–8.

Innocent III and others.¹² The murder of a legate, a man not merely an agent of the pope but the pope's authority personified, was a dagger that struck at the heart of the church itself.¹³ Even though no Cathars were responsible for either plotting or carrying out the assassination, the pope used the murder of Peter of Castelnau not only to get back at Raimon VI, who was anathematized and dispossessed of his territories, but also to call on the Christian faithful to extirpate heresy from the Count of Toulouse's lands by force. In essence Innocent III had authorized the use of military force over a religious issue against a Christian land. He promised those who made the journey remission of their sins – an indulgence – a reward which had been around at least since the First Crusade.¹⁴ With this assassination and broad promise of an indulgence, finally the pope found a sympathetic audience anxious to avenge a wrong against the church, get rid of a religious cancer and win pardon for sin. The assassination and indulgence triggered earnest men to take the cross, move south against other earnest men and begin a terrible time of war, massacre, repression, and conquest. The underlying causes for military intervention, the heresy and noble support or acquiescence for it, had existed for over half a century, but it took the killing of Peter of Castelnau to initiate the conflict.

THE OCCITAN POLITICAL SITUATION ON THE EVE
OF THE CRUSADE

As Joseph Strayer and others point out, "Occitania" was not a state but a loosely defined region in the early thirteenth century (see Figure 1, p. xvii).¹⁵ It was not French in any fashion and besides, no one in the thirteenth century thought about the kingdom or region they lived in the way many twenty-first-century people think about their nationality. Most of Occitania belonged in the *regnum Francorum*, the kingdom of the Franks, and had so ever since the Merovingian dynasty imposed hegemony over most of it in the sixth century.¹⁶ By the High Middle Ages, this meant

¹² For the complete letter and translation of Pope Innocent's reaction see PVCE, 31–8 # 55–65; PVC, 51–65. The other major accounts of the crusade mention Peter of Castelnau's murder and Raimon VI's possible complicity; SCW, 13 laisse 4; WTud, 12, 14, 16; WPE, chapter IX, 27; WP, 52–3.

¹³ Claire Dutton, "Aspects of the Institutional History of the Albigensian Crusades, 1198–1229" (Ph.D. dissertation, London University, 1993), 67–70.

¹⁴ PVCE, 36–7 #62–4, PVC 1, 60–4. ¹⁵ Strayer, *Albigensian Crusades*, 11.

¹⁶ Edward James, *The Origins of France from Clovis to the Capetians 500–1000* (London: MacMillan Press, 1982), 18–21. Some sub-regions of Occitania like Septimania, which included prominent towns such as Narbonne and Béziers, remained outside the *regnum Francorum* until the Carolingian period.

that the French king, far away in the northern part of his realm, could theoretically draw on the people of Occitania's support, loyalty, and allegiance, from the highest nobility like the Count of Toulouse down to the most humble peasant. This theory tells very little of the actual circumstances, however. The King of France could no more effectively demand the loyalty of the nobles of Occitania than the Count of Toulouse could demand allegiance from those in the region farther down the social scale than he. Nobody controlled Occitania; rather it was a jumble of lordships within which noble families intermarried and formed both formal and informal alliances with each other and with nobles and kings from other regions. Thus trying to figure out a baron's ultimate loyalty could elude even the most diligent researcher then and now. (See Figure 2, p. xviii.)

The most prominent nobles in the central part of Occitania were the counts of Toulouse. The counts regularly married the children of royalty and their children occasionally made suitable mates for kings.¹⁷ Being the greatest nobles in the region did not necessarily bring wealth, security, and control to the counts. They did not rule over Occitania but were more a first among noble equals. Included within the cultural, linguistic, and regional borders of Occitania were Gascony and Aquitaine, modern southwestern and western central France, and Provence to the east. Like all of the land of the *regnum Francorum* the western territories ultimately belonged to the King of France, but much of eastern Occitania was under the overlordship of the kings and emperors of Germany. De facto control of the territories to the west of the Count of Toulouse's lands actually lay with the Duke of Aquitaine in the early thirteenth century. This control was complicated by the fact that from 1152 the dukes of Aquitaine were also kings of England. Yet the King of England still owed homage as duke to the King of France for his Occitan territories. During the second half of the twelfth century, the counts of Toulouse had constant troubles with their Angevin neighbors on the western borders, as each tried to extend his influence by military force using marriage or blood ties as a pretext. As

¹⁷ Hélène Débax, "Stratégies matrimoniales des Comtes de Toulouse (850–1270)," *Annales du Midi* 100, no. 182 (1988), 131–51, especially 144–8; "Les Comtesses de Toulouse: Notices Biographiques," *Annales du Midi*, 100 no. 182 (1988), 215–34, especially 229–32; Laurent Mace, *Les Comtes de Toulouse et leur entourage, XIIIe – XIIIe siècles. Rivalités, alliances et Jeux de Pouvoir* (Toulouse: Privat, 2000), 58, 60–1; 94; 202–3. In 1154 Raimon V married Constance of France, sister of King Louis VII. Raimon VI married five times; one of his wives was Joan of England, daughter of King Henry II and sister of kings Richard I and John. Raimon VI later married Eleonor of Aragon, sister of King Pere II, in 1209; his son Raimon VII married Eleonor's younger sister Sanchia of Aragon in 1211. Raimon VI's daughter Constance married Sancho VII, King of Navarre, but this monarch rejected her in 1190. Raimon VII's daughter Jeanne married King Louis IX's brother, Alphonse of Poitiers.

Richard Benjamin put it, this resulted in a “forty years war” between Angevin and Raimondine that lasted until near the end of the century. A marriage in 1196 between Raimon VI and Joan, sister of Richard I, helped matters immensely.¹⁸ As part of the settlement Richard gave the Agenais region of Aquitaine to Raimon VI as his sister’s dowry.¹⁹ Joan died just three years later in 1199, but the Count of Toulouse renewed his homage for the Agenais on behalf of his then infant son. Once the Occitan War began John, King of England, largely failed to defend his nephew’s (and vassal’s) interests or his own in Occitania until after 1212 and accomplished very little when he eventually tried.²⁰ Between his attempts to take back northern territories like Normandy lost to the French king after 1204, ongoing problems with the papacy, his allies’ loss to the French crown in 1214, and himself having to thwart a French invasion of England by Prince Louis in 1216, John had little time or resources to intervene in the south.

After 1196 Raimon VI’s most serious problems were further east with his near neighbor, the Viscount of Béziers, Carcassonne, and Albi. Their shared boundary turned out to be the biggest hotbed of Cathar heresy, perhaps symptomatic of the political problems of that border region.²¹ The title of viscount had begun as a bureaucratic one in the early Middle Ages, denoting a count’s agent or someone who administered part of a county, but by the High Middle Ages viscounts often operated independently of any higher authority, as was largely the case in Occitania.²² Through careful marriage strategies going back to the late eleventh century the Trencavels, the dynasty that held the office of Viscount of Béziers, had become great nobles in their own right.²³ In spite of the fierce rivalry between the Trencavels of Béziers and the Raimondines of Toulouse, the

¹⁸ Richard Benjamin, “A Forty Years War: Toulouse and the Plantagenets, 1156–96,” *Historical Research* 61 (1988): 270–84; John Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, 2nd edn. (London: Arnold, 2001), 29–30, 48.

¹⁹ WPE, chapter v, 18; WP, 38; Claire Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France. Dualism in Aquitaine and the Agenais, 1000–1249* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society, 2005), 148.

²⁰ Claire Taylor, “Pope Innocent III, John of England and the Albigensian Crusade (1209–1216),” *Pope Innocent III and his World*, ed. John C. Moore (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 1999), 206–9; and *Heresy in Medieval France*, 204–7. Taylor does a masterly job of portraying John as more active than most historians give him credit for, but from a military standpoint his role in the region was abysmal.

²¹ Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne*, 327–9.

²² Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble. Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 8.

²³ For the Trencavels’ complicated rise to power see Fredric L. Cheyette, “The ‘Sale’ of Carcassonne to the Counts of Barcelona (1067–1070) and the Rise of the Trencavels,” *Speculum* 63 (1988), 826–64, and Elaine Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility and the Albigensian Crusade* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005).

two dynasties had close ties. In 1209 the Count of Toulouse was the uncle of the Viscount of Béziers.²⁴

Who “owned” or had the power to dispose of the Trencavel lands provided the biggest political football of the Occitan War. Further to the east and south, the Viscount of Béziers owed allegiance for most of his territories to the Count of Barcelona, who in 1137 confused matters further by becoming the King of Aragon through marriage.²⁵ The King of Aragon was an Occitan noble in his own right, controlling various territories in Provence including the area around Montpellier.²⁶ To make sorting out land titles more difficult yet, in 1204 the King of Aragon, Pere II, sought papal protection and possible financial help for a crusade against the Muslims. To gain this he became a papal vassal by ceding his kingdom to the pope. This made determining who should receive overlordship of the Trencavel lands after his death in 1213 that much harder, since it was not clear whether Pere’s cession of 1204 included lands outside the kingdom of Aragon, i.e., in Occitania.²⁷ The early thirteenth century saw the strengthening of the King of Aragon’s role in a region which was technically part of the King of France’s realm, partially because the Aragonese monarch was far more active in Occitania and came from a land culturally more similar to Occitania than that of the French. Extending marriage ties into the region, Pere II’s sister married Raimon VI in 1209, a decade after the count’s Angevin wife died.²⁸ This made the Count of Toulouse the former or present brother-in-law to two different monarchs and uncle of his greatest regional rival. The kings of Aragon were often preoccupied by the *Reconquista* in Spain, no less so during the early years of the Occitan War. This preoccupation lasted until 1212, when, along with the King of Castile, Pere II helped engineer the decisive victory over the Almohads at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa.²⁹ Still, as early as the first summer of the

²⁴ Mace, *Les Comtes de Toulouse*, 30; Graham-Leigh, *Southern French Nobility*, 98–9.

²⁵ T. N. Bisson, *The Medieval Crown of Aragon. A Short History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 27, 31. The Count of Barcelona was betrothed to the heiress of Aragon in 1137, though the marriage did not take place until 1150.

²⁶ Graham-Leigh, *Southern French Nobility*, 102–3; V.-L. Bourrilly and Raoul Busquet, *La Provence au Moyen Âge. Histoire politique: l’église: les institutions (1112–1481)* (Marseille: Barlatier, 1924), 10–13.

²⁷ Anonymous, *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III*, trans. James F. Powell, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 228–31; PL 214, *Gesta Innocentii*, cols. CLIX–CLX; PL 215 cols. 550–1, # CCXXIX; Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 63–5; Damian J. Smith, *Innocent III and the Crown of Aragon. The Limits of Papal Authority* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 43–60. Smith has an especially full account of Pere’s 1204 trip to Rome.

²⁸ Mace, *Les Comtes de Toulouse*, 61.

²⁹ A good current account of the battle is in Smith, *Innocent III and the Crown of Aragon*, 111–15.

war in 1209, Pere II increasingly involved himself in Occitania to keep and extend his rights as lord and to support his kinsmen and vassals. By 1213, free from worry about Muslims in Spain but growing increasingly concerned over Simon of Montfort's domination of Occitania, Pere II became diplomatically involved and eventually militarily intervened on the southern side. This intervention cost him his life and largely closed the door on Aragonese hopes for expansion in Occitania.

East of the Rhône in Burgundy and Provence, Occitania was itself a patchwork of claims, ties, and family ownership. This region did not play a large role in the war until 1216. Most of it technically belonged to the German emperors, who had old claims going back to the eleventh century but little actual control. Real imperial authority in the region, however, came close to reality in 1156 when the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa married the heiress to Burgundy, thus making him not merely feudal suzerain but an actual landholder there.³⁰ Ultimately of course Frederick's interests lay elsewhere and imperial control remained light throughout the twelfth century. Any sort of imperial oversight remained illusory during the Occitan War because the rival houses for the imperial throne – Hohenstaufen and Welf – fought for control of the empire and largely did not concern themselves with events in Occitania.³¹ The southernmost part of eastern Occitania south of the Durance river had been contested between the counts of Toulouse and the counts of Barcelona (later kings of Aragon) since the beginning of the twelfth century.³² After 1125 the rival houses divided the region between them, the counts of Toulouse controlling certain towns on the Rhône and territory north of the Durance river, calling themselves “Marquises of Provence,” while south of the Durance river the region was episodically controlled by relatives of the count-kings of Barcelona or the count-kings themselves.³³ Though occasionally the houses dueled for primacy in eastern Occitania, many of the prosperous towns in the region, especially along the Rhône, existed largely free from any external authority.

Who then had the ultimate allegiance of the nobles of Occitania? No one really. Allegiance and loyalty were contingent on marriage alliances, personal agreements and murky land titles. These last were particularly fluid, and the old saying, “possession is nine tenths of the law,” held true.

³⁰ Otto of Freising and his Continuator, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, trans. Charles C. Mierow (New York: W. W. Norton, 1953), 165, 186; Alfred Haverkamp, *Medieval Germany 1056–1273*, trans. Helga Braun and Richard Mortimer (Oxford University Press, 1988), 223.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 240–4. ³² Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne*, 17–18. ³³ *Ibid.*, 261–7.

There were no black and white borders in Occitania or anywhere else in western Europe at the time. Essentially monarchs and nobles controlled zones of influence with hazy boundaries that changed rapidly as a result of marriage, death, or war. While inheritance remained the most important criterion in assessing who controlled what, physical possession carried as much or more weight. Unless a noble could militarily enforce his authority, a birth or marriage right over property meant little. Once a noble gained control over an area through warfare he had a claim to keep it. The fluidity of political control in this era is exactly what Simon of Montfort exploited for almost nine years. His right to southern lands through military conquest trumped rightful inheritance, marriage, personal ties, and legal custom.

To a great extent this principle of possession held true farther down the social pile. Much more humble nobles essentially commanded territories as if they owned them outright, even if technically they owed homage for them to someone else. Unless a suzerain actively enforced his rights, he did not control those who held property from him. The lords of Cabaret, for example, who held castles located high in the Black Mountains, were supposedly vassals of the Viscount of Béziers. In practice the lords listened to the viscounts only when they felt like it and could not be made to do anything they did not want to do, short of a military expedition to dislodge them from their mountain hide-outs.³⁴ This took more effort than the viscounts of Béziers were willing to expend, so the lords of Cabaret lived like kings of the mountain until the political dynamics of the region changed after the Occitan War began. Alliances and counter-alliances, spats, and endemic, localized warfare were ubiquitous in western Europe, and no noble questioned the fairness of the system. It was the bringing in of an outside agency, in this case the crusade, that upset the course of politics and warfare in Occitania and began the transformation of the region into one partially controlled from the outside.

There was one other zone of influence that could not be overlooked in Occitania by 1209: the growing economic, political, and military power of towns and cities, particularly of the greatest city of the region, Toulouse. In most of western Europe, including Occitania, urban centers thrived during the twelfth century as growing population created demand and overseas commerce expanded, both with the Islamic world and in support of the

³⁴ Malcolm Barber, "Catharism and the Occitan Nobility: The Lordships of Cabaret, Minerve and Termes," *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood III*, ed. C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1990), 1–19, especially 8–10.

Crusades. Along with the increasing economic power of Occitan cities and towns came political and military muscle. As any tourist who has traveled into the hinterland of France knows, during the Middle Ages cities, towns, and even small villages were situated with defense in mind, using the geography of the land to enhance whatever defensive structures could be built. Travelers to the modern Midi-Pyrénées and Languedoc-Roussillon regions of France, the main theaters of the Albigensian Crusade, will see small towns perched on the highest hills of open, rolling country, or, more spectacularly, on steep crags or tabletop plateaus high up in the mountains. In addition to natural defensive advantages, most towns and cities had extensive walls and defensive structures. That is why many a municipality in Occitania was called a *castrum*, meaning fortified place.³⁵ For the most part these *castra* could hold out against all but the most determined of enemies, which is why nobles in the south rarely bothered to besiege them prior to 1209.

The largest population centers had not only formidable fortifications but also the military and financial means to defend themselves for an extended period of time. Toulouse in particular was a large, productive city in 1209, with a population of 30,000–35,000, placing it first in the region in terms of population, wealth, and influence.³⁶ Along with many other cities elsewhere in Europe in the twelfth century, Toulouse had become an independent, politically autonomous commune with its own town government prior to 1209.³⁷ Though the counts of Toulouse still used the city's citadel, the Narbonnais Castle, as their residence in Toulouse, by the time of the Occitan War the counts had virtually no power over the city.³⁸ As the crusaders would find out to their chagrin in 1217, the

³⁵ Benoît Cursente, "Le castrum dans les Pays d'Oc aux XI^e et XIII^e Siècles," *Heresis* 11 (1988), 19–25, especially 20–1; PVCE, Appendix A part v, 283–5.

³⁶ Josiah Cox Russell, *Medieval Regions and their Cities* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles Publishers, 1972), 156; Philippe Wolff, *Les "Estimes" Toulousaines des XIV^e et XV^e Siècles* (Toulouse: Bibliothèque de l'Association Marc Bloch de Toulouse, 1956), 54–5; Jean-Noël Biraben, "La population de Toulouse au XIV^e et XV^e siècles," *Journal des Savants* (1964), 284–300. Using the same evidence as the other authors, Biraben suggests a higher population, somewhere between 45,000–50,000 inhabitants. All of the numbers are based on the tax estimates of 1335. It is impossible to be anything more than speculative on the population of 120 years before.

³⁷ John H. Mundy, *Society and Government at Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1997), 234–5; Christopher K. Gardner, "Negotiating Lordship: Efforts of the Consulat of Toulouse to Retain Autonomy under Capetian Rule (ca. 1229–1315)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2002), 68–107. Many of the primary documents for this process can be found in R. Limouzin-Lamothe, *La Commune de Toulouse et les sources de son histoire (1120–1249). Troisième partie: Le Cartulaire du consulat* (Toulouse: Edouard Privat, 1932), 261–403.

³⁸ John H. Mundy, *Liberty and Political Power in Toulouse 1050–1230* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), 43–58.

Narbonnais Castle itself served best to keep people outside the city from getting in, not to control or defend against the populace of Toulouse. Bishops often had control over Occitan cities or parts of them, causing great friction between prelate and citizen. As Folquet of Marseille, Bishop of Toulouse during the Occitan War, found out, arrogant, overbearing bishops without military force to back up their rights were easily neutralized.³⁹ Not only was Toulouse an independent political entity beholden to no one, it had become a military power in its own right in the years before the Albigensian Crusade. Its militia had besieged or fought almost two dozen other towns or lordships between 1202 and 1204, at best to establish what John Mundy has called a “contado,” an autonomous city state, at worst gaining favorable peace treaties with its neighbors.⁴⁰ As an economic, political and military power, the city of Toulouse could be ignored neither by outsiders nor by the nobility of Occitania prior to 1209 nor by Simon of Montfort after. Though the people of Toulouse appeared disorganized and weak between 1209 and 1211, in moments of crisis from 1211 on, this cosmetic weakness congealed quickly to a hard, united front.

WARFARE IN WESTERN EUROPE ON THE EVE
OF THE OCCITAN WAR

The study of medieval military history has entered a renaissance in recent years, with a steadily increasing number of solid, well-researched studies. This brief account does not propose to reinvent the wheel, but rather remind the reader of its shape.

The twelfth- and thirteenth-century literary tradition of Arthurian romance and *chanson de geste* paints a picture in which war consists of knights fighting each other on horseback in single combat. By the last quarter of the twelfth century all nobles in western Europe saw themselves as knights and associated themselves with the supposed virtues and values

³⁹ For Bishop Folquet’s troubles with his flock in Toulouse see WPE, chapter VII, 22, chapter XV, 35–7; WP 44–5, 64–7; PVCE, 114–15 #221, PVC 1, 220–2.

⁴⁰ Mundy (*Liberty and Political Power*, 68 and *Society and Government*, 87, 250) has advanced the thesis that Toulouse sought to gain a *contado* as Italian city states had, through aggressive wars of conquest. Pamela Marquez, “Urban Diplomacy: Toulouse and its Neighbors in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,” *Viator* 33 (2002), 87–99, has recently challenged this, arguing that the Toulousans simply sought peace and favorable commercial arrangements from the towns with which they fought.

of knighthood.⁴¹ Without a doubt, the military ethos of the early thirteenth century was dominated by ideas and ideals of knightly warfare. Indeed, one of the most important sources for the Occitan War, the Anonymous continuation of the *Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise*, or in its English translation the *Song of the Cathar Wars*, is at its best describing chivalric acts and the exhilaration of knightly combat.⁴² By the 1990s, however, the myths about knightly warfare had been challenged and dispelled as a consensus emerged among scholars that most medieval warfare consisted primarily of sieges.⁴³ This consensus has been qualified in recent years with the realization that raiding or the *chevauchée* (a mounted raid) played an equal, perhaps even more important, role in a world in which it was often hard to get directly at one's enemy.⁴⁴ Even though the aristocracy of the period loved participating in and writing about tournaments, which in their early days were only a hair short of real warfare, when it came to face-to-face combat out in the open few were willing to engage in it.⁴⁵ That was because static fortifications, i.e., castles and town walls, were so effective. Facing an enemy in the field was often an all-or-nothing proposition. While winning could bring the obvious spoils of victory, coming off second best meant, at the very least, a loss of reputation, and at worst the total rout of one's army, capture, or death. Therefore, besides raiding activity, during war one side typically sat in a fortress while the other raided and occasionally attempted sieges that usually failed. Raiding cost the aggressor virtually nothing; the only hazard was having to endure raids on one's own land. Attacking an opponent's fields, orchards, and unfortified villages not only kept one's own army supplied, but made one's presence felt when siege or battle were unlikely to occur. Attritional warfare of raids and sieges was endemic in western Europe precisely because it was cheap, and it merely weakened, rather than destroyed, opponents who

⁴¹ Tony Hunt, "The Emergence of the Knight in France and England 1000–1200," *Knighthood in Medieval Literature*, ed. W. H. Jackson (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1981), 1–22, especially 3–4; Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), 27–30; Jean Flori, *L'Essor de la chevalerie XIe–XIIe siècles* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1986), 229–30; Linda M. Paterson, *The World of the Troubadours. Medieval Occitan Society, c. 1100–ca. 1300* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 84–7; Bouchard, *Strong of Body*, 23–5.

⁴² For an example see SCW, 159–61 *laisse* 200.

⁴³ Randall Rogers, *Latin Siege Warfare in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 1–5; Jim Bradbury, *The Medieval Siege* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 188–9. Bernard S. Bachrach, "Medieval Siege Warfare: A Reconnaissance," *The Journal of Military History* 58 (1994), 119–33, summarizes the thesis succinctly.

⁴⁴ John France, *Western Warfare in the Age of the Crusades 1000–1300* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 12, 14–15.

⁴⁵ Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 174–5.

often recovered to lead their own raids and sieges later. When pitched battles occurred this was because both sides wished to fight, an extremely rare situation.

War in Occitania prior to 1209 fits this pattern well. Decades before the crusade began southern nobles regularly raided each other's property as the normal mode of warfare, something that continued even after the Occitan War began.⁴⁶ There were virtually no major field battles between nobles of the south prior to 1209. In garden variety wars between old enemies, few nobles bothered to besiege each other because that required a blockade and the presence of siege machines to have any hope of success. This in turn meant more resources and time than most nobles cared to expend. More serious warfare occurred between the counts of Toulouse, their neighbors, and the Angevins during the twelfth-century "forty year's war," including an unsuccessful siege of Toulouse in 1159, but this is noteworthy primarily because it was so exceptional.⁴⁷ Once the Albigensian Crusade began in 1209, this normal pattern of raids was upset by the crusaders' willingness to engage in intensive siege warfare to a degree that the people of the region had never seen before.⁴⁸ Battles remained rare, however, as indeed they did in the rest of western Europe. During the Occitan War there were only four pitched battles between 1209 and 1218, only one of which, Muret in 1213, was fought between two opponents who had deliberately chosen this most potentially decisive of options.

A pattern of warfare consisting of sieges and raids simply did not favor the kind of warfare we associate with knights. While mounted knights were faster in open territory than those without horses, and hence could be valuable in any activity that required mobility, a fully equipped knight in armor on a heavy *destrier* (warhorse) would not necessarily be a commander's first choice at a siege. During assaults and hand-to-hand combat a knight's armor was much better than nothing, but armor provided little protection against stones weighing hundreds of pounds, missiles flying through the air at hundreds of feet per second, or anything else heavy or fast enough to crush or pierce the armor of the day.

Nonetheless, with their better equipment, mobility and social status, knights provided the cadre of both armies during the Occitan War. Most

⁴⁶ Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne*, 276.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 263–76; Benjamin, "Forty Years War," 271; W. L. Warren, *Henry II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 85–7.

⁴⁸ For the number of sieges see Barber, *The Cathars*, 256–7 and Laurence W. Marvin, "War in the South: A First Look at Siege Warfare in the Albigensian Crusade, 1209–1218," *War in History* 8.4 (2001), 376–7.

royal and noble households of the early thirteenth century had a few knights as part of their retinue, bodyguard or *familia* (household). Younger sons or brothers with no prospects of marriage or inheritance were perfect candidates for this role in their brother's household or more likely in someone else's.⁴⁹ Perhaps the best examples of this are Raimon VI's younger brother Baldwin, who formed part of the count's retinue but later defected to the crusade, and Simon of Montfort's brother Guy, who formed part of Montfort's *familia*. Commanders such as Raimon VI, Simon of Montfort, or Pere II, all knights, chose their lieutenants from among their noble and knightly relatives, friends, associates, and retinue. These lieutenants advised their commander, led independent wings of an army, or governed towns and cities.

Beneath nobles and knights in equipment and status but serving alongside them were mounted men we might call horse sergeants. These men had the mobility of the knight but not the heavy equipment and armor and usually possessed only one horse. Actually horse sergeants may have been better at raiding than knights because they had less equipment to drag around with them. Either knights or mounted sergeants worked very well as supply train escorts, as Simon of Montfort had them do many times during the war. Medieval sources only occasionally make the distinction between knightly and non-knightly horsemen, as do two sources about Montfort's cavalry at the battle of Muret in 1213.⁵⁰ The number of both knights and horse sergeants in the opposing armies is usually impossible to calculate, and varied considerably depending on the season and year of the war. When it is possible to do so, however, I have provided numbers with the appropriate analysis. Suffice it to say that neither side would have had more than a few hundred horsemen at any time other than the occasional chance agglomerations of men at the height of the summer campaign season. Any army of horsemen required too many supplies and too much support for medieval governments to bear for very long, so mounted forces were always *ad hoc*. On the southern side, the cavalry consisted of great nobles and their retinues, lesser nobles and their followers, and paid troops. Southern nobles like the counts of Toulouse and Foix often operated together, as they did in 1211, but these were by no means permanent arrangements. Their horsemen mustered for a very short time, and as the

⁴⁹ Marjorie Chibnall, "Mercenaries and the *Familia Regis* under Henry I," *History* 62 no. 204 (1977), 15–23; Georges Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. Cynthia Postan (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 112–22; David Crouch, *William Marshal. Knighthood, War and Chivalry, 1147–1219*, 2nd edn. (London: Longman, 2002), 29–31; Mace, *Les Comtes de Toulouse*, 107–10.

⁵⁰ PVCE, 209 #460, PVC II, 151; WB, 259–60.

immediate crisis passed, disbanded. On the northern side during the summer campaigns, Montfort might have thousands of noble, knightly and non-knightly horsemen who had taken the cross along with his own followers, while out of campaign season these numbers slipped into the dozens.

Below the vital but small part of the army of horsemen were foot soldiers. Both sides used infantry, but it is hard to know what any of the terms we associate with “footsoldier” or infantry, like *pedes*, *serviens*, *sirvans*, or *sergans*, mean in terms of function or quality, unless specific terms for “archer,” “crossbowman,” etc. are used. Needless to say, there were different types of infantry engaged in the war, including missile troops of various types and siege engineers.⁵¹ On the southern side, many times the references to footsoldiers meant the citizens of town militias. We know virtually nothing about their equipment or training in this period. Most urban militias were organized to protect the town on top of its hill and behind its walls. Since the defender in any siege had clear advantages over the aggressor, town militias functioned very effectively in defense. There were always exceptions, as when the town militia of Béziers panicked and abandoned their positions in 1209, partially accounting for the lopsided crusader victory. In the limited role most town militia served – fighting behind walls for their lives, family, and property – they were usually good enough to hold out during a siege. Some militias were clearly better trained and equipped. Again, the militia of Toulouse is a case in point, though the militia of Narbonne had similar capabilities. Proficient not only at defending its city, the Toulousan militia could conduct limited offensives of its own, as it had in wars with other towns and lordships prior to the Albigensian Crusade. Once the Occitan War began, the experienced militiamen of Toulouse participated in offensive operations in 1211 on the side of the crusaders and in 1213 and after against the crusade. From among their numbers of skilled tradesmen the militiamen of Toulouse could build their own equipment and prosecute their own sieges, as they did before the walls of Muret in 1213. The number of men who served in the Toulousan militia is not known, but based on the city population probably about two to four thousand could campaign for short intervals outside the city, which made it a considerable force that could not be ignored.⁵²

⁵¹ For a discussion of Occitan terms for specialists see Paterson, *World of the Troubadours*, 51–5. Latin terms will be explained as they occur.

⁵² Ferdinand Lot, *L'Art militaire et les armées au Moyen Age en Europe et dans le Proche Orient*, 2 vols. (Paris: Payot, 1946), 1: 215–16 footnote 4; Martín Alvira Cabrer, *12 de septiembre de 1213. El jueves de Muret* (Barcelona: University of Barcelona Press, 2002), 301, 627. This is plausible if the population

The crusader rank and file mentioned by sources like Peter Vaux-de-Cernay or William of Tudela are more problematic beyond their region of origin. The Occitan War began and operated as a crusade much of the time, after all, so a wide variety of soldiers might make their way south to fight under the crusade banner. In addition to the nobles and knights who participated there were thousands of others who served. Little is known about them and even the term “crusader,” often used in this account, requires explanation. The terms “crusade” and “crusader” have taken on new life in the last sixty years for such diverse purposes as Eisenhower’s “crusade” in Europe to the Muslim use of “crusader” as a pejorative term for westerners.⁵³ These words emerged only by the end of the twelfth century, after one hundred years of European military expeditions to the Middle East. They derive from the term *crucesignatus*, literally meaning “bearing the sign of the cross.” As common as *crucesignatus* was *peregrinatus*, or a variant of it, which meant “pilgrim.”⁵⁴ Crusades to the Holy Land were a form of pilgrimage, a penance for past sins and misdeeds, hard as that may seem for modern detractors of this medieval activity to believe. The mainstays of the crusader army during the campaign seasons of the Occitan War were these men, called “crusaders” or “crusader-pilgrims” in this book. Just as they did on all the previous crusades to the Middle East, these crusader-pilgrims ranged in social status from royal princes, nobles, and knights down to commoners.

The commoners’ experience and equipment spanned from men who had served in their own urban militias in northern France and elsewhere, might have served as an offensive force, and were outfitted effectively for the needs of campaigning, to those who brought no skills or equipment except for religious zeal, a pilgrim’s staff, and an empty knapsack. These men drained the resources of the crusade and provided the fodder for ambush and death as they tramped the roads back and forth, but they were an absolutely essential part of the crusader army. Their presence provided the necessary numbers for Simon of Montfort to use them in all manner of

of Toulouse was somewhere between 30,000 and 35,000. The number only represents a theoretical one for offensive operations; anyone who acted as a soldier, including a woman, could be counted as part of the militia when the people of the city defended themselves against outsiders. See Chapter 6, footnote 109 and accompanying text, for more discussion of the numbers of Toulousan militiamen at the battle of Muret.

⁵³ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York: Doubleday, 1948), 157.

⁵⁴ James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1969), 10, 31; Michael Markowski, “Crucesignatus: Its Origins and Early Usage,” *Journal of Medieval History* 10.3 (1984), 157–65; Christopher Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 27–9.

effective ways, though at times even under his control they could be a liability. Their numbers can only be estimated at various stages of the war.

Both sides in the Occitan War employed the services of paid soldiers, a common practice by the early thirteenth century. In the days before the efficient taxation systems of the modern nation-state no ruler could afford the services of a professional army beyond his own personal retinue or *familia*. When a crisis loomed and monarchs and nobles had money in their pockets, or acted like they did, they hired soldiers on an ad-hoc basis until the danger passed or the money ran out. These hirelings received money for their service but could be fired at will, presumably to take up arms with whomever they wished. Because their motives were probably not strictly financial we normally do not consider these men to be “mercenaries” in the modern, negative sense. For example, King Philip II of France employed over two thousand troops in 1202, the records explicitly describing what types of soldiers he hired and what he paid them.⁵⁵ We certainly do not know whether they served the King of France out of loyalty, duty, or because they were paid, but it was probably a combination of all three reasons. The crusader army in the Occitan War made use of paid troops. From 1209 on Simon of Montfort was forced to compensate the soldiers who stayed with him beyond the summer campaign season.⁵⁶ Nobles or knights could be promised or given land from conquests, but even they needed cash periodically to pay their expenses. Men called *mainadiers*, *soldarios*, *soudadiers*, or a variation of those terms meant those who received pay or salary.⁵⁷ Salaried troops could come from high social status, as did Robert of Picquigny, a northern lord who served in the south in 1218 for pay, but usually paid soldiers came from more humble social strata.⁵⁸ Montfort’s garrisons were typically composed of a few knights and many more sergeants who likely served primarily for monetary compensation.

⁵⁵ *Compte Général des Revenus tant ordinaires qu’extraordinaires du Roi pendant l’an 1202* (1750), reprint in Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des Hautes Etudes 259 (1932), cxxxix–ccx; Ferdinand Lot and Robert Fawtier, *Le Premier Budget de la monarchie française. Le Compte Général de 1202–1204*, Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des Hautes Etudes 259 (1932), 1–298. For an analysis of the military aspects of the 1202 budget see Edouard Audouin, *Essai sur l’armée royale au temps de Philippe Auguste* (Paris: Edouard Champion, 1913) and John W. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus. Foundations of French Royal Power in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 166–9.

⁵⁶ PL 216 cols. 141–2. Montfort first complained to the pope about his inability to pay his men as early as the fall of 1209.

⁵⁷ PL 216 col. 142 refers to *soldarios*; see *Chanson* III, 66 laisse 192, line 49 and SCW, 143 for the term *mainadier*. For more discussion of these terms see John H. Mundy, “The Albigensian Crusade 1209–1229. A Military Study” (MA dissertation, Columbia University, 1941), 79–80; Paterson, *World of the Troubadours*, 58.

⁵⁸ SCW, 143 laisse 192; *Chanson* III, 66 line 59.

Besides these salaried troops there were other soldiers who received cash for their services but were reviled at the same time. A modern definition of “mercenary” would be one who fights for pay but has no political allegiance to his employer. The thirteenth century contained these sorts of men. While by the early twelfth century western Europe’s growing population, expanding arable land, overseas trade and increasing money supply generally meant greater prosperity for most, it also meant overpopulation and underemployment for some. Certain regions of Europe, such as the Low Countries where population was dense, and (paradoxically) underpopulated places on frontiers like Aragon, eventually began to “export” their young men in military companies often called after the geographical area they originally came from, such as Brabançons, Aragonese, Navarrese or Basques. There were generic names for these units as well, such as *coterells*, *ribaldi*, *ruptari*, and *routiers*. By the second half of the twelfth century these *routiers* and their variant names had become extremely skilled, often possessed high unit cohesion, and were readily available.⁵⁹ Late twelfth-century commanders like the Angevin kings of England and Frederick Barbarossa often employed *routiers*, and even Philip Augustus used them occasionally.⁶⁰ *Routiers* gained a bad reputation because they lacked political allegiances, but on a more practical level their great skill against even knightly opponents made the latter afraid of being killed or imprisoned by their social inferiors.⁶¹ Ironically, it was the ease of going to war through raiding and siege warfare that allowed these units to thrive as they did; they simply supplied a demand in a ready market. *Routiers* became so feared for their competence and pragmatic view of warfare that by the late twelfth century they had become a Europe-wide scourge in the court of literate opinion, and chroniclers like Walter Map condemned them as “hated of God and Man” even as rulers made increasing use of their services.⁶²

⁵⁹ The essential article on the genesis of *routiers* is Herbert Grundmann, “Rotten und Brabanzenen: Söldner-heere im 12. Jahrhundert,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* (1942), 419–92. The best recent discussion is Steven Isaac, “Down Upon the Fold: Mercenaries in the Twelfth Century” (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1998).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 115–33; Grundmann, “Rotten und Brabanzenen”; H. Gérard, “Les routiers au douzième siècle,” *Bibliothèque de L’Ecole des Chartes* 3 (1841–1842), 125–47 and “Mercadier. Les routiers au treizième siècle,” *Bibliothèque de L’Ecole des Chartes* 3 (1841–1842), 417–33.

⁶¹ J. F. Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare in Western Europe during the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn., trans. Sumner Willard and Mrs. R. W. Southern (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 46–9; Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry. The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066–1217* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 291–329.

⁶² For this most famous description of the *routiers* of the era see Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, ed. and trans. M. R. James, rev. C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 118–19.

Routiers walked a fine line on the margins of European society. While rulers might be grateful for their help in a crisis, mercenary units were subject to discharge and unemployment as soon as the conflict had passed and could be cheated out of their pay. This occurred in 1188, when Philip Augustus had his *routiers* stripped of their possessions and weapons and turned out “unarmed and naked” during a lull in the fighting between himself and Henry II.⁶³ *Routiers* could expect little mercy on the battlefield or as prisoners, as experienced by the men of the *routier* garrison at Moissac in 1212, who were executed after the *castrum* surrendered.⁶⁴

Because of their lack of political affiliation, their willingness to engage in war regardless of the cause, and their brutally efficient conduct in battle, at the Third Lateran Council in 1179 *routiers* were anathematized in the same canon as the Cathars mentioned earlier.⁶⁵ In other words, these units of professional fighters who fought for pay were seen as being outside the Christian fold, outside the bounds of normal humanity. What is also interesting is their role in the warfare of the south *prior* to 1209. Since lordship was so weak in central Occitania and nobles up and down the social ladder had trouble controlling their followers, certain nobles in the south, such as the Count of Toulouse, had come to depend on the services of *routiers*. Not only the counts but southern towns themselves hired or accepted *routier* garrisons for protection and to man their fortresses in the advent of a siege.⁶⁶ These men appear to have provided loyal and valuable service if paid, but remained outside the good graces of church and society and occasionally suffered the consequences.

In the early thirteenth century no written body of custom or laws existed governing the conduct of war. Christian theories of the just war date back to Saint Augustine, however, and were updated in religious law by Gratian in the twelfth century. By 1209, from the viewpoints of the pope who initiated it, the clerics who preached it, and those who took the cross to fight it, the Occitan War was just.⁶⁷ Few southerners agreed. As late as 1215 the southern noble Raimon-Roger, Count of Foix, argued quite eloquently

⁶³ Roger of Hoveden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houeden*, ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols., RS 51 (London, 1868–71), 2: 345.

⁶⁴ PVCE, 165 #353; PVC II, 50. ⁶⁵ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* 1, 224.

⁶⁶ Isaac, “Down Upon the Fold,” 136–7; Michael Costen, *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade* (Manchester University Press, 1997), 12–15, 47, 107.

⁶⁷ Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 1975), 205–6, 209. Any war waged to protect the church was just, including ones against internal enemies. As Russell points out, canon law suggested that the pope could redistribute territory from these just wars, a theoretical position Innocent III never quite accepted in practice.

why he thought the crusaders were fighting an unjust war.⁶⁸ Beyond the abstract concepts of just war theory – and of more immediate importance – is how laws or customs of war were implemented or ignored on the tactical level. Since there was nothing written or signed by governments or participants regulating conduct, the treatment of combatants and non-combatants was situational. Although growing more elaborate all the time, the European code of chivalry was better suited to the tournament than to actual combat and was never applied to warfare between soldiers and civilians of different social classes. Generally Christian ethics were no more effective in ameliorating warfare in the Middle Ages than they are today.

That being said, just as children playing together usually have some sort of unwritten rule or custom governing themselves when no adult is around, so did peoples of the west have an accepted, though unwritten, code of conduct subject to change depending on the circumstances. For example, the garrison of a town or castle that wished to surrender during the course of a siege was usually allowed to negotiate terms, the ease of those terms being predicated on how long the siege had been underway. On the other hand, according to widespread military practice in the medieval world, any city, town, or fortification that did not surrender and fell by assault was liable for sack and the possible murder of its inhabitants.⁶⁹ This concept dated back to the beginnings of humankind, when the standard formula dictated the slaying of adult males and the enslavement of women and children.⁷⁰ Even though Greek and Roman authors often mentioned this practice with some distaste, murder, rape, and torture continued to be the fate of those who would not surrender in the classical world.⁷¹ Medieval warfare was more complicated, since enslaving or slaughtering Christian prisoners was against Christian ethics, but that never stopped barbarous behavior. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries excesses in war occurred on a regular basis in Christian western Europe.⁷² In the crusading

⁶⁸ *SCW*, 73–75 *laissez* 144–6; *Chanson* II, 44–5. ⁶⁹ Russell, *Just War*, 209, 256.

⁷⁰ Paul Bentley Kern, *Ancient Siege Warfare* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 22–5, 135–62, 227–36, 323–55.

⁷¹ What happened to the Melians during the Peloponnesian War is probably the most famous example; see Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. and rev. T. E. Wick (New York: Random House, 1982), book V, 357 #116. A good Roman example comes from Sallust, *The Jugurthine War*, trans. S. A. Handford (London: Penguin, 1963), 124, 126–7: in 107 B.C.E. Marius, the Roman commander, killed the adult males and enslaved the women and children after storming a North African stronghold.

⁷² Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, chapter II; Randall Rogers, “Aspects of the Military History of the Anglo-Norman Invasion of Ireland 1169–1225,” *The Irish Sword* XVI no. 64 (1986), 143–4; Friedrich Lotter, “The Crusading Idea and the Conquest of the Region East of the Elbe,” *Medieval Frontier*

world of the Middle East on occasion both Christians and Muslims slaughtered innocents, non-combatants and surrendered opponents, as happened in Jerusalem in 1099 or to the Latin field army at Hattin in 1187.⁷³ No one was immune from suffering from, or participating in, atrocity.

Still, most medieval people placed limits on what was acceptable conduct in war. Mutilation of captured or surrendered prisoners guilty of no other crime than being caught was usually not condoned. Women and children were not supposed to be sexually assaulted or killed, though this was also situational. Prisoners of noble status were supposed to be kept in honorable captivity and permitted a ransom. These customs were never written down, but when they were violated chroniclers tended to note it.⁷⁴ It is in the waiving of or failure to observe these customs that the Occitan War is sometimes viewed as exceptionally brutal, even for the age.⁷⁵ There is some justification for this viewpoint. In a war against heretics and their protectors, those who would not submit to the crusade or continued to support heretics and heresy could expect no mercy.⁷⁶ On any scale of brutality, wars tend to be nastier when an ideology or religion is involved. The Albigensian Crusade was spawned by religious reasons which never completely faded from how enemies treated each other during the war. Therefore, brutality and atrocity formed a part of the conflict, and this is often cited as the reason why this war of all wars was the nastiest in Europe during the High Middle Ages.⁷⁷ The sack of Béziers, the killing or

Societies, ed. Robert Bartlett and Angus MacKay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 288–94, 304; Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe. Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (Princeton University Press, 1993), 86–90.

⁷³ For Jerusalem see Raymond d'Aguilers, *Le "Liber" de Raymond D'Aguilers*, ed. John Hugh and Laurita L. Hill (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste, 1969), 150–1; *Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. and trans. Rosalind Hill (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962), 90–2; for Hattin see *Moslem Historians of the Crusades*, trans. Francesco Gabrieli (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 123–5.

⁷⁴ For the laws and customs of war and siege in this era and later see Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 31–54, 196–203, 208–12, 218–24; Maurice Keen, *The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 119–33; Bradbury, *Medieval Siege*, 296–333.

⁷⁵ The most recent discussion is Malcolm Barber, "The Albigensian Crusades: Wars Like Any Other?" *Dei gesta per Francos. Crusade Studies in Honour of Jean Richard*, ed. Michel Balard, Benjamin Z. Kedar, and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 45–55.

⁷⁶ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* 1, 224 Canon 27. In Innocent III's many letters leading up to the crusade he emphasized that heretics and their supporters could expect harsh treatment.

⁷⁷ Barber, "Wars Like Any Other," 53–5; Daniel Baraz, *Medieval Cruelty. Changing Perceptions, Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 86–9, 177. Baraz uses the Albigensian Crusade to show how "cruelty" was just emerging as a philosophical and cultural concept in western European thought. He concludes that what happened during the crusade itself was not necessarily worse than what occurred in other eras or places; it was simply that people had grown more sensitive to atrocity.

mutilation of garrisons or civilian populations, the executions of high-status individuals such as Giralda of Laurac in 1211 and Baldwin of Toulouse in 1214, all testify that this war, like all wars, was hell for whoever was caught up in it regardless of social class, age, religious affiliation, or gender. What *may* separate the Occitan War from other wars in western Europe is the duration of the conflict over ostensibly one goal: the eradication of heresy. Petty squabbles over property between aristocratic families were the usual fare for the south, but 1209 ushered in large armies of outsiders convinced that the people of Occitania harbored a great evil in their midst that had to be exorcized by military violence. In pursuit of that goal, people from northern France and elsewhere in Europe conducted dozens of sieges and brought a regularity and intensity to warfare that had never been seen in the south. It is no surprise, then, that the war seems worse than normal, because it was worse for the people of Occitania. In September 2001 the population of the United States reacted as though it was the first time people had ever been killed by international terrorism, because in the American world that was true. Southerners of 1209 reacted the same way for the same reason: their world had never been shattered by systematic, sustained military conflict. This book asserts, however, that even after the conflict ceased to be about religion and became more about political, legal, and geographical control, on a medieval scale of brutality the Occitan War does not stand out as particularly barbarous compared to warfare elsewhere in western Europe of the time.

LOGISTICS

Unlike other historical eras, logistics in the Middle Ages has not been intensively studied, though increasingly scholars have begun paying more attention to it.⁷⁸ The purpose of military logistics in the medieval world was to ensure an army's survival, but not its comfort. In static warfare over fortifications, defending forces could, with ample warning of an enemy's

⁷⁸ The classic text on logistics is Martin van Creveld, *Supplying War. Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (1977); 2nd edn. (Cambridge University Press, 2004). This widely cited work goes back no farther than the seventeenth century. In the latest edition van Creveld bows to criticism over omitting Roman logistics and cites recent works on the subject, but includes not one title covering the medieval period. Some works of value on logistics for the period of this book are Bernard S. Bachrach, "Some Observations on the Military Administration of the Norman Conquest," *Anglo-Norman Studies VIII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference* (1985), 1–25 and "Logistics in Pre-Crusade Europe," *Feeding Mars. Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. John Lynn (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 57–78. Though some published works and unpublished theses have covered crusade finances, very little has been done on the military logistics of the Occitan War other than Mundy, "The Albigensian Crusade," 60–5.

approach, gather foodstuffs which would allow them to hold out for months. By gathering up resources garrisons denied them to approaching field armies. Unless a shortage of water occurred, or the food supply failed or was spoiled or destroyed, or the fortification fell by direct assault, the defenders had an excellent chance of waiting out any army trying to besiege them. Field armies, on the other hand, had to trace back through rivers and roads a line of supply that could only be as long as the chain of fortifications they controlled along those routes. As was often the case, not being able to trace a line of supply meant that a field army's days were numbered in any given campaign season, and the army would melt away as it quickly consumed its own supplies.

In terms of the logistical difficulties of both sides in the Occitan War, the forces of the crusade had a much greater challenge. The southern side possessed interior lines, access to and knowledge of the countryside, and inhabitants who usually supported resistance to the crusade. Besieging armies from the north had to maintain their supplies without these advantages. Travel along the roads was dangerous and crusader supply trains required heavy escorts which very often drained the army of its most mobile soldiers. For example, the battle of Saint Martin-la-Lande in 1211 occurred when Simon of Montfort had to rescue a supply train which had been trapped by a southern army.⁷⁹ Unless the season was right and food and fodder could be procured along the line of march, a supply train of pack or draft animals had to carry its own feed to the detriment of human foodstuffs, and this made supply difficult in regions with a weak agricultural base such as Termes or Cabaret high in the Black Mountains. If pack animals are dependent solely on what they carry on their backs they will consume it within ten days. A pack train whose animals graze for fodder but transport their own grain will eat up everything they carry within twenty-five days assuming they carry nothing else. A pack train carrying human food, grain, fodder, and non-comestibles therefore had to reach its objective in far less time in order to be effective.⁸⁰ Even though Occitania had abundant navigable rivers, overall control along their length fell to

⁷⁹ For the battle see Chapter 4, 122–5.

⁸⁰ Donald W. Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 18–22, 26, Appendix 1, 126–30. This work remains the classic study on pre-modern logistics. Engels calculates that the Macedonian army could only carry about ten days' rations for beast and human, because the animals also carried baggage such as tents. He also believes an army forced to carry all its supplies, including water, in extremely harsh conditions could only supply itself for four days or less. While the requirements for a 30,000–60,000-man army of the fourth century B.C.E. were not the same for often smaller western European armies operating in the early thirteenth century, his conclusions are still most compelling.

communities often sympathetic to the southern cause. The crusade could not control every town, and therefore its supply line along a river was always vulnerable. The geographical location of rivers in the region did not always make supply convenient for an army marching away from a river. Control of a river could prove vital to victory or defeat, as Simon of Montfort found out at the siege of Beaucaire in 1216 and the second siege of Toulouse in 1217–18, where the crusade could neither check enemy boat traffic nor supply itself because it did not command the entire length of the river. Distance from navigable rivers meant that places like Termes or Cabaret were absolute nightmares when keeping a besieging army supplied. The only way up to fortifications such as these was so steep that resupply was restricted to single-file pack animals and human porters. With few exceptions, the crusaders during the Occitan War were as miserable and ill-fed if not more so than the people they inflicted war upon.

MAIN NARRATIVE SOURCES FOR THE CRUSADE

No incident in the medieval world has so many sources covering it that scholars have the luxury of wondering how to sort through it all. Yet relatively speaking parts of the Occitan War are decently covered, though not always to the depth of detail one would like. Of all the sources used in this study, three stand out as absolutely essential to it. All have historiographical problems, of course, and throughout the text I comment on specific debates and arguments. The first and most important source for studying the Occitan War is the Latin chronicle of Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, completed by or before 1220. Peter was a Cistercian monk in his twenties who accompanied his uncle Guy, himself Abbot of Vaux-de-Cernay, and later Bishop of Carcassonne, on crusade. Though Peter was not in the south the entire time of which he wrote, he witnessed many important events during the crusade, and he knew all the important principals on the crusader side, including Simon of Montfort. Scholars who have assessed Peter's contribution have come up with a mixed bag, depending on which side their sympathies lie. Because of his youth and ideals (zealously pious), status (a Cistercian monk) and relations (nephew of a Cistercian abbot who was on intimate terms with the commander of the crusade), the current consensus is that Peter was heavily biased towards the crusade but that his biases are openly stated. This really understates his value. Peter's chronicle is essential not only for the depth of basic details he provides, but quite simply for understanding through the eyes of the crusaders how the war

was fought. As someone so intimately linked to the crusade his work contains details to which no other source comes close, and he recorded verbatim many letters exchanged between the pope and others on the crusade. Religious zealotry aside, Peter was a detailed observer who stated in his dedication to the pope that he wrote nothing down that he did not personally witness or hear from eyewitnesses.⁸¹ While we should not always take him at his word, Peter is the best source for the Occitan War up to 1216. By the summer of that year and after, his coverage begins to lessen in both volume and quality. For the siege at Beaucaire and subsequent events he provides some details, but other sources become more valuable at that point. Some have suggested this is because he died before he completed the last third of his account.⁸²

If all we had was Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's work we would count ourselves lucky, but even more fortunately we have sources from the southern perspective, even if they are not sympathetic to the Cathar heresy. The *Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise*, written in Occitan, is usually considered as one source though it was actually written by two people. As its title suggests, the *Chanson* is a poem, a problem that has never prevented any scholar from heavily depending on it. Roughly the first third of it was composed by William of Tudela, who identifies himself in his prologue as a cleric from Navarre. During the early years of the Occitan War, William of Tudela served in the household of Baldwin of Toulouse, half-brother of Raimon VI yet one of the most important allies of the crusade.⁸³ This means that, like Peter, William either witnessed many of the things he wrote about or knew those who did, and he served a noble who became a member of the inner circle of the crusade. William's portion breaks off abruptly in 1213, suggesting that he died but that it was compiled soon after the events it covers. William has traditionally been viewed as a loyal Christian but also a southerner who did not always approve of the way the crusade was conducted. Actually, his background as a southerner but role as a cleric make William perhaps the least biased of any of the major chroniclers. He often provides details that Peter Vaux-de-Cernay does not, such as his recounting of the branch of the crusade which attacked Casseneuil in 1209.⁸⁴ In other cases he corroborates what Peter says, thus increasing our confidence in the way certain events probably took place.

⁸¹ PVC 1, 2, #2.

⁸² Graham-Leigh, *Southern French Nobility*, 18; Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, *Histoire albigeoise*, trans. Pascal Guébin and Henri Maisonneuve (Paris: L. Vrin, 1951.), xii; PVCE, xxv; PVC III, ix.

⁸³ WTud, 2, 4, 6; SCW, laisse 1, II. ⁸⁴ WTud, laisses 12, 34, 36; SCW, 16–18.

William's portion of the *Chanson* ends in 1213 before many of the crucial events of that year, most notably the battle of Muret. His continuator remains anonymous and that is what I call him. The Anonymous is actually the most partisan of the three writers already mentioned, yet he provides us detail for the latter stages of the war which would be unavailable otherwise. Probably from Toulouse, his perspective has both great strengths and weaknesses. Based on his background and perhaps participation in the second siege of Toulouse, he most likely accurately reflects Toulousan attitudes during the second half of the war. The Anonymous provides the most detailed account of any source of what occurred at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. By the siege of Beaucaire in 1216, he begins to surpass Peter Vaux-de-Cernay in the quantity and quality of his reporting on the war, eventually devoting almost one third of the entire *Chanson* just to the second siege of Toulouse. In his mention of individuals and incidents during the siege we get a fair picture of what this lengthy episode was really like for the people of Toulouse, including their fear and concern over what for them was the central struggle of their generation. As good as he is on the siege of Toulouse, we have to be careful when the Anonymous talks about goings on in the crusader camp. Simon of Montfort and some of the papal legates come off as stock villains in a melodrama in which the people of the south represent the heroine tied to a railroad track. In that sense however, the Anonymous is no different from Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, who does much the same thing inverted. The Anonymous is also detailed, indeed hyper-detailed, in his descriptions of combat conducted at the siege of Beaucaire and the second siege of Toulouse. Though offering a vivid word picture of early thirteenth-century hand-to-hand combat, the thick description but hazy details wear thin and leave us no wiser when it comes to understanding many incidents and their context.

The last major source comes from William of Puylaurens, who did not witness the Occitan War and wrote at least a generation later than the other three authors. Though we have a name for him he never actually mentions one in his work, so the name we have may be a later addition.⁸⁵ His name and background are actually more problematic than first appears, as there was a William of Puylaurens who was priest of the church of the same name during the mid-thirteenth century. He also may have been a notary in Toulouse, or a chaplain of Raimon VII, or perhaps all three.⁸⁶ At certain

⁸⁵ WPE, xx–xxi; Graham-Leigh, *Southern French Nobility*, 36.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 37–9; Yves Dossat, "La croisade vue par les chroniqueurs," *Paix de Dieu et guerre sainte en Languedoc au XIII^e siècle*, *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 4 (1969), 236–8 and his earlier "Le chroniqueur

points his writing suggests he knew the people he was talking about, as in his recounting of the battle of Muret. He states that the young Count Raimon related that he was not allowed to participate in the battle because of his age (he was about sixteen at the time), but observed it from the hills west of the battlefield.⁸⁷ Since Raimon VII died in 1249 and William's chronicle goes to 1275, William would have been fairly old to have served the last Count of Toulouse and still be writing more than twenty-five years later. Still, it is not impossible to believe that the count's chaplain and the chronicler was one and the same person. Even if the composer lived later than traditionally believed, or was actually more than one person, he or they provide many original details not available in the other major sources, such as the fate of the crusader garrison at Pujol, which fell to the southern army in the summer of 1213.⁸⁸ On most events William of Puylaurens is a valuable supplement, but obviously his account gets better the closer it draws to his own era. Therefore his greatest strength lies in events after 1218.

Guillaume de Puylaurens était-il chapelain de Raymond VII ou notaire de l'inquisition toulousaine?" and "A propos du chroniqueur Guillaume de Puylaurens," both reprinted in *Eglise et hérésie en France au XIII^e siècle* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1982) as chapters II and III. Dossat and Graham-Leigh both suggest there were two Williams of Puylaurens, but neither is able to definitively prove it.

⁸⁷ WP, chapter XXI, 48. ⁸⁸ WP, chapter XIX, 44.

The campaign of 1209

Virtually all works on the Albigensian Crusade spend an inordinate amount of time on the first year of the war. This is largely due to the storming of Béziers, which is often viewed as establishing a pattern of unforgiving and brutal warfare in the south. For all the ink spilled on it scholars have not studied the campaign year of 1209 with the thoroughness and lack of partisanship it deserves. Much of what has been written about the crusade since the nineteenth century has tended to be anti-church or pro-Occitan, and the events of the year 1209 provide easy fodder for these agendas. The legate Arnaud-Amaury's apocryphal remarks, supposedly made at the height of the sack of Béziers, will never go away, and they have to be dealt with in any discussion of what happened there. No matter who gets the blame, undoubtedly 1209 ushered in a time of troubles for the people of the south.

By 1 March 1209 Innocent's hopes of military intervention in Occitania had come closer to reality when real preparations for a crusade against the lands of the Count of Toulouse began. On that date Innocent appointed a Master Milo *legatus a latere* for the coming crusade, where he would join Arnaud-Amaury, the Abbot of Cîteaux, who had been a *legatus a latere* since 1204.¹ Master Milo was reputed to be the pope's personal priest and confessor, a man renowned for his verbal acuity.² Theodisius of Genoa, a canon of the cathedral of Genoa, soon joined him as his assistant.³ The three of them made their way to France, where they met Philip Augustus in May at Villeneuve in the Senonnais. Bearing a papal letter before a

¹ PL 216 col. 187 #CLXXVIII for details of Master Milo's appointment; see Dutton, "Aspects," 69, 74, 130 and Beverly Mayne Kienzle, "Innocent III's Papacy and the Crusade Years, 1198–1229: Arnaud Amaury, Gui of Vaux-de-Cernay, Foulque of Toulouse," *Heresis* 29 (1999), 52 and *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania*, 138–139 for Arnaud-Amaury's background and appointment. A *legatus a latere* had the most power of any type of papal legate. His authority was limited only by what specific instructions and parameters the pope had given him in his mandate.

² PVCE, 40 #69; PVC 1, 68–9; *SCW*, 13 laisse 5; WTud, 18 line 8; Dutton, "Aspects," 78.

³ PVCE, 40 #70; PVC 1, 69–71; Dutton, "Aspects," 79.

large assembly of prelates and nobles, the legates urged the French king or his twenty-one-year-old son to take direct action in the ecclesiastical province of Narbonne.⁴ Philip Augustus had balked at this several times before, and the May meeting was no different. Remarking that he was “beset on his flanks by two great and dangerous lions” (John of England and the Emperor Otto), the king said that for the sake of his kingdom neither he nor his son could travel to the south, though he would allow his barons to go if they wished.⁵ Based on previous letters issued by the pope or perhaps new ones stating the same thing, those who served in the south would receive an indulgence just like those who campaigned in Outremer.⁶

The legates made their way south, meeting with prelates at Montélimar. While there they summoned the Count of Toulouse to the city of Valence in the Rhône valley. There, as recorded in a long document called the *Processus*, Raimon VI answered various charges against him before Master Milo, the legates, and prelates and agreed to numerous punishments to atone for his sins and misdeeds. Raimon was not formally accused of heresy, nor did he plead guilty to it, though he did admit to hiring *routiers* and harboring heretics.⁷ He agreed to hand over seven fortified towns to the authority of the church via Master Milo, including Oppède, Mornas, Beaumes de Venise, Roquemaure, Fourques, Montferrand, and Largentière, but would continue to supply and pay for their garrisons.⁸ All of these *castra* were in the Rhône valley, in other words in Raimon’s eastern possessions. None of these *castra* was suspected of heresy, but it appears they were taken from Raimon to prevent their inhabitants from hindering the progress of crusaders traveling from the north who would come through the Rhône valley on their way to the crusade. The town consuls of Avignon, Nîmes, and Saint-Gilles swore an oath to Master Milo that should Raimon disobey the legate they would consider themselves released from any legal ties to the count and that the county of Melgueil would be

⁴ PVCE, 40–1 #71–2 and footnote 64, 71–3; PL 215 col. 1545 #CCXXIX. The Siblys suggest the letter was written on 3 February 1209 and had already been sent to the French king, so the legates were there to follow up in person.

⁵ PVCE, 41–2 #72; PVC 1, 73. The translation in the text is the Siblys’.

⁶ PVCE, 42 #73; PVC 1, 74. The pope sent several sets of letters, and as the Siblys point out on 39, footnote 49, Peter Vaux-de-Cernay does not specify if the letters to which he refers are those earlier sets or new.

⁷ PVCE, 43 #75 and footnote 72 and 44 #77 and footnote 75; PVC 1, 75–8. The entirety of the *Processus* is found in PL 216 cols. 89–98; for Raimon’s admission of hiring *routiers*, see col. 90. The Siblys do a good job of summing up this document.

⁸ PL 216 col. 89; PVCE, 43 #75; PVC 1, 75–6; SCW, 16 laisse II; WTud, 30–3.

forfeit to the church.⁹ Raimon agreed to expel heretics and all manner of *routiers*, including Aragonese and Brabançons, from his territories.¹⁰ In order to be absolved, Raimon VI underwent a humiliating ceremony in the town church of his ancestral home of Saint-Gilles, about sixteen kilometers from Arles. Clad only in a robe, he was led by a rope and scourged by Master Milo in front of more than twenty other prelates. In order to spare himself further humiliation in front of a large crowd that had gathered outside the church, Raimon left by a side route, which forced him to go by the tomb of Peter of Castelnau, the legate whose murder he had been accused of setting in motion.¹¹ Although he was now technically reconciled to the church, thousands of crusaders were already on their way south to rid Raimon's territories of heretics and their protectors. Knowing this was the case, and to forestall a possible invasion, on 22 June 1209 Raimon took the cross himself as a crusader along with two of his knights.¹² Peter Vaux-de-Cernay suggested he did it to "conceal and cover his wickedness," but more simply the count did it out of a sense of self-preservation. As long as he was a crusader his lands could not be taken from him.¹³ His astute action saved his lands from being ravaged in this first summer of the war. Others were not as clever.

GATHERING THE TROOPS

We do not know how many took the cross this first season, nor for that matter any other year between 1209 and 1218. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay said thousands of both the "noble and ignoble" joined up, but this does not help us much.¹⁴ No crusade sermons for this phase of the Albigensian Crusade survive, so we cannot know for sure what kind of people the crusade preachers wished to attract. A few characteristics do make this first summer of the war stand out from others between 1209 and 1218. Perhaps the most notable feature was the crusading host's size. All medieval and modern scholars agree that the army mustered to campaign in the summer of 1209 was perhaps the largest raised between 1209 and 1218, though on specific numbers there is nothing to approach a consensus. The size of any army in the Middle Ages is difficult to figure out with any accuracy, and this

⁹ PVCE, 43 #75 and footnote 73; PVC 1, 76; PL 216 cols. 92–3. Melgueil was a county north of Montpellier that Raimon held as a papal fief; it stands to reason this property would revert back to its overlord (the pope) if the vassal (Raimon) broke his word.

¹⁰ PL 216 col. 91. ¹¹ PL 216 col. 94; PVCE, 44–5 #77–8; PVC 1, 77–9.

¹² PVCE, 45 #80; PVC 1, 79–80; PL 216 col. 95. The identity of the two knights is not mentioned.

¹³ Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 165–9. ¹⁴ PVCE, 45 #81; PVC 1, 80–1.

certainly holds true for those of the Occitan War.¹⁵ The eyewitness account of the legates who accompanied the army does not mention any numbers, and the best they could tell the pope was that the army was the largest Christian army ever gathered.¹⁶ William of Tudela is the closest source to the events who actually lists a number, but he leaves us no better off for having done so. According to his account the army contained 20,000 horsemen, 200,000 commoners and countless clergy and burghers.¹⁷ Robert of Auxerre, whose lord participated in the campaign, offered no numbers but besides nobles, other lords and prelates, he said that “vulgarium numerus infinitus” made up the army.¹⁸ William the Breton related much the same thing: that many barons, knights, and infinite numbers of people from the French kingdom (“multi alii barones, milites et populi infiniti de regno Francorum”) joined the crusade.¹⁹ As far away as England chroniclers like Roger of Wendover also remarked on the large size of the army.²⁰ Modern scholars agree that the army was unusual in size for a western European army, though most have not attempted to come up with actual numbers.²¹

A scale can be suggested, however, by considering other contemporary armies raised for an international event, such as the army raised only seven years before for the Fourth Crusade, and the French army mustered in 1214 for the battle of Bouvines. The treaty signed between the crusaders and Venetians for the Fourth Crusade listed very specific numbers. Geoffrey of

¹⁵ Most argue for small numbers for medieval armies, though there are some who believe that large armies comparable to those of later eras were possible to field in the Middle Ages. See Bernard Bachrach, “Early Medieval Military Demography: Some Observations on the Methods of Hans Delbrück,” in *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages. Essays on Medieval Military and Naval History*, ed. Donald J. Kagay and L. J. Andrew Villalon (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), 3–20 and “The Siege of Antioch: A Study in Military Demography,” *War in History* 6.2 (1999), 127–46.

¹⁶ PL 216 col. 138–9, “cum tanta multitudine signatorum quanta inter Christianos non creditur aliquando convenisse”; English translation in WPE, Appendix A, 127–9; Austin P. Evans, “The Albigensian Crusade,” *A History of the Crusades*, vol. II, ed. Kenneth Setton *et al.*, 2nd edn. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969–1989), 287; Costen, *The Cathars*, 121.

¹⁷ WTud, 36–7 laisse 13, lines 2–4; SCW, 17. ¹⁸ Robert of Auxerre, *Chronicon*, MGH SS 26, 273.

¹⁹ WB, 258.

²⁰ Roger of Wendover, *The Flowers of History*, ed. Henry G. Hewlett, RS 84.2 (London: 1887), 87. Like most of the chroniclers Roger gave no numbers, but suggests the number of men drawn by the crusade preachers was so large that it was greater than the English kingdom could ever have gathered.

²¹ Strayer, *Albigensian Crusades*, 52, 53, says “many thousands”; Jonathan Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), 86, says about 20,000, of whom half were non-combatants, but he never explains how he came up with that number; Fernand Niel, “Béziers, pendant la Croisade contre les Albigeois,” *Cahiers d'Etudes Cathares* 4 no. 15 (1953), 141, thinks “on peut raisonnablement la [the army] chiffrer à trois cent mille homes”; Philippe Wolff, *Histoire du Languedoc* (Toulouse: Privat, 1967), 200, estimates 5,000–6,000 knights or more but does not give a concrete number for the other components of the army.

Villehardouin reported that the treaty called for the Venetians to transport and care for an army of 33,500, composed of 4,500 knights (*chevaliers*), 9,000 squires (*esquiers*), and 20,000 infantry (*serjanz a pié*).²² Far fewer actually showed up, perhaps about 14,000.²³ In 1214 Philip Augustus may have mustered the largest army of his reign in order to combat a planned invasion of France, which culminated in the battle of Bouvines. In this time of great crisis the king fielded an army of perhaps as many as 7,600 men composed of 1,300 knights, 300 horse sergeants, and between five and six thousand infantry.²⁴ This number does not include a separate but potentially considerable army operating in western France that same campaign season, commanded by Prince Louis. This army had at least 800 knights, perhaps as many as 2,000 horse sergeants, and six to seven thousand infantry.²⁵ This gives the total forces mustered by the French crown in 1214 as 17,400 men, representing perhaps the largest total a single western European government could gather in a single year.

The examples both of the Fourth Crusade and Philip Augustus' army give us a scale of magnitude from which we can estimate the size of the crusader army of 1209. The men of the Fourth Crusade planned for a sea journey with massive logistical requirements that necessarily restricted army size. Philip Augustus' army in 1214 was limited by his financial ability to pay for stipendiaries, his personal authority over his vassals, and his royal influence over the civic militias of towns and cities of northern France

²² Geoffroy de Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. and trans. Edmond Faral (Paris: Société d'Édition les Belles Lettres, 1938), 1: 22–5; Donald E. Queller and Thomas F. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade. The Conquest of Constantinople*, 2nd edn. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 10–11, 17, 215–16 endnote 19.

²³ Villehardouin, *La Conquête*, 1: 58. Villehardouin believed that the number of ships mustered by the Venetians could have accommodated three times the number of crusaders who showed up, suggesting the actual numbers were about one third of the 33,500. Queller and Madden, *Fourth Crusade*, 48 and 232 endnote 60, propose 14,000.

²⁴ See Laurence W. Marvin, "Warfare and the Composition of Armies in France, 1100–1218: An Emphasis on the Common Soldier" (Ph.D dissertation, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 1997), 158 and footnote 109 for a summary of scholarship on the numbers present at Bouvines. See also Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare*, 242–7 and "Le problème des effectifs et de la tactique à la bataille de Bouvines (1214)," *Revue du Nord* XXI no. 124 (1949), 181–93; Lot, *L'Art militaire*, 1: 224–30.

²⁵ William the Breton, *Philippide, Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, ed. François Delaborde (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1885), 286, Book x lines 131–2; 289, lines 202–4; Lot, *L'Art militaire* 1: 224–5; C. W. C. Oman, *A History of The Art of War in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1924), 1, 469–70; Charles Petit-Dutaillis, *Étude sur la vie et le règne de Louis VIII (1187–1226)* (Paris: Librairie Emile Bouillon, 1894), 49; Gerard Sivéry, *Louis VIII le Lion* (Paris: Librairie Fayard, 1995), 119. The *Philippide* is the only source that mentions the numbers in Louis's army. It is not very reliable for details, and there is no way to judge whether the numbers given in it bear any resemblance to the truth, though no modern scholars have questioned their veracity. The numbers remain suspect because this gave Louis more men than his father in a campaign season in which Philip Augustus faced the greater threat.

which owed military obligations to him. The expenses for a march to Occitania were far less than those for a sea journey of much greater distance and duration. If the nobles and knights who participated planned on a campaign of forty days, for which there is no evidence,²⁶ it should not have cost them much more than they might incur during their normal obligations. The campaign of 1209 had relatively few logistical or geographical difficulties, and it did not depend on the egos of secular rulers for leadership. Since the army of 1209 had few inherent disabilities limiting its theoretical size, the possible numbers of crusaders might have been quite high. If 33,500 was an overly optimistic and ultimately unsustainable number for a crusade overseas, and 17,400 was the best a monarch could do given the limited resources of any one kingdom, then a range of twenty to thirty thousand people is a realistic figure for the first campaign of the Occitan War. The qualitative references in the closest sources support the estimate of a large army. William of Tudela said that on its march south the crusading army stretched along for “a league” and swamped the existing road system.²⁷ It was so large that much of its baggage, including armor, food, and other supplies, was shipped by river.²⁸

Of whom was it composed? Some have proposed it was raised “within a feudal framework,” suggesting a large army of nobles with their knightly retainers, but this model might not be a very strong one in general, let alone for the Albigensian Crusade.²⁹ The crusade was popular among the secular elite of northern Europe. Among the important northern nobles who participated in 1209 mentioned by name were Odo, Duke of Burgundy; Hervé, Count of Nevers; Gaucher of Châtillon, Count of Saint-Pol; Simon, lord of Montfort and titular Count of Leicester; Milo, Count of Bar-sur-Seine; Peter, Count of Auxerre and his brother Robert of Courtenay, who were cousins of the Count of Toulouse; William, Count of Genevois; Guichard, lord of Beaujeu; William of Roches, the Seneschal of Anjou; and Gaucher of Joigny, lord of Châteaurenard.³⁰ Southern nobles or vassals of Raimon VI on this campaign included Adhémar of Poitiers, Count of Valentinois and Diois; and Peter Bermond, lord of Sauve.³¹ Peter Vaux-de-Cernay said that there were others “too numerous

²⁶ Laurence W. Marvin, “Thirty-Nine Days and a Wake-up: The Impact of the Indulgence and Forty Days Service on the Albigensian Crusade, 1209–1218,” *The Historian* 65.1 (2002), 75–94.

²⁷ *SCW*, 19, laisse 17; *WTud*, 50–1 lines 12–13. ²⁸ *SCW*, 17, laisse 13; *WTud*, 38 lines 18–19.

²⁹ Rachel Noah, “Military Aspects of the Albigensian Crusade” (M.Phil. dissertation, University of Glasgow, 1999), 33; Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals. The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 306–10.

³⁰ *PVCE*, 47 #82; *PVC* 1, 81–4; *SCW*, 16–17 laisse 12; *WTud*, 34–6 lines 9–23; *WPE*, 32 chapter XIII; *WP*, 60.

³¹ *SCW*, 16–17 laisse 12; *WTud*, 36.

to list," though the manuscript tradition names lower-ranking lords and knights such as Guy of Lévis, Lambert of Thury and Philippe Goloin who were present, the first two of whom became permanent fixtures of Montfort's army.³² Other chroniclers mentioned that many nobles, lords and knights also participated or confirmed names listed in the main sources.³³

The crusade proved no less popular among northern Europe's religious elite. In addition to the three papal legates, Master Milo, Master Theodisius, and Arnaud-Amaury, Abbot of Cîteaux and the most important Cistercian in Latin Christendom, they included Peter, Archbishop of Sens; Robert, Archbishop of Rouen; Gautier, Bishop of Autun; Robert, Bishop of Clermont; William, Bishop of Nevers; Robert, Bishop of Bayeux; Jordan, Bishop of Lisieux; and Renaud, Bishop of Chartres.³⁴ Virtually all of these nobles and prelates would have brought their own contingents of noble and knightly retainers and vassals, but we have no way of knowing how many these constituted all together. A May 1208 letter of Philip Augustus, specifically permitting his vassals the Duke of Burgundy and Count of Nevers to crusade if they wished, restricted them to a maximum troop of 500 knights because he needed his manpower at home to address ongoing problems with King John and Emperor Otto.³⁵ Based on the popularity of this initial recruitment, we can assume that the two nobles took their full allowance. The Duke of Burgundy and Count of Nevers's men probably constituted the single largest knightly contingent in this first campaign, and we can only speculate that most nobles and prelates brought followers in the dozens or less depending on their financial circumstances. The above discussion covers those who joined the main crusade and who would storm Béziers. It does not include the nobles, lords, and prelates who participated in another crusade in the summer of 1209 in the Agenais region of western Occitania, discussed below.

Guessing how many men each noble, lord or prelate brought with them still does not account for the vast majority of the crusader-pilgrims who made up the rank and file. No apparatus existed to recruit these common soldiers, and in the absence of evidence it appears that the thousands of men who made up the bulk of the army did so under similar terms to those

³² PVC 1, 83 #82, note a and footnotes 1, 2, and 3 on 84; PVCE, 47–8, footnote 1. See Christine Woehl, *Volo vincere cum meis vel occumbere cum eisdem. Studien zu Simon von Montfort und seinen nordfranzösischen Gefolgsleuten während des Albigenserkreuzzugs (1209 bis 1218)* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), 123–7, 165–7, 176–7 for background on these men.

³³ Robert of Auxerre, *Chronicon*, MGH SS 26, 273; ATF, 889; WB, 258–9.

³⁴ PVCE, 47 #82; PVC 1, 81–2; WB, 258, ATF, 889. ³⁵ *HGL* 6, 563–4 #142.

who crusaded in the Holy Land. On this first campaign there was no clear term of service or obligation to a leader among the nobles or prelates. Though the *ribauds* or *ribalds* of our main sources will be discussed below, beyond these it is hard to get a sense of the social origins of the common crusader-pilgrims who served in this army. Our sources do tell us at least some of the geographical, if not the social, origins of the men who participated. Men flocked to the cross in the thousands from all parts of the *regnum Francorum* and elsewhere, such as Auvergne, Burgundy, Flanders, the Ile-de-France, Limousin, Gascony, Normandy, Poitou, Provence, Rouergue, Saintonge, Vienne, men from both north and south Germany, and Lombards from northern Italy.³⁶ Most certainly the crusade drew poor pilgrims of a type who would not or could not participate in a crusade to Outremer because of the distance, mode of transportation, and expense. The cosmopolitan nature of the army came with a price: its “international” nature undoubtedly contributed to tensions within the ranks, as there was bound to be linguistic confusion and other misunderstandings that lessened the overall military effectiveness of the army, as had happened to earlier crusading armies in the Middle East.³⁷ The participants of the crusade, both great and small, made their way that spring and early summer to Lyon, where many of them were by 24 June 1209.³⁸

INTERLUDE IN THE AGENAIS, SPRING–SUMMER 1209

Though we have no firm dates for when it happened and only one source discusses it, in the spring of 1209 a separate crusader army formed in the western part of Occitania and conducted its own independent crusade for a brief time in the summer.³⁹ Unlike the main army assembling in Lyon, this independent army formed over 400 kilometers west of Lyon near the Agenais region. Besides beginning from a different place, one of the main differences between this smaller army and the larger one at Lyon is that the former was primarily led by and composed of southerners from Occitania or its borders rather than from those outside it. Its secular leadership included five nobles or lords: Guy, Count of Auvergne; Raimon, Viscount of Turenne; Bertrand, lord of Cardaillac; Bertrand,

³⁶ SCW, 17 laisse 13; WTud, 38–9 lines 5–13; Robert of Auxerre, 273.

³⁷ John France, *Victory in the East. A Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 18–21; Simon Lloyd, “The Crusading Movement, 1096–1274,” *The Oxford History of the Crusades*, ed. Jonathan Riley-Smith (Oxford University Press, 1999), 51–2.

³⁸ PVCE, 47 #82; PVC 1, 81.

³⁹ A good analysis of this crusade in English is Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 190–1.

lord of Gourdon; and Ratier of Castelnaud-de-Montratier, the last named an eventual enemy of the crusade.⁴⁰ The ecclesiastical representation included four prelates: William, Archbishop of Bordeaux; John of Veira, Bishop of Limoges; William, Bishop of Cahors; and Arnaud, Bishop of Agen.⁴¹ As Taylor emphasizes, this crusade was probably instigated by the Bishop of Agen, fiercely anti-heretic but also at odds with the Count of Toulouse over lordship rights in the Agenais. Most of the men who served in it, however, came from the Quercy region, not the Agenais.⁴² This army occupied the undefended town of Puylaroque, then destroyed Gontaud, a small town about thirty-eight kilometers northwest of Agen. Next the army moved about eight kilometers southeast to sack the town of Tonneins.⁴³ None of these towns appear to have had heretics in them, so they may have been taken for less lofty, secular reasons, such as to settle old political or economic scores.

The next target chosen was Casseneuil, controlled by the Bishop of Agen's own brother Hugh, lord of the town. Casseneuil lay twenty-six kilometers to the east of Tonneins, and was a recognized center of Cathar activity.⁴⁴ In 1214 Casseneuil bore the brunt of the crusade until it fell in the last great crusader military victory. In 1209, however, the siege of Casseneuil was destined for a quick, negotiated settlement. The *castrum* of Casseneuil was surrounded on three sides by rivers and probably had a large ditch on its southeastern side, making it a difficult target for an inexperienced army. Casseneuil's garrison was composed of Gascon *routiers*: archers, knights, and "javelin men" (*dardasiers*) led by Sequin de Balenx. The last group with their spears or javelins caused problems in the ranks of those besieging the town.⁴⁵ From the start the crusade army made little headway against the town. In addition to a lack of military progress, the Count of Auvergne and the Archbishop of Bordeaux squabbled over secular affairs, the count apparently worried about the crusaders despoiling property he owned in the area.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ The Count of Auvergne's presence in this army would suggest that men raised from his region accompanied him, even though William of Tudela said there were men from Auvergne with the main crusader forces gathering at Lyon. It is possible that men from Auvergne went to both places.

⁴¹ SCW, 17–18 laisse 13; WTud, 40 lines 25–31; Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 190.

⁴² *Ibid.*; SCW, 18 laisse 13; WTud, 40. ⁴³ SCW, 18 laisse 13; WTud, 40 lines 32–4.

⁴⁴ Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 190; Jean Duvernoy, *L'Histoire des Cathares* (Toulouse: Edouard Privat, 1979), 236; Elie Griffé, *Le Languedoc cathare au temps de la Croisade (1209–1229)* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1973), 99. Taylor says Casseneuil was the seat of a Cathar bishopric.

⁴⁵ SCW, 18 laisses 13–14; WTud, 40–2, laisse 13 lines 35–7, laisse 14 lines 1–2.

⁴⁶ SCW, 18 laisse 14; WTud, 42 lines 4–5.

Though Casseneuil appeared to be in no danger of falling to this divided army, William of Tudela explicitly mentions that it would have eventually surrendered to the crusaders had not continued problems between the Count of Auvergne and Archbishop of Bordeaux caused the count to end the siege by offering terms to the garrison. What those terms were is not spelled out directly. The count appears to have agreed to spare both town and garrison in exchange for handing over known Cathars. The poet mentions the burning of many male and female heretics, executed for heresy because they refused to recant.⁴⁷ Thus the cycle of atrocities of the Occitan War has its beginnings at Casseneuil, not Béziers. The fact that an army was now besieging towns and dispensing harsh justice scared some so much that even one hundred kilometers east of Casseneuil, the people of Villemur on the Tarn burned their own town and fled.⁴⁸ At this point we hear no more of this western crusade, perhaps because it dispersed. The Quercy and Agenais regions would not play an active military role in the Occitan War again until 1212.

THE MARCH OF THE CRUSADER ARMY AND THE STORMING
OF BÉZIERS, JUNE TO 22 JULY 1209

By 24 June the bulk of the crusader army had formed in the city of Lyon. Up until that point the leaders intended to invade the heretically infected western lands of the Count of Toulouse, since he was the main noble villain identified by the church as harboring heretics. That changed when the count became a *crucesignatus* himself on 22 June.⁴⁹ He immediately made use of his new status and met the crusader army as it left the city of Valence, ninety-one kilometers south of Lyon along the Rhône valley. At a meeting with the crusade leadership, Raimon VI managed to convince them of his sincerity, promising to obey the church and the orders of the crusaders and to turn over some *castra* as a gesture of good faith. He even offered himself

⁴⁷ SCW, 18 laisse 14; WTud, 42 lines 7–9; Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 190–1. William's description is not clear so one must make a short leap to reconstruct what happened.

⁴⁸ SCW, 18 laisse 14; WTud, 42, 44 lines 15–20 and note 3; Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 191, 233. The poet suggests the inhabitants burned the town after a tip from a boy that the army was on the move. Martin-Chabot and Taylor note that Villemur was a Cathar center and its lord a Cathar sympathizer. Martin-Chabot dates the burning of Villemur to around 22 June based on William of Tudela's remark that the people fled their town "by moonlight" on a Monday. Taylor suggests the siege of Casseneuil ended because the army had served its forty days, but there is no evidence that the forty-day period had become standard yet.

⁴⁹ Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 159–68.

or his twelve-year-old son as hostage for the good behavior of his people.⁵⁰ His cousin Peter, Count of Auxerre, was among the crusaders, and in general it seems that at least the secular leaders of the crusade bore little ill-will towards the Count of Toulouse.⁵¹ Since the leaders and rank and file of the army were still determined to punish someone for heresy, Raimon convinced the crusade leadership to invade his nephew's lands in the viscounty of Béziers, Carcassonne, and Albi. Though Raimon VI was Raimon-Roger Trencavel's maternal uncle, the Raimondine and Trencavel houses had been at odds for most of the past century.⁵² Convincing the crusade to attack his nephew must have relieved and delighted Raimon VI, since he had deflected a huge army bent on destruction from his own lands to those of one of his greatest rivals. It was a shrewd move that had tremendous consequences in both the short and long term.

From Valence the crusader army continued marching down the Rhône valley for the next several weeks, but eventually had to leave the logistical convenience of the river to proceed westward. By about 20 July the army reached Montpellier, approximately 203 kilometers from Valence. At some point during this time the substantial *castrum* of Béziers became the intended target for the crusade, since it was the closest city suspected of heresy or harboring heretics that belonged to Raimon-Roger Trencavel. Raimon VI now acted as guide, and once the crusaders entered the lands of his nephew he even courteously rode ahead of the army to secure good campsites for it, conveniently not costing himself a grain of wheat.⁵³ Though some southern nobles abandoned their holdings along the line of march, there does not appear to have been a widespread exodus, and indeed some local lords came to the crusader camp to pay homage. As the crusaders marched further westward on 21 July, they moved through the surrendered *castrum* of Servian, a small fortified town twelve kilometers northeast of Béziers, and took possession of some of that small *castrum's* even smaller dependencies.⁵⁴ By the evening of 21 July 1209 the army arrived at the western banks of the Orb river beside the city of Béziers.⁵⁵ (See Figure 3, p. xix.)

⁵⁰ PVCE, 48 #83; PVC 1, 85–6. The names of the *castra* are not listed. If they were the same ones listed in the *Processus* Raimon was not offering anything new. Perhaps he believed that as a crusader he no longer had to turn over the *castra*, but was willing to do so now as a gesture of good faith.

⁵¹ WPE, chapter XIII, 32; WP, 60.

⁵² SCW, 18 *laisse* 14–15; WTud, 44 *laisse* 14 lines 25–6, *laisse* 15 lines 5–6. See Introduction, 6–7, for more about their relationship. On changing targets from the Count of Toulouse to Raimon-Roger Trencavel see Graham-Leigh, *Southern French Nobility*, 45–51.

⁵³ SCW, 18, *laisse* 14; WTud, 44, lines 22–6. ⁵⁴ PL 216 col. 139; WPE, Appendix A, 127, 128–9.

⁵⁵ WPE Appendix A, 127; Legates' letter, PL 216 cols. 138–9; WPE, chapter XIII, 33; WP, 60.

The twenty-four-year-old Viscount of Béziers knew by the time the crusader army left Montpellier on 20 July that his city was the first military objective of the crusade. By the morning of 21 July, before the army's arrival, the viscount had arrived in Béziers to discuss what to do with its inhabitants. At a gathering of citizens he exhorted the people of the city to defend themselves against the crusaders and promised them quick reinforcement. After delivering this pep talk he rode on to Carcassonne to prepare the defenses there.⁵⁶ Our two main chroniclers interpret Raimon-Roger's quick exit from Béziers differently. William of Tudela suggests the viscount's personal leadership was necessary at Carcassonne, and this certainly sounds plausible. Evidently Raimon-Roger believed, as did everyone on either side, that the citizens of Béziers did not need his actual presence in order to resist the crusade. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay believes Raimon-Roger fled his duties out of fear of the approaching army. Based on Raimon-Roger's solid conduct later that summer defending Carcassonne the former source is probably more accurate here.⁵⁷ The viscount's advance warning of the army was evidently sufficient to allow those who wished to flee the city to do so, because the Jews of Béziers left with their viscount and traveled to Carcassonne and points west.⁵⁸ The Jews apparently believed that they would be especially vulnerable to the depredations of a crusade, based on crusader conduct dating back to the First Crusade.⁵⁹

By the time the crusader army reached Béziers on the evening of 21 July few residents had opted to flee. Renaud of Montpeyroux, Bishop of Béziers, had accompanied the northern army on part of its journey and now entered his episcopal city in a last effort to convince his flock to give up before blood was spilled.⁶⁰ At a large public gathering, probably in the cathedral church of Saint Nazaire, the bishop strongly urged the citizens of

⁵⁶ SCW, 19 laisses 15–16; WTud, 46, 48 laisse 15 lines 25–7, laisse 16 lines 1–8; PVCE, 49–50 #88; PVC 1, 89–90.

⁵⁷ For a modern interpretation of Raimon-Roger's behavior see Niel, "Béziers," 143–4. Niel suggests it was because the Trencavels had had serious problems with the people of Béziers, including the assassination of Raimon-Roger's grandfather in the city in 1167, that the young viscount left the city to defend itself.

⁵⁸ SCW, 19 laisse 16; WTud, 48 lines 9–10. In this same passage William mentions that the citizens grew apprehensive after their viscount talked to them, but based on their subsequent actions there seems to have been little anxiety among the bulk of the population.

⁵⁹ Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade. A New History. The Roots of Conflict between Christianity and Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 84–8.

⁶⁰ SCW, 19 laisse 16–17; WTud, 48, lines 11–20; Legates' letter, PL 216 col. 138, WPE, Appendix A, 127; Henri Vidal, *Episcopatus et pouvoir épiscopal à Béziers à la veille de la Croisade Albigeoise* (Montpellier: University of Montpellier Press, 1951), 43–5. The bishop was lord of Béziers's bourgs.

Béziers to make their peace with the crusade, even if it meant some despoliation of their goods.⁶¹ He urged them to hand over all heretics to the crusade and even had a list of Cathars to help facilitate their removal. Failing that, he encouraged loyal Catholics to flee the city in order to avoid being lumped in with the heretics.⁶²

His words did not meet with a favorable reception. Well aware of the army's size, since they could see it before them, and fully warned by their own bishop, why did the citizens of Béziers not comply with the demands of the crusade? First, there was the obvious reluctance to hand neighbors, friends, and relatives over to a crusading army that would certainly not treat them well. Secondly, there was the common though unexpressed belief that the odds were with them because it was hard for an army to take a city quickly, particularly one of Béziers's size and geographic location atop high hills above the Orb river. The Biterrois had had time to strengthen the city's defensive works, as related in an anecdote by Peter Vaux-de-Cernay.⁶³ Indeed the citizens assumed they could still hold out even after a month of sieging.⁶⁴ Third, the townspeople were sure that the huge size of the crusading army would actually be its downfall, believing it could last no more than two weeks.⁶⁵ Any substantial pre-modern western army would quickly outstrip its food supply, and this, along with the fact that the undisciplined nature of any army of this polyglot composition and large size meant it would dissolve as quickly as it formed, was something the people of Béziers counted on. Finally there were the tactical and geographical difficulties inherent in besieging a city, particularly one like Béziers, a town of between 10,000 and 14,500 people.⁶⁶ William of

⁶¹ SCW, 19 laisse 17; WTud, 48.

⁶² PVCE, 50 #89; PVC 1, 90–1 #89; the list of named heretics, some 222 in number, can be found in L. Domairon, ed., "Role des hérétiques de la ville de Béziers à l'époque du désastre de 1209," *Le Cabinet Historique* 9.1 (1863), 95–103; Barber, *The Cathars*, 65–6, provides an explanation of their social origins.

⁶³ PVCE, 49 #87; PVC 1, 88–9. In this anecdote a mysterious old man tells workers strengthening the fortifications just before the crusaders arrived that doing so will protect the town against humans but not from God. This suggests that the defenders had warning of the army's approach and time to reinforce at least some of the defenses.

⁶⁴ SCW, 19 laisse 17; WTud, 50–1 line 14. ⁶⁵ SCW, 19 laisse 17. WTud, 50–1 lines 9–12.

⁶⁶ For an analysis of Béziers's population see Russell, *Medieval Regions*, 161–2, who comes up with the figure of 14,500 for the city on the eve of the Black Death. Medieval estimates include WB, 258–9 (60,000); Caesarius, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, ed. Joseph Strange, 2 vols. (Cologne: H. Lempertz, 1851), 1: 302 and *Dialogue on Miracles*, trans. H. von E. Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland with an introduction by G. G. Coulton, 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Sons, 1929), 1: 345 (100,000). Modern estimates include J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi, *History of the Crusades against the Albigenes in the Thirteenth Century*, trans. unknown (London: Wightman and Cramp, 1826), 36 (15,000); Ph. Tamizey de Larroque, "Un épisode de la Guerre des Albigeois," *Revue des Questions Historiques* (1866), 188 (24,000); Pierre Belperron, *La Croisade contre Les Albigeois et*

Tudela's account and the legates' letter reported how strong and well defended it was.⁶⁷

The army encamped on the left side of the Orb at least 220 meters from the walls. The siting of the crusader camp, down below the heights where the cathedral church stood and deceptively far away across the river, lulled the people of Béziers into a false sense of security. The Orb cannot be forded anywhere close by, so the crusaders had to cross a single bridge which would have been under close surveillance by the citizens.⁶⁸ To get into the *castrum* required climbing a steep hill, on top of which perched the cathedral church.⁶⁹ The advantage clearly lay with the people of Béziers even though they were outnumbered by the crusade army.

Even though the storm and sack of Béziers is an infamous incident it is not well served by the sources. The only eyewitness account was left by the papal legates Milo and Arnaud-Amaury, but their exuberance reduces their accuracy. Our main chroniclers all left unsatisfactory accounts, though there is fairly wide agreement among modern scholars as to the sequence of events. The day after the arrival of the crusade army, trouble began almost immediately between the crusaders and the Biterrois. Behind their high walls and strong defenses, the citizens of Béziers badgered the crusader army camped across the river with jeers, sorties, and arrow fire. In a scuffle on the single bridge over the Orb, a crusader was hacked to death and thrown over the bridge.⁷⁰ The main brunt of the citizens' harassment fell on the thousands of pilgrims and camp followers of both sexes who had encamped closest to the bridge and walls. The sources consistently use the same type of words to describe these camp followers: *ribaldi*, *arlotz*, *vulgi*, and *gartz*.⁷¹ Figuring out what they mean by those terms is not easy. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says they were "sergeants (*servientes*) of the army, who in the popular language were called 'ribalds.'"⁷² Clearly this referred to the

l'union du Languedoc a la France (1209-1249) (reprint: Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 1967)190-2 (fewer than 25,000); Niel, "Béziers," 149 (10,000); Evans, "The Albigensian Crusade," 2: 289 footnote 14 (8,000-9,000); Philippe Wolff, "Une discussion de témoignages: le massacre de Béziers en 1209," *Documents de l'histoire du Languedoc*, ed. Philippe Wolff (Toulouse: Privat, 1969), 114 (no more than 10,000); Strayer, *Albigensian Crusades*, 61 (8,000-10,000).

⁶⁷ WPE, Legates' letter, Appendix A, 127; PL 216 col. 139; SCW, 19 laisse 17; WTud, 50-1 lines 14-15.

⁶⁸ This is based on both my personal observation of the Orb river near Béziers and also on the fact that none of the sources mentions any other possible crossing.

⁶⁹ Walking from the cathedral down to the river and back, I was struck by the steep gradient of the road. One simply cannot climb at this angle very quickly.

⁷⁰ SCW, 20 laisses 18-19; WTud, 55, laisse 18 lines 14-19, laisse 19 lines 21-2.

⁷¹ PVC 1, 91 #90, WTud, 54 laisse 19 line 1; Legates' letter, PL 216 col. 139; WP, 60.

⁷² PVC 1, 91 #90 "servientes exercitus, qui publica lingua dicuntur 'ribaldi.'" The translation in the text is mine.

less affluent crusader infantry, but Peter Vaux-de-Cernay usually uses *pelegrini* or *crucesignati* to describe crusader-pilgrims. Several modern historians have taken the sources' use of the word *servientes* to imply that these men were the hangers-on or servants of other soldiers, knights, nobles, or prelates.⁷³ Others such as Michel Roquebert have suggested that these *ribalds* were *routiers* or mercenaries, an interesting theory of some merit.⁷⁴ It seems unlikely, however, that the thousands of soldiers on this first campaign were *routiers*, because of their lack of discipline and the absence of obvious financial incentive. Contrary to what Roquebert suggests, our main sources liberally use words like *routier* when they mean "mercenary," so the fact that they do not do so here indicates something different. The enthusiasm this campaign created for those from all walks of life who joined for an indulgence suggests the "ribalds" were simply the poor crusader-pilgrims of the army.

A group of *ribaldi* grew incensed under the goading fire and harassment from the city, crossed the bridge and river, and attacked the walls and gates of Béziers. William of Tudela says they had a "king" or leader who mobilized them, and the existence of a leader of some kind partially explains why Roquebert thinks these may have been *routiers*. But the troubadour goes on to say that they grabbed clubs because they had nothing else, which suggests they were poor crusader-pilgrims, not organized mercenaries.⁷⁵ They moved so quickly that before the militia of Béziers could respond, the *ribaldi* had crossed the bridge and were well on their way to battering in the gates. The nobility and knights of the crusading army held back or remained unaware of what was going on until the attack was well underway. According to the legates' letter, at the time of the *ribaldi* attack, the leaders of the crusade were discussing how to get the loyal Catholics out of the city, presumably before a blockade and proper siege had begun.⁷⁶ By the time the better-equipped crusaders realized what had happened and armed themselves, the *ribaldi* had penetrated the *castrum*. The citizens of Béziers abandoned their positions and fled to protect their families, assembling in the churches, the most defensible buildings within the city. During the frenetic capture of the city the crusade

⁷³ Sumption, *Albigensian Crusade*, 92–3; Belperron, *La Croisade*, 189–90; Evans, "Albigensian Crusade," 288; Strayer, *Albigensian Crusades*, 62–3. Shirley's translation of William of Tudela's account also suggests these were servants. See Paterson, *World of the Troubadours*, 56–7 for a better definition of the Occitan words.

⁷⁴ *L'Épopée* 1, 254–8; Zoé Oldenbourg, *Massacre at Montségur. A History of the Albigensian Crusade*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Pantheon, 1961), 105–6.

⁷⁵ Legates' letter, PL 216 col. 139; PVCE, 50 #90; PVC 1, 91; SCW, 20, *laissez* 19–20; WTud, 54, 56.

⁷⁶ WPE, Appendix A, 127–8; PL 216 col. 139; PVCE, Appendix B, 289.

leadership could not control events, as even many knights now scrambled to get their share of loot.⁷⁷ Within two or three hours, according to the legates' letter, the city was firmly in crusader hands but not under any coherent leadership, and division of the spoils led to further loss of life.⁷⁸ In the course of restoring order, the barons of the crusade began to collect the plunder and kick the *garz* out of the houses they had seized. Incensed, the *ribaldi* set the *castrum* on fire in retaliation for the loss of their too-easily-won possessions and to ensure that if they did not get to keep what they had seized, no one would.⁷⁹

From this point the story tends to get inflammatory. Most famous of all is the story that supposedly at the height of the fighting, as the crusaders forced their way into the town, someone asked the legate Arnaud-Amaury how they would separate the good Christians from the heretics. His apocryphal words, "Kill them, God knows who are his," reported by a Cistercian monk with a fanciful imagination, have become a byword for religious intolerance, placing what happened at Béziers on the top rung of pre-modern atrocities.⁸⁰ Though Arnaud-Amaury was not above executing heretics, in 1210 this inflexible and unyielding man gave Cathars who surrendered a fair chance to abjure their heresy and so avoid execution, which heaps more doubt on the credibility of Caesarius' report.⁸¹ The speed and spontaneity of the attack indicates that the legate may not have actually known what was going on until it was over.

What has proven equally controversial is the scale of the massacre inside the city. The sources all agree that a mass killing took place, but modern commentators have had trouble analyzing the sources to come up with a realistic number for those who died. One prominent scholar has simply

⁷⁷ PVCE, 50 #90; PVC 1, 91; SCW, 20-1 laisse 20; WTud 1, 54, 56, 58; WPE, chapter 13, 33 and Appendix A, 127-8; WP, 60; PL 216 col. 139. The legates' letter and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay specifically mention that this was done without consulting the crusade leadership.

⁷⁸ PL 216 col. 139; WPE, Appendix A, 128.

⁷⁹ SCW, 21 laisses 20-2; WTud, 56 laisse 20 lines 15-21, 58 laisse 21 lines 20-5, 60 laisse 22 lines 1-7; Robert of Auxerre, *Chronicon*, 273.

⁸⁰ Caesarius, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, 1: 302; Caesarius, *Dialogue of Miracles*, 1: 346. The Latin, part of which comes from Timothy 2:19, is "Caedite eos. Novit enim Dominus qui sunt eius," usually with exclamation points added. For the fullest discussion see Jacques Berlioz, "Tuez-les tous. Dieu reconnaîtra les siens." *Le massacre de Béziers (22 juillet 1209) et la croisade contre les Albigeois vus par Césaire de Heisterbach* (Portet-sur-Garonne: Loubatières, 1994), 71-2, 76-83.

⁸¹ For biographical information and discussion of this legate's character, see Marie-Humbert Vicaire, "Les clercs de la Croisade," *Paix de Dieu et guerre sainte en Languedoc au XIIIe siècle. Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 4 (1969), 265-8; Dutton, "Aspects," 80-2; Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*, 138-61; Martín Alvira Cabrer, "Le 'Vénéral' Arnaud Amaury: image et réalité d'un cistercien entre deux croisades," *Heresis* 32 (2000), 3-35.

opted for the complete annihilation of the city.⁸² The number killed in the sack reported by the legates, “almost 20,000” (“fere viginti millia hominum”), is by any stretch of the imagination more than the entire population of Béziers, since the city probably had fewer than the 14,500 inhabitants reported in the first reliable population figures for it more than a century after 1209.⁸³ Peter Vaux-de-Cernay estimated that 7,000 people died in one church alone, La Madeleine. The structure of La Madeleine is still largely extant, and many observers including myself have concluded that the church is simply not large enough to accommodate that many people, even terror-stricken people packed in like cordwood.⁸⁴

Fire may have caused the death of thousands. Both William of Tudela and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay reported that the crusaders, or more specifically the *ribaldi*, set fire to the city. Based on other pre-modern fires, however, such as those in Constantinople in 1203–4 and in London in 1666, conflagrations rarely caused many deaths relative to the total population.⁸⁵ In these fires, which took place in cities with populations of 200,000 or more, no more than a few hundred died. For example, in the second fire of Constantinople on 19 and 20 August 1203, when the inhabitants did not have warning and large sections of the city were destroyed, fewer than 200 people were killed as a direct result of fire.⁸⁶

There is also the unsavory possibility that hundreds or thousands died as the result of deliberate murder while they ran for their lives, but how many died after the city fell cannot be known. As bad as the destruction was in the city, clearly most of Béziers’s population and buildings survived, since the *castrum* continued to function as a major population center. Less than a month after the sack, the new Viscount of Béziers, Simon of Montfort,

⁸² Bernard Hamilton, *The Albigensian Crusade* (London: The Historical Association, 1974), 18–19 and more recently “The Albigensian Crusade and Heresy,” *The New Cambridge Medieval History c. 1198–c. 1300*, vol. 5., ed. David Abulafia (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 167.

⁸³ Russell, *Medieval Regions*, 163.

⁸⁴ From personal observation of the inside and outside of La Madeleine; Belperron, *La Croisade*, 191 and footnote 2. The translators of PVCE, 51, footnote 35, Appendix B, 289–93, suggest Peter Vaux-de-Cernay may have confused his churches and meant the cathedral church of Saint Nazaire, which is quite a bit larger. The chronicler specifically mentions the church of the Magdalene however, and there is no reason to disbelieve him. Based on my own observations of the post-1209 cathedral church, which was presumably larger than the old cathedral church, even in an emergency it is not large enough to shelter 7,000 people.

⁸⁵ Thomas F. Madden, “The Fires of the Fourth Crusade in Constantinople 1203–1204: A Damage Assessment,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 84/85 (1991–1992), 74, 85–9. Walter George Bell, *The Great Fire of London in 1666* (London: John Lane Co., 1920), 176–7; John Bedford, *London’s Burning* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1966), 186–7.

⁸⁶ Madden, “Fires of the Fourth Crusade,” 87.

gave the Cistercians a house (*domus*) which had belonged to a Cathar, suggesting that at least some private residences escaped destruction.⁸⁷ The swiftness of Béziers's fall, with virtually no blockade or siege, was extremely unusual in medieval warfare and this makes what happened there seem worse for some reason. In other words, had the crusaders blockaded Béziers for weeks, then stormed the city, one might chalk up what happened after it fell as the result of pent-up frustration. The fact that many innocent Christians died with the papal legates in military command at the time makes the whole crusade seem hypocritical. We must bear in mind however, that the legates did not have much control over what occurred and that the conditions that allowed such success at Béziers would never be repeated during the Occitan War.

Of more immediate relevance is this: Béziers introduced the people of Occitania to the high stakes they faced. These included inevitable punishment, if not execution, for recalcitrant Cathars, changes in religious practices for those afraid to die for their beliefs, and political domination from the outside even for those who had always remained faithful to the church. It raised fear among the inhabitants that the northerners were better fighters than they, and it suggested they could be more brutal. What happened at Béziers greatly fostered the military reputation of northerners and helped sustain much smaller crusading armies through many troubles at least until 1216. Since Béziers gave the northerners false hope that perhaps God *was* on their side after all, it ensured a steady stream of crusader-pilgrims for years after.

THE SIEGE OF CARCASSONNE, 1–15 AUGUST 1209

The march from Lyon and the sack of Béziers had taken its toll on the crusaders, and because so much appears to have been destroyed in the sack the crusaders were no better off logistically for having done it. They were tired, justifiably or not. The crusading army camped not in the city, perhaps uninhabitable for the moment, but in the meadows outside it.

⁸⁷ *HGL* 8 #145 col. 572; Catalogue des actes, 452–3 #29; Richard Kovarik, "Simon de Montfort, His Life and Work: A Critical Study and Evaluation Based on the Sources" (Ph.D. dissertation, Saint Louis University, 1964), 138. Interestingly enough, the house's owner, Amela of Rieussec, does not appear on the list of the named heretics in Béziers, unless he is identical with Amelius Bertrandus of the burgh of Saint Jacques as claimed by Belperron, *La Croisade*, 193 footnote 2; or with B. Amelius Sutor of the burgh of Saint-Aphrodise. The burgh of Saint Jacques was within the walls on the south side of Béziers in 1209. The Saint-Aphrodise burgh was farther north than the town and outside the main circuit of town walls, which might have allowed it to escape severe destruction.

There they remained for three days before marching on to the next large *castrum* controlled by Raimon-Roger Trencavel.⁸⁸ The crusaders moved to the southwest until they hit the Aude river, which would lead them to Carcassonne. In doing so they crossed close by the territories of Aimery III, Viscount of Narbonne. In fact, they came within at most six kilometers of the city of Narbonne itself.⁸⁹ Narbonne was the seat of the senior churchman in this part of Occitania, the Archbishop of Narbonne. Neither Aimery nor his lands was an intended target for the crusade as Raimon VI had been, but Archbishop Berengar's failure to act vigorously against heresy prior to 1209 meant the crusade might be redirected to take this city just as it had been diverted against Béziers. By now the inhabitants, the viscount, and the archbishop were well aware of what happened to the people of Béziers, for many who had escaped that carnage had fled to Narbonne. Rather than face the possible ire of the crusade, Aimery quickly took himself off a possible target list by swearing to fairly harsh peace terms. He agreed to open all fortified places to crusaders and support the crusade both militarily and financially. As well, the viscount and archbishop agreed to turn over to the legates all heretics who had fled Béziers, and to suppress heresy more vigorously in the *castrum* of Narbonne.⁹⁰ Aimery honored his pledge to aid the crusade by providing lackluster military service later in 1209 and assisting in the siege of Minerve in 1210, but in general the viscount and the Narbonnais maintained a low profile during most years of the Occitan War. Along the way the crusade marched through or near perhaps dozens of other towns and *castra*, some of whose inhabitants submitted to the crusade while many more simply fled. In their hurry to do so, they very often abandoned strong fortifications and large stocks of food to which the crusaders helped themselves, perhaps accounting for the relative abundance of supplies they enjoyed during the siege of Carcassonne.⁹¹

The crusading army marched a distance of about forty-seven kilometers from the Aude above Narbonne and arrived at Carcassonne by Saturday,

⁸⁸ SCW, 22 laisse 23; WTud, 62 lines 1–8.

⁸⁹ Graham-Leigh, *Southern French Nobility*, 51–3. Graham-Leigh suggests that in the early thirteenth century the main road west of Béziers went through, not north of, Narbonne. Though neither Peter Vaux-de-Cernay nor the papal legates' letter mentions the crusaders marching to the city, Graham-Leigh believes the army did.

⁹⁰ Richard Wilder Emery, *Heresy and Inquisition in Narbonne* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 58; Paul Carbonel, *Histoire de Narbonne des origines à l'époque contemporaine*, vol. 1 (Narbonne: Brille and Gautier, 1956), 149–51; *L'Épopée* 1., 265.

⁹¹ WPE, Appendix A, 128; Legates' letter, PL 216 col. 139; PVCE, 51 #92; PVC 1, 94.

1 August 1209.⁹² As the seat of the Trencavel viscounts Carcassonne was considered at that time to be the heart of Cathar resistance.⁹³ The city of Carcassonne was smaller in population than either Béziers or Narbonne, with a population of less than 9,500, the number estimated from data of the early fourteenth century before the Black Death. Most likely it was even smaller in the early thirteenth century, although its population was larger than usual as people fleeing the crusader army came there for refuge.⁹⁴ Carcassonne's fortifications still exist, though they were substantially modified in the later thirteenth century by an additional set of curtain walls and the site was greatly restored in the nineteenth century. Today "La Cité" is considered one of the finest extant examples of a complete medieval defensive structure and ranks as one of the biggest tourist draws in the Midi-Pyrénées. (See Figure 4, p. xx.)

In 1209 "La Cité" was perched on an outcrop located some distance east of the Aude, surrounded by a single set of walls and ditches as well as three suburbs, only two of which, the Bourg and the Castellar, had a perfunctory set of walls and ditches around them. Overall the outcrop upon which the *castrum* sat did not lend much to its defenses. Contrary to the seeming strength of its fortifications as related by William of Tudela, Carcassonne was a far easier target than Béziers for blockade and siege, particularly along its river side.⁹⁵ Still, since the city had ample warning of what this crusader army was capable of, it was probably more competently defended than Béziers had been. Viscount Raimon-Roger had already lost one of his main cities and did not intend to give this one up without a spirited defense. Initially the twenty-four-year-old viscount gathered together 400 of his knights and mounted sergeants to sortie out and attack the crusade army in the open. Prudent counsel from one of the viscount's vassals, the old mountain lord Peire-Roger of Cabaret, now in Carcassonne to lend his assistance, convinced Raimon-Roger Trencavel to stay within the *castrum*

⁹² Legates' letter, PL 216 col. 139; SCW, 22 laisse 23; WTud, 62 line 12. This date is reported by the legates, who say the crusade reached Carcassonne on the feast of Saint Peter's chains. There is a discrepancy between this and the date suggested by William of Tudela. The poet says the army arrived before Carcassonne on a Tuesday (*dimartz*) evening before Vespers, which could make it either 28 July or 4 August. The twenty-second of July (the sack of Béziers) was a Wednesday. If the crusade camped outside the walls of Béziers for three days and left on the fourth, it had to march about seventy-five kilometers from Béziers to Carcassonne, plus any time it took to work out the agreement with Aimery of Narbonne, making 1 August or later more plausible.

⁹³ Evans, "Albigensian Crusade," 288. ⁹⁴ Russell, *Medieval Regions*, 162, 164.

⁹⁵ J. F. Finó, *Fortresses de la France médiévale: construction-attaque-défense* (Paris: A. and J. Picard, 1967), 322–6, and Noah, "Military Aspects," 72–4, provide a good description and history of Carcassonne's defenses. See SCW, 22 laisse 24; WTud, 64 lines 12–20 for William of Tudela's praise of the fortifications.

rather than squandering his resources in a fruitless attack against overwhelming numbers.⁹⁶

From the time the crusading army arrived before Carcassonne, it surrounded the city and its suburbs, making it impossible for the defenders to reinforce themselves.⁹⁷ Through the evening of 1 August and the next day the army rested and planned its attack. Perhaps hoping for the same success they had enjoyed at Béziers, on the morning of 3 August the crusaders assaulted the Saint Vincent suburb to the west of the *castrum* without support from siege engines. This suburb was the least protected, but it covered the most strategic side of the main fortifications, between the city and the river. After a fight led by Simon of Montfort, the crusaders captured the ditches of the suburb. Saint Vincent was soon abandoned by its defenders and burned by the crusaders, who then occupied the ground next to the *castrum*. This assault had only taken about two hours. Thus by 3 August they had cut off Carcassonne completely from its water supply.⁹⁸

Since assaults had worked so well on two occasions, on 4 August the crusaders attacked the northern suburb, the Bourg. Because the Bourg had both ditches and walls, and the southerners had readied themselves against a possible assault, this attempt stalled in the fosses under a heavy bombardment of stones thrown from the heights. The crusaders retreated but not before Simon of Montfort, accompanied by a single squire, performed another act of courage by going back under the hailstorm of rocks into the ditch to rescue a fellow knight trapped there with a broken leg.⁹⁹ Now that the crusaders saw that direct assault would not work on a prepared and determined enemy, they began to construct siege machines. As the sources report, among the types of machines constructed during the siege of Carcassonne were mangonels, catapults, and petreries, all standard thirteenth-century siege weapons in use in western Europe since the Roman era.¹⁰⁰ These machines threw stones of various weights to

⁹⁶ PVCE, 51–2 #93; PVC 1, 94–5; SCW, 22 laisse 23–4. WTud, 64–5 laisse 23 lines 15–23, laisse 24 lines 1–11.

⁹⁷ PVCE, 52 #94; PVC 1, 95–6.

⁹⁸ PVCE, 52–3 #95; PVC 1, 96; SCW, 23 laisse 25; WTud, 66, 68 lines 3–20; WPE, Appendix A, 128; Legates' letter, PL 216 col. 140. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says the fighting was not very fierce, while William of Tudela notes it was serious with heavy casualties on both sides. The legates' letter specifically mentions the short time it took to successfully assault Saint Vincent's suburb.

⁹⁹ PVCE, 53 # 96; PVC 1, 96–7.

¹⁰⁰ SCW, 23 laisse 25; WTud, 66 lines 14–15; PVCE, 53 #96; PVC 1, 97–8; WPE Appendix A, 128; Legates' letter, PL 216 col. 140. See Bradbury, *Medieval Siege*, 250–9, France, *Western Warfare*, 118–19, and Helen Nicholson, *Medieval Warfare. Theory and Practice of War in Europe 300–1500* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 90–6 for a description and discussion of when these machines originated.

destroy walls, buildings and human beings. At Carcassonne the crusaders made good use of machines to batter the walls of suburb and *castrum*.¹⁰¹ During the next few days, as the crusader bombardment weakened the walls of the Bourg, the crusaders constructed another siege weapon, a wagon covered in oxhides called a “cat.”¹⁰² Now engineers concealed inside the cat began to sap the foundational walls of the suburb. The defenders destroyed the cat by throwing down incendiaries, logs, and stones, but by the time this was accomplished the sappers had burrowed far enough into the walls to move into the hole they had dug and continue digging into the foundation, untouchable now by missiles thrown down from above. The next day, 8 August, the wall over the hole fell in, allowing the crusaders to mount another assault, taking the Bourg while its defenders withdrew into the city. Complacency immediately set in however, as the crusaders placed only a few men in the Bourg and went back to their tents. The defenders of Carcassonne sortied back into the suburb, killed its few defenders and burned the suburb before retreating back into the city, thus denying the crusaders their homes and property.¹⁰³

During the time of the Bourg’s bombardment another event occurred which almost altered the course of the crusade and certainly set the stage for further conflict. Sometime between 4 and 6 August the King of Aragon, Pere II, arrived with 100 horsemen and attempted to mediate between the crusaders and his vassal Raimon-Roger.¹⁰⁴ Pere was the natural leader to perform this sort of function, because of his extensive family ties in Occitania and his suzerainty over Carcassonne. Thirty-five years old in 1209, Pere II was charismatic, affable, devout in his fashion, but a man inclined to overindulgence in both wine and women. He was an extremely effective crusader-soldier in his own right, a fact borne out three years later when he helped engineer the decisive Spanish victory over the Almohads at

¹⁰¹ SCW, 23 laisse 25; WTud, 66 line 14; PVCE, 53 # 96; PVC 1, 97.

¹⁰² PVCE, 53 #96; PVC 1, 98; SCW, 25 laisse 30; WTud, 74 line 5; Bradbury, *Medieval Siege*, 270–4. Cats were covered, wheeled shelters under which engineers and miners digging or undermining defensive walls could work unmolested by missiles, stones, and incendiaries flung from above. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay actually calls this a *carrus*, a four-wheeled wagon, rather than using the recognized term “cat.” This suggests it was a makeshift shelter rather than a purpose-built one. William of Tudela does not mention the cat used here, but mentions their use during this siege.

¹⁰³ PVCE, 53 #96; PVC 1, 98; WPE, Appendix A, 128; Legates’ letter, PL 216 col. 140. According to the legates’ letter, the citizens of the bourg burned it before it could be captured.

¹⁰⁴ *L’Épopée* 1: 272–3; SCW, 23 laisse 26; WTud, 68 lines 1–3. The date cannot be exact. All William says is that it was “very soon” (“vengutz mot tost”) after the crusaders arrived, and since it is placed in his work after the second assault of 4 August, it appears to be after this that Pere arrived.

the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa.¹⁰⁵ In the long term, since he had direct ties to Occitania and was anxious to hold on and expand his overlordship in the region, Pere and the royal house of Aragon represented an alternative authority to Occitania's theoretical place in the *regnum Francorum*.

Since he arrived with what amounted to no more than an escort, Pere had no intention of offering military aid to his vassal in Carcassonne, as doing so would have deliberately defied the crusade. The sight of the huge crusader army surrounding the city and its suburbs must have been quite a shock to the Aragonese monarch. Nevertheless the crusaders greeted him warmly and he dined with the Count of Toulouse in the crusader camp. After the meal Pere entered Carcassonne with only three men to talk to Raimon-Roger Trencavel. The viscount and people of Carcassonne were overjoyed at the king's arrival, thinking he was there to deliver the *castrum* from the crusade. Pere knew from the size of the crusader host and the determination of its leadership that he could not prevent the crusaders from taking the city. Even after hearing Raimon-Roger discuss the mass killing at Béziers, Pere admonished the viscount for his weak efforts against the Cathars and urged him to treat with the crusaders immediately. The king offered to get what terms he could for the viscount. After arriving back at the crusader camp, Pere discussed Raimon-Roger's position with the secular lords and the papal legate Arnaud-Amaury. Showing the inflexibility with which he commonly treated everyone, Arnaud-Amaury told Pere that the crusaders would allow Raimon-Roger to leave the city with eleven men of the viscount's choice, but that the city would have to surrender all its people and goods. In essence the terms were a slap in the face and angered the king. He already knew what his vassal's reaction was going to be: no noble anxious to retain his honor could agree to desert a combat zone with a few of his cronies. Nevertheless the king rode into Carcassonne again to reveal the terms to Raimon-Roger, who reacted in typical fashion. The viscount knew that if he accepted them he would be branded a coward for deserting his people. He told the king he would fight on. Pere, realizing he could do nothing more to save the city, left for Spain in great distress and annoyance.¹⁰⁶

Though Carcassonne was reputed to be a powerful structure that could have held out indefinitely in normal circumstances, this was not a normal

¹⁰⁵ Jaume I, *The Book of Deeds of James I of Aragon*, trans. Damian Smith and Helena Buffery (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 21; Smith, *Innocent III*, 15–17.

¹⁰⁶ *SCW*, 23–4 laisses 26–30; *WTud*, 68–74. Curiously enough the legates' letter does not mention the attempted diplomatic intervention of Pere II; William of Tudela is our only source.

circumstance. In light of what had happened at Béziers, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of refugees had swarmed into the city with their personal goods and livestock. This greatly strained the water supply, and with the capture and occupation of Saint Vincent's suburb cutting the city off from the river on 3 August, the defenders and refugees were reduced to relying on wells and cisterns. These fast dried up under the heavy demands placed upon them and the hot August sun. The stench of close-packed people and the bodies of those who had succumbed to heat, dysentery, or direct combat, coupled with the rotting skins of cattle slaughtered for their meat but also for their hides to protect against fire, made conditions in Carcassonne unbearable.¹⁰⁷ Though those besieging a fortification usually suffered as much or more than those inside it in pre-modern western warfare, the siege of Carcassonne was an exception. Both our major sources mention that, contrary to the usual siege conditions, provisions were actually plentiful in the crusader army. Prior to the siege those in Carcassonne had destroyed grain mills in its vicinity to deny them to the crusaders, but there was a plentiful supply of salt for seasoning and trading for flour.¹⁰⁸ William of Tudela remarks that bread was so cheap that one could buy thirty loaves for a penny, and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay supports this too, saying the besiegers had a plentiful supply of bread.¹⁰⁹ By any standards this was a rare situation, no doubt facilitated by the empty towns and villages whose storehouses were open to the crusaders to take what they wanted.

Thus with every passing day the situation for the Carcassonnais and the refugees in the city grew more desperate, while the crusaders suffered few adverse effects from conditions in their camp. After the departure of Pere of Aragon, the crusaders made plans for a direct assault on the *castrum*, though they were concerned lest another Béziers occur and Carcassonne be lost to the crusade as a base of operations.¹¹⁰ Basically both sides hoped that the city would surrender quickly, the crusader leadership being anxious to capture the city intact, Raimon-Roger Trencavel to ease the suffering of his population. One of the leaders of the crusade, perhaps a relative of Raimon-Roger, suggested a parley with the viscount to discuss the possibility of terms. Raimon-Roger accepted the offer of a

¹⁰⁷ SCW, 25, laisse 30; WTud, 76 lines 13–25.

¹⁰⁸ SCW, 23 laisse 25; WTud I, 68, lines 25–6 and footnote 3. Martin-Chabot believes that the salt supply may have come from the Marseillette, a salt marsh about fourteen kilometers east of Carcassonne.

¹⁰⁹ SCW, 23 laisse 25; WTud, 68 line 24; PVCE, 53 # 97; PVC 1, 98–9.

¹¹⁰ PVCE, 54 #98; PVC 1, 99.

safe-conduct and, escorted by a hundred of his knights, entered the crusader camp.¹¹¹ In spite of the safe-conduct, after walking to the Count of Nevers's tent where the discussions were to be held, the viscount placed himself and nine of his companions in crusader custody.¹¹² Why he did this is not explained by our poet. Was it to secure favorable terms for the inhabitants? Did he offer himself up as a sacrificial lamb? Did he expect to be released after the town had surrendered? We simply do not know.

All of our major sources are consistent on the harsh and humiliating terms of the surrender. The citizens of Carcassonne (and the refugees presumably) were to be expelled from the city in their shirts and breeches, i.e., with minimal clothes on their backs and without any moveable property. The city of Carcassonne and all its contents were forfeited to the crusade, to be reserved for the military head of the crusade when one was chosen.¹¹³ Viscount Raimon-Roger Trencavel was imprisoned, with no length of sentence determined.¹¹⁴ The people of Carcassonne left for whatever safe havens they could find, some going to Toulouse while others fled across the Pyrenees to Spain.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ *SCW*, 25 laisses 30–1; *WTud*, 76 laisse 30 lines 27–9, laisse 31 lines 1–4; Legates' letter, *PL* 216 col. 140; *WPE*, chapter XIV, 34 and Appendix A, 128; *WP*, 62. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay does not mention how the parley came about. The legates' letter says it was on the initiative of the people of Carcassonne, but William of Puylaurens says the viscount sought terms out of fear. The lead negotiator on the crusade side claimed to be a kinsman of Raimon-Roger Trencavel, but he is not identified.

¹¹² *SCW*, 25–6 laisse 32–3; *WTud*, 78, 80 lines 7–14; *L'Épopée* 1, 276–7. Possibly the terms of surrender had already been agreed to, because Peter Vaux-de-Cernay mentions that the viscount was to be imprisoned as part of the surrender agreement.

¹¹³ *PVCE*, 54 #98; *PVC* 1, 99; *SCW*, 26 laisse 33; *WTud*, 80 lines 5–13; *WPE*, chapter XIV, 34; *WP* 62; Legates' letter in *WPE* Appendix A, 128; *PL* 216 col. 140. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay is the most detailed, though he says the citizens were to be expelled "naked" (*nudi*). The other sources mention the people were to leave with minimal clothes: shirts, shifts, and breeches.

¹¹⁴ *WPE*, chapter XIV, 34; *WP*, 62; *PVCE*, 69 #124; *PVC* 1, 128; *WTud*, 94 laisse 37 lines 16–18 and 100, laisse 40 lines 12–25; *SCW*, 28–9. As a great noble, vassal of a king, and a man who had not been charged with heresy, Raimon-Roger Trencavel could not be publicly tried or executed. Nonetheless he became a great burden to the crusade immediately after the formal choosing of a military leader and naming of a new viscount had dispossessed him. At age twenty-four he would be dangerous for decades to come. In fact he died in his own prison in Carcassonne in November 1209, allegedly of dysentery. The crusade's role in this (and Simon of Montfort's in particular) can be endlessly debated, depending on one's opinion of Montfort's character. Deliberately killing a noble prisoner was not his style, particularly one who was never tried for a crime. William of Tudela mentioned that Montfort kept Raimon-Roger in honorable confinement and allowed the young noble communion on his deathbed; he would never have permitted Raimon-Roger to be killed in custody. That being said, Montfort cannot have been overly saddened by his death.

¹¹⁵ *SCW*, 26 laisse 33; *WTud*, 80 lines 12–13.

A CHIEF CRUSADER IS CHOSEN: THE ATHLETE OF CHRIST

By about 15 August 1209 the terms of this harsh treaty had been carried out. There was great concern among the leaders of the army that Carcassonne would be looted, based on what had happened at Béziers. To avoid this, once the crusaders entered the city they immediately gathered most of its wealth in a large pile. Horses and mules were divided up among them. Still fearful that nothing would be left to sustain the crusade, and that pillaging and vandalism would undermine its progress, Arnaud-Amaury called a general meeting of crusaders to address the issue. In fierce language he promised to excommunicate and anathematize anyone who took so much as a piece of charcoal. In the name of God he allocated every bit of moveable wealth to the noble who would take over as chief crusader. Though probably many in the army were bitterly disappointed at being thwarted again, Carcassonne's riches remained intact for the moment.¹¹⁶ Several knights were designated to protect the wealth of the city from depredation.¹¹⁷

Although it appears to have gone unnoticed at the time, the crusade had taken an interesting turn for the crusaders and a dire one for the people of Occitania. There had been no designated duration for the crusade, and even before entering Occitania the army had gone off course by attacking Raimon-Roger Trencavel's lands rather than the Count of Toulouse's. The legates realized by the middle of August that in order to extirpate the heresy completely much more work needed to be done. Their response to this was to choose a secular noble to lead the crusade in an ongoing campaign. In order to get this noble to fight in the midst of enemy territory in the months and possibly years ahead, the legates had to offer him sufficient compensation. What they could not have predicted, however, is that by giving the noble extensive properties and the incentive to acquire more from those deemed to be guilty of heresy or of protecting heretics, the legates in fact set the stage for an endemic war with political rather than religious objectives. Wars for secular political objectives are not easily controlled by religious authorities.

The new leader had to be of sufficient stature to command respect from all who might serve in the crusade and from the people the crusade would

¹¹⁶ SCW, 26 *laisse* 33; WTud, 80, 82 lines 14–34.

¹¹⁷ PVCE, 55, #100; PVC 1, 100–1 and footnote 2; PVC III, Appendix, 194–5 #1. The loot of Carcassonne continued to tempt even its designated protectors. In November 1209 these unnamed knights were excommunicated by the papal legates Arnaud-Amaury and Milo, with the support of Innocent III, for absconding with treasure worth 5,000 *livres*.

eventually affect. The man chosen had to be devout enough not to abandon the religious mission of the crusade. He had to be hungry enough to be willing to risk his life and reputation for the reward of lands wrested from their rightful owners. The great lords of the crusade were first asked if they would take the job, but the Count of Nevers, the Count of Saint-Pol, and the Duke of Burgundy all refused it. These nobles refused for perfectly sensible reasons: all had sufficient patrimonies that would not be measurably enhanced by the addition of lands taken from men who would undoubtedly fight against them.¹¹⁸ In other words, they already expected to receive an indulgence for their service and did not need dubious land titles, or at the very least they saw that the possible gain was not worth the potential risks.

Beyond this circle the prestige level of possible candidates fell precipitously. Two bishops and four knights were chosen from the army, and along with Arnaud-Amaury the seven had to find a suitable candidate to lead the crusade. The best choice to come out of this committee appeared to be Simon of Montfort, titular Count of Leicester. Montfort had joined the crusade at the urging of both the Duke of Burgundy and the abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Vaux-de-Cernay, Guy, uncle of the chronicler Peter Vaux-de-Cernay.¹¹⁹ Once Montfort's name came to the surface Arnaud-Amaury, the Duke of Burgundy, and the Count of Nevers privately approached Montfort to take the job, but he declined. He did so not for the reasons two of his interlocutors had previously rejected the offer, but rather because he did not see himself as worthy of the task. Although Arnaud-Amaury and Duke Odo begged him repeatedly, he refused. Finally the legates ordered him to take the post and the viscounty of Carcassonne, Béziers, and Albi that would go along with it, promising him the pope's, their own, and the assembled prelates' and barons' help in the months and years to come. Montfort finally agreed on condition that all gave their formal oath to defend him when needed.¹²⁰

Simon of Montfort has been ill served by the quality and quantity of biographical works devoted to him. Even though he is one of the most infamous characters in all of medieval – indeed Christian, history – there is

¹¹⁸ PVCE, 55 #101; PVC 1, 101; SCW, 26 *laisse* 34; WTud, 84. William mentions only the Counts of Nevers and Saint Pol, but the Duke of Burgundy undoubtedly refused for the same reasons.

¹¹⁹ PVCE, 56 #103; PVC 1, 102–3. Supposedly it was a biblical verse that convinced him: Psalm 91 lines 11–12, “For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

¹²⁰ PVCE, 55 #101; PVC 1, 101–2; SCW, 27 *laisse* 35; WTud, 86, 88; Legates' letter, PL 216 col. 140; WPE, Appendix A, 128–9; WPE chapter XIV, 34; WP, 62. These accounts differ slightly in detail, but all affirm that Montfort had not actively lobbied for the position.

a surprising lack of scholarly attention to his life. His son, also named Simon, so famous in thirteenth-century English history, has been the subject of several comprehensive biographies, the latest in 1994, but the elder Simon has to date been the subject of one 1964 American doctoral dissertation, an article in the *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* in 1969, and two French popular biographies published in 1953 and 1988.¹²¹ This is not the place to rescue Montfort from this lack of attention, but some explanation of the man and his background is in order since once he took over the Albigensian Crusade it became essentially his own private war. For whatever the pope, legates, and Christian world of the early thirteenth century envisioned the ideal Christian knight and crusader to be, Simon of Montfort fit the bill. Forty-four years old at the time of his election as chief crusader, he was stereotypically handsome, an “athlete of Christ” according to the eyewitness Peter Vaux-de-Cernay. Montfort brought to his role a lifetime of experience as both a secular and a religious warrior.¹²² A combat-tested soldier since youth, Montfort was best known prior to 1209 for his refusal to take part in the siege of Zara during the Fourth Crusade, saving himself the consequent excommunication imposed on all who participated.¹²³ He was utterly convinced of his own rectitude, as shown at Zara when he risked his life and reputation by refusing to attack the city and later when he insisted on adhering to the original goal of liberating or visiting Jerusalem, the latter of which he eventually did. Montfort was an extremely pious and principled person, a man who lived by a rigid code of supporting those relatives, friends, and followers who supported him and being an implacable enemy to those who did not. Essentially he saw things in black and

¹²¹ Kovarik, “Simon de Montfort”; Yves Dossat, “Simon de Montfort,” *Paix de Dieu et guerre sainte en Languedoc au XIIIe siècle, Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 4 (1969), 281–302; Jean Girou, *Simon de Montfort du catharisme à la conquête* (Paris: La Colombe, 1953); Dominique Paladilhe, *Simon de Montfort et le drame cathare* (Paris: Perrin, 1988). For the younger Simon of English fame, see J. R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge University Press, 1994). I did not have access to Michel Roquebert’s *Simon de Montfort. Bourreau et martyr* (Toulouse: Perrin, 2005) during the writing of this book.

¹²² PVCE, 56 #104; PVC 1, 104–5; SCW, 27 laisse 35; WTud, 86, 88. Every bit of Peter’s description is positive, though William of Tudela’s depiction is not far behind in terms of flattery. Montfort is tall, attractive, well-muscled, a good speaker, loyal, chaste, humble, wise, pious, generous, perceptive, and an excellent warrior. Peter calls Montfort “athlete of Christ” several times in his work: see PVCE, 182 #393, 230 #509, 241 #541, 260 #579; PVC II, 88, 205, 236, 273.

¹²³ PVCE, 57–9 #106; PVC 1, 106–11; Villehardouin, *La Conquête*, 82–5, 110–13; Robert of Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, trans. Edgar Holmes McNeal (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), 31–2, 44; Monique Zerner-Chardavoine and Hélène Piéchon-Palloc, “La croisade albigeoise, une revanche. Des rapports entre la quatrième croisade et la croisade albigeoise,” *Revue Historique* CCLXVII (1982), 3–18. Many of the people who “defected” from the Fourth Crusade, such as Guy, Abbot of Vaux-de-Cernay and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay’s uncle, Guy of Montfort, Simon’s brother, and Robert Mauvoisin were all part of the inner circle of the Albigensian Crusade.

white. In 1209, taking property and titles from a man found guilty in the court of popular opinion of harboring heretics left him with a completely clear conscience. Religiously, then, Montfort was a good son of the church and rigidly committed to the faith.

Something the men who selected him may or may not have known about was his desire for lands and wealth. Externally Montfort resembled many of the men who crusaded in Outremer during the first fifty years of the crusade era and decided to stay: those who remained tended to be ambitious lower-ranking nobles who got more land than they had back home, enhancing their prestige and raising their social status by doing so.¹²⁴ In the hierarchy of nobles Montfort ranked relatively low. The ancestral lands of Montfort-l'Amaury straddled the contested zones of Capetian/Anglo-Norman northern France, and the lords of Montfort had switched their allegiance to suit the political climate, caught between two great royal houses. Montfort's father, Simon III, had supported Henry II of England, a change from the more common allegiance of the family to the kings of France, though our Simon switched back to the King of France when he came of age. From his father's patrimony he inherited the seignory of Montfort, making him overlord of ten vassals, but this still placed him at the lower end of the nobility.¹²⁵ He had married well, into the powerful Montmorency family, but while these ties brought him enhanced social connections, they did not bring him wealth. His wife Alice, however, would be one of his most trusted lieutenants during the Albigensian Crusade.¹²⁶ In 1204, his maternal uncle, the Earl of Leicester, died without a direct heir, making Simon, as senior male of the line, an English earl, a status later confirmed by the English crown. Because of the turmoil between King John of England and King Philip of France, particularly in 1204 with the fall of Normandy to the French crown, Simon never received a penny from the Leicester lands in England, even though he used the title to the end of his life.¹²⁷ In short he was a noble of limited financial

¹²⁴ Joshua Prawer, *Crusader Institutions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 21.

¹²⁵ Kovarik, "Simon de Montfort," 82–8.

¹²⁶ For a short description of Alice of Montmorency's character see PVCE, 59 #107 and PVC 1, 111–12. For a more detailed sketch of her abilities and role in the Albigensian Crusade, see Monique Zerner, "L'épouse de Simon de Montfort et la croisade albigeoise," *Femmes—Mariages—Lignages, XIIe—XIVe siècles. Mélanges offerts à Georges Duby*, ed. Jean Dufournet, André Joris, and Pierre Toubert (Brussels: De Bock-Wesmael, 1992), 449–70.

¹²⁷ Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, 1–3; W. L. Warren, *King John* (1961) (reprint, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 103–4; *Les Actes des seigneurs de Montfort en La Seigneurie de Montfort en Iveline*, ed. A Rhein, Mémoires de la Société Archéologique de Rambouillet xxv (Versailles, 1910), 153 #67. Montfort began using the title of Count of Leicester as early as 1207 in his charters. In 1204

means but impeccable reputation, incredibly pious but equally ambitious. The opportunity now offered to Simon of Montfort appealed to his sense of Christian duty, his desire for riches, and the possibility of a larger patrimony for his large family.¹²⁸

SHOWS OF FORCE: AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 1209

Though the legates and army had chosen a leader of high resolve, unimpeachable faith, and unquestioned integrity, the struggle to carry out the mission of the crusade had only begun. By late August, many in the army decided they had met the requirements for an indulgence and were anxious to return north before colder weather set in. Nobles and ordinary crusaders began to leave the army in a steady stream. Montfort and the Abbot of Cîteaux begged the Duke of Burgundy and the Count of Nevers to stay, pointing out to them that three strongly defended, hostile *castra* close by – Minerve, Termes, and Cabaret – remained unsubdued. While the Duke of Burgundy readily agreed to stay, particularly because of his friendship with Montfort, the Count of Nevers could not be persuaded, partly because he could not stand the Duke of Burgundy.¹²⁹ With the Count of Nevers went the vast majority of the crusaders. The stream of men leaving the army soon became a flood. This created a crisis, because gains so easily won by a huge army in optimum campaigning conditions could just as easily be lost by a much smaller army as the seasons changed. The captured cities now held by Montfort represented no more than a few islands in the midst of a sea of hostile population centers and nobles with local power bases still quite capable of defending themselves. While the crusade army could successfully besiege cities in open country, it had not been tested against fortresses up in the mountains, which would provide far more frustration and danger relative to their strategic or financial importance. In particular the *castra* of Cabaret, Termes, and Minerve could not be easily taken in any but the summer months, when the narrow paths leading to the fortresses would be free of snow and mud, and a sure supply of food could be secured to sustain

John confiscated the English possessions of lords who did not declare their loyalty to him, but Simon's uncle Robert was exempted from this arrangement. To all intents and purposes the lands were worthless to Montfort because John refused to release any revenues from them. John's refusal to allow Simon of Montfort revenues from his English possessions may account for Montfort's willingness to seize English land in Gascony in 1214.

¹²⁸ Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, xxiv–xxv for a genealogical chart. The Montforts had seven children, two of whom were born during the Occitan War.

¹²⁹ PVCE, 60–1 #108–9; PVC 1, 112–14; WPE, chapter XIV, 34–5; WPL 62–3. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay states that during the campaign the Duke of Burgundy and Count of Nevers grew to dislike each other so intensely that they almost came to blows.

a blockade and siege. The conditional loyalty of southern nobles and captured towns would eventually prove as problematic to Montfort and the crusade as manpower, supplies, and the weather. As the crusading army became smaller, surrendered populations were more likely to withdraw their loyalty and rebel. This is in fact what many of them did in the coming months.

By taking the job of chief crusader Simon of Montfort inherited a nightmare that haunted him until his death less than nine years later. He had no secular sponsor to provide steady logistical and personnel support. The papacy could only provide undependable revenue from occasional crusading taxes and the moral suasion of crusade preachers for recruitment. To his credit, Montfort quickly recognized the immensity of his task. In the only known letter written by him to the pope, sent sometime in the first few months after he took command of the crusade, Montfort not only introduces himself and the position from which he will command the crusade, as Viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne, but also outlines for the pontiff the problems he faces and asks for support. He informs the pope that he has become leader of the crusade by selection by the other crusaders and that he will remain in the south until the heresy is exterminated. (On that last point he was as good as his word.) In an almost plaintive tone, he says he has been left with only a few knights to assist him. Because of the danger in which the crusaders find themselves, Montfort not only has to pay men to serve him but has to pay double the normal wages in order to keep them.¹³⁰ His plaint reached a sympathetic audience, and Innocent III in turn attempted to assist the crusade in any way he could.¹³¹

Though Montfort's army soon dwindled to practically nothing, it was the hard kernel which remained that provided the subordinate leadership, experience, and expertise necessary to continue the war. William of Tudela mentions by name or title at least fourteen knights, lords or nobles who remained with Montfort that first fall and winter of the crusade.¹³² These men were even farther down on the social scale than Montfort, being younger sons or hard-scrabble lords who stood to gain by remaining in

¹³⁰ PL 216 cols. 141–2; Robert J. Kovarik, "A Study of the Epistolary Relations between Pope Innocent III and Simon de Montfort (1209–1216)," *Studies in Medieval Culture* 4.1 (1973), 160. Kovarik says the letter was taken to the pope by Robert Mauvoisin.

¹³¹ Kovarik, "Epistolary Relations," 160–2.

¹³² SCW, 27–28 laisse 36; WTud, 88–92. Among these men were Simon of Ciskey, Robert of Picquigny, William of Contres, Guy of Lévis, Robert of Forceville, Lambert of Crécy or Thury (later of Limoux), Rainier of Chauderon, Ralph of Agis, Pons and John of Beaumont, Rouaud, Viscount of Donges, Roger of Andelys, Roger of Essarts, and Hugh of Lacy. Excellent background information on many of these men can be found in Woehl, *Volo vincere*.

the south. Montfort came to be fanatically loyal to his close followers, something they reciprocated. These veterans formed the core of all subsequent field armies which crusaded in the south and served as the castellans who defended fortifications against hostile townspeople. In addition to this inner circle, Montfort had some paid troops. If we include the men who comprised the garrisons of various places, he may technically have had an army of several hundred in the fall of 1209, though we have no numbers from which to tabulate or estimate a total. Clearly it was a small number, since so many southern lords were tempted to rebel by the late fall of 1209.

The time line of events between late August and late November 1209 is very unclear. We are largely dependent on Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account. Montfort continued to campaign throughout the fall, but none of the sources mentions any dates until November.¹³³ Planning his next moves, Montfort sent some of his lieutenants to command garrisons in strategic places within his newly-won dominions. To Béziers went William of Contres and to Limoux went Lambert of Crécy, who later took the town's name as his own.¹³⁴ Though the Count of Toulouse and his namesake city had escaped the wrath of the crusade, apparently doubts remained about both his culpability and whether the people of Toulouse had made their peace with the crusade. Raimon VI would eventually go to Rome to resolve any problems. The crusade leadership sent messengers to Toulouse to work out a peace with the townspeople, but the Toulousans preferred to settle their grievances with the pope directly. Soon a delegation from the city went to Rome to plead its case.¹³⁵

Before any more of the army left for home, Montfort decided to perambulate his western domains since most of them had not actually been visited by the crusade. He intended a show of force to cement the loyalty of these places before they would even contemplate rebellion. Though this is not stated by the sources, it seems likely that Montfort moved west deliberately to put the Count of Toulouse on notice that the chief crusader would be an aggressive lord on the border between them. As a professed crusader himself, Raimon VI had already used the legality of the crusade to settle personal scores in various places by destroying several *castra* in the border region.¹³⁶ Leaving Carcassonne sixteen kilometers to the northwest, the crusader army occupied Alzonne, then moved a further

¹³³ See PVCE, Appendix E 302–3 for an analysis; I have tried to maintain a plausible sequence in the narrative.

¹³⁴ SCW, 28, laisse 37; WTud, 92–4.

¹³⁵ SCW, 28–9 laisse 39; WTud, 96, 98. This they did in late 1209. ¹³⁶ PVCE, 61–2 #III; PVC 1, 116.

fourteen kilometers southwest to Fanjeaux. Earlier, when the crusaders had been besieging Carcassonne, Fanjeaux had been abandoned and perhaps burned by its own population. Curiously, the men who, on behalf of the crusaders, occupied both Fanjeaux and the *castrum* of Montréal, nine kilometers away, appear to have been Aragonese *rouitiers* led by one Peter of Aragon, who methodically stripped the *castrum* of Fanjeaux of all the moveable wealth he could find.¹³⁷ Perhaps doubtful of these *rouitiers'* loyalty and ultimate allegiance, Montfort moved into Fanjeaux and installed a new garrison. Many other towns and fortifications in the area were abandoned by their inhabitants as the crusade moved close by.¹³⁸

While the chief crusader was at Fanjeaux a delegation from the large *castrum* of Castres, some forty-six kilometers north of Carcassonne, submitted to him. Castres was one of the most prominent towns in the Albi region, and making an appearance there was important, partly because this region's loyalty had been neither tested nor assured. Montfort traveled to Castres with only a token force, leaving the army under the command of the Duke of Burgundy, who began moving back towards Carcassonne. From Fanjeaux the journey to Castres would be about fifty-two kilometers if one skirted the Black Mountain range falling in between. While Montfort stayed at Castres, a delegation from Lombers, twenty-three kilometers further north of Castres on the way to Albi, met Montfort at Castres and asked him to make an appearance in their town.¹³⁹ For some reason he declined the request and quickly returned to the main army. Perhaps he was afraid the army would soon fall apart as more and more men departed for home. At any rate Montfort traveled back towards Carcassonne where he met up with the army again.¹⁴⁰

Upon Montfort's arrival back to the main crusader army the Duke of Burgundy suggested the army move towards Cabaret to harass its defenders or perhaps seize it. Cabaret was fourteen kilometers north of Carcassonne, high in the Black Mountains, so-called because of their dark color when

¹³⁷ SCW, 26 laisse 34; WTud, 84 lines 1–6; *L'Épopée* 1, 298, 300; *HGL* 8, col. 601. The consensus has been that Peire of Aragon was an Occitan noble loyal to the crusade from the town of Aragon, located only about ten kilometers north of Carcassonne. This is certainly plausible, but it does not account for the mercenary nature of his force. The fact that his name is not listed among the known nobles of the town suggests he was not from there. Roquebert believes that Peire of Aragon was probably from the region of Aragon, based on how his name was rendered in Latin, "Petrus Aragonensis." If he was an Aragonese *rouitier* this would better account for Peter's and his men's conduct in the town. Peire showed up as a witness to a donation of Montfort's in July 1210, though this does not provide any more clues as to his provenance.

¹³⁸ PVCE, 60–1 #110; PVC 1, 115. ¹³⁹ PVCE, 62 #112; PVC 1, 116–17.

¹⁴⁰ PVCE, 63 #114; PVC 1, 118–19.

seen from a distance. Now known as Lastours, Cabaret is an incredibly remote and desolate location. Perhaps the crusaders did not realize just how formidable Cabaret was until they moved the remainder of the army into the mountains, because even though they got within “half a league” of the fortifications they soon abandoned their attempts to take it.¹⁴¹ By this time the Duke of Burgundy had more than earned his indulgence, and he finally departed for the north, along with most of what was left of the army. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, Montfort had no more than thirty knights left in the army. These knights had to control a region twice the size of Rhode Island.¹⁴²

Montfort now moved south into the border zone between the Trencavel lands and those of the Count of Foix. He did so as a demonstration of what even a small crusader army could do. The Count of Foix was overlord of various places just to the southwest of Carcassonne and was suspected of protecting heretics. By attacking the Count of Foix’s territory beyond the Trencavel lands, Simon of Montfort exceeded his mandate, though he probably justified it on the grounds that he was acting against a protector of heretics. In doing so however, he gained one of the most stalwart and formidable enemies the crusade ever had. Montfort captured several places belonging to the Count of Foix, including Mirepoix. He then took the allegiance of the people of Pamiers and occupied Saverdun.¹⁴³ Leaving the Foix region and returning to Fanjeaux, Montfort and the army moved north again into the Albi region. He actually got as far as Lombers this time, taking the allegiance of the reluctant knights defending it. From there Montfort traveled to Albi, which constituted the northernmost zone of the Trencavel viscounty. Technically Albi belonged to the King of Aragon, to whom the Trencavels did homage for it, but even the latter’s authority was weak, as the Bishop of Albi had long been the *de facto* lord of the *castrum*. Still, upon entrance of the chief crusader into the city, the Bishop of Albi acknowledged Montfort as overlord and did homage for Albi. For the

¹⁴¹ PVCE, 63 #114; PVC 1, 119.

¹⁴² PVCE, 63–4 # 115; PVC 1, 119. Presumably he had mounted sergeants and paid troops, though many of them were probably already taken up in garrisons. Montfort now theoretically controlled territory stretching from Béziers in the east, soon Albi to the north, and Mirepoix to the south, yielding an area of approximately 4,950 square kilometers, or 2,970 square miles. Rhode Island is 1,212 square miles in size.

¹⁴³ PVCE, 64–5 #116; PVC 1, 120–1; Elie Griffe, *Le Languedoc cathare au temps de la croisade (1209–1229)* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1973), 19. Mirepoix had been a subject of dispute between the Counts of Foix and the Trencavels. With Montfort’s possession of the viscounty he was simply continuing old rivalries as Viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne.

moment Montfort was lord of the viscounty with the exception of a few hold-outs to the Count of Toulouse.¹⁴⁴

Moving south yet again he fortified Limoux, which his lieutenant Lambert had occupied previously, seized some other unnamed *castra*, hanged some of their inhabitants as an example to the rest, and besieged the *castrum* of Preixan, another possession of the Count of Foix but only nine kilometers south of Carcassonne. Temporarily worn out by the blows he had suffered in quick succession, the Count of Foix came to Montfort's camp before Preixan to make peace. According to the terms Raimon-Roger of Foix agreed to support the church, surrender his rights in Preixan to Montfort, and offer his youngest son as a hostage.¹⁴⁵ Though the chief crusader had cowed a possible enemy and seemingly removed a potential trouble spot close to Carcassonne, the peace between Simon of Montfort and Raimon-Roger of Foix appears to have lasted little longer than it took for the ink to dry on the parchment.

RETRENCHMENT AND REVENGE:
SEPTEMBER—DECEMBER 1209

The peace between the Count of Foix and Simon of Montfort was the high-water mark for the year as far as the military conduct of the crusade was concerned. Though they took some time to reach him, in response to the letter he had earlier sent the pope Montfort received two letters from the pontiff promising full support. On 11 November Innocent wrote of his pleasure on hearing of Montfort's leadership, and notified the chief crusader that he would be sending letters to various crowned heads of Europe, including the King of Aragon, asking for their help, which he later did.¹⁴⁶ In a second letter dated the next day, Innocent confirmed Montfort as Viscount of Carcassonne and Béziers partially because the judgment of God and the acclamation of the army had already given the viscounty to him.¹⁴⁷ Through conquest, God's verdict, the strong approval of the crusade army and the pope's backing, Montfort now lacked only the support of the feudal suzerain of the Trencavel lands, Pere II of Aragon.

Initially it appeared that November would bring secular confirmation. On 10 November Raimon-Roger Trencavel died in the dungeons of

¹⁴⁴ PVCE, 65–6 #118; PVC 1, 122–3.

¹⁴⁵ SCW, 29 laisse 41; WTud, lines 4–8; PVCE, 66 #119–20; PVC 1, 123–4.

¹⁴⁶ PL 216 cols. 152–3; Kovarik, "Epistolary Relations," 161. For the letters to the Emperor of the Romans and the King of Aragon see PL 216 cols. 153–4.

¹⁴⁷ PL 216 cols. 151–2; Kovarik, "Epistolary Relations," 161. Kovarik's analysis is most helpful here.

Carcassonne, removing a large impediment to Montfort's gaining title to the viscounty.¹⁴⁸ In late November King Pere traveled north again and agreed to meet with Simon of Montfort to negotiate accepting Montfort's homage, thus giving the authority of secular custom to what the chief crusader had already gained. The two men chose to meet on neutral ground in Narbonne, but by 24 November had traveled together to King Pere's city of Montpellier. While in Montpellier Montfort received the dowry lands of Raimon-Roger's widow, Agnes of Montpellier, consisting of the towns of Pénzenas and Tourbes, in exchange for an annuity.¹⁴⁹ Though the king and chief crusader talked for some fifteen days in Montpellier, the king ultimately refused to accept Montfort's homage for the Trencavel viscounty. Montfort therefore left empty-handed amid reports of defections among his lordships.¹⁵⁰

Taking advantage of the fact that Montfort now had no more than a miniscule army, knights and lords throughout the region began to withdraw their allegiance to him. A particularly revealing incident demonstrating some of the obstacles Montfort faced in holding on that first fall and winter was the capture of Bouchard of Marly by southerners. Bouchard of Marly was one of Montfort's loyal lieutenants and cousin to Simon's wife Alice.¹⁵¹ Together with another knight, Gaubert d'Essigny, Bouchard of Marly went to Cabaret with a party of fifty men in November 1209. The crusading army had briefly flirted with taking this mountain-top fortress a few months before, but abandoned the effort almost immediately after seeing how hard it would be. As the newly invested lord of Saissac, about seventeen kilometers west of Cabaret, Bouchard had a vested interest in pacifying areas eastward. He therefore went into the region around Cabaret to raid.¹⁵² As his party of fifty drew close to the area¹⁵³ they were surrounded and ambushed by men of the garrison, consisting of ninety horse and foot

¹⁴⁸ PVCE, 69 #124; PVC 1, 128; SCW, 29 laisse 40; WTud, 100 lines 12–25; WPE, chapter XIV, 34; WP, 62.

¹⁴⁹ HGL 8 cols. 579–82; Catalogue des actes, 455 #35–6; PVCE, 67–8 #121; PVC 1, 124–5; Peter Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange* (London: Office of the Royal Historical Society, 1986), 208. These did not come cheap. Montfort agreed to pay Agnes 3,000 Melgorian sous yearly for the annuity, and a final pay out of 25,000 Melgorian sous in exchange for her renouncing forever her rights to the properties. According to exchange data from 1244 (still close enough in time to offer an approximation), forty-nine sous two and one quarter deniers Melgorian equaled one pound sterling. This would make Montfort's annuity payment about sixty-one pounds sterling per year for the properties, or the equivalent of about three knights' fees by early thirteenth-century standards.

¹⁵⁰ PVCE, 68, #121–2; PVC 1, 124–6. ¹⁵¹ Woehl, *Volo vincere*, 144.

¹⁵² PVCE 68–9 #123; PVC 1, 126–8.

¹⁵³ Marie-Elise Gardel *et al.*, *Cabaret: histoire et archéologie d'un castrum* (Carcassonne: CVPM, 1999), map on 26, 38. "Close" is a relative term, because the castles of Lastours sit high above the main road on the ridge of the mountains. Though recent archaeological work has found evidence of a small

(“que a caval que a petz”) and fourteen archers (“arquiers”). Even though they were taken by surprise, for a time Bouchard’s men defended themselves without panicking before many were killed, including Gaubert d’Essigny. The rest managed to get away except for Bouchard of Marly, who remained in dreary captivity for sixteen months at Cabaret.¹⁵⁴

The man who engineered the ambush was Peire-Roger, lord of Cabaret. Peire-Roger was one of the petty mountain lords of the region whose ostensible loyalty had been to the Trencavel viscounts, and he had served the viscount in at least part of the siege of Carcassonne. Since Simon of Montfort was now viscount, Peire-Roger theoretically owed loyalty to him, though the southerner had never formally given it. Yet he had never obeyed the Trencavels either, basically doing as he pleased.¹⁵⁵ In 1209 Cabaret actually contained three castles called Quertineux, Surdespine and Cabaret, ranged in a line across a desolate mountain ridge more than 300 meters above sea level. The fact that Peire-Roger believed he made himself safest by building and maintaining castles in this bleak location suggests he was more worried by his enemies than his enemies were by him. On the one hand Cabaret guarded a road, but it was a road easily bypassed around the mountains. On the other hand Cabaret was only fourteen kilometers from Carcassonne, close enough for Peire-Roger’s men to be a potential nuisance, as they proved on several occasions after 1209. The unproductive land surrounding Cabaret could not have furnished Peire-Roger a lavish lifestyle. The castles themselves are so remote and high up from the main road that almost everything edible in them would had to have been carried in by single-file mule teams or on the backs of human porters. Poor but proud, and quite dangerous under certain conditions, Peire-Roger was essentially a gentrified robber-bandit, sympathetic to Catharism but most interested in self-preservation. He struck targets of opportunity, but his goal was to remain independent of any higher authority, not simply that of the crusade. Still, he and Cabaret well represented the kind of men and sites Simon of Montfort was going to have to deal with in order to subdue the country. For the moment Montfort and the crusade could do nothing, so Peire-Roger continued to live as he always had.

castrum most likely corresponding to the one extant in 1209, it would have been very difficult for Bouchard de Marly and fifty men to get close to the *castrum* or castle sites without being detected. Most likely the garrison of Cabaret saw the men long before the crusaders drew close, giving the garrison time to lay an ambush alongside the main road.

¹⁵⁴ PVCE, 68–9 #123; PVC 1, 126–8; SCW, 30 laisse 41; WTud, 102, 104 lines 23–36; Barber, “Catharism and the Occitan Nobility,” 10. Barber incorrectly gives the number of archers present in the southern forces as forty, though William of Tudela explicitly states there were fourteen, “quatorze arquiers.”

¹⁵⁵ SCW, 22, laisse 24; WTud, 64, lines 4–5.

While the lord of Cabaret had never given homage to Simon of Montfort and was therefore not guilty of treason, other southern lords who had earlier sworn homage or pledges of loyalty to Montfort now began to withdraw them. Montfort abhorred disloyalty and never forgot those who broke their word to him. After returning to Carcassonne from Montpellier in late November or early December, Montfort learned that two of his knights, Amaury and William of Poissy, were besieged by “traitors” (*traditores*) and captured in a “tower” (*turrem castrî*) somewhere north of the Aude around Carcassonne. Though the chief crusader desperately tried to reach them in time, autumn floods prevented him from crossing the Aude and rescuing them.¹⁵⁶ As Montfort moved close to Narbonne, he received word that Giraud of Pépieux, lord of a small *castrum* twenty-six kilometers northeast of Carcassonne who had previously pledged loyalty to Montfort, had broken his word and rebelled. Giraud did so partially because at some earlier point a Frenchman of the crusading army had killed his uncle. Though the Frenchman who committed the murder is not named, apparently he was a fairly prominent knight or noble. Nonetheless, as proof of his willingness to mete out justice fairly, Montfort had this Frenchman buried alive.¹⁵⁷ This was not enough for Giraud of Pépieux, who continued to nurse a grudge. Instead of uttering public defiance and renunciation of loyalty more in accordance with northern feudal custom, he secretly engineered a surprise attack.

To what degree feudalism existed in Occitania has always been a topic of debate among scholars. One might legitimately argue that southern lords like Giraud of Pépieux were not used to the practices of the north and therefore reacted according to their own customs, and perhaps should not have been found culpable when they broke their word. True enough perhaps, but Simon of Montfort responded in the familiar ways of northern France. He envisioned his lordship in a northern French context and saw acts such as Giraud’s as treachery, particularly when they had not been preceded by public declaration or renunciation of loyalty. Each side, then, operated on a different set of assumptions, and it should be no surprise that these misunderstandings only made the punishment of real or imagined transgressions that much more brutal.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ PVCE, 68 #122; PVC 1, 125–6; *L’Épopée* 1, 329. Roquebert says the castle tower was Alaric, now called Miramont, a small site twelve kilometers east of Carcassonne.

¹⁵⁷ SCW, 30 laisse 41; WTud, 102 lines 9–20.

¹⁵⁸ Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, 37–8; F. L. Ganshof, *Feudalism*, trans. Philip Grierson, 3rd edn. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), 72–8, 83–4, and especially 98.

Along with some other disloyal knights Giraud of Pépieux traveled to the *castrum* of Puisserguier about fourteen kilometers west of Béziers. Somehow he managed to trick the Montfortian garrison of two knights and fifty sergeants into admitting him and his men, where he then overwhelmed and imprisoned them. Under oath he promised to spare their lives and allow them to keep their possessions when he and his men left. Montfort soon learned what had happened, and as he was close by he responded quickly to the news. He rushed to Puisserguier, bringing Aimery of Narbonne and the Narbonnais civic militia with him. As soon as they arrived, however, Aimery and his townsmen inexplicably refused to lay the place under siege and abandoned Montfort and his tiny field army. Since it was late in the day and Montfort now had few men with him, instead of blockading the place as he intended, for safety's sake he took quarters for the night in the nearby town of Capestang, less than five kilometers away to the south.¹⁵⁹

The fortifications of Puisserguier were not very strong, and the place, located on fairly level ground, was easy to surround. Perhaps not knowing that Montfort had lost the services of the Narbonnais militia, and believing that he would certainly besiege Puisserguier the next morning, Giraud of Pépieux took advantage of this reprieve to flee during the night. The captured garrison posed a problem for him, however. Dragging the prisoners along would only slow him down, especially since he had starved them for the past three days. Equally he was not anxious to allow more than fifty prisoners to go free. Rather than murder them face-to-face, Giraud of Pépieux had the captured sergeants placed in the dry ditch surrounding the fortifications. He and his men then proceeded to stone the prisoners as well as throwing straw and combustibles down to burn them alive. Leaving the sergeants for dead, he then fled to the Cathar stronghold of Minerve, taking with him only his own men and the two knights who commanded the garrison, for whom he planned another fate. The next morning Montfort arrived before Puisserguier only to see the place abandoned, though at least some, perhaps all, of the sergeants had survived their ordeal in the ditch. In a rage Montfort had the citadel of Puisserguier destroyed and proceeded to lay waste Giraud of Pépieux's lands.¹⁶⁰

The aftermath of the story had ominous overtones briefly worth discussing here. Once safe at Minerve, Giraud had the two captured knights mutilated, their eyes gouged out, and their ears, lips, and noses cut off.

¹⁵⁹ PVCE, 70 #125; PVC 1, 130.

¹⁶⁰ PVCE, 69–70 #125–7; PVC 1, 129–31; SCW, 30 *laisse* 41; WTud, 102 lines 21–2.

They were then set free to find Montfort in the cold, late autumn weather. One died, but the other eventually made it to Carcassonne.¹⁶¹ Montfort was not an inherently cruel man, but he certainly believed in an-eye-for-an-eye plus raising the ante. He would remember Giraud of Pépieux's treachery and the mutilation of the knights, and exact payment for it both in the near future and even years later.¹⁶²

The treacheries, seizures, and assassinations against crusaders or crusade sympathizers continued throughout this whole period. An abbot of the Cistercian house of Eaunes, traveling back with three companions from a meeting of the papal legates at Saint-Gilles, was stabbed to death along with a lay brother just outside the city of Carcassonne. The perpetrators let one monk go because they knew him, but when he reached safety he reported that the killers were led by Guilhem of Roquefort, local lord and brother of none other than the Bishop of Carcassonne, Bernard-Raimon.¹⁶³ Montfort received word that two important *castra* in the Albi region, Castres and Lombers, which had granted their loyalty to him only the previous September, now withdrew it and imprisoned the garrisons of sergeants and knights Montfort had left there.¹⁶⁴ At some point the Count of Foix also broke the peace he had agreed with Montfort and took back Preixan. One night he and his men also attempted to take back Fanjeaux, though the garrison managed to repel the attack.¹⁶⁵ Montfort had left a French cleric in charge of the garrison of Montréal, less than eighteen kilometers

¹⁶¹ PVCE 70 #127; PVC 1, 131–2.

¹⁶² For example see Montfort's actions after Bram fell in 1210 in Chapter 3.

¹⁶³ PVCE, 71–2 #130; PVC 1, 134–6; Elie Griffé, *Le Languedoc Cathare de 1190 à 1210* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1971), 102–6. The *castrum* of Roquefort was located right on the edge of the Black Mountains between Durfort and Les Cammazes, approximately thirty-five kilometers northwest of Carcassonne. It had served as a refuge for Cathar perfects, and the family's commitment to Catharism and the southern cause was strong. William's and Bernard-Raimon's mother was a Cathar perfect, and William's brother-in-law was a Cathar bishop. The family's involvement cost Bernard-Raimon his see in 1211, though he was restored in 1224 when Guy Vaux-de-Cernay died. William himself died for the southern cause, killed at the first siege of Toulouse in 1211.

¹⁶⁴ PVCE, 72–3 #132–3; PVC 1, 136–7. They did not harm the garrison, however, because Castres had given hostages who were in Carcassonne. The Montfortian garrison of Lombers was sent as prisoners to Castres, where all were imprisoned in the keep. Many escaped soon after by making a clothes rope and fleeing out a window.

¹⁶⁵ PVCE, 73 #134 and Appendix E 302–3; *L'Épopée* 1, 320–3. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's chronology is confusing here. He says that the Count of Foix attempted to take back Fanjeaux on the feast of Saint Michael, 29 September. While this is certainly possible, Peter recounts the count's treachery among other events that can be more reasonably charted to late November or early December. Roquebert takes Peter at his word, stating that the Count of Foix almost immediately broke his agreement by retaking Preixan and attempting to retake Fanjeaux, no more than a few weeks after he lost the former. As the Siblys point out, there is no definitive chronology, but I have chosen to follow theirs. Their point that the Count of Foix struck back only when it was clear Montfort was very weak, i.e., in November, makes the most sense.

away from Carcassonne. This unnamed clerk turned Montréal back over to its original lord, Aimeric of Montréal. Aimeric had deserted Montréal during the siege of Carcassonne to come to Montfort's camp and pledge his loyalty to the crusade, but reneged a few days after leaving. Montfort forgot neither the French clerk nor Aimeric of Montréal, and eventually settled scores with both.¹⁶⁶ Further defections and assassinations took place so that by Christmas 1209 Montfort had lost more than forty castles and *castra*. He was left with Béziers, Carcassonne, Fanjeaux, Saissac, Limoux, Pamiers, Saverdun, Albi, and the small *castrum* of Ambialet.¹⁶⁷

By the end of the year the crusade had accomplished little, although it had already cost many lives on both sides. It had put the inhabitants of Occitania on their guard, yet they had recovered much of their territory. While Béziers, Carcassonne, and Albi constituted the critical population centers of the Trencavel viscounty and remained in crusader hands, these *castra* could rebel at any time. Hostile lords and towns surrounded all three places. Though Cathars from Béziers to Lombers had lost their lives to the crusade already, the religious movement itself had yet to suffer permanent damage. Thus by Christmas 1209 the military campaign to exterminate Catharism and win control over the region had only just begun.

¹⁶⁶ PVCE, 73-4 #135; PVC 1, 138-9. See Chapters 3, 72-3 and 4, 103, below.

¹⁶⁷ PVCE, 74 #136; PVC 1, 139-40; SCW, 30 laisse 42; WTud, 104 lines 3-5.

Simon of Montfort and the campaign of 1210

The year 1210 began in uncertainty, but conditions for the crusade would rapidly improve when the weather warmed and reinforcements arrived. It was in this year that one of the most important and infamous aspects of the Albigensian Crusade became institutionalized by the papal legates: the forty-day service (quarantine) required to win the indulgence.¹ Montfort's ability to fight in geographically hostile country amidst his enemies was tested by this requirement. Besides undergoing repeated military and logistical tribulations, he had to worry about diplomatic efforts by the Count of Toulouse, the people of Toulouse, and the King of Aragon possibly undercutting his position.

Though Raimon VI had taken the cross and served with the crusade through the capitulation of Carcassonne, as mentioned previously he intended to seek out support and protection from the crusade by going directly to the sources of power, in this case his primary feudal overlord, Philip Augustus, and his spiritual overlord, Pope Innocent. When Montfort's military fortunes began to sour during the autumn of 1209 the Count of Toulouse traveled north to visit the King of France. While Philip treated him graciously, he refused to assist him in his attempt to reinstate tolls he had previously imposed in his territories.² Next the count traveled to Rome via parts of eastern France. On his journey to the pope Raimon VI visited two of the most prominent crusaders from the previous campaign season, Odo, Duke of Burgundy, and Hervé, Count of Nevers. Evidently the time Raimon had spent in the crusader army had predisposed at least some to like

¹ Marvin, "Thirty-Nine Days and a Wake-Up," 75–94.

² PVCE, 74–5 #137 and note 43; PVC 1, 140–1; SCW, 30 laisse 42; WTud, 104 line 4; PL 216 cols. 127–8. Raimon had often been at loggerheads with his own people and the church for imposing excessive and arbitrary tolls. He had been excommunicated in 1207 partially because of this. Around the time of his reconciliation to the church in June 1209, Master Milo prohibited Raimon VI from raising tolls without the permission of the King of France or the emperor.

him, because both received the Count of Toulouse warmly and the duke gave him gifts.³

Once Raimon VI arrived in Rome, our sources vary as to the pope's response to his visit. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says the pope chastised the count and made accusations against the depth of his faith and his support of Christianity. William of Tudela relates that the pope treated the Count of Toulouse warmly and kindly, giving him gifts and showing him relics in his personal possession.⁴ The tone of the pope's reception was probably somewhere in between. Innocent III had a furious temper, but he was extremely accommodating to those who made personal visits to him and willingly gave people second and even third chances. He ordered Raimon VI to purge himself of the murder of Peter of Castelnaud and also of any taint of heresy, orders he commended in writing to the Archbishops of Narbonne and Arles, the Bishop of Riez, Master Theodisius, Arnaud-Amaury, and Raimon of Toulouse himself in January 1210.⁵ In exchange for this any sentence of excommunication would be lifted unless Raimon attempted to reinstate any tolls.⁶ As the Count of Toulouse attempted to win back the pope's favor, so did the people of Toulouse. During the previous fall they told the leaders of the crusade that they would treat with the pope directly. By November 1209 a delegation of town consuls had traveled to the pope in hopes of freeing Toulouse from any possible visit from the crusade. In addition they sought a lifting of the sentence of excommunication against the consuls and the interdict laid on the city the previous September by Master Milo.⁷ They were quite successful; Innocent lifted the interdict and excommunication by a letter of January 1210.⁸

As Raimon of Toulouse made his way back from Rome early in 1210, he paid a visit to the Emperor Otto in northern Italy in hopes of securing support against Simon of Montfort, especially since the emperor was

³ SCW, 30–1 laisse 42; WTud, 104, 106 lines 6–15. William of Tudela's text suggests that a delegation from the city of Toulouse was along; this may or may not have been the case.

⁴ PVCE, 75 #137; PVC 1, 141–2; SCW, 31 laisse 43; WTud, 106.

⁵ PVCE, 75–6 #137; PVC 1, 142–3; PL 216 cols. 171–6.

⁶ PVCE, 76 footnote 49. The Sibyls do an excellent job of summarizing the evidence here.

⁷ SCW, 30 laisse 42; WTud, 104 line 7; PL 216 cols. 126–8, especially 128; Edward B. Krehbiel, *The Interdict. Its History and Operation with Especial Attention to the time of Pope Innocent III 1198–1216* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1909), 152–3. The interdict against Toulouse was contained in a letter of Master Milo to the pope based on the results of a local council held at Avignon in September 1209.

⁸ *Layettes du Trésor des Chartes*, vol. 1, ed. Alexandre Teulet (Paris: Henri Plon, 1863), 368–9; Krehbiel, *The Interdict*, 153. The pope's instructions lifting the excommunication and interdict are contained in a longer letter written by the consuls of Toulouse to King Pere II in 1211. Arnaud-Amaury required payment of what amounted to a fine for his absolution, which was not paid in full, resulting in a reinstatement of the excommunication and interdict, but that too was lifted before the end of 1210.

Raimon's overlord for some of his more eastern territories along the Rhône valley.⁹ Nothing substantial appears to have come out of that meeting, but it did hurt the count's relationship with King Philip when the count met the king for a second time on his way back south. The king was angry about Raimon's visit to the emperor, as the two monarchs were bitter rivals, a rivalry that came to a head at Bouvines four years later.¹⁰ Once back in his own lands, Raimon even had a meeting with Montfort, and it appears that at least up to this point the two men had no reason to dislike each other. In fact they arranged a marriage alliance between Raimon VI's son and one of Simon of Montfort's daughters. As another guarantee of his good behavior the Count of Toulouse turned the Narbonnais Castle, the citadel of the city defenses of Toulouse and the count's residence, over to Guy, Cistercian abbot of Vaux-de-Cernay, who had arrived in Occitania the previous autumn, and Folquet of Marseille, Bishop of Toulouse.¹¹ These two men soon began a vigorous preaching campaign against heresy, money lending, and usury though the people of the south were not much interested in what they had to say.¹² January and February 1210 was a quiescent time for the south, as the weather made campaigning nearly impossible and Montfort was so short of men he could do little anyway. In February 1210 Estève of Servian, lord of the small *castrum* of Servian twelve kilometers northeast of Béziers, which had been abandoned as the crusade army marched through the previous summer, formally abjured heresy and swore loyalty to the crusade. In early March Montfort gave Estève his lands back.¹³

At the beginning of Lent that year, 10 March, Simon of Montfort received word that his wife Alice was on her way to Occitania with a large party of knights. Relieved and overjoyed, he met her at Pézenas, twenty-one kilometers northwest of Béziers, to escort her and these newly arrived troops along the main roads to Carcassonne. On their way to

⁹ PVCE, 77 # 139; PVC 1, 144.

¹⁰ PVCE, 77 #139; PVC 1, 144–5; SCW, 30 laisse 42, 31 laisse 44; WTud, 106 lines 9–10, 108 lines 5–6.

¹¹ PVCE, 77 #139; PVC 1, 145; SCW, 31 laisse 44; WTud, 108 line 11. For Guy Vaux-de-Cernay's arrival, see PVCE, 70–1 #128. For basic biographical information on these two key prelates see Monique Zerner-Chardavoine, "L'abbé Gui des Vaux-de-Cernay prédicateur de croisade," *Les Cisterciens de Languedoc (XIIIe–XIVe siècles). Cahiers de Fanjeaux* (1986), 183–203; N.M. Schulman, *Where Troubadours Were Bishops. The Occitania of Folc of Marseille (1150–1231)* (New York: Routledge, 2001) chapters 1 and 2; Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*, 161–71, and "Innocent III's Papacy," 69–79. Guy Vaux-de-Cernay was an old friend of Montfort's who also risked death during the Fourth Crusade when he and Montfort refused to participate in the capture of Zara. A former noble and troubadour of note, Folquet of Marseille's free-wheeling lifestyle came to an end when he became a Cistercian monk. Possessing the fervour of any new religious convert, Folquet was heartily disliked in his diocese.

¹² SCW, 32 laisses 45–6; WTud, 108, 110, 112. ¹³ HGL 8, cols. 584–9; Catalogue des actes, 456 #38.

Carcassonne the campaign year began. Staying the night at a *castrum* called Capendu less than sixteen kilometers from Carcassonne, they received word that the citizens of another *castrum* in the Corbières mountains, Montlaur, had rebelled against their Montfortian garrison and were besieging the men inside the keep. Only six kilometers from Capendu, in terms of actual distance Montlaur was much farther due to the winding roads leading up into the mountains. Leaving Alice in the castle at Capendu, Montfort took what troops she had brought and those he already had with him and rode quickly to Montlaur, surprising the besiegers and quickly ending the siege. Given the fact that Montfort was a man of his word, when others broke their promises to him he did not take it lightly. He showed his displeasure at what he rightly regarded as treachery on the part of the people of Montlaur by hanging the men he caught for their disloyalty. Some got away however.¹⁴

Montlaur was a small problem that required little effort to solve. Montfort now decided to go on the offensive by picking off other small targets which had either resisted him the previous year or had rebelled. In all these actions of 1210 Montfort used Carcassonne as a base of operations, intending to clear the territories around it first before he risked going farther afield. After a short stay in Carcassonne, the army moved west to Alzonne, which had been occupied by the crusade in August 1209 but was now deserted. From there the army continued west less than six kilometers to the small *castrum* of Bram, also located along the main roads west of Carcassonne. For some time Bram had functioned as a safe house for Cathar *perfecti*, but – more importantly for a man with a long memory for treachery like Simon of Montfort – it housed the unnamed French cleric who had given back Montréal to its rebellious lord Aimeric in November–December 1209. Bram had weak fortifications and unlike many other *castra* in the region was located in a flat area where geography could not assist its defense. Bram was so weak that Montfort only blockaded it for three days before having his army take the unusual step of direct assault against the town. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay explicitly mentions that the crusaders accomplished the blockade and assault of Bram without the support of any siege devices, a testament to the *castrum*'s vulnerability.¹⁵

The aftermath of the siege of Bram greatly added to the infamy of the crusade. While one certainly cannot condone Montfort's actions at Bram, placing why he did so in context makes his actions far more

¹⁴ PVCE, 78 #141; PVC 1, 146–7. ¹⁵ PVCE 78–9 #142; PVC 1, 147–8.

understandable. Besides the fact that he captured over one hundred prisoners who had refused to surrender, their lives possibly forfeit under contemporary customs of war, Montfort had two other scores to settle which made scapegoats of the men of Bram. The cleric caught in Bram, a man of the church supporting heretics and a Frenchman no less, represented the worst kind of treachery to Simon of Montfort. The Bishop of Carcassonne defrocked this renegade priest, and the man was tied to a horse's tail and dragged through the streets of Carcassonne before being hanged.¹⁶ The other score Montfort believed he had to settle was in retaliation for the two knights blinded and mutilated by Giraud of Pépieux the previous autumn. More than willing to raise the ante, Montfort had all but one of the over one hundred prisoners blinded and their noses cut off. A single man of Bram was left with one eye in order to lead the rest to Cabaret, a clear message to those who would defy the crusade. This army of the disfigured and disabled would spread terror amongst his enemies as they worked their way west.¹⁷

Though most modern authors do not condemn what Montfort did at Bram, it has become perhaps the second most infamous story next to the storming of Béziers. We should be cynical about Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's claim that Montfort disliked doing things like this; for example, he willingly confirmed the death sentence on a repentant heretic at Castres in September 1209, justifying that if the man was sincere the fire would atone for his past misconduct, and if he had converted simply to avoid the flames the fire would be suitable punishment.¹⁸ A more flexible man might have used Bram as an opportunity to show his magnanimity or good faith, but Montfort was not such a man. He lived by a strict code in which loyalty was important above all else. Those who showed it were treated well by him; those who betrayed it could expect retaliation. While we might ask, as Zoé Oldenbourg did, why Montfort did not conform to standards more akin to ours by taking the moral high road and sparing the men of Bram, the fact remains that the chief crusader had to use any example he could to offset his weak position, something even Oldenbourg admits.¹⁹ Before indicting him as a war criminal in a modern court we should be aware that both sides bore responsibility for the continued pattern of mutilations and executions of prisoners during the Occitan War. As an additional justification for the

¹⁶ PVCE, 73-4 #135; PVC 1, 139. ¹⁷ PVCE, 79 #142; PVC 1, 148-9.

¹⁸ PVCE, 62-3 #113; PVC 1, 117-18. The man was duly consigned to the flames but broke through his bonds and escaped the fire. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay does not mention if he was spared at that point or thrown back in.

¹⁹ Oldenbourg, *Massacre at Montségur*, 136-7.

mutilations at Bram, Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says that southerners habitually dismembered captured crusaders.²⁰

Though the arrival of reinforcements led by Alice of Montfort allowed the crusader army to capture Montlaur and Bram, the weather was still too cold and the army still too small to mount any major offensives or sieges. During the rest of March and until Easter (18 April) 1210, the crusading army conducted successful raids against crops and grapevines in the foothills of the Black Mountains north of Carcassonne, particularly near Cabaret and farther east around Minerve. These raids effectively isolated Minerve, a key Cathar refuge. By Easter the crusade had secured all the important sites near Minerve except for the fortress of Ventajou.²¹ Around Easter the army extended its operations south of Carcassonne in the Corbières mountains against targets that threatened the highway between Carcassonne and Béziers. This time the army blockaded another small mountain *castrum* called Alaric, only about eleven kilometers south-east of Carcassonne. Snow still covered the ground and the cold weather greatly hampered operations, but the crusading army continued the blockade for two weeks before the garrison attempted to flee during the night. Many of the garrison were caught and killed during the subsequent chase.²²

Meanwhile a number of southern lords, among them Peire-Roger of Cabaret, Raimon of Termes, and Aimeric of Montréal, though all now technically vassals of Simon of Montfort, took advantage of the King of Aragon's presence in the region by asking him to become their direct overlord. All three of these lords had previously been lukewarm vassals of the Trencavel viscounts, but they clearly did not want to do homage to Simon of Montfort, partly because two of them had already suffered at his hands. Having the king as their protector but far away in Aragon seemed to be the optimum situation for keeping their own independence. In fact, appealing to King Pere might convince the monarch of Aragon to drive Montfort out of their territory entirely. Neither side apparently had any serious intention of making a settlement. The original meeting place was to

²⁰ PVCE, 79 #142; PVC 1, 148. Girou, *Simon de Montfort*, 199, 204. In his closing chapter, "Simon de Montfort, criminel de guerre," Girou concludes that Montfort deserves conviction as a war criminal, albeit specifically for destroying Occitan culture.

²¹ PVCE, 79 #143-4 and note 14; PVC 1, 149-50 and note 5. Ventajou was near modern Félines de Minervois, some twelve kilometers west of Minerve.

²² PVCE, 79-80 #145 and note 16; PVC 1, 150-1 and note 2. Alaric was near the modern town of Miramont.

be Montréal, but so impatient were these southern lords that they or their representatives met the king on the road and made their offer to become his vassals. Pere countered with his own proposal and the cost was steep. The king demanded that the *castrum* of Cabaret be turned over to him, and that all nobles interested in having him as direct lord agree to hand over their fortifications to the king if asked to do so. The barons demurred, requesting that the king enter Montréal before they agreed. He refused. Any possibility for agreement evaporated and no formal parley between Pere II and the southern lords ever occurred.²³ Pere's refusal to treat with the southern lords in the former Trencavel viscounty kept the door open to possible future relations between himself and Simon of Montfort.

At the same time as the southern lords converged on Montréal and King Pere approached the town, Simon of Montfort decided to perform some show of strength, even though with his small army he did not dare risk attacking the southern nobles in Montréal directly. He opted instead to besiege a small castle called Bellegarde, less than thirteen kilometers to the southwest of Montréal.²⁴ While Montfort besieged this castle, which no one troubled to rescue, Pere II sent a note to him asking for a truce between Pere's vassal, the Count of Foix, and Montfort, to last until Easter 1211. Montfort readily agreed to this, partly because it freed him from having to worry about threats to the southern borders of his territories from the aggressive Count of Foix. Bellegarde fell to the crusaders soon after, with the consequence that other castles and *castra* in the area were abandoned or capitulated.²⁵ The beginning of May saw the truce between the chief crusader and the Count of Foix evaporate as Montfort and his men operated farther away from a secure base of operations south of Carcassonne. Passing through Pamiers, recently the site of a fruitless meeting between Pere II and Raimon VI, Montfort broke the truce by unexpectedly riding up to the city and castle of Foix with his men. Catching the defenders by surprise, at the head of his small band of raiders Montfort almost managed to get inside the fortress even though taking the *castrum* was not really his original intention. With the gates of the castle literally shut in his face he hastily retreated, though not before one of his companion knights was hit by

²³ PVCE, 81 #148–9; PVC 1, 152–3. Were these southern nobles trying to lure the king into some kind of trap, to get him to agree to favorable terms? The nobles' insistence that Pere physically enter Montréal seems to suggest this.

²⁴ PVCE, 81 #148, Appendix A, 285–6; PVC 1, 153. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay calls Bellegarde a *munitio* which, according to the Sibyls, usually means the citadel of a larger set of fortifications, or a stand-alone castle without a village, town, or city around it.

²⁵ PVCE, 81–2 #150; PVC 1, 153–4. None of these other places is mentioned by name.

rocks thrown from the considerable heights of the castle walls. Since what men he had with him amounted to no more than a large raiding party, he did not bother to besiege such a strong fortification so deep in enemy country. Instead the raiders spent several days in the vicinity of Foix destroying grain in the fields, grapevines, and fruit trees before heading back to Carcassonne.²⁶

THE SIEGE OF MINERVE, JUNE–JULY 1210

By late June things were moving in a positive direction for Simon of Montfort. Though his overlord, the King of Aragon, had not accepted his homage, he had not rejected it either, and the lords of the viscounty had likewise failed to work out a solution with King Pere at Montréal. By 24 June Montfort decided to secure his lordship more firmly by beginning major military operations for the year. His first target was the mountain fortress and Cathar refuge of Minerve. Neither the siege of Minerve nor that of Termes later was that important militarily, as both were small *castra* deep in the mountains. He chose Minerve because it consistently served as a refuge for Cathar perfects, so taking it became crucial in establishing both church and vicecomital authority in that part of his territory.

Bolstered by reinforcements from the north, including men from Anjou, Brittany, Champagne, Frisia, and Lotharingia and other groups of “Germans,” Montfort besieged Minerve for seven weeks, from the third week of June to the end of July 1210.²⁷ He did so, according to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, because the citizens of Narbonne asked him to, even though he had his own reasons for doing so as mentioned above. Though the chronicler is vague about why the people of Minerve were a “constant source of trouble” to the Narbonnais, Montfort had the support of Viscount Aimery and the town militia for the entirety of the siege.²⁸ Having Aimery’s help at Minerve was a pleasant change from the previous year when the militia of Narbonne refused to help Montfort punish Giraud

²⁶ PVCE, 80–1 #146–7; PVC 1, 151–2.

²⁷ *Annales Colonienses Maximi*, ed. Charles Pertz, MGH SS 17 (1861), 825; SCW, 33 laisse 49; WTud, 116. The annalist says that French, English, and Lotharingians came south for the papal indulgence, while William of Tudela adds men from Champagne, Maine, Anjou, Brittany, Frisia, and “Germany.”

²⁸ PVCE 82 #151; PVC 1, 154–5; Emery, *Heresy and Inquisition*, 58–9. Emery suggests the Narbonnais and their viscount were so eager now because they had suffered reprisals from *castra* like Minerve for their support of the crusade the preceding fall, lack-luster as it was. The translation in the text is the Siblys’.

of PÉpieux before the walls of Puisserguier.²⁹ Also present at Minerve was a unit of Gascons, perhaps recruited by the Archbishop of Auch.³⁰

The siege of Minerve revealed Simon of Montfort's talent and tenacity. The chief crusader still did not control every major city in the viscounty, and his hold on the ones he possessed was really only as good as his reputation when it came to defend them from both internal and external enemies. He could not count on having a large army at all times, and isolated parties of reinforcements could be picked off before they ever reached him. The agricultural base around Minerve was not enough to support an army of any size, yet the geography dictated there must be sufficient manpower to blockade the site. Logistics played a key role in the siege. Supplies were secured, bought, escorted, and hauled up steep, narrow, and dangerous roads from Carcassonne and other places more than thirty-five kilometers away. In addition to being the first great siege of the Occitan War under Simon of Montfort's leadership, Minerve became the first example of his skillful use of siege warfare to take castles in geographically hostile conditions.³¹ Unlike Béziers and Carcassonne, both medium-sized cities in relatively open areas, Minerve sat atop a steep, rocky, peninsula-shaped plateau protected by vertical cliff walls and flanked by two deep river gorges.³² Even in the summer, when much of the water dries up in the gorges, it would have been virtually impossible to get in the *castrum* by force except along the narrow isthmus at its north end, and that side was guarded by a citadel. Montfort set up his main camp on the east side of Minerve across one of the gorges while he sent the Gascons under the command of one of his lieutenants, Guy of Lucy, to the west side of Minerve.³³ As co-commander of the siege Aimery, with the militia of Narbonne, cut off the isthmus on the north side, while other crusader groups surrounded the south.³⁴ (See Figure 5, p. xxi.)

While the gorges surrounding Minerve are incredibly steep they are not overly wide, placing the town in easy range of siege weapons stationed

²⁹ See Chapter 1, 65–6.

³⁰ PVCE, 82 #152; PVC 1, 155. That the archbishop procured them is the assumption of Guébin and Lyon and followed by the Siblys. It is true the Archbishop of Auch was a devoted supporter of the crusade but there is no direct evidence to suggest he recruited these soldiers.

³¹ For a discussion of the inaccessibility of Minerve and other places see Barber, "Catharism and the Occitan Nobility," 6–8.

³² PVCE, 82–3 #152–3, PVC 1, 156; SCW, 33 *laisse* 49; WTud, 116–17 lines 1–4. I can vouch for the ruggedness of the site from visiting Minerve.

³³ PVCE, 82 #152; PVC 1, 155–6. For biographical information on Guy of Lucy see Woehl, *Volo vincere*, 160–2, though she has the date for the siege of Minerve as 1211, not 1210. Guy of Lucy was later given the town of Puylaurens.

³⁴ PVCE, 82–3 #152; PVC 1, 155–6.

across the gorges. Additionally, the land surrounding the gorges is higher than the walls of the town, and that made Minerve particularly vulnerable to missile fire. Even today, standing across from either the east or south one can easily see into the town. Viewing Minerve's formidable geography, the crusader leadership realized from the start that it could not be stormed successfully. Almost immediately, therefore, a mangonel manned by a Gascon crew was brought up and began battering the walls from the west. Two other machines to the north and south meanwhile bombarded their respective sections of the walls from across the gorge.³⁵ On Montfort's side the crusaders brought up a special rock thrower (*petraria*). This may have been the first use of a large counterweight, or at the very least a traction, trebuchet, in the crusade.³⁶ This "lady and queen" among the siege engines was called *mala vezina*, or "Bad Neighbor," and its crew was paid twenty-one *livres* a day.³⁷ Judging from Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's explicit use of the sum, this must have been a lot of money to pay a siege crew, but evidently their ability was highly regarded by the army. Under this crew's skillful handling, Bad Neighbor's missiles broke up the walls of Minerve and even partially destroyed the house of Guilhem of Minerve, the lord of the place.³⁸

The trebuchet's contribution to the siege is indicated by the worry it caused the defenders. One Sunday night a unit of southerners sortied out of the safety of Minerve, crossed the gorge, climbed up, and attempted to burn Bad Neighbor. Its crew had left it unguarded, confident that no one would brave so many obstacles to get to it. The southerners heaped baskets

³⁵ PVCE, 83 #152; PVC 1, 156. Bradbury, *The Medieval Siege*, 252–3, has descriptions and drawings of a mangonel, a small catapult.

³⁶ Neither Peter Vaux-de-Cernay nor William of Tudela describes this weapon in any meaningful way. Based on the excitement it caused and its obvious effectiveness, I believe it to have been a trebuchet. France, *Western Warfare*, 122–3, discusses later uses of the trebuchet in the Albigensian Crusade, as at Castelnaudary in 1211. The date of origin of the trebuchet in western Europe is not known, but it was in use before the end of the twelfth century. Donald R. Hill, "Trebuchets," *Viator* 4 (1973), 104, places it in the late twelfth century; Carroll M. Gillmor, "The Introduction of the Traction Trebuchet into the Latin West," *Viator* 12 (1981), 1–8, argues for an earlier introduction, perhaps before 900 C.E.; Bradbury, *Medieval Siege*, 87, 260, suggests the mid-twelfth century; Joseph Needham et al., *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 5: *Chemistry and Chemical Technology*, part 6: *Military Technology: Missiles and Sieges* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 214, 232–9, proposes as early as 648 C.E. for the introduction of the traction trebuchet, and the early thirteenth century for the counterweight trebuchet into the west; Paul Chevedden, Les Eigenbrod, Vernard Foley and Werner Soedel, "The Trebuchet," *Scientific American* (July 1995), 66–71, suggest the earliest dates of all for the trebuchet's introduction into the Mediterranean region, sometime in the sixth century C.E., though when it may have reached western Europe the authors do not say. Regardless of the exact date of introduction, trebuchets seem to have been relatively rare as late as 1210.

³⁷ PVCE, #152, 83; PVC 1, 156; SCW, 32–3; WTud, 114, lines 6–7.

³⁸ SCW, 32–3 laisse 48; WTud, 114 lines 8–9.

of flax, dry wood, grass, and grease around the trebuchet and attempted to ignite it. By sheer chance, one of Bad Neighbor's crew members was urinating next to it and raised the alarm before being impaled by a spear. Crusaders rushed from all parts of Montfort's camp to save the beleaguered siege weapon, and returned it to action in "two strokes" ("per duos ictus jacere non cessavit").³⁹

Eventually the constant bombardment destroyed a great deal of the small *castrum's* buildings. Completely cut off, Minerve's swollen population of townspeople and Cathars from as far away as the Béziers region soon grew short of supplies. Undoubtedly the defenders lacked water as well, since the crusaders could easily prevent attempts to get water from the near-dry rivers in the gorges by firing missile weapons or dropping stones down from the heights. Guilhem of Minerve finally decided to meet with the chief crusader and negotiate a settlement. During the negotiations two papal legates, Arnaud-Amaury and Master Theodisius, arrived to complicate matters. Though Simon of Montfort was undisputed military head of the crusade, evidently he was unsure of his power because he deferred final judgment over terms to the legates.⁴⁰ Arnaud-Amaury proposed that the *castrum* surrender to Montfort; Guilhem of Minerve, the villagers untainted by heretical beliefs, and the *credentes*, the rank-and-file Cathars, were to be simply reconciled to the church. Even the perfects would be spared if they converted back to orthodoxy. One of Montfort's lieutenants, Robert Mauvoisin, feared that too many would accept the proposal and get off scot-free. Representing the more zealous warriors among the crusaders, he told the legate to his face that the men of the army would never accept the proposal to let professed heretics go free. According to our chronicler, the legate told Robert Mauvoisin that he knew his enemies well and figured that few would take the deal.⁴¹ This proved to be the case, at least among the *perfecti*. The Abbot of Vaux-de-Cernay and Simon of Montfort himself personally tried to persuade the perfects to be reconciled. In the end Guilhem surrendered the town, but 140 *perfecti* refused to abjure their Cathar faith – part of the agreement Arnaud-Amaury imposed – and were burned alive on a pyre constructed outside the town. Some of the perfects actually rushed forward to hit the flames faster, indicating how futile it had been to try to convert them.⁴²

³⁹ PVCE, 83 #153; PVC 1, 156–7.

⁴⁰ Dutton, "Aspects," 92–3. Arnaud-Amaury served as senior legate until 1214.

⁴¹ PVCE 83–4 #154; PVC 1, 157–9.

⁴² PVCE, 84–5 #155–6; PVC 1, 159–61; Robert of Auxerre, *Chronicon*, 275; ATF, 892. Robert of Auxerre says 180 perfects were burned.

This is one more example of the mass atrocities committed by both sides during the war. None of the sources give an exact chronology from the *castrum's* surrender to the burning of the *perfecti*, but it seems there was an interval of hours or days between them. In other words, the burnings did not happen immediately after the town's capitulation, and the people affected had plenty of time to decide whether to convert or die. Depending on one's perspective this time interval either ameliorates what happened or makes it worse. Certainly Montfort and his men gladly participated in this mass burning, but it was under terms imposed by the legates, not by him or a council of the army. While not excusing the behavior of the crusaders, after the frustrations of a seven-week siege these things should not be so surprising. The villagers of Minerve and Cathar refugees who wished it were reconciled to the church and appear to have suffered no other punishment, indicating that at least at this point in the war atrocities were not the reaction of first choice. Guilhem, lord of Minerve, suffered no penalties for his defiance and was granted comparable lands around Béziers. He, like Giraud of Pépieux and so many other southern lords, later betrayed Montfort's clemency by fighting against the crusade at Beaucaire in 1216 and at Louis VIII's siege of Toulouse in 1219.⁴³

The taking of Minerve was an important moral victory for the crusade and enhanced Montfort's military reputation, but his command over his territories remained tenuous. In the short term Montfort's victory at Minerve helped him in the diplomatic realm. Peire-Roger of Ventajou, a rebellious lord from the previous fall, pledged his allegiance to the crusade, and Montfort punished him no worse than by pulling down the keep or tower (*turris*) of his fortifications. More importantly, Aimeric, lord of Montréal, was reconciled to the crusade for a second time and offered his territory up in exchange for suitable (meaning less defensible) territory somewhere else. This was duly granted in spite of the fact that Aimeric had already violated his word when he took back Montréal from the crusade in 1209. The fact that Montfort gave these two men a second chance suggests that he attempted to be flexible and merciful to avoid a siege or protracted conflict. In 1211 Aimeric of Montréal broke his word yet again and finally paid the ultimate price for his disloyalty when Lavaur fell.⁴⁴

⁴³ SCW, 101 laisse 167, 104 laisse 169, 191 laisse 214; *Chanson* II, 176 line 54, 190 line 92; *Chanson* III, 304 line 21.

⁴⁴ PVCE, 90 #166-7; PVC I, 169-70.

Buoyed by his success Montfort continued to take the offensive. Within the next couple of days a council of advisors, including Montfort's wife Alice, met with Montfort at the town of Pennautier, about five kilometers northwest of Carcassonne. The council suggested that the chief crusader next besiege the castle of Termes, further south and even deeper into the mountains than Minerve. Besieging Termes was a greater gamble than besieging Minerve. Montfort still faced possible rebellion if he got bogged down in another protracted siege. He lacked manpower to replace the men who had participated in the siege of Minerve, won their indulgence and had now departed for the north, as well as the Narbonnais militia, who would not participate again. Finally, the rugged country in which Termes sat would place a greater logistical strain on the resources of the crusade than even Minerve. While the military leadership continued to meet at Pennautier, William of Cayeux arrived with a party of crusader-pilgrims from the north to reinforce the army and to bring word that a sizeable army of pilgrims from Brittany was marching south to join the crusade.⁴⁵ Although Montfort's army remained quite small even with the additions of William of Cayeux, these reinforcements offered the chief crusader sufficient incentive to march into the mountains southeast of Carcassonne to begin a siege of Termes.

Because Montfort marched to Termes with the bulk of his army it was clear he would be unable to respond quickly to any attacks or rebellions in crusader-held towns. Keeping Carcassonne safe was particularly important, since capable southerners extremely hostile to the crusade surrounded it. Peire-Roger of Cabaret commanded the mountain roads north of it while Raimon-Roger of Foix dominated the road and Aude river directly south of the city through his recapture of Preixan. Picking a governor of proven ability for Carcassonne was essential in order to prevent its loss and to keep a supply line open while the army besieged Termes. In succession Montfort asked two of his lieutenants, Lambert of Crécy and Rainier of Chauderon, to command the defenses of Carcassonne. Both refused because of the enormous responsibility of serving as governor over the most important conquered crusader city still in the middle of enemy territory.⁴⁶ Several of Montfort's lieutenants, and even Alice of Montfort, pushed forward William of Contres as garrison commander of Carcassonne. According

⁴⁵ PVCE, 90 #168; PVC 1, 170-1.

⁴⁶ SCW, 34 laisse 51; WTud, 122; PVCE, 127 #248; PVC 1, 247-9. Lambert of Crécy, later called Lambert of Limoux, could not escape bad luck. In 1211 the Count of Foix captured and imprisoned him in harsh conditions before he was ransomed. In 1216 Lambert commanded the ill-fated garrison at Beaucaire. For biographical information on Renier of Chauderon, see Woehl, *Volo vincere*, 175.

to William of Tudela, at that time Montfort viewed William as one of his better field soldiers and wanted him to be at the siege of Termes, not governing Carcassonne. The consensus within the army supported his candidacy, so Montfort finally agreed, but further ordered Crespín of Rochefort, Simon the Saxon, and Simon the Saxon's brother Guy to be William of Contres's subordinates.⁴⁷ The council now broke up, with the bulk of the army moving southeast thirty-three kilometers to Termes while William of Contres and his men rode a much shorter distance of about five kilometers southeast to Carcassonne, arriving there late in the evening of 29 July.⁴⁸

As it turned out, Lambert of Crécy and Rainier of Chauderon had made the right decision by refusing the command of Carcassonne. Besides protecting the town both internally and externally, Montfort had ordered William of Contres to send on a wagon train consisting of mangonels, other siege weapons, and their associated equipment currently at Carcassonne. Upon his arrival in Carcassonne William of Contres directed that the equipment and wagons be assembled for transport and placed outside the city on the road towards Termes alongside the Aude.⁴⁹ With the wagons packed up and accompanied by a hundred-man escort, the train would get an early start the following morning. Though the train's escort and drivers stayed with the wagons during the night, undoubtedly many slept at their posts while none was particularly vigilant, since they would not have been outside the walls in the first place had they expected trouble. A poorly guarded, unsuspecting prize of this magnitude was a perfect target for those willing to risk an attack in the shadow of the *castrum's* defenses. A spy (*espia*), perhaps from within the garrison guarding Carcassonne itself, secretly left the city and rode the fourteen kilometers to Cabaret to inform Peire-Roger of the potential bounty and its weak guard.

Upon hearing the news, Peire-Roger led more than 300 men and two of his lieutenants, William Cat and Raimon Mir, on horseback from Cabaret

⁴⁷ SCW, 34 laisses 51–2; WTud, 122, 124. For biographical information on all three, see Woehl, *Volo vincere*, 168–70, 140, 174. Simon the Saxon was killed at Pujol in 1213.

⁴⁸ SCW, 34 laisses 52–3; WTud, 124; Gauthier Langlois, "Le siège du château de Termes par Simon de Montfort en 1210, problèmes topographiques et historiques," *Heresis* 22 (1994), 104–5. William of Tudela mentions the council meeting on a Thursday, and, as Langlois has figured and I have followed, this would have been the Thursday after Minerve capitulated, which would make it 29 July 1210. Langlois estimates the distance from Carcassonne to Termes as closer to fifty or sixty kilometers based on the likely route of the army.

⁴⁹ SCW, 35–6 laisse 53; WTud, 126; PVCE, 90 #169; PVC 1, 171.

in a moonlight raid on the siege train outside Carcassonne.⁵⁰ A force this size riding hard to take advantage of the night would be fairly noisy, and evidently the guards of the train had some warning of their approach. The raiders struck part of the train strung out along the road, chopping up some of the weapons while they tried to light a fire to destroy the rest. Inside Carcassonne, William of Contres hastily mounted up about eighty sergeants, who joined him in a counter-charge against Peire-Roger's raiders. The garrison's quick response in turn surprised the raiders, and intense hand-to-hand combat broke out, spilling over the road and open ground leading down to the Aude. Men knocked from their horses in the fierce fighting drowned in the river, weighed down by their iron hauberks. Eventually the raiders appeared to have had enough, and retreated back towards Cabaret without accomplishing much. The need to strike a strategic blow to postpone the coming siege of Termes convinced the raiders to try their luck again that same night. Taking advantage of the fact that the defenders would not expect another raid, Peire-Roger's men doubled back and attacked the train again near dawn. Once more the men fought at close quarters, but even the early morning light was insufficient to recognize friend from foe. In this second melee Peire-Roger was surrounded, but shouting the crusaders' battle cry of "Montfort!" he rode off before anyone realized who he was. Once day broke the raiders fled for cover, and it took two days before Peire-Roger made it back to the safety of his mountain fortress.⁵¹ William of Tudela related how happy the crusaders were at driving off a superior force and preserving the siege train, but this joy must have contained a great deal of relieved embarrassment for William of Contres, who had opted for convenience over security.⁵²

The siege train departed soon after, probably on 31 July 1210, its escort greatly supplemented by the large party of Breton crusaders who had finally arrived in Occitania soon after the chief crusader had left for Termes. These crusaders arrived in Carcassonne by way of Castelnaudary, where they had been refused admittance to the *castrum* by the townspeople and spent the

⁵⁰ William of Tudela said that William of Contres arrived at Carcassonne after supper but before "bed time." He mentions that the crusaders would have to get up the next day to guard the wagons, but the connotation is that William of Contres had the machines dragged out immediately after he got there. The spy evidently made it to Cabaret quickly, because the men of Cabaret left at moonlight to make their raid on the train. All of this activity seems to have occurred on the same night, 29–30 July 1210. Cabaret is a little less than fourteen kilometers from Carcassonne, though this does not account for the actual road distance.

⁵¹ SCW, 35–6 *laisses* 54–5; WTud, 126, 128, 130; PVCE, 90–1 #169; PVC 1, 171–2.

⁵² SCW, 36 *laisse* 55; WTud, 130 lines 30–4.

night in the fields and gardens around it.⁵³ Montfort heard what happened at Carcassonne when the train arrived with its escort about three days later.⁵⁴ He was still preparing the territory of Termes for the siege, and even though William of Tudela said the chief crusader was overjoyed at the successful check of Peire-Roger, his joy too must have been tinged with relief that disaster had been narrowly averted.⁵⁵ Though no source says it, this raid may have further convinced him that the nuisance of Peire-Roger and Cabaret would have to be dealt with as soon as an opportune moment presented itself.

THE SIEGE OF TERMES, AUGUST TO 23 NOVEMBER 1210

Modern visitors to Cathar sites in southern France find themselves constantly awed as each castle visited seems to exceed the last in its spectacular and rugged setting. As the crow flies the modern site of Termes is located about thirty kilometers from Carcassonne in the Corbières Mountains. The actual travel distance is closer to fifty or sixty kilometers on steep, meandering, one-lane roads punctuated by switchbacks that hug the side of the mountains.⁵⁶ Because of these conditions, even today it takes the better part of two hours by car from Carcassonne to reach the modern village below the actual site of Termes, not counting the journey by foot required to climb to the site. Built on a mountain summit of bare rock, Termes was impossible to undermine. The small summit contained the main fortifications, but close by to the northwest, on the same summit, another small tower stood upon it called Termenet.⁵⁷ The only practical way to approach the ruins of the fortifications, then and now, is by one path/road from the southeast.⁵⁸

⁵³ PVCE, 91 #170; PVC 1, 172. For the date of the train's departure and itinerary see Langlois, "Le siège du château de Termes," 104–5, and *Olivier de Termes. Le Cathare et le croisé (vers 1200–1274)* (Toulouse: Privat, 2001), 39–40.

⁵⁴ SCW, 36 laisse 56; WTud, 132; Langlois, "Le siège du château de Termes," 105. Langlois suggests that with heavy equipment the journey would take about three days.

⁵⁵ PVCE, 91, #171; PVC 1, 173–4; Robert of Auxerre, *Chronicon*, 275; Langlois, "Le siège du château de Termes," 105.

⁵⁷ PVCE, 91, #171; PVC 1, 173–4; Robert of Auxerre, *Chronicon*, 275; Langlois, "Le siège du château de Termes," 114–21; Michel Roquebert, *Citadelles du vertige* (Toulouse: Bayard, 1967), 63–8. Archaeologists still have not determined the exact location of Termenet. The consensus is that the tower was about 200 meters northwest of the main fortifications. Even the remnants of the main fortress extant today are not the same as when Montfort besieged it in 1210. The site was extensively modified when Termes became a royal castle in 1228. Langlois's article, 115, has a modern reconstruction of the main fortifications as they might have looked in 1210.

⁵⁸ PVCE, 91 #171; PVC 1, 173–4 says from the south, and this can be verified by personal observation.

The lord of Termes was a robber-noble in the mold of Peire-Roger of Cabaret. Raimon of Termes was very sympathetic to heresy, if not a Cathar himself. At various times in his career he had defied every conceivable authority possible in Occitania, including the Viscount of Béziers, the Count of Toulouse, and the King of Aragon.⁵⁹ He, along with Guilhem of Minerve and Aimeric of Montréal, had been one of the lords who earlier that year had tried to persuade Pere II to become their overlord instead of Simon of Montfort. Long aware that Montfort intended to besiege Termes, Raimon had gathered all the *milites* he could, adding them to his garrison of Aragonese, Brabançon, Catalan, and Roussillon *routiers*. He had also carefully provisioned the castle with fresh meat, bacon, wine, water, bread, and tools useful for defense.⁶⁰

Even with the substantial Breton contingent of crusader-pilgrims, which had escorted his siege train to Termes, Montfort was short-handed because the first wave of crusaders had departed shortly after the siege of Minerve. It appears that it was at the siege of Termes that the forty-day period for gaining the indulgence was first institutionalized by the papal legates. Though there is some justification for placing this institution at the beginning of the crusade in 1209, Peter Vaux-de-Cernay does not mention it until the siege of Termes. Since Peter was the closest to an official crusade chronicler, he would have been in the best position to know when it began. It is entirely possible, of course, that crusaders had informally taken it upon themselves to serve forty days before this, but it is only at Termes and afterward that we get consistent references to a defined period of service.⁶¹ Peter Vaux-de-Cernay reports that the defenders in Termes heckled Simon's troops over the tiny size of the army as they went about their work. Due to lack of men the crusading army could not properly blockade Termes as the defenders continued to bring in water and supplies from somewhere or other. The agricultural base around that remote area high in the mountains is weak even today, which means that no thirteenth-century general could support an army for long except by an extended route leading along the mountain roads back to the open country of Carcassonne. Doing so left the supply line vulnerable to ambush at every twist and turn, a situation exploited by Peire-Roger of Cabaret. Teams of men from Cabaret, far more familiar with the country around Termes than the crusaders, bushwhacked unsuspecting parties of northerners on the roads

⁵⁹ PVCE 92 #172; Langlois, *Olivier de Termes*, 19–21.

⁶⁰ PVCE, 92 #172; PVC 1, 174–5; *SCW*, 36 laisse 56, WTud, 134, 136.

⁶¹ Marvin, "Thirty-Nine Days and a Wake-up," 85–9.

around Termes, either killing them or disfiguring them by gouging out their eyes or cutting off their noses.⁶² The types of mutilation reported by Peter Vaux-de-Cernay suggest the men of Cabaret were retaliating for what had happened at Bram that spring. In any event, this latest round of mutilations represents yet another link in a chain of atrocities going back to what Giraud of Pépieux did to Montfort's knights after Puisserguier in 1209. These activities must have created a climate of fear among the small crusader force engaged at the siege of Termes, as well as confirming that Cabaret needed to be taken as soon as the army could turn its attention to it.

As the days wore on, more substantial numbers of crusader reinforcements began to arrive, led by Renaud and Philip, the bishops of Chartres and Beauvais, and the Counts of Dreux and Ponthieu from the north, and the Archbishop of Bordeaux and Amanieu of Albret leading men from the southwest. Within these contingents were Germans, Bavarians, Saxons, Frisians, Mainois, Angevins, Bretons, Normans, Gascons, Provençals, and both northern and southern Italians.⁶³ The army constructed a number of petraries, which they used to bombard the outer wall of Termes.⁶⁴ Among the recent arrivals was William, the Archdeacon of Paris. In addition to his aggressive sermonizing to recruit men for the crusade in northern France, William preached to boost the morale of the men at Termes and raised money among them to keep the siege engines in working order. He also turned out to be a talented and ingenious, albeit amateur, siege engineer. Leading parties of crusaders into the wooded areas surrounding Termes to gather timber, William and his men began filling up one of the ravines surrounding Termes with wood, earth, and rocks so a machine could be placed closer to the walls. William took the initiative to direct the blacksmiths, carpenters, and engineers on their jobs, instruction they apparently accepted willingly.⁶⁵

Machines bombarded the outer wall of Termes from the southeast for a number of days. When the wall weakened, crusaders readied for an assault on it. Rather than let it fall into enemy hands, the defenders burnt it down and retreated into the main fortification. As the crusaders tried to take possession of the space between the outer and inner walls, however, the defenders counter-attacked and drove the crusader army out.⁶⁶ The

⁶² PVCE, 92 #173; PVC 1, 175–6.

⁶³ PVCE, 92–3 #174; PVC 1, 176–7; SCW, 36 laisse 56; WTud, 132, 134 lines 21–4.

⁶⁴ PVCE, 93 #174; PVC 1, 178. ⁶⁵ PVCE, 93–94 #175; PVC 1, 178–80.

⁶⁶ PVCE, 94 #176; PVC 1, 180.

separate Termenet tower northwest of the main castle remained a constant impediment to surrounding the walls of the main fortification. For the next couple of days the crusader army made the capture of Termenet its top priority. First they surrounded it with men, cutting it off from supplies, reinforcements, and communications with the main castle. Eventually the crusaders installed a mangonel close enough to batter the tower and its knightly garrison. The defenders in either the main fortifications or Termenet (Peter Vaux-de-Cernay is unclear on this point) actually built their own mangonel and flung missiles at the crusader weapon but failed to damage it. The blockade and bombardment eventually forced the knights inside Termenet to abandon it in the dark of night. The Bishop of Chartres's sergeants immediately seized the empty tower and signaled its capture by planting their bishop's banner on top of it.⁶⁷

The capture of Termenet allowed the crusaders to concentrate their efforts at bombarding the main fortifications, though the defense was still spirited enough to make assaulting the place unwise. *Peterells* (another type of rock thrower) constantly threw stones against the walls of the castle, but before abandoning one wall the resourceful garrison constructed wooden and stone barricades to take its place.⁶⁸ The crusaders installed a mangonel close by the walls but in an "inaccessible place."⁶⁹ Montfort personally assigned a substantial party of men to guard this mangonel, some 300 sergeants and five knights, because of its isolated position. One day eighty defenders ventured down from the fortifications in an attempt to destroy the mangonel with wood and other combustibles. Because the attack occurred so suddenly, the sergeants guarding it fled in terror, presumably towards the crusader camp. As the raiders got closer four of the knights also ran, leaving one, William of Ecureuil, to defend it. He fought courageously against the men climbing down to him, repulsing the raiders repeatedly in a desperate one-man stand. When the raiders tried to burn the mangonel he put the fire out several times. Those in the main camp noticed his stand

⁶⁷ PVCE, 94 #177; PVC 1, 180-1; see Langlois, "Le siège du château de Termes," 117-120 for a description and map showing the approximate site of Termenet.

⁶⁸ PVCE, 94 #178; PVC 1, 181-2.

⁶⁹ Even archeological work on this site does not reveal clues about where the ensuing attack occurred. If the extant ruins are substantially larger than the original fortification, Montfort's men may have been on the summit, but whether it was east or west of the walls or crusader camp is hard to determine. Though the extant ruins of Termes have a sally port on the west side, its small size and the steep hill beneath it would have made a large raiding party like the one Peter Vaux-de-Cernay describes impossible to pull off, even assuming that the earlier fortifications also had a sally port. The mangonel is unlikely to have been on one of the surrounding mountains because of their ruggedness and distance from the summit on which Termes stood.

but realized they could reach neither him nor the mangonel in time, so they created a diversion against one of the walls of Termes. The raiders saw what was happening and fled back into the *castrum*, leaving the knight alive and the mangonel intact.⁷⁰

In spite of the success against Termenet, the crusaders made no headway against the fortifications, thanks to a combination of Termes's strength and ruggedness, as well as the ample food supply enjoyed by the defenders.⁷¹ The constant coming and going of crusader-pilgrims also slowed down operations. These contingents of crusaders did not all show up at the same time, nor did they leave all at once. Now that forty days was laid down as the requirement for getting the indulgence, most of these "summer" soldiers only served the minimum number and then departed, leaving Montfort anxiously awaiting the next arrival. More experienced troops and crews must have wasted time putting newcomers wise to the current situation at Termes. Because of these factors, the siege was bogged down for months in dull but at times dangerous routine. Even Montfort's personal food supplies ran low, so we can imagine what conditions must have been like for the rank and file. Archdeacon William continued to gather money for siege machines and other necessities, however.⁷² The crusader camp below the castle of Termes was within missile range and remained a place of constant danger. Montfort himself had two near-fatal episodes during the siege of Termes. Once, when the crusaders had dragged a siege cat near one of the walls to mine its foundations, Montfort engaged in conversation with a knight. While both were right by the cat, and Montfort close enough to touch the knight's shoulder with his hand, a large stone hit the knight on the head and killed him, though the chief crusader suffered no harm. The other near miss occurred one Sunday when Montfort was hearing mass in his tent. While he and others stood around listening, a ballista bolt came shooting through the tent, killing a sergeant standing right behind him.⁷³ These represent only the things that almost killed the commander. We may assume that dangerous incidents occurred on a daily basis and that many of Montfort's men were not so lucky as he was.

⁷⁰ PVCE, 95 #179, PVC 1, 182-3; Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade*, 124. Sumption says the raiders were horsemen, but the summit and surrounding hills simply would not allow for a mounted raid. Besides, Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, the sole source for the sortie, says nothing about a mounted raiding party. William of Ecureuil not only survived but served at least twice more in the south, in 1213 and 1214. See PVCE, 196 #427; PVC II, 121.

⁷¹ SCW, 36 #56; WTud, 136 lines 41-3. ⁷² PVCE 95-6 #180; PVC 1, 183-4.

⁷³ PVCE, 99-100 #190-1, PVC 1, 192-3. In the first incident it is unclear whether the stone was shot by the mangonel or rolled from the walls.

The siege continued from August into October 1210. Eventually the crusaders surrounded the summit and finally managed to cut off Termes from any outside water supply.⁷⁴ Though the defenders had plenty of food and wine due to Raimon's stockpiling before the siege, the length of the contest eventually exposed the Achilles heel of the fortification. The castle of Termes had no wells or streams within its walls because it was built on a solid piece of rock.⁷⁵ For its water supply the garrison depended on two cisterns and whatever empty barrels were on hand for the collection of rain water. By late October the water had run out.⁷⁶ Because of the water situation and the growing lateness of the campaign season, the two sides began to parley. Raimon offered to give up the castle to Montfort until the following Easter (1211), in exchange for which he would retain all his other possessions. This was not a particularly good deal for the chief crusader, but while the garrison's water supply drained away, Montfort faced just as serious a set of problems. The bishops of Chartres and Beauvais, and the counts of Dreux and Ponthieu, decided to leave the army as the summer passed into autumn. This particularly vexed the crusade commander because these men had not completed their forty days' service, the minimum days needed to gain the indulgence.⁷⁷ The seriousness of the situation reduced Montfort and his wife to pleading with these nobles and prelates to stay, Alice even throwing herself at their feet. The siege of Termes had been long, uncomfortable, and dangerous yet had progressed very little, so it is not hard to see why these half-hearted crusaders wanted to leave. The Montforts' entreaties fell on deaf ears save for the Bishop of Chartres, who agreed to stay a while longer, probably only in order to collect his indulgence. With this imminent departure of leaders and men, Montfort had no choice except to seriously consider the proposal offered by Raimon of Termes. Montfort demanded that Raimon surrender the castle immediately, and the latter agreed to do so the next day, apparently as per the original proposal.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ PVCE, 96 #181; PVC 1, 184.

⁷⁵ On the amount and quality of his supplies, see *SCW*, 36–7 *laissez* 56–7; *WTud*, 136 lines 42–3, 138 lines 4–6.

⁷⁶ Since the extant fortifications are not those of 1210, even the number of cisterns may be different. It is unlikely that the earlier fortifications had more than two cisterns because surely the later, larger, and more substantial castle built on the site would have at least as many as its predecessor, if not more.

⁷⁷ PVCE, 97 #184; PVC 1, 187. This is the first instance where Peter Vaux-de-Cernay explicitly states that forty days were required to win the indulgence. From the context it seems that this number had only become institutionalized during the long siege of Termes.

⁷⁸ PVCE, 96 #182; PVC 1, 185–6.

The heavens revealed to Montfort yet again that southern nobles were not men of their word. Though Raimon had agreed to surrender the next day, that night a heavy rain fell, filling Termes's cisterns and allowing the garrison to collect more in their extra barrels.⁷⁹ The next morning the Bishop of Beauvais, the two aforementioned counts, and their men departed. The heavy rain in the night had completely changed the situation in the mind of Raimon and the defenders of Termes. Raimon began to believe he could successfully wait out the rest of Montfort's army, which was dwindling before his eyes. The rain seemed to him and the others of the garrison to have been divine providence – false as this turned out to be, according to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay.⁸⁰ Raimon now broke his word by refusing to surrender the castle, and new negotiations wrangled back and forth. The Bishop of Chartres, who also wished to leave, told Montfort to offer any terms that might convince Raimon of Termes to surrender. The marshal of the army, Guy of Lévis, brought along the Bishop of Carcassonne, Bernard-Raimon of Roquefort, whose mother and brother were trapped in Termes. The bishop's mother was a Cathar and his brother Guilhem no friend to the church, having assassinated the pro-crusade Abbot of Eaunes outside Carcassonne the previous autumn.⁸¹ Raimon refused to allow the bishop to talk to his brother. He must have sensed the trouble he had got himself into over rejecting the terms of surrender, breaking his word and violating the customs of war. In fact, his conduct caused so much of a problem that two knights of his garrison, who had previously given their word to surrender to Guy of Lévis, walked out of Termes and offered themselves to Montfort.⁸² Though this could have indicated that these two wanted to get out before Termes was stormed or forced to surrender, it seems as likely that they did not want to be stained by Raimon's dishonorable conduct.

Montfort's manpower shortage grew more acute as even the Bishop of Chartres left the following day with his men. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay specifically mentions Montfort's anxiety over this. Both sides knew that the chief crusader now had so few men that he lacked the means to continue the siege much longer, not to mention that severe weather in the mountains could come at any time. As Montfort escorted the Bishop of Chartres away from Termes, defenders sortied out to destroy the mangonels. Montfort had to ride quickly back to the summit, rally his men and force the raiders back

⁷⁹ PVCE, 97 #183; PVC 1, 186; *SCW*, 37 *laisse* 57; WTud, 138 lines 7–8.

⁸⁰ PVCE, 97 #183; PVC 1, 186–7. ⁸¹ PVCE, 97–8 #185; PVC 1, 187–8.

⁸² PVCE, 97 #185, PVC 1, 188.

into the castle while the Bishop of Chartres and his forces continued to march away.⁸³ It was now well into October and the weather began to deteriorate, with no end to the siege in sight. In spite of the increasing odds, Montfort refused to raise the siege, though his continued failure to take Termes caused him no end of tribulation and agony.⁸⁴

At this point, totally unexpected by either side this late in October, a group of common crusader-pilgrims on foot arrived from Lorraine (“Lothoringia pedites peregrini”) to perform their forty days’ service, raising both troop strength and the morale of those who remained. Redoubling their efforts, the siege machines began again to batter and eventually weaken the walls and keep of Termes. Despite this help, the siege continued for another month, to 22 November (the feast of Saint Cecilia). The crusaders slowly inched their way closer to the walls of the citadel. Eventually they got close enough to construct a covered trench at the base of the walls where a hole could be dug through the wall. A breach and assault appeared imminent. The garrison was obviously in great distress by this point, knowing what would happen to them if they were stormed. Not only were the defenders worried about a possible assault, but William of Tudela offers an additional reason for their increasing desperation. By late November dysentery had broken out in the garrison, perhaps from the rain water from October stored in contaminated barrels and other vessels.⁸⁵ So hopeless did the situation inside Termes become that the defenders assembled in the keep on the night of 22 November to attempt a last-minute escape past the crusading army. All would flee except for the women who would remain behind to be captured in the keep. Ostensibly the women would have more trouble keeping up, and since they had not violated their word, perhaps they would be treated well, an assumption that turned out to be correct.⁸⁶ The women presumably included the Bishop of Carcassonne’s mother, though William of Tudela does not say. Fleeing through enemy lines in the middle of a cold November night while suffering from serious intestinal problems was a fool’s gamble, and not surprisingly most of the garrison did not make it. Though a few Aragonese and Catalan *routiers* managed to escape in the dark and confusion, Raimon

⁸³ PVCE, 98 #186–7, PVC 1, 189–90. ⁸⁴ PVCE 98–9 #188; PVC 1, 190.

⁸⁵ PVCE, 99 #188–9, PVC 1, 190–2; SCW, 36–7 *laisse* 57, WTud, 138, lines 8–12. William of Tudela says that the garrison could have held out longer had not dysentery struck. He suggests that the defenders began to suffer immediately after the rain fell, but Peter Vaux-de-Cernay’s mention of specific saint’s days indicates the dysentery actually occurred several weeks later. The rain appears to have fallen in October, but the garrison did not flee until the night of 22–23 November.

⁸⁶ SCW, 37 *laisse* 57; WTud, 138. William of Tudela says that Montfort treated all the ladies well and did not take any of their property from them.

of Termes himself either returned to the castle or was captured hiding somewhere close by a poor common soldier from Chartres (“carnotensis pauper et ignobilis”) who had joined in the chase. As predicted, Montfort treated the captured women well, though Raimon of Termes died a miserable captive in the prison at Carcassonne a few years later.⁸⁷

Thus after almost four wretched months of blockade and siege Termes fell. Ironically, the formidable geographical and weather-related problems faced by Montfort there were not the greatest obstacle. This was the constant coming and going of summer crusaders. The departure of the prelates, nobles, and bulk of the army in October had seriously jeopardized the siege. Montfort had to plan operations around arrivals and departures, and even when one group replaced another their lack of familiarity with whatever the current situation was must have hampered progress. Although the crews of his machines may have been of long standing, it is possible that they too came and left at points, contributing to the ineffectiveness of the siege machines that plagued operations during the first three months. Montfort was greatly cheered up (*exhilaratus*) by the arrival of a group of poor and ill-equipped Lotharingian foot soldiers suggesting how desperate he was for men.⁸⁸ Forty days was too short a time to take these mountain fortresses in the best of conditions, but Montfort could do nothing to stop those who decided that even forty days was too long.

Although the campaign season was usually long over by this time, the weather stayed relatively mild into December, allowing Montfort to continue active operations even with his tiny army bereft of forty-dayers.⁸⁹ As the end of the year approached he attempted to solidify his position and take as much territory as he could, moving west from Termes through the mountains. The people of Coustaussa, about twenty-two kilometers southwest of Termes, abandoned their *castrum* upon hearing of Termes’s capture. After taking possession of Coustaussa the army moved a further twenty-one kilometers west to the *castrum* of Puivert, which capitulated after a short, three-day blockade.⁹⁰ Still in 1210, Montfort relentlessly

⁸⁷ PVC 1, 189–92; WTud, 138–41; Robert of Auxerre, *Chronicon*, 275; *Annals of Cologne*, 825; Reinerius, *Annales*, ed. G. H. Pertz, MGH SS 16 (1859), 663–4; ATF, 892; Langlois, *Olivier de Termes*, 21. The Cologne annalist said one hundred people attempted to escape over the walls at Termes, straight into the arms of forty crusader-pilgrims.

⁸⁸ PVC 1, 190 #188.

⁸⁹ SCW, 37 laisse 58; WTud, 140 lines 1–9; Reinerius, *Annales*, 664 lines 2–5. Reinerius also mentioned that few soldiers remained with Montfort after the successful conclusion to Termes.

⁹⁰ PVCE, 100 #191; PVC 1, 193; SCW, 37 laisse 58; WTud, 140 lines 3–5. Compared to Termes a castle like Puivert had no chance to hang on for very long. It is located on a hill easily accessible from the road below.

marched straight north into the diocese of Albi where he had lost two prominent *castra*, Castres and Lombers, to rebellion the year before. Mindful of the military laurels of Minerve and Termes, neither Castres nor Lombers put up a resistance. Castres resubmitted to him; Lombers was abandoned still full of supplies and subsequently had a Montfortian garrison placed in it. Before the end of the year the chief crusader had recovered all of the territory in the diocese of Albi south of the river Tarn.⁹¹

This year made Simon of Montfort. Word of his exploits, particularly the siege of Termes, reached far beyond the chroniclers who directly witnessed the crusade to find its way into northern French and German accounts like those of Robert of Auxerre, Alberic of the Three Fountains, the Cologne annalist, and Reinerius. Montfort had conducted two tough sieges in horrible geographical conditions, and had managed to take other strategic and politically important Occitan towns with an army of inconsistent size and quality. The capture of the impregnable Termes cemented his reputation as a tough, ruthless soldier with limitless determination who would use terror if necessary.

⁹¹ PVCE, 101 #193; PVC 1, 194–5.

The campaigns of 1211

The year 1211 was perhaps the most militarily active of the Occitan War. Though Simon of Montfort suffered a minor setback at the first siege of Toulouse, in 1211 he not only conducted some sieges on the scale of Minerve and Termes but also defended himself successfully when besieged at Castelnaudary. Two of the four field battles fought in the Occitan War occurred in 1211. The battle or ambush of Montgey was a lopsided southern victory, but Montfort was not present and thus his reputation did not suffer. Saint-Martin-la-Lande proved that even outnumbered the crusaders could win the supreme test of a medieval army, the pitched battle. The sum total of tactical victories against superior odds in 1211 showed Montfort to be a far more capable general than any of his southern contemporaries, though he made one strategic mistake that year which dogged him to the end of his life. That grave error was turning the people of Toulouse from reluctant allies into implacable enemies.

At the beginning of the year various parties tried to work out a *modus vivendi* between southern interests and those of the crusade. Especially concerned in this was the Count of Toulouse, whose authority had been shattered east of Lavaur and whose own brother would soon prove disloyal. In late January 1211 Pere II, Simon of Montfort, Raimon of Toulouse, and Raimon-Roger of Foix, as well as several church prelates including Arnaud-Amaury and Master Theodisius, met at Narbonne. The meeting's purpose was to discuss whether the Count of Toulouse had sufficiently fulfilled the conditions for reconciliation to the church dating back to 1209.¹ The difference between this and the conferences of 1209 was that now Montfort's interests had to be considered. The leaders of the conference offered Raimon VI not only the title of all his lands but further rights over *castra* forfeited from nobles known to be heretics. He was to act as a proper Christian ruler and take responsibility for persecuting heresy in his lands.

¹ SCW, 37–8 laisse 59; WTud, 144 lines 1–4.

Though the terms of the agreement appear entirely reasonable Raimon did not accept them.² The Count of Foix also rejected similar proposals of retaining lands in exchange for not attacking crusaders or hindering the crusade.³ As overlord of Foix, Pere II offered to maintain a garrison in the town and would turn the castle over to Montfort if Raimon-Roger of Foix proved disloyal or tried to harm the crusade in any way.⁴ Although neither southern noble budged, Montfort won an important concession from the King of Aragon at Narbonne. Though the chief crusader had essentially gained approval from the church for the Trencaval lands, he still did not have official sanction from the overlord of the property in accordance with custom. Pere was reluctant to grant this and had earlier refused to accept Montfort's homage in November–December 1209.⁵ After constant entreaty by Arnaud-Amaury, another bishop and Montfort himself on his knees before the king, Pere grudgingly accepted Montfort's homage for Carcassonne.⁶ Perhaps he did so now because it was a *fait accompli* anyway, and to continue a bad relationship with one who controlled the areas through military victory and hence the judgment of God might weaken his own position in Occitania and with the pope.⁷ Thus Montfort now had legal title to at least some of his lands as Viscount of Carcassonne, legitimating a situation already much in his favor.

Later that month, soon after the meeting in Narbonne, the principals met again in Montpellier. Here the newly enfeoffed vassal Simon of Montfort won another important concession from the King of Aragon, one that might have tremendous long-term consequences for Occitania. King Pere agreed to a marriage alliance between his three-year-old son Jaume and Simon of Montfort's daughter Amicia. In order to show his good intentions, Pere allowed his son to be housed at Montfort's headquarters at Carcassonne until he reached sufficient age to be married to Amicia of Montfort. In effect William of Puylaurens is accurate when he

² PVCE, 101–2 #194–5 and footnote 9; PVC 1, 195–7. This meeting in Narbonne came on the heels of an earlier meeting between Raimon VI and Montfort near Albi in which the two men revealed their dislike for each other.

³ PVCE, 103 #196; PVC 1, 197–8. The deal offered to Raimon-Roger of Foix was not quite as generous. He would keep all his lands with the exception of Pamiers, which would remain in Montfort's hands as a hostile bastion pointed at the heart of the Count of Foix's patrimony. Therefore the count's rejection of the proposal makes sense.

⁴ PVCE, 103 #196; PVC 1, 198–9. ⁵ See Chapter 2, 62–3.

⁶ PVCE, 107 #210; PVC 1, 208. Neither Albi nor Béziers is mentioned, leaving the dispositions of these properties attached to the viscounty rather ambiguous.

⁷ PVCE, 107 footnote 33. The Siblys suggest Pere wished to stabilize the situation in his northern lordships in order to prepare for a campaign against the Almohades in Spain.

says that Jaume would essentially be a “hostage,” albeit a well-treated one, to ensure that each party stayed loyal to the other.⁸

The legal wrangling over the Count of Toulouse’s status was not over and continued at Montpellier, where the crusade leaders again offered terms to Raimon VI. These terms were considerably harsher than the previous ones, and one suspects there was an intended aspect of humiliation to them. While the terms offered at Narbonne are not described in great detail even by Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, William of Tudela goes into great specifics about what Raimon was supposed to agree to at the Montpellier meeting. If the list given by William is accurate, Raimon would not only have to diligently persecute heretics and repel the Jews from his territories, but also to dress simply and submit to personal dietary restrictions.⁹ Though some scholars have questioned the veracity of this account,¹⁰ the conditions imposed on Raimon seem carefully calculated to ensure his refusal, which duly happened. For this rejection the Count of Toulouse would be excommunicated yet again at the beginning of February 1211.¹¹

The latest excommunication of Raimon VI opened the door for re-establishing the Count of Toulouse’s lands as potential targets. If Montfort chose to act he now had the legal backing of the church to invade the lands of a defiant excommunicate. In order to move effectively against these new targets Montfort needed reinforcements and had to take care of old business. Neither impediment delayed him for long. By the middle of March 1211, the crusader-pilgrims began to make their way south. New arrivals included the two cousins of Raimon VI who had crusaded in 1209: Peter, Count of Auxerre, and his brother Robert of Courtenay. Peter, Bishop of Paris, and other nobles and prelates brought substantial contingents to help the crusade.¹² Yet again crusaders from outside France came to participate

⁸ PVCE, 107–8 #211; PVC 1, 209–10 and footnote 1; WPE, chapter XVI, 37; WP, 66; Jaume I, *The Book of Deeds*, 22. Why Pere did not demand Amicia of Montfort as a hostage is unclear.

⁹ SCW, 38–9 laisse 60; WTud, 148, 150. The conditions included much more than what is included in the narrative. Among them were that Raimon was not to defend himself against the forces of the crusade, and he must make a pilgrimage to Outremer and join the Templars or Hospitallers for an indefinite period. He was to destroy certain fortifications and prohibit usury.

¹⁰ Belperron, *La Croisade*, 240; Strayer, *The Albigensian Crusades*, 78. Both these authors suggest that William of Tudela does not report the terms accurately.

¹¹ PVC 1, 211 footnote 1.

¹² PVCE, 110 #213, 112 #216; PVC 1, 211–12, 215–16; SCW, 39 laisse 63; WTud, 154, 156 lines 1–4. There is some confusion about the Count of Auxerre’s itinerary. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay initially only mentions his brother, Robert of Courtenay, and has Peter (the count) arrive after the crusade army moved to Lavaur. William of Tudela mentions that the count went to Carcassonne before moving on to Lavaur. This is not an essential detail, but makes one wonder whether the Count of Auxerre and his brother lost some of their enthusiasm for crusading after learning that their cousin was excommunicated again and might be a target.

that spring and summer: the Cologne annalist records that in 1211 many nobles and a vast “mob” marched south to Occitania.¹³

With this first influx of summer crusaders, Simon of Montfort decided to take care of old business. First up for attack was Cabaret. Though not quite as far into the mountains as Termes, the three castles of Cabaret were strong military structures located amid formidable geological formations that probably would have taken some time to take. In relation to their size and strategic proximity to Carcassonne and roads leading through the Black Mountains the castles of Cabaret had been more of a nuisance than any other community or fortification since the Occitan War began. For the past twenty months Peire-Roger of Cabaret had thrived in his role of noble robber-bandit and greatly harmed the progress of the crusade. He operated with impunity, seemingly safe high up in his mountain fortresses. Montfort had shown himself capable of capturing such fortresses and now he could devote considerable resources early in the campaign season to besiege Cabaret. Peire-Roger’s chances of prevailing in a long siege were not good. Two of his lieutenants, Peire Mir and Peire of Saint Michel, both of whom had assisted in the capture of Bouchard of Marly in the fall of 1209, deserted Cabaret in 1211 and defected to Montfort in exchange for getting their lands back.¹⁴ Undoubtedly they revealed to the chief crusader the state, size, and weaknesses of the castles and garrisons. Their defection, Peire-Roger of Cabaret’s role in the ambushes and mutilations of crusaders, and the fact that he held in his prison one of Montfort’s closest lieutenants must have weighed heavily on the old mountain warrior’s mind. Knowing the size of Montfort’s army and the earliness of the season Peire-Roger decided to reconcile himself to the crusade and his new overlord. As a gesture of good will, Peire-Roger released Bouchard of Marly from his prison in the castle and surrendered the fortress of Cabaret to him.¹⁵ Though Peter Vaux-de-Cernay and William of Tudela differ on whether Peire-Roger surrendered the fortress to Bouchard prior to the approach of the crusading army or after, the castles ended up in Bouchard’s possession anyway. Certainly the colorful story of Peire-Roger having Bouchard’s chains cut off and his hair barbered, getting him bathed, and giving him gifts fits in well with a man anxious to ingratiate himself with a leader known to be generous to his friends but cruel to his enemies. As William of Tudela put it, “Against the host of Christ no castle, no citadel can stand, however strong its battlements. Only a fool opposes the crusaders, a fool

¹³ *Annals of Cologne*, 825.

¹⁴ PVCE, 110 #214; PVC 1, 213.

¹⁵ SCW, 39–40 *laisse* 63; WTud, 156.

who may rejoice at first but in the end must be defeated.”¹⁶ The relief of the crusade leadership at Cabaret’s capitulation was obvious as Montfort awarded Peire-Roger lands comparable in wealth to those around Cabaret but presumably less defensible, as he had done for Guilhem of Minerve.¹⁷

THE SIEGE OF LAVAU, SPRING 1211

With this large thorn removed painlessly from his side, Montfort had reduced all of his strongest vassals in the viscounty of Carcassonne save one and had secured his northern, eastern, and southern borders around Carcassonne, thus relieving that *castrum* from any immediate threats. He could now use his growing army and resources to go farther afield against that last enemy and also more strategic targets. By moving westward Montfort grew ever closer to the frontier between his lands and those of the now excommunicated Count of Toulouse. In late March or early April 1211 Montfort began a siege of the substantial *castrum* of Lavaur. Lavaur stands approximately seventy kilometers northwest of Carcassonne but only about thirty-two kilometers east of Toulouse. Montfort chose Lavaur for a number of reasons. It appears that traditionally Lavaur was subject to the overlordship of the Trencavels, which now meant Simon of Montfort, but since it was closer to the city of Toulouse the counts of Toulouse had increasingly had a presence there, albeit a weak one.¹⁸ The seigneurs of Lavaur and the town had been sympathetic to Catharism for decades, and Lavaur, like Minerve before it, served as a safe house in 1211 for Cathars fleeing the crusade.¹⁹ Most important of all, perhaps, was the fact that Aimeric of Montréal, unhappy with the lands allotted to him in his latest agreement with Montfort, had once again broken his word and fled to Lavaur to be with his sister Giralda of Laurac.²⁰ Montfort always went to great lengths to settle with a traitor or someone who had been disloyal to him, and for this reason combined with the others Lavaur became the next

¹⁶ SCW, 40–1 laisses 63–6; WTud, 156, 158, 160, 162. The quote from the end of laisse 66 is Shirley’s translation.

¹⁷ PVCE, 110–11 #214; PVC 1, 213–14.

¹⁸ HGL 6, 95; WPE, 38 chapter XVI; WP, 66; Limouzin-Lamothe, *La Commune de Toulouse*, 371–3 #57; PVCE, III, footnote 9. Who actually held the overlordship of Lavaur is uncertain. The lords of Lavaur had been vassals to the viscounts of Carcassonne in the twelfth century but the town was in the diocese of Toulouse. By 1203 the lords of Lavaur had made a peace treaty with the commune of Toulouse, seemingly bringing the *castrum* into the orbit of Toulouse.

¹⁹ Elie Griffe, *Le Languedoc cathare de 1190 à 1210* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1971), 80–3.

²⁰ SCW, 41 laisse 68; WTud, 165 lines 5–13.

target. Events at Lavaur would bear out Montfort's talents as a soldier, but, like so many sieges of the Occitan War, exposed the savagery of both sides.

This siege lasted from late March or early April to early May, 1211. Lavaur presented significant challenges, though geography was less of a problem than at Minerve or Termes because overall the country around Lavaur was more open and settled. A strong *castrum* with good fortifications, Lavaur dominated river travel on the Agout river.²¹ The *castrum* belonged to the widowed dame (*domina*) Giralda of Laurac, but Giralda and Aimeric together led its defense.²² Lavaur's garrison included at least eighty knights from the surrounding area, who helped prepare the fortifications, and at least 400 others, either villagers of the town or refugees from the surrounding areas.²³ As the crusaders soon found out, Lavaur was extremely difficult to besiege from the south and east, although not so bad from the west. (See Figure 6, p. xxii.)

Crusader forces initially arrived at Lavaur short of supplies, transport, and manpower. The shortage of materials occurred partly because the Count of Toulouse, excommunicate but still influential in his capital city, prohibited convoys from leaving Toulouse carrying arms, lances, or shields.²⁴ According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay the garrison of Lavaur almost outnumbered the besieging force.²⁵ In order to maximize their numbers the crusaders split into two camps to begin a siege of one side of the defenses, though having two separate camps meant that each was more vulnerable to attack. Both camps were set up across the river from Lavaur, thus making them relatively ineffectual. From the far side of the river the crusaders could do little more than take long-range missile shots and attempt to control river traffic entering and leaving the town. Soon after this the Count of Auxerre, Jordan, Bishop of Lisieux, and Robert, Bishop of Bayeux, arrived with their contingents. These reinforcements allowed the crusaders to extend the siege by constructing a wooden bridge

²¹ SCW, 41 laisse 68; WTud, 164 lines 1–2; PVCE, III #215; PVC 1, 214.

²² PVCE, III #215; PVC 1, 214–15; SCW, 41 laisse 68; WTud, 164 lines 5–6; Griffe, *Le Languedoc cathare*, 110.

²³ SCW, 41 laisse 68; WTud, 164 lines 16–19; PVCE, III #215; PVC 1, 214; WPE, chapter XVI, 38, 40; WP, 68, 70. This is based on the numbers executed after Lavaur fell. The figure of eighty knights is remarkably consistent among the sources, but William of Puylaurens says some of them were not knights but rather pretended to be after the assault, thinking they would receive better treatment. The figure of 400 others is also quite consistent, though William of Puylaurens puts it at 300 rather than 400. There may have been more people in the town who participated at some point in the defense of their homes, but the highest number mentioned is 400.

²⁴ PVCE, III #217, III #231; PVC 1, 217, 231. ²⁵ PVCE, III #216; PVC 1, 215.

across the Agout, tightening the blockade and moving siege machines closer to the walls on the south side of Lavour.²⁶

As an excommunicate Raimon VI's reluctance to let supplies go to Lavour is understandable. It was in his best interest to hinder the siege to delay or prevent himself from being attacked. The count's wishes were not necessarily in accordance with those of the citizens of Toulouse, for the Toulousans were divided about whether or not to support the crusade. In the previous year the Bishop of Toulouse, Folquet of Marseille, had instituted an inclusive confraternity of men of the city (as opposed to the bourg) called the "Whites" dedicated to combating heresy and usury. The bishop designed the confraternity to provide a core of support for the crusade within the city of Toulouse and allow Toulousans to participate in the crusade and gain its benefits just as northerners had since 1209. In its anti-usury stance the White brotherhood directed its energies against the people of the bourg, hauling suspected usurers before kangaroo courts and fining them or robbing their houses. The people of the bourg defended themselves by forming their own confraternity, called the "Blacks," and by 1210–1211 armed conflict occasionally broke out between the two groups.²⁷ Thus before the siege of Lavour the people of Toulouse were at war with themselves and could neither assist the crusade nor defend the Count of Toulouse.

After the siege of Lavour began, Bishop Folquet urged the White brotherhood to offer direct military support to the crusade. This militia responded in great numbers, its members gathering their arms and provisions near the Place Montaygon not far from Saint Stephen's cathedral.²⁸ Raimon VI, who was in Toulouse at the time, walked among them trying alternately to persuade or threaten these Toulousans from marching to the aid of Lavour. Virtually all the Whites decided to honor their commitment to Bishop Folquet in spite of Raimon's threats and they proceeded to the gate of Saint Stephen, close by the cathedral, to march directly eastward towards Lavour. As they drew close to the gate, the Count of Toulouse literally stood at the crossbar of the gate and blocked the way, saying the militiamen would have to break his arms before he allowed them to pass. The White militiamen turned around then as if to disperse, but they simply marched to the west end of Toulouse, forded the Garonne and then began

²⁶ PVCE, 112 #216; PVC 1, 215–16; WPE, chapter XVI, 38–9; WP, 68.

²⁷ WPE, chapter XV, 3535–7; WP, 64, 66; SCW, 32 *laisse* 47; WTud, 112 lines 1–13.

²⁸ PVCE, 114 #220; PVC 1, 220. The chroniclers says about 5,000 came to assist, though based on the population of Toulouse at the time that was probably more than the entire city militia.

their march to Lavaur. The Count of Toulouse did not figure out the ruse until it was too late to stop them.²⁹ As the White militia approached Lavaur, the people inside believed the Toulousans came to assist them against the crusade until the militia pitched its tents outside the walls. This greatly hurt the morale of the defenders.³⁰ The actual role of the White brotherhood in the siege of Lavaur is not mentioned by the major sources of the crusade. The only source to discuss it was a letter written by the consuls of Toulouse to Pere II of Aragon in July 1211. In this letter the consuls summed up the militia's role at the siege of Lavaur, which included providing supplies and military force for the entirety of the siege.³¹

Perhaps to show his nominal loyalty to the crusade, or to see for himself how things fared at Lavaur, Raimon VI traveled to the beleaguered *castrum*. The count's reluctance to aid the crusade may have gone farther than refusing permission for the White militia to go to Lavaur. In 1245, almost thirty-four years after the siege of Lavaur, a man testifying about Raimon VI before the inquisition stated that during a stop at the *castrum* of Le Faget, fifteen kilometers directly south of Lavaur, Raimon VI might have abetted his seneschal, Raimon of Ricaud, in giving horses to two heretics staying there and riding with them to Lavaur, where presumably the two would slip into Lavaur and assist in the defense.³² When the count arrived at Lavaur his cousins the Count of Auxerre and Robert of Courtenay vainly tried to get him to reconcile himself again with the crusade.³³ Unrepentant, the Count of Toulouse departed soon after, taking some of the White militia back with him to Toulouse.³⁴ Shortly after Easter 1211 Bishop Folquet came to the siege as well, since Raimon of Toulouse had ordered him out of the city.³⁵ This allowed the prelate to retain the rest of the White militia at Lavaur.

In spite of the growing odds against them, the men of Lavaur conducted an aggressive defense. In the initial stages of the siege, the defenders captured a crusader knight and immediately killed him.³⁶ They fired

²⁹ WPE, chapter XVI, 16, 39; WP, 68, 70. ³⁰ WPE, chapter XVI, 16, 39; WP, 70.

³¹ *Layettes* I, 369–70, #968.

³² *HGL* 8, #CCLXIII col. 1148; PVCE, 113 #220 and footnote 24; PVC I, 219.

³³ PVCE, 112 #217; PVC I, 216–17.

³⁴ PVCE, 112 #217; PVC I, 217. This contradicts the letter the Toulousans sent to Pere II in July 1211 mentioning the militia's service for the siege's duration. Probably the majority of the White militia remained at Lavaur.

³⁵ PVCE, 114–15 #221; PVC I, 220–2. Actually Folquet refused to leave until fifteen days after the Count of Toulouse told him to, to show that as Bishop of Toulouse he was answerable only to his flock. Eventually, however, he realized it would be best for him to be out of the city and at the siege.

³⁶ PVCE, 112 #216; PVC I, 215.

missiles from machines at a wooden tower built by the crusaders.³⁷ None of the sources say what kind of machines the defenders had, though we can guess they were similar to the mangonels and petraries the crusaders used. Meanwhile the Count of Foix, who ostensibly had a truce with the crusade, led a party of raiders to ambush crusader reinforcements on their way west to Lavaur and killed most of them in the battle of Montgey.³⁸ As they had done at Carcassonne and other places, the crusaders built a cat and pulled it up to the fosses of the town, presumably on the southern side.³⁹ They filled in a section of ditch with wood, branches and other debris in order to move the cat across to the walls. Unbeknown to the crusaders, either the besieged had constructed a mine or tunnel from the town into the fosse, or the mine had existed prior to the siege. After the crusaders filled the ditch during the day, small groups of defenders sortied out at night and cleared it. One night a group of defenders came out of the mine to burn the cat. Two unidentified German counts close by the machine alerted other people, who barely had time to save it.⁴⁰

As time passed the besiegers began to despair of taking the *castrum*. They filled the tunnel during the day, but could not prevent the defenders from digging it out again at night. Finally someone arrived at an ingenious solution. Before the entrance to the mine, crusaders placed green wood and small branches. On top of this they piled dry wood, grease, oakum, and other combustibles. Over this they threw more wood, as well as unripe grain and grass. The bottom layers were lit, producing a slow fire with, as one can imagine, a noxious smoke. The wheat and grass on the top blocked the upward passage of the smoke so the only way for it to go was through the tunnel. The smoldering fire drew its air supply from fresh air at the surface but discharged its smoke continuously into the tunnel, effectively blocking it. The defenders could not get close enough to put it out, or to clear the entrance.⁴¹ Now the besiegers could fill the rest of the fosse, protected from further sorties and digging parties. At this point, crusader knights and sergeants (“*milites nostri et servientes armati*”) rolled the cat to the wall. Miners (*suffosores*) inside the cat began their own mining. Though the besieged threw burning wood, flaming grease, rocks, and sharpened beams, they could not destroy the cat or drive the miners

³⁷ PVCE, 115, #223; PVC 1, 223.

³⁸ Pierre and Sophie Bouyssou, “Le combat de Montgey,” *Revue du Tarn* 86 (1977), 177–96.

³⁹ I say “presumably” because the eventual hole knocked in the defenses appears to have been on the southern side, hence the name “Breach Street” in modern Lavaur.

⁴⁰ PVCE, 115 #224; PVC 1, 223–4; *SCW*, 41 laisse 68; WTud, 166, line 26.

⁴¹ PVCE, 116 #225; PVC 1, 224–5. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay does not indicate who came up with the idea.

away from the walls. On 3 May, the crusaders finally breached the wall at the southwest corner of the town and assaulted the *castrum*. The besieged then surrendered, but only after the assault had begun.⁴²

Because the crusaders had successfully assaulted the walls, the defenders and people of Lavaur could expect little mercy.⁴³ Secondary works discussing Lavaur prefer to dwell on what happened after the siege rather than the hard five weeks it took to bring it to a conclusion.⁴⁴ It should come as no surprise that Aimeric of Montréal was executed. He had betrayed the crusade many times in spite of Montfort's leniency and had broken his word as a nobleman. For his perfidy Simon had Aimeric hanged like a common criminal rather than beheaded as a noble normally would be. The eighty knights who composed the garrison's core were also hanged, since some of them might have broken their oaths of loyalty to the crusade. When the makeshift gallows erected for the executions began to fall down, in his impatience to exact revenge Montfort had the rest stabbed to death. Giralda of Laurac was cast into a well and crushed by heavy stones thrown down upon her. Perhaps as many as 400 other heretics were burned.⁴⁵ It is worth noting that no one in the crusading army, even a prelate or Simon of Montfort, tried to convert any of the Cathars inside as had occurred at Minerve.⁴⁶ Evans has suggested that Lavaur represents a change of policy in Montfort's treatment of prisoners as the chief crusader grew more frustrated over people breaking their promises to him, but as we shall see this was not necessarily the case.⁴⁷ Though Aimeric of Montréal's execution was not unexpected, his sister's treatment was particularly harsh, especially for a noblewoman. None of our sources adequately explain why she was

⁴² PVCE, II6 #226; PVC I, 226–7; WPE, chapter XVI, 39; WP, 70. I have followed Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's sequence here. William of Puylaurens suggests the defenders of Lavaur had time to negotiate, though they did so only after offering hostages and agreeing to surrender unconditionally.

⁴³ See the discussion in Chapter I, 20–2.

⁴⁴ Simonde de Sismondi, *History of the Crusades*, 74–7; Belperron, *La Croisade*, 241–4; Bradbury, *The Medieval Siege*, 135; Evans, "The Albigensian Crusade," 292–3; Hoffman Nickerson, *The Inquisition, A Political and Military Study of its Establishment* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1932), 135–6; *L'Épopée* I, 395–6; Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade*, 131–2; Strayer, *The Albigensian Crusades*, 79–80. In these widely available secondary works, only Belperron and Roquebert specifically discuss the stratagem the crusaders used on the mine, though Simon de Sismondi mentions it. Bradbury's omission is especially puzzling, since his work is the only one specifically on sieges. All include an ample description of the executions that followed it.

⁴⁵ PVCE, II7 #227; PVC I, 227–8; SCW, 41 laisse 68, 42 laisse 71; WTud, 164, 166 lines 20–4, 172, 174; WPE, chapter XVI, 40; WP, 70; Robert of Auxerre, *Chronicon*, 276. Both William of Tudela and William of Puylaurens say that Aimeric was indeed hanged, but Robert of Auxerre states that the crusaders executed seventy-four, not eighty, knights. William of Puylaurens says 300, not 400, townspeople were executed. Still, the numbers reported by the sources are close, and their detail suggests not only the veracity of this incident but the shocking nature of what happened.

⁴⁶ PVCE, II7, footnote 44. ⁴⁷ Evans, "Albigensian Crusade," 293.

killed in this particular manner or why she was executed at all, since at Termes the year before Montfort not only spared all the noblewomen but treated them well. It would seem that since Giralda of Laurac exercised lordship and perhaps actively commanded during the siege, she was treated like any soldier who refused to surrender before his fortification fell by assault. Perhaps it really was less humiliating for her, as a noblewoman, to be executed out of sight instead of being hanged or stabbed to death in full view of everyone. Malcolm Barber proposes that Montfort executed the eighty knights because many of them came from the Béziers region and had betrayed the crusade at some time in the past; this might also terrorize other local lords into abandoning their holdings or surrendering to the crusade.⁴⁸

One can offer other standard reasons why the massacre at Lavaur occurred, including religious zeal on the part of the crusaders, the dictates of canon law, the laws of war, and the frustration of Montfort over the siege taking so long. Beyond these there are two other probable reasons. The treatment of the prisoners may have been a simple case of economics. William of Tudela mentions that the crusaders received a great amount of booty from Lavaur, including warhorses, armor, grain, wine, cloth, and clothing. Killing a substantial number of the citizens, as they were entitled to in accordance with the custom of taking by storm would have facilitated the collection of wealth with fewer subsequent repercussions.⁴⁹ Clearly Simon of Montfort needed money during the siege, as indeed he did always, because William of Tudela reports that Montfort turned over the spoils of Lavaur to Raimon of Salvanhac, a wealthy merchant who had lent substantial sums to Montfort and thus received the booty as partial payment on this debt. Michel Roquebert suggests that Montfort turned all the wealth of Lavaur over to Raimon of Salvanhac, freezing out the common crusaders. William of Tudela's discussion is too brief to absolutely determine if this was the case. It seems unlikely that every crusader and stipendiary acquiesced to losing his hard-won spoils in order for their commander to pay his debts. Perhaps as general in charge of doling out the spoils Montfort short-changed his men in favor of discharging his financial obligations, though given his usual careful treatment of his soldiers this does not seem likely. Most likely the booty turned over to Raimon of Salvanhac represented the one-third share Montfort received as

⁴⁸ Barber, *The Cathars*, 41, 43. ⁴⁹ SCW, 43 laisse 71; WTud, 174 lines 16–18.

general in charge of the siege.⁵⁰ Ultimately however, William of Tudela provides the reason that makes the most sense and also obeys the dictates of Ockham's razor in its simplicity: The crusaders sought revenge for the recent massacre of crusaders at Montgey, when reinforcements on their way to the siege at Lavaur were ambushed and killed.⁵¹ Lastly, it should be noted that in spite of what the crusaders did to hundreds of people at Lavaur, not everyone inside the *castrum* was killed. All the noblewomen save Giralda of Laurac were spared, and so were most of the people of Lavaur who were not professed Cathars.⁵²

THE BATTLE OF MONTGEY, SPRING 1211

Montgey proved to be one of two reverses the crusade suffered in 1211. It was also the first real field battle of the war, although it was neither strategically nor tactically important. In effect Montgey was a southern raid that got lucky, but this should in no way impugn the considerable skills of the Count of Foix at raiding and ambushing. In terms of numbers of men directly affected, Montgey was the most costly raid of the Occitan War for both sides. Unfortunately the sources say frustratingly little about the battle and what they do say is contradictory. It is not even clear when it took place. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay initially says it occurred while the Count of Toulouse was present at the siege of Lavaur, but later suggests it occurred right before Lavaur fell, in late April or the beginning of May 1211.⁵³

As the main crusader army besieged Lavaur, a large party of crusader-pilgrim reinforcements marched from Carcassonne westward along the standard routes towards Lavaur.⁵⁴ William of Tudela says there were 5,000 men in this army. As with all of William's numbers, we should exercise caution in accepting them, as will be explained later. Alberic of the Three Fountains claims there were 1,500 crusaders, a more realistic total. The fact that this army would be virtually wiped out suggests that it was a sizeable one, but not so huge that it would have been logistically impossible to kill most of the men in it. What kind of men comprised the crusader force is also a matter of some dispute. The sources do not describe the army in detail except to say that it was largely composed of Germans or Frisians and that one of their leaders was Nicholas of Bazoches, a French knight or

⁵⁰ *L'Épopée* 1, 398. ⁵¹ SCW, 42 laisse 69; WTud, 170 line 19.

⁵² SCW, 42–3 laisse 71; WTud, 172 lines 14–15; WPE, chapter XVI, 40; WP, 70.

⁵³ PVCE, 112, #218, 119, #231; PVC 1, 217, 230–1. ⁵⁴ SCW, 42 laisse 69; WTud, 168; ATF, 892.

noble from the Soissons region.⁵⁵ Peter Vaux-de-Cernay relates that most were unarmed (*inermis*), or not wearing armor, which is plausible given what we know of poorly equipped crusaders.⁵⁶ Robert of Auxerre mentions the army as well, but simply said they were a large *caterva*, which could refer to either a throng or a military formation.⁵⁷ William of Tudela gives the impression that the army rode or marched in a disciplined column actively seeking battle.⁵⁸ While the numbers on the southern side elude us, we do know more about the leaders and composition of the raiding party. The Count of Foix, that prince of irregular warfare, his son Roger-Bernard and Giraud of Pépieux, the turncoat southerner who had captured Puisserguier by ruse in 1209, led the southern forces. Beyond their immediate contingents, the army contained some of Raimon of Toulouse's men, confirming that the count had now begun to actively contest the crusade.⁵⁹ Besides the knights or mounted sergeants that went even squires and boys ("escudiers e garson") accompanied the army. Lastly, the southerners brought a large force of *routiers* along.⁶⁰

The details of the battle are frustrating. The hill of Montgey stands as the most prominent geographical feature in rather open but rolling country about thirty-four kilometers northwest of Carcassonne. Today a church and a small castle stand upon the hill. A village of the same name stands close by to the east, in the flatter country that surrounds the hill. The summit of Montgey affords an impressive view of the surrounding countryside for several kilometers in at least three directions, and if the Count of Foix's men were on top they would easily see any army marching from the east at a great distance. Depending on the size of the raiding party, they could have concealed themselves among the fortifications and behind the trees that stud the hill, increasing the likelihood of surprise.⁶¹ The sources disagree over what the crusading army was doing up to the time when the battle occurred. According to William of Tudela, the crusader-pilgrims were fully armed and ready to fight. Since Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay's account says these men were unarmed or did not have their armor on, the crusaders may have been camped or resting and were caught by

⁵⁵ SCW, 42 laisse 69; WTud, 168 lines 5, 12; ATF, 892 and footnote 86.

⁵⁶ PVCE, 113 #218; PVC 1, 218. ⁵⁷ Robert of Auxerre, *Chronicon*, 276.

⁵⁸ SCW, 42 laisse 69; WTud, 168 lines 7–8.

⁵⁹ PVCE, 112 #218; PVC 1, 217; SCW, 42 laisse 69; WTud, 168 line 3. Both sources mention that men loyal to the Count of Toulouse accompanied this army.

⁶⁰ PVCE, 112 #218; PVC 1, 217; SCW, 42 laisse 69; WTud, 168 line 4.

⁶¹ The description is based on my own observations from the hill. According to Roquebert in *L'Épopée* 1, 390–1, the region around Montgey was greatly sympathetic to the Cathars, which explains why the raiders were probably hidden there.

surprise. The fact that the battle appears to have been so unequal supports Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's version. Achieving surprise against unready troops is further suggested by William of Puylaurens, who says many of the crusaders were slaughtered ("trucidavit," referring to the Count of Foix) in the woods, as if they were camped nearby.⁶² While Peter describes a scene of pure carnage, William of Tudela says these "Germans and Frisians" defended themselves well. All the sources agree that most of the crusaders died in the combat at little or no cost to the southern side, thus supporting the theory that the crusaders may have been resting or were caught by surprise.⁶³ The southern victory was complete enough for the raiders to collect a lot of wealth, some of which made its way into Toulouse.⁶⁴ Whomever the raiders failed to kill and despoil of his equipment, wealth and goods were further stolen and dispatched by the local populace, perhaps from the village of Montgey below ("vilan de la terra"), who bludgeoned the survivors to death with clubs and stones.⁶⁵ The Count of Foix and his men rode quickly away from the scene of the ambush to spend the night at Montgiscard, around thirty kilometers west of Montgey (and only about eighteen kilometers southeast of Toulouse), safely out of range of the main crusader army still at Lavaur. Although details of the battle will remain forever murky, the southerners had won a decisive victory on the field albeit against a group of seemingly inexperienced northern crusader-pilgrims.

One survivor of the battle carried the news of the ambush for approximately twenty-four kilometers to the crusaders at Lavaur.⁶⁶ Upon hearing of the disaster the French immediately sent out a large mounted party, including the Count of Auxerre, his brother, and Simon of Montfort himself, to salvage what they could at Montgey and bring the Count of Foix and his raiders to bay. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay said that as the relief force drew near the scene of the ambush they saw a "column of fire" pointing the way to the bodies, lying face upwards, their arms outstretched in the shape of the cross. In his grief and anger over what had happened Montfort had Montgey completely destroyed.⁶⁷ It soon became clear to the posse that they would be unable to catch the Count of Foix and his men, so

⁶² WPE, chapter XVI, 39; WP, 70.

⁶³ PVCE, 113 #218; PVC 1, 218; SCW, 42 laisse 69; WTud, 168, lines 12–16; WPE, chapter XVI, 39; WP, 70; ATF, 892. Alberic reports that 1,000 were killed, two-thirds of the number he reports as constituting the force.

⁶⁴ PVCE, 113 #218; PVC 1, 218. ⁶⁵ SCW, 42 laisse 69; WTud, 168, 170, lines 17–21.

⁶⁶ SCW, 42 laisse 70; WTud, 170, lines 5–6. Presumably he did this on horseback the same day.

⁶⁷ PVCE, 119 #231; PVC 1, 232. The text is not clear enough to indicate whether this means the castle on top of the hill of Montgey or the small village that lay a short distance away on the plain or both.

they turned back after no more than a twenty-four-hour pursuit, spending the night at Lanta about midway between Lavaur and Toulouse.⁶⁸ The defeat at Montgey must have given Simon of Montfort some anxious moments since he had left the siege of Lavaur to personally chase after the raiders. The loss of troops undoubtedly slowed down the siege of Lavaur, and just as importantly frightened not only crusaders about to depart for the north, but also would-be crusaders thinking about coming south.⁶⁹ In addition, it offered the people of Occitania their first sizeable victory over the crusading army since the war began.⁷⁰

After the fall of Lavaur a number of things occurred at roughly the same time. Montfort discovered some of the Count of Toulouse's men among the captives in Lavaur. The Count of Toulouse and Simon of Montfort had been engaged in a cold war for a while of course. Raimon VI had hampered operations at Lavaur as much as he could, while Simon of Montfort's aggressive action against a town so close to Toulouse suggested that open warfare between the two nobles was only a matter of time. Finding those men in Lavaur convinced Montfort that he could now actively seek to punish the Count of Toulouse.⁷¹ Also after the fall of Lavaur, Montfort lost substantial parties of crusaders who had done their forty days, including contingents under the Bishop of Paris, and other French nobles like Enguerrand of Coucy, Robert of Courtenay and Juhel of Mayenne.⁷² Yet the chief crusader still had sufficient resources to take as many towns in strategic locations as he could. On his way to the battlefield and destruction of Montgey, Montfort had occupied the *castrum* of Puylaurens and granted it to Guy of Lucy, one of his staunchest supporters.⁷³ At the same time the Count of Toulouse was at Castelnaudary, an important fortified town on the main road to Toulouse. He ended up burning at least part of the defenses before pulling out to avoid Montfort's army.⁷⁴

After Lavaur's fall and Montgey's destruction Montfort marched southwest to the *castrum* of Les Cassés, held from the Count of Toulouse by a

⁶⁸ SCW, 42, laisse 70–I; WTud, 170, 172; PVCE, 119, #232; PVC 1, 231. William of Tudela says that 14,000 men ("quatorze milia") of the main crusading army unsuccessfully pursued the Count of Foix, giving us another reason not to trust his numbers. Surely that would have been more than the entire army encamped at Lavaur.

⁶⁹ Bouyssou, "Le combat de Montgey," 177–96.

⁷⁰ Bouyssou, "Le Combat de Montgey," 177. ⁷¹ PVCE, 119 #231; PVC 1, 230–2.

⁷² PVCE, 118 #230; PVC 1, 230. ⁷³ PVCE, 118 #230; PVC 1, 230.

⁷⁴ PVCE, 119–20 #233; PVC 1, 232. This made it more difficult for the crusaders when they had to defend Castelnaudary that fall.

family deeply involved in Catharism, the Rocquevilles.⁷⁵ Les Cassés not only contained a garrison of Raimon VI's men, but served as a refuge for as many as ninety-four Cathars, including fifty *perfecti*.⁷⁶ At the crusaders' approach, the vastly outnumbered knights of the garrison made little attempt at a defense, and offered up the Cathars in the keep on condition that the knights went free.⁷⁷ After the capitulation at Les Cassés Montfort and the clerical leadership of the army reverted to the old days of Minerve; that is, the bishops still with the army went to preach to the heretics in hope of converting them, rather than executing them out of hand as had happened at Lavaur. Perhaps this was because the garrison had surrendered so readily, thus making clemency an attractive possibility. In spite of the option of conversion offered to the active Cathars at Les Cassés there were few takers among the captured and perhaps none among the perfects, because both Peter Vaux-de-Cernay and William of Puylaurens report that sixty were burnt.⁷⁸

From Les Cassés the crusading army moved six kilometers southwest to the *castrum* of Montferrand. Raimon VI had entrusted Montferrand, just over forty kilometers from Toulouse, to his younger brother Baldwin right before the siege of Lavaur began.⁷⁹ The same age as Simon of Montfort, Baldwin is an intriguing and ultimately tragic figure. The third and last son of Raimon V, Baldwin was born and raised in the north by his mother Constance, sister of Philip Augustus. He came to Occitania at age forty in 1205. Because he had been born after his mother's repudiation by Raimon V and raised in the north, his older half-brother Raimon VI cast aspersions on his parental background and denied him a patrimony in the south, even after Baldwin produced letters from various churchmen attesting to his paternity. Despite receiving his loyal service for four years, it was only in 1209 that Raimon began to treat him as a brother, in that year giving him an income and partial wardship over the future Raimon VII.⁸⁰ This belated recognition and responsibility turned out to be too little too late. Baldwin had fourteen knights and nobles with him, along with a small body of *routiers*, to defend a weak fortress against the brunt of Montfort's army. This force was so weak that Baldwin could not prevent the soldiers of

⁷⁵ PVCE, 119 #233; PVC 1, 232; SCW, 48 laisse 84; WTud, 200 lines 8–11; ATF, 892; Griffe, *Le Languedoc cathare*, 137–8.

⁷⁶ PVCE 120 #233; PVC 1, 232–33; SCW, 48 laisse 84; WTud, 200 lines 8–9; WPE, chapter xvii, 41; WP, 72.

⁷⁷ PVCE, 120 #233; PVC 1, 232–3; WPE, chapter xvii, 41; WP, 72.

⁷⁸ PVCE 120 #233; PVC 1, 233; WPE, chapter xvii, 41; WP, 72. ⁷⁹ WPE, chapter xvi, 38; WP, 66.

⁸⁰ WPE, chapter xii, 31; WP, 58; PVCE, 121 #235; PVC 1, 233–4; Mace, *Les Comtes de Toulouse*, 74–8.

the crusading army from immediately filling up the fosses around the fortifications in preparation for an assault. Under the cover of siege engines, crusading knights and sergeants attempted to storm Montferrand. To his credit, Baldwin and his knights put up a strong defense by throwing flaming brands in the fosse to ignite the stuff the besiegers had thrown in. In fact, his spirited defense caused the crusader assault to fail. Still, the crusade had far more resources and plenty of time. Perhaps the crusaders had an inkling that Baldwin was not a staunch supporter of his brother, because Montfort approached Baldwin with terms for a respectable surrender. Seeing that he could not possibly hold out for much longer, Baldwin surrendered Montferrand and its supplies of wine, bread, and grain, in exchange for which he and the men of the garrison marched out in their armor and retained their arms.⁸¹ Both Peter Vaux-de-Cernay and William of Tudela dwell on the fact that Baldwin and his men swore an oath of loyalty to the crusade, agreeing to assist it if called. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, Baldwin became Montfort's vassal.⁸² On the surface this may not be much different from what Montfort had received from other lords or towns as they acknowledged him as overlord. By swearing feudal loyalty, however, Baldwin clearly violated whatever familial loyalty he had towards his brother, and his disloyalty eventually cost him dearly. In spite of this treacherous act against Raimon VI, Baldwin hoped to be reconciled with his half-brother even while maintaining his allegiance to the crusade, but the brothers remained estranged until Baldwin's death in 1214.⁸³

Montfort then marched to and garrisoned the partially demolished and now abandoned defenses of Castelnaudary before proceeding northwest into a part of the Albigeois region which had once been under Trencavel lordship but in recent years had fallen under the control of the Count of Toulouse.⁸⁴ Montfort could justify invading this territory either to regain lands belonging to the viscounty or to seize those of an excommunicate. As he moved into this area his army assaulted, or took the surrender of, several strongholds. These included Cahuzac, Gaillac, La Garde-Viaur, La Guépie, Montégut, Puicelcy, Rabastens, Saint-Marcel, and Saint-Antonin.⁸⁵ None of these fortresses appears to have put up a spirited resistance. At Bruniquel

⁸¹ SCW, 43–4 *laissez* 72–4; WTud, 174, 176, 178, 180, PVCE, 121 #235; PVC 1, 233–4. William's description of events at Montferrand is much more detailed than Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's.

⁸² SCW, 44 *laisse* 74; WTud, 180; PVCE, 121 #235–6; PVC 1, 234–5.

⁸³ SCW, 45; *laisse* 77; WTud, 184, 186 lines 1–14; PVCE, 121 #236; PVC 1, 234–5.

⁸⁴ PVCE, 65–66 #118 and 122 footnote 21; PVC 1, 122–3.

⁸⁵ PVCE, 122 #237; PVC 1, 236–7; SCW, 44 *laisse* 75; WTud, 180, 182 lines 1–8.

on the Aveyron river Baldwin quickly proved his loyalty to the crusade by convincing the garrison to exchange his brother's authority for his own. The fortress surrendered to him and hence to the crusade.⁸⁶

THE FIRST SIEGE OF TOULOUSE, SUMMER, 1211

With the capture of Lavour and so many cities of the Albigeois, no large cities remained between Simon of Montfort and Toulouse. We really do not know what he planned to do next because events forced his hand. Theobald, Count of Bar and Luxembourg, had arrived at Carcassonne with a large force ready to begin his forty days.⁸⁷ The sources are unclear as to whether Montfort had already determined to besiege Toulouse and the Count of Bar's arrival confirmed it, or whether the Count of Bar decided to besiege the city without consulting with Montfort and the chief crusader had to go along.⁸⁸ In any event, the siege presented the first real obstacle that the crusading army and Simon of Montfort could not overcome. By identifying the city with its count, rather than realizing that the two were not necessarily committed to each other, the crusade leadership, and in particular Simon of Montfort, made a serious blunder that was compounded from 1211 on. Since the beginning of the war the people of Toulouse had been at best divided in their loyalty to their count and the crusade, but news of Montfort's decision to invade drove the city together in a common cause, something neither the Count of Toulouse nor the bishop had ever succeeded in doing. The people of Toulouse had not been wonderful allies to the crusade, but they had provided some assistance at the siege of Lavour, and were a ready market and supplier of food and military necessities. The imminent siege of Toulouse eliminated any reason

⁸⁶ SCW, 44–5 laisses 75–6; WTud, 182, 184; *L'Épopée* 1, 406; Sumption, *Albigensian Crusade*, 134–5. The surrender of Bruniquel is a rather curious episode. According to William of Tudela, the only source for the incident, Raimon VI was initially present at Bruniquel and first wished to destroy the fortifications to deny them to the approaching crusade army. Later Baldwin arrived at Bruniquel. Baldwin assured some members of the garrison that he would not destroy Bruniquel or harm them if his brother Raimon handed the *castrum* over to him. Raimon soon released the garrison from its loyalty to him, and its knights and sergeants swore oaths to Baldwin, who in turn managed to convince Montfort to allow him to keep all territory that he acquired on the crusade. Sumption suggests that Raimon was unaware of his brother's betrayal at Montferrand and that Baldwin secretly informed the garrison of what he proposed to do. Raimon therefore granted his brother the *castrum* of Bruniquel, ignorant of Baldwin's conduct at Montferrand and the subversion of the garrison at Bruniquel. This interpretation certainly seems plausible.

⁸⁷ WPE, chapter xvii, 41; WP, 72. William says that this force included a large force "of Germans" (*Teutonicorum*) by which he may have meant Luxembourgers.

⁸⁸ SCW, 45 laisse 77; WTud, 186 lines 15–18; PVCE, 123, #238; PVC 1, 238.

for anyone in the city to support the crusade morally, logistically, or militarily.⁸⁹

The two crusader armies linked up at Montgiscard, eighteen kilometers southeast of Toulouse, before marching northwest, eventually crossing the last small river east of the city, the Hers. Word reached Toulouse of the approach and intent of the crusader army, so some of the defenders decided to meet it outside the city walls in order to slow it down. The counts of Toulouse, Comminges, and Foix, along with a force of at least 500 knights, “countless” infantry, and a unit of Navarrese *routiers*, marched out to engage the crusader army at Montaudran, less than five kilometers from Toulouse.⁹⁰ The sources disagree as to where the initial skirmish took place. One of three things appears to have happened. One, there was a skirmish at the Hers river, then another somewhere in Montaudran. Two, there was simply the skirmish at the river. Three, there was no skirmish at the river but there was one west of it at Montaudran. William of Tudela believes that Montfort’s army forded the Hers river, and the skirmish took place somewhat west of it.⁹¹ According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay the defenders of Toulouse engaged the crusaders before the latter crossed the Hers.⁹² For tactical reasons alone it made more sense to contest passage over a river, so Peter Vaux-de-Cernay’s account sounds closer to the truth. The extent of the skirmish is equally difficult to determine, because again the two sources do not agree. In the Cistercian monk’s account, the crusaders come upon the defenders in the middle of destroying the second of two bridges over the river, and quickly move to engage, some soldiers swimming across while others swarm over the bridge itself, preventing its destruction. Whatever resistance the Count of Toulouse had intended to put up evaporated as the defending army retreated back into the walls of the city. According to William of Tudela the southern forces put up a desperate fight that may have caused 180 deaths on the two sides before the defenders retreated back into the city.⁹³ Regardless of whose account is correct, the crusader army had made a good beginning, and there was nothing to stop them from besieging the city. On the way the army captured one of the Count of Toulouse’s illegitimate sons and killed at least thirty-three peasants in a meadow just outside the walls of Toulouse.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ *Layettes* 1, 368 #968; PVCE, 120 footnote 11. ⁹⁰ *SCW*, 45 laisse 78; WTud, 188 lines 1–2.

⁹¹ *SCW*, 45 laisse 78; WTud, 188 lines 2–5. ⁹² PVCE, 123 #238; PVC 1, 238–9.

⁹³ *SCW*, 45 laisse 78; WTud, 188 lines 2–5.

⁹⁴ *SCW*, 46 laisse 78; WTud, 188 lines 9–10; *Layettes* 1, 370 #968.

In spite of this initial success both sides soon realized that the crusaders had bitten off more than they could chew. The crusader army encamped in the extensive gardens and orchards outside the walls, but did not have enough manpower, even with the Count of Bar's troops, to surround the city and conduct a proper blockade. The crusaders could besiege only one side of the city, probably the east-southeast, which was also the most powerful and included Narbonnais Castle in its defenses. There were practical reasons for choosing this side, as it ensured communications and an open supply route eastward to Carcassonne.⁹⁵ All things considered, however, attacking only one side and the strongest one to boot was obviously not an optimum situation. In addition to these considerable difficulties the combined forces of the counts of Toulouse, Foix, and Comminges plus the militia of Toulouse vastly outnumbered Montfort's army.⁹⁶

There are a number of things we can discern about the first siege of Toulouse. It consisted mostly of skirmishes in and around the crusader camp. The crusaders never bothered to build or use siege equipment. Why they chose not to is unknown, but in their impatience to get into the city perhaps they decided not to wait to bring machines up or build them on site. Maybe the army did not have the resources, manpower, or expertise to use machines at that time, though this had not been the case at Lavaur just weeks before. There may have been some rivalry between Simon of Montfort and the Count of Bar, and in their attempts to be the first to breach the walls neither bothered to conduct a proper siege.⁹⁷

In fact the Count of Bar and some northern French contingents led the initial assault on the walls of Toulouse, perhaps on the first day they arrived. These men rushed to the fosses below the walls to fill them, protected by large boiled-leather shields called *targes*.⁹⁸ This assault ground to a halt in the ditches as defenders from Toulouse rushed out to stop the attackers and no doubt threw rocks and other missiles down from the walls. William of Tudela says there were over a hundred killed and 500 wounded on both sides because of this assault, a figure within the realm of possibility.⁹⁹ The defenders captured three *targes*, no doubt humiliating the

⁹⁵ PVCE, 123 #239 and footnote 27; PVC 1, 239, footnote 5, 240.

⁹⁶ PVCE, 123 #239; PVC 1, 240.

⁹⁷ PVCE, 122-3 #238; WTud, 237-8. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay clearly reveals his own dislike and disappointment in the Count of Bar's conduct during the first siege of Toulouse and perhaps this also reflects what Simon of Montfort felt.

⁹⁸ SCW, 46 *laisse* 80; WTud, 190, lines 1-4. Where the *targes* came from is not explained.

⁹⁹ SCW, 46 *laisse* 80; WTud, 190, 192 lines 9-10.

Count of Bar. Because of the lack of manpower the crusade army quickly found itself on the defensive, and soon Montfort was looking for a way out. The crusaders came under constant harassment during the two-week siege, though they did manage to repel all the attacks. In one southern sortie the crusaders killed a vassal of the Count of Comminges, Raimon At, and Guilhem of Roquefort, the Bishop of Carcassonne's brother, who had caused the crusade problems since 1209.¹⁰⁰ The deaths of these two nobles did not dampen the growing southern aggression against the crusade army.

As reported in more than one source, the crusader camp was poorly protected from sorties from the city. The entire crusade army, especially the nobles, was compelled to maintain a constant state of readiness.¹⁰¹ The defenders of Toulouse were emboldened by the crusader camp's increasing inactivity and constantly attacked it.¹⁰² Even though the crusaders controlled access to the extensive orchards and gardens just outside the city walls, the grain and fruit had been either consumed or destroyed soon after the siege began, forcing the crusaders to increasingly rely on supplies from elsewhere.¹⁰³ Eventually the crusade army began to run short of provisions and depended entirely on these supply trains. The trains too increasingly came under attack from mobile forces inside Toulouse. The most serious skirmish happened on 27 June. Contrary to the Count of Toulouse's wishes, southern contingents led by Raimon VI's seneschal and son-in-law, the Navarrese *routier* captain Hugh of Alfaro, and his brother Peire Arcès sortied out of the city while most of the crusading army were resting after their noon meal.¹⁰⁴ The southerners came out in two separate forces, intent on cutting off a crusader supply train drawing close to the camp. One force attacked the camp as a diversion while the other marched or rode quickly to capture the supply train, which by this time was almost at the entrance to the crusader camp. Two of the train's commanders, Eustache of Cayeux and Simon, Castellan of Neauphle, had ridden ahead and found

¹⁰⁰ SCW, 46 *laisse* 80; WTud, 192 lines 11–13; PVCE, 124 #240; PVC 1, 241. Guilhem had led the party which assassinated the Abbot of Eaunes in 1209.

¹⁰¹ SCW, 46 *laisse* 81; WTud, 194 lines 1–3; WPE, chapter XVII, 42; WP, 72.

¹⁰² *Layettes* 1, 370 #968.

¹⁰³ SCW, 46 *laisse* 80; WTud, 192, lines 21–5; PVCE, 124 #242; PVC 1, 243. The crusaders had used grain, vines, and the branches from fruit trees to fill up the ditches.

¹⁰⁴ SCW, 46–7 *laisse* 81–2; WTud, 194, 196. William of Tudela reports that the Count of Toulouse forbade this force from attacking because he feared the men and their leaders would somehow be defeated, captured, or killed. The men armed themselves in their own quarters and went out anyway. This confirms that the Count of Toulouse was reluctant to fight the crusaders even in favorable circumstances.

themselves trapped by the raiders between the train and camp. As the two nobles attempted to fight their way out Eustache of Cayeux was hit by a spear and killed, but Simon of Neauphle managed to escape. When the crusaders figured out that the real objective was the supply train, and ran or rode to save it, the southern *rou tiers* retreated back into the city, looting part of the crusader camp as they did so.¹⁰⁵

The position of the crusaders became increasingly hopeless because of the lack of food and growing dissatisfaction with the way the leadership had conducted the siege. The price of bread soared to two *deniers* a loaf, as contrasted with the siege of Carcassonne two years before when one could buy thirty loaves for half that.¹⁰⁶ The army had no meat, and its soldiers were reduced to a diet of beans and whatever fruit they had scrounged from the orchards where they camped. Constant attacks from the city frayed tempers and wore the army down, and demonstrated both its lack of numerical strength and its vulnerable defensive position. As supplies ran low in the crusader camp there were arguments between the Count of Bar and other leaders. Eventually Montfort realized the futility of continuing a siege when his army was underfed and undermanned and ordered a retreat on 29 June 1211. In its wake lay cut vines, tramped and burned grain, and destroyed fruit trees, causing the Toulousans to suffer from the damage for some time afterward.¹⁰⁷ Instead of licking his wounds Montfort showed his flexible tactical style by moving his army south of Toulouse to punish Raimon-Roger of Foix, who had been present in Toulouse during the siege. The first stop was the *castrum* of Auterive, twenty-eight kilometers south of Toulouse. Montfort left a few sergeants to garrison Auterive as he proceeded further south, but the small garrison surrendered to southern *rou tiers* almost immediately after the main army moved to Pamiers, a further twenty-eight kilometers away.¹⁰⁸ After burning the *castrum* of Varilhès eight kilometers south of Pamiers, Montfort led his men on an eight-day raid deep into the territory of the Count of Foix, burning crops,

¹⁰⁵ SCW, 47, *laissez* 82–3; WTud, 196–8; PVCE, 124 #241; PVC 1, 241–3; *Layettes* 1, 370 #968.

¹⁰⁶ SCW, 23 *laisse* 25, 47 *laisse* 83; WTud, 68 lines 23–4, 198 lines 25–6.

¹⁰⁷ PVCE, 125 #243; PVC 1, 243; SCW, 47 *laisse* 83; WTud, 198 lines 21–2; *Layettes* 1, 370 #968; WPE, chapter xvii, 42; WP, 72. William of Puylaurens states that Montfort raised the siege because the crusader-pilgrims had completed their forty days. This does not appear to be the case, because the Count of Bar and the German contingents continued to campaign with the chief crusader after leaving Toulouse.

¹⁰⁸ PVCE 125 # 243–4; PVC 1, 243–4. The sergeants surrendered on condition that their lives be spared, a condition that was honored. Apparently Auterive was left ungarrisoned after this, because the next time Montfort moved through the area he had the town burned to the ground.

uprooting vines, and destroying all he could, including the bourg of Foix.¹⁰⁹

THE SOUTHERN COUNTER-ATTACK, SUMMER–FALL 1211

Even after the siege and raids the campaign season was still in its youth. In July 1211, at the request of the Bishop of Cahors and some of the nobles of the Quercy region, Montfort proceeded northward to take their homage and oaths of loyalty. The fact that the bishop and nobles had previously held their territories from the Count of Toulouse shows the weakening of Raimon VI's position right before a counter-attack began.¹¹⁰ On the way north, at Castelnaudary, the Count of Bar suddenly refused to accompany the army further and left with his contingent, though for the moment the other summer crusaders stayed with the main army. The count's abrupt exit embarrassed Montfort, and those who remained jeered the Count of Bar and his men as they left.¹¹¹ The Count of Bar's exit and the looming departure of other summer crusaders increasingly hampered Montfort's ability to field an army. Still, all who remained continued northward into the Quercy region towards Cahors, stopping to seize and burn a suburb of the *castrum* of Caylus, still loyal to the Count of Toulouse. Eventually the army marched even farther north to the pilgrimage town of Rocamadour, from where most of the other summer crusaders proceeded northward to their homes.¹¹²

The check received by Montfort at Toulouse, coupled with the departure of the last crusaders of the summer, proved too tempting for the Count of Toulouse and other southern lords to ignore. Raimon VI had been attacked in the capital of his possessions and stood to lose everything if Simon of Montfort strengthened his hold over the south. Out of

¹⁰⁹ PVCE, 125 #245; PVC 1, 244–5; SCW, 48 laisse 84; WTud, 200, 202.

¹¹⁰ PVCE, 125–6 #246; PVC 1, 245–6; Catalogue des actes, 459 #45; SCW, 48 laisses 84–85; WTud, 202. The Bishop of Cahors actually had done homage on behalf of these nobles and himself while the crusaders still besieged Toulouse, but it was only after the raiding activity that Montfort decided to make a trip up there.

¹¹¹ PVCE, 126 #246 and footnote 44; PVC 1, 245–6; SCW, 48 laisse 84; WTud, 200 lines 3–7 and footnote 1. Why was the Count of Bar's departure such a blow to Montfort and the rest of the army? Montfort should have been used to units and individuals leaving the army even when inconvenient. Martin-Chabot and the Siblys speculate that the Count of Bar thought Montfort had unreasonably attacked the Count of Toulouse even though the latter had been willing to negotiate. William of Tudela mentions a "Count of Alos" who attempted to make a separate peace with the Count of Toulouse about the time of the crusader raids in Foix. Martin-Chabot and the Siblys follow a tradition that this Count of Alos may have been the Count of Bar. Why would not William of Tudela say so, then?

¹¹² PVCE, 126 #246–7; PVC 1, 246–7; SCW, 48 laisse 84; WTud, 202 line 18.

self-preservation if nothing else, the Count of Toulouse began gathering an army for a counter-offensive.¹¹³ His main objective was to come to grips with and destroy Montfort's main force, already greatly weakened by the departure of the summer crusader-pilgrims. The count gathered substantial numbers, perhaps the largest army fielded by southern lords up to this point in the war. William of Tudela and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay note contingents from Moissac, Montauban, and Castelsarrasin as well as other forces from the Agenais, Gascons led by Gaston of Béarn, a contingent under Savary of Mauléon, the militia of Toulouse, and of course the Count of Foix and his men. According to William of Tudela more than 200,000 had been gathered, while Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says 100,000 – both obviously gross exaggerations but indicating a considerable number. Curiously, William also mentions that a large force of 1,053 mounted *rouriers* from Navarre and the Aspe valley was part of the Count of Toulouse's army.¹¹⁴ The size and specificity suggest a plausible number, unlike the 200,000 mentioned earlier. The army included a large supply train loaded with bread, wine, and other foodstuffs. The Count of Toulouse even brought siege equipment of his own, including mangonels and trebuchets.¹¹⁵

Though we have no firm dates, by now it was probably early September 1211. While the Count of Toulouse gathered his army Montfort and what men remained to him moved south from Quercy to Carcassonne before moving further south into the Pamiers region. There at an unnamed *castrum* the army assaulted a small fortification defended by six knights and “many men” (“homines multi”). In a one-day struggle the northerners burnt the gates, undermined the walls and managed to kill most of the garrison in the process, though they refrained from executing the three surviving knights so as to use them in a prisoner exchange.¹¹⁶ The confidence inspired by the massive army gathering against the crusade now led to a predictable but vexing cycle of defections against Simon of Montfort. At Pamiers he received news that Puy-laurens, which had been captured only

¹¹³ SCW, 48 laisse 86; WTud, 204 lines 5–7.

¹¹⁴ SCW, 48–9 laisses 86–9, and on the militia of Toulouse, 54 laisse 103; WTud, 204, 206, 208, 210, 234 lines 6–10; PVCE, 130 #253, 132 #257; PVC 1, 253–4, 256–7; H. J. Chaytor, *Savaric de Mauléon. Baron and Troubadour* (Cambridge University Press, 1939), 21–2. According to an extant stanza of a lost poem composed by Savary to Raimon VI's wife Eleanor (sister to John, King of England), Savary brought perhaps 500 or so *rouriers* with him.

¹¹⁵ SCW, 49 laisse 88; WTud, 208 line 12; PVCE, 133 #261; PVC 1, 259; WPE, chapter XVIII, 42; WP, 74.

¹¹⁶ PVCE, 127 #248, 128 #249–50; PVC 1, 247–50. The prisoners seized there helped redeem Walter Langton, brother of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Lambert of Limoux, both of whom had been captured by the Count of Foix while operating independently of the main army.

that June and given to Guy of Lucy, had surrendered to its former lord, Sicard.¹¹⁷ Moving north again, Montfort garrisoned Castelnaudary and Montferrand only to have the latter surrender to the approaching southern army soon after he left.¹¹⁸

The strategic dilemma for Montfort now lay in where to draw a line in the sand against the southern army. Since the Count of Toulouse's army greatly outnumbered his own, the safest course would be to hold out behind Carcassonne's substantial defenses until the southern army dissipated due to inclement weather or lack of supply. Montfort called a council to help him decide what to do, a meeting recorded by William of Tudela, who may or may not have been present but seems to accurately record what transpired. Hugh of Lacy advised Montfort not to wait in Carcassonne but to defend his "weakest possession," which in this case was Castelnaudary, the most substantial *castrum* east of Toulouse and west of Carcassonne.¹¹⁹ The town is best known today as the capital of southern France's most famous regional dish, the white-bean stew known as cassoulet, and as one of the major training bases of the French Foreign Legion. Castelnaudary had been occupied and burned earlier that summer by the Count of Toulouse and would be difficult to defend. The place was essentially a salient, since Montfort did not have the manpower to block the southern army from going around and possibly surrounding him. He gambled that the Count of Toulouse intended to destroy him wherever he was, rather than bypassing him to attack more vulnerable targets farther east. If the Count of Toulouse bypassed him at Castelnaudary and went on to attack Carcassonne, this would leave Raimon VI's own supply line, stretching back to Toulouse, vulnerable to attack. By staying exposed at Castelnaudary and banking on the idea that the Count of Toulouse would not bypass him Simon of Montfort kept the heart of his territory safe from pillage, possible capture, or defection.

So the chief crusader decided to make his stand with inadequate forces in an exposed area at the far end of his supply line, with less than enthusiastic support from the citizens of Castelnaudary. Montfort had far fewer men than did Raimon VI. Though William of Tudela provides no overall numbers for either side, the suggestion that the crusaders were small in number is underscored by the fact that right before the siege began one of Montfort's lieutenants, Guy of Lucy, arrived with almost fifty knights. The

¹¹⁷ PVCE, 129 #251; PVC 1, 250–1. Here the commander of the garrison paid the price for surrendering too quickly; he was convicted in Simon of Montfort's court and executed for taking a bribe.

¹¹⁸ PVCE, 129 #252; PVC 1, 251–2. ¹¹⁹ SCW, 50 *laissez* 90–1; WTud, 210, 212, 214.

joy and relief this paltry force brought to Montfort and the other defenders suggests how important even these small numbers were to the army's total.¹²⁰ Peter Vaux-de-Cernay estimates the crusader army at something less than 500 knights and sergeants, an entirely reasonable figure based on what we know of numbers from Montfort's forces at Muret two years later, and the fact that the summer crusaders had departed by now (September 1211). Surely the people of Castelnaudary would account for more, but as the southern forces approached, the townspeople in charge of defending the Saint Peter's suburb fled their posts, climbed over the walls, and deserted, so Montfort could not rely on the ones who remained.¹²¹ As the crusaders saw the approaching army come into view it was so numerous it seemed "like grasshoppers covering the ground" ("quasi locuste terram cooperientes").¹²² Because Montfort's soldiers were eating and did not immediately notice this defection by the militia of Castelnaudary, the southern troops took the suburb. After their meal, realizing what the militia of Castelnaudary had done, the crusaders gathered their weapons and immediately retook the suburb.¹²³

Instead of a close investment – within missile shot at least, especially seeing that the besiegers outnumbered the defenders and the *castrum* was reasonably small – the southern army pitched its tents on a hill north of the castle and town, perhaps as far as "half a league away," not blockading the fortifications as one would expect in a typical siege.¹²⁴ What happened next partially reflects the contrasting mentalities of the northern French and their southern adversaries. Not only did the southerners neglect to surround Castelnaudary in a close blockade but, apparently afraid of the crusader army, they constructed a fortified camp of trenches, palisades, and barriers in the hills to the north overlooking the *castrum*, thus securing their own defense rather than adopting an offensive position to destroy Montfort's army. After nightfall southern forces reoccupied Saint Peter's suburb because there were too few crusaders to defend it properly. The

¹²⁰ PVCE, 131 #255; PVC 1, 254–5. These knights were returning from Aragon, where they had assisted Pere II in one of his campaigns.

¹²¹ PVCE, 132 #257; PVC 1, 256–7.

¹²² PVCE, 131 #256, 132 #257 and footnote 20; PVC 1, 255–6, 256–7; Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, *Histoire Albigeoise*, trans. Guébin and Maisonneuve, 106. Peter estimates the southern forces at 100,000. As the Sibyls point out, in the French translation the editors translate this as 5,000, apparently in error as they include no note explaining why they deviated from the Latin number. Error it probably is, but 5,000 is certainly more plausible. If we discount this mistake we have no credible tally for the southern army. The translation in the text is mine.

¹²³ PVCE, 131 #256; PVC 1, 256. ¹²⁴ SCW, 51 laisse 92; WTud, 214, line 5.

southerners reinforced the wall facing the *castrum*, but actually cut holes in the outer walls in case they had to flee quickly. The next morning the crusaders easily chased them out of the suburb and back to the outskirts of their fortified camp.¹²⁵

Because the southerners never surrounded the castle, Castelnaudary was never properly blockaded. As the region moved into harvest season the crusaders took advantage of the local bounty in sight of their besiegers. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay reports that every day sergeants led the horses out to water half a league from the *castrum*, while footsoldiers (*pedites*) harvested grapes in the countryside in full view of southern forces inside their fortified camp.¹²⁶ Eventually the southerners grew more aggressive and began to assault portions of the walls of the *castrum*. The Count of Foix and his son Roger-Bernard led a great part of the army (“*magna pars exercitus*”) out of their fortified camp to attack the guards at the gates of Castelnaudary. The crusaders counter-attacked immediately and in the process knocked Roger-Bernard and others off their horses, driving them back into their camp. Beyond this episode, Peter Vaux-de-Cernay makes the general comment that all the assaults made by southern forces failed against Castelnaudary.¹²⁷

Eventually the Count of Toulouse began using the siege machines he had brought with him, and perhaps constructed some on site. But, as in so much of this general’s conduct of war, his attempts were pathetically unsuccessful as related by William of Tudela. First southerners used mangonels but achieved nothing, apparently not even scaring the men in Castelnaudary. Eventually the count had a trebuchet brought into use (“*machinam quandam mire magnitudinis*”), perhaps the one mentioned earlier by William of Tudela in the count’s supply train. Even this machine was initially unsuccessful, partly because the crew was unable to find rocks hard enough to stay whole on impact, and thus caused little damage to what they hit. The crew soon fixed the ammunition problem and the trebuchet began to cause extensive damage.¹²⁸ The trebuchet became enough of a concern that eventually Montfort himself led a sortie out to destroy it. Here the southern concern for defense paid off, because the weapon was protected by an extensive network of barriers, ditches, and palisades. Montfort’s attack failed when his own men pulled him back

¹²⁵ PVCE, 131–2 #257; PVC 1, 256–7. ¹²⁶ PVCE, 132 #248; PVC 1, 257–8.

¹²⁷ PVCE, 132 #259; PVC 1, 258–9.

¹²⁸ PVCE, 133 #261; PVC 1, 259–60; SCW, 51 *laisse* 92; WTud, 216 lines 13–21.

from crossing the wide ditch between him and the machine, his troops afraid lest he be cut off and unable to get back to his own lines.¹²⁹

The general inactivity of the attackers indicates their fear of Simon of Montfort and his small army. Raimon VI had taken the strategic offensive, but even with superior forces in generally friendly territory he preferred to stay on the tactical defensive, which achieved nothing as long as the intended targets came and went as they pleased. With the exception of the Count of Foix's assault, however, both sides knew that the Count of Toulouse would make no headway if he did not invest the *castrum* more closely. From the walls of Castelnaudary the crusaders taunted the southern siege crews, promising to demolish their own walls for twenty silver marks if the southerners really wished to fight them.¹³⁰ Peter Vaux-de-Cernay relates that a jongleur in the southern camp asked the Count of Toulouse why he bothered with machines when the people inside the intended target still had the initiative.¹³¹ While the northern chronicler could not have known what was happening among the men of the southern army, and had no access to southern witnesses for his chronicle, the thoughts of the jongleur may have reflected what the men of Montfort's army actually wondered.

THE BATTLE OF SAINT-MARTIN-LA-LANDE

Though Montfort was in little danger of being overwhelmed or driven out of Castelnaudary, he still faced three problems not surmountable from within the walls: a lack of supplies, a manpower shortage, and defections of other *castra* to the Count of Toulouse. All three were factors leading up to the first real pitched battle of the Occitan War. Montfort sent his marshal, Guy of Lévis, and another of his faithful lieutenants, the erstwhile prisoner in, and now lord of, Cabaret, Bouchard of Marly, to co-ordinate and escort a supply train from Fanjeaux and Carcassonne, and to recruit men from Carcassonne and Béziers to reinforce the garrison at Castelnaudary. For the most part the trip failed as the recruiters worked their way west from Béziers in search of men. In Narbonne a group of citizens agreed to assist only if their viscount, Aimery, would go as well. Aimery had apparently got his fill of fighting as co-commander at the siege of Minerve in 1210 and refused to help. This refusal meant that Guy of Lévis only scraped up about 300 Narbonnais willing to march back with his party.

¹²⁹ PVCE, 133 #263; PVC 1, 261. ¹³⁰ PVCE, 133 #262; PVC 1, 260–1.

¹³¹ PVCE, 133 #261; PVC 1, 260.

In Carcassonne and the surrounding region, the heart of Montfort's territory, the recruiters could barely raise 500 men, most of whom deserted before they even left Carcassonne.¹³² In Lavaur Bouchard of Marly recruited 100 more knights and the Spanish *routier* Martin Algai brought an additional twenty, all of whom set out to escort the supply train coming from Carcassonne.¹³³ Though the manpower results were disappointing, the supply train itself was loaded down with wine, biscuit, wheat, oats, and other supplies needed at Castelnaudary.¹³⁴ The nobles in the southern camp near by were aware of the supply train and in fact some had tried to ambush it earlier, though the crusaders managed to avoid them by taking roundabout routes.¹³⁵

A day before the convoy was due to reach Castelnaudary the Count of Foix led all his troops and Spanish *routiers* out of their fortified camp to the small village of Saint-Martin-la-Lande, while the Count of Toulouse, Savary of Mauléon, and their troops remained behind. Saint-Martin-la-Lande was about five kilometers east of Castelnaudary, astride the only road into Castelnaudary. The numbers reported for the Count of Foix's troops are small enough to be generally plausible. William of Tudela says that the count had approximately 400 men of his own followers, who we can presume were mounted, and maybe 2,000 or more other cavalry and infantry including some crossbowmen.¹³⁶ The sources mention no overall number for the crusaders, so we have to add up what was reported earlier. That encompasses the 300 recruited from Narbonne, some presumably from the other localities the recruiters had marched through, plus 100 knights under Bouchard of Marly and the twenty mounted men of Martin Algai, giving a total of 500–700 at most. After the crusaders in Castelnaudary noticed the Count of Foix marching away from the siege, Montfort sent three lieutenants (Guy of Lucy, Simon, Castellan of Neauphle, and Roard, Viscount of Donges) with forty knights to warn both Guy of Lévis and Bouchard and tell them to attack the forces of the Count of Foix.¹³⁷ That allows us to conservatively estimate the crusader

¹³² PVCE, 133–4 #264; PVC 1, 261–2. The recruitment actually happened in two outings; Matthew of Marly participated in the second run through Narbonne and Carcassonne.

¹³³ SCW, 51 laisse 93; WTud, 216 lines 3–6.

¹³⁴ SCW, 51 laisse 93; WTud, 216 lines 7–12; PVCE, 134 #265; PVC 1, 262–3.

¹³⁵ PVCE, 134–5 #266; PVC 1, 263–4. Unbeknown to Montfort at that time, one of the Occitan knights ostensibly fighting for him at Castelnaudary, William Cat of Montréal, had leaked information about the convoy and was plotting its capture. Eventually his treachery was found out, with the usual consequences.

¹³⁶ SCW, 51 laisse 93, 52 laisse 96; WTud, 218 lines 23, 27; 222 line 5; PVCE, 136 #270; PVC 1, 267.

¹³⁷ PVCE, 135 #268; PVC 1, 265–6.

forces present at the battle at no more than 750. Both Peter Vaux-de-Cernay and William of Tudela mention that the crusaders were greatly outnumbered, a fact which must have been common knowledge at the time of the battle.¹³⁸ The departure of forty-three combatants from Castelnauudary left Montfort with only sixty knights and mounted squires (“*milites et armigeros in equis*”), though he did have an unspecified number of infantry.¹³⁹ Once Raimon-Roger of Foix heard that Montfort had sent men to warn Guy of Lévis he marched back to the main Occitan camp for even more men.¹⁴⁰ Unlike Raimon VI of Toulouse, the Count of Foix intended to fight.

We do not know the actual spot where the battle of Saint-Martin-la-Lande took place. Wherever it was it was one of those rare places where the ground was open and would not hinder or favor one side over the other.¹⁴¹ We also do not know whether the Count of Foix met the crusader reinforcements east or west of Saint-Martin-la-Lande, but west seems to make more sense because Montfort could see his supporters (and vice versa), which would suggest they were not blocked by any buildings. William of Tudela mentions that the Count of Foix marched towards Saint Martin (“*Lo coms de Foiss cavalga ab de sos companhos / A Sant Marti a las Bordas*”), again suggesting he was west of the town.¹⁴² The battle must have occurred close to the main road leading to Castelnauudary, since the reinforcements were escorting a heavily laden supply train which was forced to stick to the road.

After hearing morning mass the marshal, Bouchard of Marly, their men, and the convoy proceeded towards Castelnauudary, aware of what would happen. As the two armies sighted each other, the Bishop of Cahors and a Cistercian monk exhorted the crusaders to fight hard. The Count of Foix aligned his troops to block their passage on the road, changing his formation from three units in marching order to a solid battle line.¹⁴³ He placed those riding armored horses (most likely knights, though Peter Vaux-de-Cernay does not explicitly say so) in the middle, the rest of the

¹³⁸ PVCE, 137 #273; PVC 1, 270; SCW, 54 *laisse* 104; WTud, 234 line 6. Peter Vaux de-Cernay says the crusaders were outnumbered thirty to one; William of Tudela says the Count of Toulouse believed the Count of Foix outnumbered the crusaders ten to one. In either case, everyone knew the Count of Foix's army was far larger.

¹³⁹ That is to say, a garrison remained in Castelnauudary throughout the entire battle, and we must assume that horsemen would have been dispatched to help Montfort's marshal.

¹⁴⁰ PVCE, 135 #268; PVC 1, 266.

¹⁴¹ SCW, 53 *laisse* 99; WTud, 228 line 5. William says it was “broad and fair, the fields level” (Shirley's translation).

¹⁴² SCW, 52 *laisse* 96; WTud, 222 lines 1–2. ¹⁴³ PVCE, 136 #270, #272; PVC 1, 267, 268.

horsemen (again, Peter just says “equites”) on one side, and on the other the footsoldiers armed with lances.¹⁴⁴

The chroniclers do not specify the disposition of Guy of Lévis’s force, but in the few minutes before combat the leaders decided the mounted men of the crusading army would aim for the strongest part of the southern formation, the center line of the knights, which they duly attacked.¹⁴⁵ As the battle began Simon of Montfort, back in Castelnaudary, anxiously awaited news. Losing patience and worried about how the battle might go, he gathered the rest of his mounted men, left Castelnaudary, and hastened to the battle, remarking that if he lost the convoy, he would lose Castelnaudary. William of Puylaurens states that Montfort departed with sixty men, a number that certainly seems accurate because Peter Vaux-de-Cernay previously states that the chief crusader had been left with sixty knights and squires to defend Castelnaudary.¹⁴⁶ Only Montfort’s infantry remained behind to defend the *castrum*.¹⁴⁷ William of Tudela offers a very specific account of hand-to-hand fighting at Saint-Martin-la-Lande, something both he and his anonymous continuator are fond of doing throughout their work. Their descriptions often seem set-piece, staged, and contrived (the work is a poem or song after all, meant to entertain), but this battle was clearly fought at close range. William had access to eyewitness testimony for his description: he twice mentions a Master Nicholas who gave him information about the battle.¹⁴⁸ Peter Vaux-de-Cernay’s account is actually more coherent as to the sequence of events.¹⁴⁹ The combat was short and sharp. The southerners streamed across the road and plain shouting “Toulouse” as their battle cry, while other soldiers yelled the names of their leaders. Units of southern crossbowmen stopped to shoot bolts along the way. At about the same time the marshal’s mounted men charged the Count of Foix’s center, as planned, their momentum dismounting and destroying most of the southern cavalry in the center, including the hundred southern *routiers*.¹⁵⁰ Still possessing some discipline even after the charge, most of the French horsemen wheeled and struck the lines of Occitan infantry, killing many outright and unnerving the rest. Things did not go so well for the crusaders all along the line of battle, however. Both our main chroniclers mention that the Spanish captain of *routiers* Martin Algai, thinking the battle lost for the crusaders, started to

¹⁴⁴ PVCE, 137 #272; PVC 1, 269. ¹⁴⁵ PVCE, 137 #272; PVC 1, 269.

¹⁴⁶ WPE, chapter XVIII, 42; WP, 74; PVCE, 135 #268; PVC 1, 266.

¹⁴⁷ SCW, 53 laisse 100; WTud, 228.

¹⁴⁸ SCW, 53 laisses 98, 99; WTud, 228 laisse 98 lines 26–7, laisse 99 line 7.

¹⁴⁹ PVCE, 137 #273; PVC 1, 270. ¹⁵⁰ SCW, 52, laisse 97; WTud, 224 lines 7–10.

flee with his twenty knights. When taken to task later for his cowardice, he tried to cover it up by insisting he was chasing some southern *rou tiers* from the Count of Foix's forces.¹⁵¹ During the battle the non-combatants of the crusader convoy, perhaps the drivers of supply wagons, but also the Bishop of Cahors and other clergy accompanying the train, also thought all was lost and fled towards Fanjeaux.¹⁵² Some of the southern infantry and *rou tiers* actually got to the supply train and looted part of it. The same Master Nicholas, mentioned twice by William of Tudela, later told the writer that his mule and servant were captured by *rou tiers* plundering the train, but he managed to escape with the clergy.¹⁵³

Simon of Montfort and his sixty knights reached the battle in its latter stages as the southern army was beginning to fall apart.¹⁵⁴ Unexpectedly coming up the road behind the southern lines, he sandwiched the Count of Foix's fleeing forces between the marshal's troops and his own. At this point the battle turned from a rout to a slaughter. Those on the southern side who had stopped to pillage the supply train or corpses were cut down where they stood. Some of the enemy were overtaken so fast that they shouted Montfort's name, pretending to be on the crusader side. As these men were overrun Montfort's soldiers told them to kill their fleeing comrades as a loyalty test, and a few of these turncoats killed their own men before being killed in turn. Fearful that in their quest for victory his own army might irreparably scatter chasing fleeing southerners, and mindful that Castelnaudary remained vulnerable, Montfort stopped in the middle of the field and reassembled his forces.¹⁵⁵

Confident of victory, back at Castelnaudary Savary of Mauléon gathered a large force ("multitudo armatorum") of those remaining at the Count of Toulouse's fortified camp and marched to the gates of Castelnaudary.

¹⁵¹ PVCE, 137-8 #274; PVC 1, 270; SCW, 52-3 laisse 98; WTud, 226 lines 11-15.

¹⁵² SCW, 53 laisse 98; WTud, 226 lines 16-18; PVCE, 138 #274; PVC 1, 270. While united about the less than honorable behavior of Martin Algai, the chroniclers disagree about the conduct of the Bishop of Cahors. William apparently did not like him, because he says the bishop fled the battle and "that the [bishop and the] bishop's companions should do this does not surprise me" (Shirley's translation). Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says the bishop yelled at Martin Algai as he rode by, telling him to get back to the fighting, which suggests the prelate was close by it himself.

¹⁵³ SCW, 53 laisse 98; WTud, 226 lines 23-5; PVCE, 136-8 #272-4; PVC, 268-70. Peter mentions neither the overrunning of the supply train nor the flight of the clergy. Since William of Tudela talked to at least one eyewitness we can assume that the non-combatants did flee, allowing partial capture of the train.

¹⁵⁴ SCW, 53 laisses 100-2; WTud, 228, 230; WPE, chapter XVIII, 42; WP, 74; PVCE, 137 #273; PVC 1, 270. Peter says that Montfort never reached the battle. Strictly speaking that may be true, but he was there at the end to pick off stragglers and dishearten the fleeing enemy.

¹⁵⁵ PVCE, 138 #274; PVC 1, 270-1; SCW, 53-4 laisses 101-3; WTud, 230, 232, 234; WPE, chapter XVIII, 42; WP, 74.

There they waited for news of the battle before beginning a general assault, though a few of his men penetrated into the suburb and attacked the *castrum* directly. At this point only a skeleton crusader force remained in Castelnaudary; Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says it consisted of no more than five knights and a small number of sergeants. In spite of being heavily outnumbered, this small garrison managed to repel the southerners from the bourg. As the besiegers and Savary of Mauléon learned of the Count of Foix's defeat at Saint-Martin-la-Lande they panicked and abandoned the assault. In fact, Savary and his men fled to their camp in such terror that he barely prevented them from striking their tents and fleeing Castelnaudary entirely.¹⁵⁶ By now Montfort's men and the supply train had reached the gates of Castelnaudary, and the chief crusader wished to take advantage of the momentum gained by his victory by storming the southern camp. The Count of Toulouse's caution paid off again, because the camp was so well defended with palisades and ditches that Montfort and his lieutenants realized almost immediately that its strength, and the weariness of their own men after the battle, might cost them the victory won earlier in the day. Instead Montfort entered the church in Castelnaudary, gave thanks for his triumph, and called it a night.¹⁵⁷ That day he had proved that with less than a thousand mixed troops he could withstand sieges and win a pitched battle against superior odds.

The distinguished medieval military historian J. F. Verbruggen wrote that the battles of Saint-Martin-la-Lande and Muret two years later demonstrate Simon of Montfort's belief that battle was the surest way to win a campaign or territory.¹⁵⁸ This cannot be true for Saint-Martin-la-Lande. Despite the glory it gave him, Saint-Martin-la-Lande was a battle that the chief crusader did not want to fight, and he only did so because the supply train was essential to the garrison at Castelnaudary. Montfort rode to the battle only after agonizing over the best course of action and to bolster what he knew was an outnumbered crusader force. Until he came upon a battle largely won by his marshal he simply wished to get the supply train

¹⁵⁶ PVCE, 138 #275; PVC 1, 271-2; SCW 54 laisse 103, 104; WTud, 234, 236 laisse 103 lines 6-10, laisse 104 lines 7-14; Chaytor, *Savaric de Mauléon*, 23. In context, William of Tudela's account suggests that the bulk of the men who wished to flee Castelnaudary were the militia of Toulouse. One noble, Raimon of Ricaud, actually did ride away to Montferrand in terror, but sheepishly returned after learning that the crusaders had not attacked the Count of Toulouse's fortified camp.

¹⁵⁷ PVCE, 138-9 #276; PVC 1, 272; SCW, 54 laisse 105; WTud, 236. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says the attack was never made, while William of Tudela says it began but was aborted in the initial stages, as the crusader army saw that picking its way across the ditches and palisades was not worth the potential gain.

¹⁵⁸ Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare*, 281-2.

through. He knew that the loss of the train might not have destroyed his ability to maintain himself in Occitania, but it would have damaged his military reputation and possibly forced him to abandon Castelnaudary.

The Count of Foix's defeat at Saint-Martin-la-Lande deeply frightened the remaining southerners. Many men among them, including Raimon VI himself, could not believe the Count of Foix had lost as he had outnumbered the crusaders "ten to one."¹⁵⁹ Thus even the most aggressive southern commander had proven inept at pitched battle, and morale in the southern camp had completely eroded.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE BATTLE AND THE CAMPAIGN
SEASON TO 1212

As the Count of Toulouse's army still held their fortified camp, Montfort was determined to hold on to Castelnaudary – more so than ever – in spite of the fact that he remained greatly outnumbered. A council of his followers urged him to recruit more men, which was usually impossible that late in the year, but with news of his victory he thought it might be possible to augment his army at Castelnaudary. Leaving most of his men in garrison Montfort went to Narbonne, hoping to pick up more soldiers in addition to the 300 who had accompanied the supply train and participated in the battle of Saint-Martin-la-Lande. In Narbonne an unexpected but welcome addition occurred when a small unit of northern crusaders arrived under the command of Alan of Roucy. Based on his victory and seeing others flock to his banner, Montfort now enjoyed some success in raising some troops from Narbonne, but while there he learned that the Count of Toulouse had abandoned the siege of Castelnaudary and fled with his troops. Their departure was so hasty that they burned what they could not carry and left one of their trebuchets behind.¹⁶⁰ Once the news reached Montfort at Narbonne the chief crusader discharged the locals and departed for Castelnaudary with only Alan of Roucy's troops.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ SCW, 54 *laisse* 104; WTud, 234 lines 1–6.

¹⁶⁰ PVCE, 139–40 #279–80; PVC 1, 274–5; SCW, 54–5 *laisse* 106; WTud, 236, 238 lines 1–8; WPE, chapter XVIII, 42–3; WP, 74. At what stage the Count of Toulouse abandoned the siege is disputed between all three sources, but I have generally followed Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account. Both William of Tudela and William of Puylaurens say that the Count of Toulouse abandoned the siege literally the day after the battle of Saint-Martin-la-Lande. It does not make much sense, though, for Montfort to have attempted another recruiting drive so soon unless he thought the Count of Toulouse would continue the siege. Therefore Peter's account seems the most plausible.

¹⁶¹ PVCE, 140 #280; PVC 1, 275.

In spite of Montfort's great victory the southerners still had some cards left to play. Both William of Tudela and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay say that the departing army (William says the Toulousans; Peter says the Count of Foix) spread rumors that it was the crusaders, not themselves, who had lost the battle and that Montfort had been killed or captured and executed. This trick worked: perhaps dozens of towns and fortified places went back over to the southern cause upon hearing the rumor, thus erasing many of the territorial gains made that campaign season prior to the siege of Toulouse.¹⁶² The citizens of Lagrave, a *castrum* less than thirteen kilometers west of Albi, and the men of the neighboring *castrum* of Gaillac murdered the French castellan of Lagrave, Pons of Beaumont, by a ruse and massacred the small French garrison.¹⁶³ These defections must have been particularly galling and inexplicable to Simon of Montfort, who could win victory on the battlefield but still lose territory. This mass disloyalty, based on unsubstantiated reports, suggests something that perhaps Montfort should have thought hard about: His loyalty base was very weak if so many *castra* would defect over a rumor.

Thus, though the Occitan counter-offensive of 1211 had been a tactical failure, various *castra* kept defecting, especially in the Albi region. The counts of Toulouse and Foix continued to keep armies in the field. Raimon VI moved his forces into the Albi region, occupying Gaillac, Saint-Marcel and other places while reinforcing the rumor that Montfort had been defeated at Saint-Martin-la-Lande.¹⁶⁴ A supply train was ambushed by the son of the Count of Foix, Roger-Bernard, which resulted in the deaths of Geoffrey of Neauphle and other knights while others were captured and held for ransom.¹⁶⁵

Montfort and his lieutenants spent the rest of 1211 and the winter of 1212 recapturing *castra* as well as taking oaths of loyalty yet again from towns still under his control. Baldwin of Toulouse, now a loyal vassal to Montfort, managed to retake Lagrave and punish those who had killed

¹⁶² PVCE, 139, 140 # 278–81; PVC 1, 274, 276–7; SCW, 55 laisse 108; WTud, 240 lines 1–4. These *castra* included Rabastens, Gaillac, Coustaussa, Montégut, Lagrave, Cahusac, Saint-Marcel, Laguépie, Saint-Antonin-sur-noble-Val, Puylaurens, Les Cassés, Saint-Félix, Montferrand, Avignon, Saint-Michel, Cuq-Toulza, and Saverdun. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says Montfort lost more than fifty *castra* on the basis of this rumor. They were all in the dioceses of Albi or Toulouse.

¹⁶³ PVCE, 141 #282; PVC 1, 278; SCW, 55 laisse 108; WTud, 240 lines 9–10. The castellan had some wine barrels repaired by a local cooper, who asked him to stick his head inside one of the barrels to see that it was fixed to his satisfaction. As he did so, the cooper took his ax and cut off Pons of Beaumont's head, signaling an uprising which resulted in the death of the small garrison.

¹⁶⁴ SCW, 56 laisse 110; WTud, 244 lines 1–14.

¹⁶⁵ PVCE, 141–2 #284; PVC 1, 279–80. Geoffrey's brother Simon of Neauphle had narrowly escaped death or capture when his supply train was ambushed at the first siege of Toulouse.

the French castellan, Pons of Beaumont. The men of Lagrave mistakenly went out to greet Baldwin and his men as they approached the *castrum*, thinking Baldwin was actually Raimon of Toulouse since their banners were similar. As they began to boast of Pons of Beaumont's death Baldwin's men attacked these unarmed men and killed many who had participated in the earlier massacre, thus getting back the *castrum* for the crusade the same way it had been lost, by subterfuge.¹⁶⁶

Late 1211 brought forth a very rare situation. In spite of the deteriorating weather and increasing cold, the campaigning and fighting never ceased. Even Peter Vaux-de-Cernay mentions the unusual nature of this campaign.¹⁶⁷ As one might expect, winter in southern France tends to be mild by Anglo-American standards, but snow falls on the higher elevations and the temperature often falls below freezing. Montfort was confined to areas he could easily reach, but he desperately wished to regain the territories he had lost that fall as quickly as possible. The summer crusaders had gone home, so Montfort's forces that winter of 1211–1212 consisted of no more than a few hundred men, probably mostly mounted knights. These mounted troops, a mixture of stipendiaries, retainers, and vassals, constituted an elite core willing to serve long periods of time even in adverse conditions out of loyalty or for compensation. The limited numbers and the logistical constraints of the season made sieges of large fortified towns almost impossible, but these mobile troops allowed Simon to move quickly in mounted raids.

Near the end of 1211 one of Montfort's trusted lieutenants, Robert Mauvoison, arrived from a recruiting trip to France bringing with him over 100 well-equipped knights. These knights agreed to serve for the winter, a great boon for the raiding activity Montfort planned to undertake.¹⁶⁸ Though the weather curbed any large-scale military activity, in the next few weeks Montfort and his men kept up a relentless pace, moving from location to location, conducting raids and short sieges to make sure he did not lose any more territory. He left Fanjeaux to go deep into the Count of Foix's holdings because the latter had besieged a *castrum* named Carum (modern Quié), about fourteen kilometers south of Foix, loyal to

¹⁶⁶ PVCE, 141 #282; PVC 1, 278–9; SCW, 55–6; WTud, 240, 242 lines 1–9. William of Tudela's account confuses events here but confirms that Baldwin's banner was thought to be his brother's, thus giving him the advantage of surprise as he approached disloyal *castra* in the Albi region.

¹⁶⁷ PVCE, 145 #292; PVC 1, 288. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's remark actually refers to events in January 1212 but is equally valid for December 1211.

¹⁶⁸ PVCE, 145 #286–7; PVC 1, 283–4. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay comments specifically on the quality of these knights, calling them "electis militibus," or "chosen knights" as the Siblys have rendered it.

Montfort.¹⁶⁹ Upon hearing of Montfort's approach, Raimon-Roger lifted the fifteen-day siege and departed so hurriedly that he left his siege weapons behind. Montfort then raided territories in the Foix region before returning to Fanjeaux. Soon afterwards Montfort's troops left yet again for another mission, this time to besiege the *castrum* of La Pomarède, ten kilometers north of Castelnaudary. After a short siege the army filled the fosse around La Pomarède and prepared for an assault, but before they could attack the garrison abandoned the place at nightfall through a secret passage in the wall.¹⁷⁰ Next Montfort moved eastward towards Albedun, an inaccessible fortress thirty-eight kilometers south of Carcassonne. Before he could get there Albedun's lord came to find Montfort and submitted, sparing the chief crusader from expending precious resources in increasingly hostile weather.¹⁷¹

As the Christmas season of 1211 arrived, Montfort observed the holiday at Castres. In the midst of the celebrations his younger brother Guy arrived. Guy had accompanied his older brother on the Fourth Crusade but had remained behind to marry into the Levantine nobility.¹⁷² After his wife's death he returned to Europe to assist his elder brother. In the coming years Guy provided fraternal support and also served as a close lieutenant. Like many of the other members of Montfort's inner circle, Guy proved to be an effective tactical commander but readily deferred to his older brother's strategic vision.

In spite of last-minute successes, as the year 1211 came to an end the chief crusader's position remained precarious. His failure to conquer Toulouse demonstrated to the nobles and people of Occitania just how tenuous Montfort's position was and provided the incentive for them to go on the offensive themselves. Even though Montfort had won a *bona fide* victory at Saint-Martin-la-Lande, and the fall southern counter-offensive failed miserably, the crusaders had made themselves so unwelcome that mere rumor caused towns under their control to rebel. In spite of the destruction of Cathar strongholds at Lavaur and Les Cassés none of the military activity of

¹⁶⁹ *L'Épopée* 1, 454. This town's location south of Foix placed it far outside Montfort's operating range, but it was for the moment loyal to him. The town was actually a fief of Roger of Comminges, Viscount of Couserans, who had pledged his loyalty to the crusade at the siege of Lavaur but perhaps had to turn the town over to a crusader garrison as a gesture of good faith. Roquebert suggests that William of Aura was castellan but not lord of the site.

¹⁷⁰ PVCE, 143-4 #288-9; PVC 1, 284-5. ¹⁷¹ PVCE, 144 #289; PVC 1, 285.

¹⁷² PVCE, 144 #290; PVC 1, 285-7; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Feudal Nobility and the Kingdom of Jerusalem 1174-1277* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Press, 1973), 23. Guy's descendants became important nobles in Outremer during the second half of the thirteenth century.

this campaign year destroyed the roots of Catharism. By the end of the year 1211, then, there still was no clear victor in this war. While qualitatively superior to anything the southerners could throw at them, Montfort's army was too small and unstable in numbers to win in the immediate future. The people of Occitania still had the numbers, resources, and resolve to defend their land and lives.

Drawing the noose: The campaign year of 1212

It becomes increasingly obvious by this stage of the war that rooting out Catharism was secondary to taking territory and eradicating those who defied the chief crusader. The coming year enhanced Simon of Montfort's reputation as a clever soldier but not as a Christian prince. Militarily, not only did Montfort regain territory the crusade had lost the previous fall and winter, but he also went on the offensive in two areas that had never been part of the original mandate for the destruction of heresy: the Agenais and Gascony. To get there, however, he had to strengthen his position in the viscounty of Albi.

Continuing the campaign of 1211 into January 1212, the truncated winter army rode north to attack the small village of Touelles in the Albi region, partly because it belonged to the traitor Giraud of Pèpieux's father. Montfort seized the town quickly and executed many of its defenders but took Giraud's father prisoner, exchanging him for Dreux of Compans, a crusader noble captured not long before in a supply train ambush.¹ After this the army besieged Cahuzac, also in the Albi region. Montfort intended to isolate the larger *castrum* of Gaillac, some of whose citizens had participated in the assassination of Pons of Beaumont, the garrison commander at Lagrave, the previous fall.² Because of the severe weather, after a short blockade of two days Montfort had his men assault Cahuzac rather than continue to besiege it. This impetuosity paid off, as the army successfully stormed the defenses, capturing the *castrum* and its substantial supplies. William of Tudela says the abundant food stored in Cahuzac kept the crusaders provisioned for a week during the feast of the Epiphany (6 January 1212).³

¹ PVCE, 142 #284, 145 #291; PVC 1, 280, 287; SCW, 56 laisse 110; WTud, 244 lines 18–19.

² See Chapter 4, 128, and footnote 162.

³ SCW, 56 laisse 110–11; WTud, 246 laisse 110 line 22, laisse 111 lines 1–4.

While Montfort and his men assaulted and occupied Cahuzac, the counts of Toulouse, Foix, and Comminges gathered an army and occupied Gaillac, due south of Cahuzac by about nine kilometers.⁴ They sent a letter of defiance to Simon of Montfort, saying they were on their way to attack him. This was a curious turn of events, and the responses by both sides can be interpreted in a number of different ways. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay reports that Montfort took some of his army towards Gaillac to meet the three nobles in battle. Contrary to what the three southern nobles had written him as he approached, they retreated to Montégut, southwest of Gaillac on the Tarn river. As the crusading army pursued them, the three counts and their men fled further west to Rabastens, and as Montfort followed, rode to Toulouse.⁵ At first glance this fits the pattern established for the southern defenders in the Occitan War: retreat in fear when confronted directly. Another look suggests that Raimon VI and company may have been trying to lure Montfort further west towards Toulouse. Conceivably they wanted to get him and his small army far from any supplies, in bad weather, in unfriendly country, and offer battle on their own terms. There is also a third possibility. Perhaps the southerners simply wanted to draw Montfort away from taking Cahuzac, Gaillac, or any other towns in the Albi region by forcing him to dissipate his energies in a fruitless chase.⁶ Montfort refused to take the bait, and he and his army returned to Cahuzac.

THE EARLY SPRING CAMPAIGNS: CHECK AT SAINT-MARCEL
AND THE SIEGE OF HAUTPOL

Between early January and mid-February 1212 the inactivity that was supposed to be the norm in winter finally settled in. Yet the campaign season of 1212 began earlier than normal, even before the forty-day crusader-pilgrims arrived. In February Montfort went to Albi and sought the papal legate Arnaud-Amaury's advice for targets of opportunity. Arnaud-Amaury recommended that Montfort besiege the town of Saint-Marcel, a small *castrum* about twenty kilometers northwest of Albi. Why Montfort asked the legate for specific advice in this matter is unknown, but perhaps because the abbot was staying in Albi at the time he had heard of particular places disloyal to the crusade. In any event, besieging Saint-Marcel was an

⁴ *L'Épopée* 1, 457. Roquebert suggests this was the remnant of the southern army from the previous summer rather than a new one gathered in the depths of winter.

⁵ PVCE, 145 #293; PVC 1, 288–9.

⁶ PVCE, 145 footnote 13. This last possibility is the Siblys' conclusion.

easy sell to Montfort because Giraud of Pépieux held it as a fief from the Count of Toulouse. Tempting though it was, Simon of Montfort failed to capture it. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay amply explains why. It was too early to expect the forty-day crusader-pilgrims to arrive, so Montfort was reduced to the small kernel of his permanent forces, amounting to a few hundred at the most. The chronicler mentions that the crusaders only had about 100 knights and very few footsoldiers. Because of this they could not surround the town, and could only attack one side. This allowed anyone friendly to the townspeople to enter when and where they wished. Eventually the counts of Toulouse, Foix, and Comminges brought their army to Saint-Marcel to help defend it. Whether this was the same army that had retreated before Simon of Montfort in January cannot be known, but the fact that all three were present suggests perhaps it was. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay reports that the three southern counts had at least 500 knights and a large force of footsoldiers, an army so large that some had to camp outside the walls.⁷ The crusaders constructed only one siege machine, a petrary, which was almost destroyed when the Count of Foix led a sortie against it. At times other parties ventured out to fight the crusaders, but these appear to have been half-hearted, easily repulsed attempts.⁸

The biggest problem facing the besiegers at Saint-Marcel was not the frequent southern sorties, Montfort's inferior numbers, or a dearth of siege equipment, though these certainly added to the siege's failure. The major difficulty was a lack of supplies. The nearest town for provisions, Albi, was twenty kilometers away, and people loyal to the southern cause controlled the roads leading to it. Montfort himself left Saint-Marcel during the siege, perhaps to drum up supplies from other parts of the viscounty, because a charter of 12 March 1212 places him in Carcassonne.⁹ Eventually Montfort was forced to send large numbers of his troops from Saint-Marcel to escort any supply carts willing to make the journey from Albi. This depleted the 100 mounted men he had with him at Saint-Marcel and left the remaining crusaders before its walls less able to repel attacks from the *castrum*. By Good Friday (23 March) the army had had no bread for several days. On Saturday 24 March the chief crusader finally concluded that he could not prevail against Saint-Marcel in the present circumstances. He therefore lifted the siege after a month's work and took his army back to Albi, where it operated in the local region for another six weeks. Both the major sources

⁷ PVCE, 146 #295; PVC I, 289–90. The numbers of knights reported seem plausible. Perhaps the 100 knights in the crusader army were the contingent brought by Robert Mauvoisin a few months before.

⁸ PVCE, 146 #295; PVC I, 290. ⁹ Catalogue des actes, 460, #49.

note that the much larger southern forces inside Saint-Marcel made no attempt to attack the tiny crusader army as it marched away.¹⁰ The failure at Saint-Marcel demonstrated that Montfort did not have the resources to engage in siege warfare with so few men, a doubtful supply line, and early spring weather.

The day after Montfort left for Albi, Easter Sunday, Raimon of Toulouse, his fellow counts, and their army left Saint-Marcel and traveled more than twenty-two kilometers southwest to Gaillac. In order to show his enemies that he had abandoned the siege of Saint-Marcel on his own initiative and not because he had been beaten, that Monday, 26 March, Montfort and his men rode from Albi to Gaillac and before its walls once again challenged the southern leaders to a pitched battle. The three southern counts either did not take the offer seriously or were afraid to fight, because they stayed behind the walls of the *castrum*. Soon after the chief crusader returned to Albi.¹¹ His extended residence there indicated where he intended to campaign once the summer crusaders began to arrive. He stayed in Albi at least through 3 April 1212 before moving the army to Castres, some thirty-six kilometers farther south, by 8 April.¹²

During the crusader army's stay at Albi Peter Vaux-de-Cernay made his first eyewitness appearance in the Occitan War. He had accompanied his uncle Guy, the abbot, to Occitania, probably as secretary. In that capacity Peter was in the south for virtually the entire campaign season of 1212 before departing for France with his uncle in early 1213.¹³ Events of the campaign year of 1212, including the sieges of Hautpol, Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val, Penne d'Agenais, and Moissac have particularly detailed accounts based on Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's personal observations.¹⁴

Between the stay in Albi and the march to Castres, crusader contingents from the north began to pour in from Auvergne and much farther away from Germany, Lombardy, and Slavic lands.¹⁵ These contingents finally

¹⁰ PVCE, 146–7 #296–7, 299; PVC 1, 290–3; SCW, 56–7 *laisse* III; WTud, 246 lines 5–7, 248 lines 13–16.

¹¹ PVCE, 148 #300; PVC 1, 293.

¹² SCW, 57 *laisse* III; WTud, 248 lines 14–16; Catalogue des actes, 461 #50; PVCE, 148 #301; PVC II, 1. William of Tudela says the crusading army spent six weeks in Albi. A charter places Montfort in the city as late as 3 April. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay states that the army left Castres two weeks after Easter, on 8 April 1212.

¹³ PVCE, 148, #300 and footnote 27; PVC 1, 293; Dossat, "La Croisade," 224. Peter was in Occitania from Easter 1212 to January 1213, for a few months in 1214, and from June 1216 to the second siege of Toulouse.

¹⁴ Christopher M. Kurpiewski, "Writing Beneath the Shadow of Heresy: the *Historia Albigensis* of Brother Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay," *Journal of Medieval History* 31 (2005), 1–27, especially 20.

¹⁵ SCW, 57 *laisse* III; WTud, 248 lines 17–20.

allowed Montfort to begin large-scale offensive operations for the year. From Castres, the crusading army marched eighteen kilometers further to the southeast to the small *castrum* of Hautpol, perched in the northwest passes of the Black Mountains. An insignificant target by itself, Hautpol did not control a river and was so high in the mountains that few people lived there, something the intervening centuries have done little to alter. Montfort chose Hautpol as a target for two reasons. First, it had rebelled the previous September, hence represented a point of honor for the chief crusader to take back. Secondly, while very small and remote, Hautpol overlooked the mountain pass and the road that meandered through it. From its walls any human or animal traffic coming from the north can be seen fifteen kilometers or more.¹⁶

Though Hautpol qualifies only as a minor siege of the Occitan War, our information is especially good because Peter Vaux-de-Cernay witnessed it.¹⁷ On Sunday, 8 April the army from Castres arrived before the *castrum*. Upon its appearance a force from Hautpol sortied out of the fortifications and attacked the crusaders, but was immediately repulsed. The crusaders set up camp before the walls on one side only, partly because their numbers were not large enough to surround all of it, and also because some parts of the cliffs surrounding Hautpol simply could not be scaled from below.¹⁸ It took the crusaders three days of work to get a petrary sufficiently close enough to bombard the keep. As the first bombardment began, a force of crusader knights put on their armor, gathered their weapons, and descended into a ravine at the foot of the town, intending to take the *castrum* by assault. They broke through the first ring of houses near the bottom, but as they did so the inhabitants of Hautpol higher up climbed on the walls and roofs of their houses and showered the knightly assault force with rocks. In the meantime, a few townspeople climbed down behind the knights and lit a fire in the pass through which the crusaders had forced their way into the outer bourg. The knights were unable to proceed farther up the hill under the hailstorm of rocks and increasingly stood in danger of being cut off from below by the fire. They had little choice but to retreat back through the smoke and heat to get out of harm's

¹⁶ Based on my personal observation when I visited Hautpol.

¹⁷ PVCE, 148 #302; PVC II, 2; Kurpiewski, "Writing Beneath," 20. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says, "ego ipse vidi oculis et experientia didici," "as I learned from my own experience as an eyewitness" (the Sibly's translation).

¹⁸ PVCE, 148 #302; PVC II, 2-3. From his own viewpoint Peter remarks that the hill before Hautpol was almost impossible to climb even if it had not been defended. I would support this based on my own observation.

way.¹⁹ Soon afterwards the people in Hautpol asked for terms, specifically requesting that one of the indigenous knights serving with the crusader army, who held a joint lordship with a kinsman in Hautpol, act as the go-between. While talking with his kinsman at the gates of the castle, this unnamed noble was gravely wounded in the leg by an arrow from a ballista or crossbow (“*sagittam jactu baliste*”), thus ending any possibility of a negotiated settlement.²⁰

At this stage of the siege the crusaders continued to bombard the keep with their rock-thrower. On the evening of the fourth day, a thick fog descended on the mountains and the town. Knowing it was only a question of time before the crusaders successfully assaulted the town, the defenders decided to use the weather to abandon the *castrum* and keep. Just as had happened at Termes almost two years before, the men of the crusade detected the escape and charged up the hill into the town, capturing and killing some and pursuing those few who had gotten away. The next day the chief crusader gave the order to burn Hautpol.²¹ Why he did so was never explained. Many *castra* in Occitania whose inhabitants had done the same thing had not been razed. Perhaps Montfort did not want to garrison the place but could not afford to let it go. As Hautpol burned, Robert Mauvoisin’s contingent of knights, who had arrived near the end of 1211, left the army. This band of French knights, which had originally numbered over 100, had served more than double the forty days required to receive their indulgence. They had provided good service to the chief crusader at a time of year when operations were rarely conducted. Even though Montfort probably greatly lamented the departure of such good troops, their loss was less critical now as the summer crusader-pilgrims arrived in the south.

As the army regrouped, Guy of Montfort and Simon’s fourteen-year-old eldest son Amaury rode to Narbonne to see the legate Arnaud-Amaury consecrated as Archbishop of Narbonne, the highest-ranking and most prestigious episcopal see in central and eastern Occitania. The ceremony took place on 2 May 1212. During the time they spent there, Amaury visited the residence of the Viscount of Narbonne, Aimery. While at the viscount’s

¹⁹ PVCE, 148–9 #302; PVC II, 2–3.

²⁰ PVCE, 149 #303; PVC II, 3–4 and footnote 3. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says this noble held joint lordship over one of the castles at Cabaret, but the chronicler never mentions the noble’s name. Guébin and Lyon believe it was Jourdain of Saissac. In a case of poetic, or in this case divine, justice, Peter related that the castellan of Hautpol, who had called the parley, was injured in the leg next day, supposedly sustaining the same kind of serious wound as his kinsman.

²¹ PVCE, 149, #304; PVC II, 4.

palace the teenager placed his hand on an old window to open it, and it fell out into the street. Later that day, when Amaury was at his residence at the Templar commandery, a mob showed up and accused him of having forced his way into the viscount's residence, which was clearly not the case. A riot ensued at the commandery and the mob seized and killed some Frenchmen in Narbonne, including two of Montfort's personal squires. Amaury's uncle Guy, who was staying at the archbishop's palace, remained where he was until the fervor died down.²² Even if the teenaged Amaury had predilections toward vandalism, the mob's reaction seems out of proportion to the supposed misdeed. The attempt to capture or harm Amaury had little to do with punishing a dubious crime but was really an underhanded way at striking back at the boy's father. This incident shows how unpopular Simon of Montfort was among the people of Occitania even though Narbonne had never been attacked by the crusade.

By May 1212 the prime campaigning season had begun as crusader-pilgrims poured in from northern Europe, filled with fiery zeal preached into them by both William, Archdeacon of Paris, and the famous crusade preacher Jacques of Vitry. Both Peter Vaux-de-Cernay and William of Tudela mention groups of crusaders from the Auvergne, while they and other chroniclers mention men from Saxony, Westphalia, Friesland, Italy, and what was then medieval Yugoslavia. These units included some high-ranking clerics and nobles, including Engelbert, provost and later Archbishop of Cologne, and the Duke of Austria, Leopold VI. His ranks swollen with troops, Montfort walked into most of the places he had lost previously in the fall of 1211 as townspeople let in his forces or fled at their approach.²³ The Count of Toulouse defended Puylaurens with a large army of *routiers* for a short period of time. As Montfort grew closer Raimon VI abandoned the town, leaving it intact for Montfort's men and its crusader lord, Guy of Lucy, to reclaim it.²⁴

²² PVCE, 149–50 #305; PVC II, 5–7. Catalogue des actes, 447 #5; Kovarik, "Simon de Montfort," 89. Simon's two eldest sons Amaury and Guy are mentioned in a deed of 1198, thus making Amaury's age fourteen years or more by 1212.

²³ PVCE, 150–1, #306–12; PVC II, 7–13 and footnotes 3 and 4, page 9; SCW, 57–8 *laissez* 112–14; WTud, 250 *laisse* 112 lines 3, 7; 252 *laisse* 113 line 2, 254, 256 *laisse* 114 line 14; *Annals of Cologne*, 826; ATF, 896; Caesarius, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, 1: 301. The *castra* included Avignonnet, Cassés, Cuq, Montferrand, Montegut, Montmaur, Puylaurens, Saint Felix, Saint-Marcel, Saint Martin Laguépé and Saint Michael, and eventually Gaillac and Rabastens. Many of these places were abandoned, some surrendered, but none gave serious resistance. Saint-Marcel and Saint Martin were both vandalized and burnt. Montfort was especially angry at the citizens of Saint-Marcel because of their successful resistance to the crusader siege of March 1212. Caesarius of Heisterbach's chronology is off, but he attests to Leopold of Austria's participation on the crusade.

²⁴ PVCE, 151 #309; PVC II, 10.

While encamped around Puylaurens, Montfort received word that yet another large army of crusaders was approaching Carcassonne from France, a force which included Robert, Archbishop of Rouen, and another Robert, the Bishop-elect of Laon, William, Archdeacon of Paris, and many nobles and common pilgrims. From Montfort's actions upon hearing the news, it appears that his growing army far exceeded in numbers any other crusader force since 1209. Showing a keen grasp of timing and force, Montfort sent his brother Guy and his marshal, Guy of Lévis, to meet the French crusaders at Carcassonne and to have them operate as a second independent field army further south against the Count of Foix.²⁵ Montfort and the troops he had with him immediately moved to the northwest, towards the Agenais region.

On his way towards the Agenais, only one *castrum* in the Albi region, Saint-Antonin (now called Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val), offered serious resistance, its lord refusing to surrender the town to the French "stick carriers," an uncomplimentary name for a crusader-pilgrim.²⁶ Because he was an eyewitness, the siege of Saint-Antonin is particularly detailed in Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account for what in retrospect was a minor military action. Saint-Antonin sat in a valley known for its beauty, bordered by the large Aveyron river on its southern side and the much smaller La Bonnette on its western end. The *castrum* of Saint-Antonin itself was located in a flat area and its buildings could not be easily defended against assaults or missile fire. As detailed as Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account is, he does not say if the crusader forces placed their camp on the east side of the Bonnette or on the north side of the Aveyron or both. The crusader encampment was large enough that perhaps some tents were close by the three barbicans protecting entry into Saint-Antonin on the northern and eastern sides of the town. Both Peter Vaux-de-Cernay and William of Tudela report that initially the inhabitants of Saint-Antonin mounted a vigorous defense, shooting arrows at the crusaders. In the evening of 20 May 1212 some of the defenders in Saint-Antonin sortied out of the town towards the crusader army and tents. The goading missile fire and this insolent advance proved too much for the common crusader-pilgrims in the army. In a scene that conjured up what had happened at Béziers almost three years before, and without waiting for orders from the chief crusader, these "poor unarmed pilgrims" ("*peregrini pauperes et inermes*")

²⁵ PVCE, 157 #326; PVC II, 25–6.

²⁶ PVCE, 152 #313 and footnote 56; PVC II, 13. As Peter Vaux-de-Cernay explains, this was a slang term for the staff crusader-pilgrims carried, a *burdon*.

began vigorously bombarding three of the barbicans with stones. Within an hour they launched an assault which successfully captured the barbicans guarding the entrances into the *castrum*.²⁷ Later Peter himself saw where large chunks had been taken out of houses by rocks thrown by the crusaders. Some of the defenders now fled through the town and across the river, pursued by some crusaders, though which river they crossed is not mentioned by Peter Vaux-de-Cernay. The pursuers managed to kill a number of retreating defenders as they attempted to escape.²⁸ With the capture of the barbicans and night coming on the crusaders chose not to press an attack. In the middle of the night the lord of Saint-Antonin, Adhémar-Jordan, realized he was powerless to stop the crusaders from breaking into the *castrum* the next day. Probably wishing he had never called the crusaders “stick-carriers,” he swallowed his pride and asked Montfort for terms, hoping at the very least to keep his own freedom. Believing that the next day the *castrum* would surely fall by assault, the chief crusader refused to grant terms, and Adhémar-Jordan finally agreed to surrender himself and Saint-Antonin unconditionally early the next morning. After the capitulation Montfort had the townspeople paraded before him, preparatory to punishing them. Then noting that most were rustics and farmers (“*rudes et agricolas*”), he realized that dispelling or executing them would simply leave Saint-Antonin deserted, so he did not follow through.²⁹ Besides, twenty-eight townspeople had died during the siege (while ten escaped), and many others had suffered greatly when they had earlier fled to the parish church, perhaps the previous day when the barbicans were captured and the poorer crusaders had chased Saint-Antonin’s defenders to the river. The common crusader-pilgrims of the army, called here “ribalds and lads” by William of Tudela, robbed and threatened all of the inhabitants crowded into the sanctuary, and stole their clothes. Montfort did not discipline his men for despoiling the people in the church and apparently allowed them to keep whatever loot they had extorted from the citizens.³⁰ Since Montfort

²⁷ PVCE, 152–3 #314–15; PVC II, 14–15 and footnote 1; SCW, 57 *laisse* 113; WTud, 252 line 10. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay does not mention the use of machines, simply that stones were thrown (“*jactu lapidum*”). It appears as though the crusaders threw stones at the walls by hand in order to drive the defenders far enough away to enable the crusaders to assault the barbicans. The location of the barbicans is not precisely known because the thirteenth-century walls of the town are not extant. The Siblys refer to Guébin and Lyon, who refer to R. LaTouche’s 1926 work on Saint-Antonin for the location of the barbicans. The consensus is that they guarded the northern and eastern ends of the town, where there was no river or other natural feature for protection.

²⁸ The Aveyron is quite wide and deep, requiring a boat or raft to cross it. La Bonnette is much smaller and appears to be fordable on foot.

²⁹ PVCE, 153, #316; PVC II, 15–16. ³⁰ SCW, 57 *laisse* 113; WTud, 252 lines 5–10.

believed Adhémar-Jordan, not the people of Saint-Antonin, was the reason the *castrum* had defied the crusade, he allowed the people their freedom but imprisoned the southern noble and his knights in Carcassonne.³¹ The capitulation of Saint-Antonin ended resistance in the Albi region.

Though the rivers Aveyron and La Bonnette flowed through it, Saint-Antonin was a minor town. Beyond the fact that Peter Vaux-de-Cernay left us an eyewitness account describing the siege, what makes it stand out is the role the common crusader-pilgrims played there. Like Béziers, Saint-Antonin fell largely thanks to the efforts of these men. In the summer Montfort's army swelled with crusader-pilgrims, who may have been a logistical burden much of the time, but their presence provided the manpower pool he needed to conduct his campaigns. Since he seemed to enjoy military success even with few soldiers, with a large army he appeared to be invincible even if much of that army consisted of men who had no expertise, weapons, or scruples but possessed large stomachs and sticky fingers.

INVASION OF THE AGENAIS

If one divided all of central Occitania into zones, Montfort now undisputedly controlled one zone centered on the former Trencavel viscounty, itself anchored around Albi, Béziers, and Carcassonne. The Toulouse zone had eluded him of course, but he now began to figure out ways to weaken and isolate it. The separate field army commanded by his brother Guy kept the Count of Foix at bay farther south, freeing the chief crusader to move northwest of Toulouse for the first time during the crusade. Under the pretext of suppressing heretical activity, and in consultation with his lieutenants, Montfort decided to wrest control of the Agenais region from the Count of Toulouse.³² Raimon VI had acquired the Agenais through his marriage to Joan of England in 1196 as dowry from her brother, Richard the Lion-Heart.³³ After Joan's death in 1199, Raimon VI controlled the Agenais directly on behalf of his son Raimon VII, who was a minor. Though the region did contain Cathars it was not prime Cathar territory.³⁴

³¹ PVCE, 153 #316; SCW, 57 *laisse* 114; WTud, 252 lines 1–3. William of Tudela mentioned that a “Pons the Viscount” became a prisoner too, but whether he was viscount of Saint-Antonin for Adhémar-Jordan, or somewhere else, is not specified.

³² PVCE, 153 #317; PVC II, 16–17.

³³ PVCE, 154 #317; PVC II, 17–18; WPE, chapter v, 18; WP, 38; Hélène Débax, “Les Comtesses de Toulouse,” 229–30.

³⁴ Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 177–80.

The Agenais had seen some military activity early in the crusade during the siege of Casseneuve in 1209, but as a whole the region had been too far from the center of things to concern the crusade until 1211, when militias from Moissac and other Agenais towns supported the Count of Toulouse in his counter-offensive of the summer and fall.³⁵ As Montfort entered the region, Peter Vaux-de-Cernay insisted that the chief crusader was following the pope's instructions to root out heresy and punish its supporters.³⁶ Simon of Montfort's real motivation for moving into this territory northwest of Toulouse cannot be attributed to religious reasons but rather to strategic and personal ones. Taking the fertile fields and well-defended towns of the Agenais both enriched Montfort personally and more importantly eroded Raimon VI's defensive base. It also helped cut off the city of Toulouse. While quite sound in strict military and strategic terms, the invasion of the Agenais actually exacerbated external political matters because the King of England, as Duke of Aquitaine, retained overlordship over the region. Thus by entering the territory Montfort infringed John of England's feudal rights. This gave the English king an excuse to intervene, or at the very least cause problems later for the crusade in western Occitania. The legal implications for Montfort's Agenais adventure resonated for years after, most notably at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.³⁷

Since none of the northerners, including Montfort, had ever been to the Agenais the crusade depended on native guides, namely one Arnold of Montaigu-de-Quercy and other Gascons, to see them through.³⁸ Several of the fortified places Montfort's army encountered journeying west from the Albi region into the Agenais surrendered or were abandoned as the army moved through.³⁹ From Montcuq the army moved farther northwest, eventually marching to the strongly defended *castrum* of Penne d'Agenais. After a short reconnaissance of the place Montfort chose not to besiege it right away but to consolidate his control where he could.⁴⁰ Leaving the main body of the army at Penne, sometime before 3 June 1212 the chief crusader traveled with a few knightly companions twenty-five kilometers southwest and peacefully entered the largest city of the region, Agen. The citizens of Agen offered Montfort joint lordship of the town

³⁵ SCW, 49 laisse 88; WTud, 208 lines 3–6. ³⁶ PVCE, 154 #317; PVC II, 18.

³⁷ PVCE, 154, footnote 67. The Siblys' excellent note neatly describes the legal complications of Montfort's invasion.

³⁸ SCW, 58 laisse 114; WTud, 254 lines 15–17.

³⁹ PVCE, 154 #318; PVC II, 18–19; SCW, 57 laisse 114; WTud, 254 lines 13–14. These included Caylus, about ten kilometers north of Saint-Antonin, and Montcuq, forty-seven kilometers west of Caylus. Simon of Montfort gave Montcuq to Baldwin of Toulouse.

⁴⁰ PVCE, 155 #319–20; PVC II, 19–21.

with its bishop.⁴¹ With the largest city in his pocket, by 3 June 1212 Montfort moved back north to the main army to begin the siege of Penne d'Agenais.

Richard the Lion-Heart had built this thick-walled castle high above the Lot River on a hill of solid rock, with all the care and skill he devoted to military projects (see Figure 7, p. xxiii).⁴² Hugh of Alfaro, the Seneschal of Agen, commanded Penne. Hugh was a Navarrese *routier* married to one of Raimon VI's illegitimate daughters, and represents a rare example of an upwardly mobile mercenary and an outsider who made good by marrying up and assuming the important responsibilities of a great noble's official.⁴³ Hugh of Alfaro proved his loyalty to Raimon VI on several occasions during the crusade before and after 1212. He helped defend the city of Toulouse during the crusader siege of 1211 and had participated in the failed southern counter-offensive that same fall.⁴⁴ He now refused to surrender as castellan of Penne d'Agenais and got ready to resist the crusade. On the one hand, as an experienced professional soldier he would not be inactive as his father-in-law often was. On the other hand, he faced a very large crusading army with a cadre highly experienced after three years of heavy siege warfare.

Long before the crusade reached him, Hugh had gathered some 400 veteran *routiers* like himself for his garrison, a garrison that included several well-known mercenary captains as well as local nobles.⁴⁵ With his professionals he headquartered himself in the inner castle at the top of the hill, while ejecting the townspeople of Penne in order to conserve supplies and to prevent civilian casualties from weakening his moral resolve. He stocked his fortress with the best of provisions in ample quantities. In addition to these preparations, Hugh had his own counter-siege weapons, including rock-throwers, and stocks of both wood and iron for making weapons and repairs. The upper castle already had its own well, but in order to make it totally self-sufficient, Hugh had built two repair shops, a furnace, and a mill to grind grain.⁴⁶ Our main chroniclers describe how formidable Penne d'Agenais was. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says it was the key (*clavis*) to the entire Agenais, though by 1212 it no longer served as a frontier castle.⁴⁷

⁴¹ PVCE, 155 #320 and footnote 74; PVC II, 21 and footnote 1; Rhein, *Les Actes des seigneurs de Montfort*, 192 #154. A deed of 1217 mentions the joint lordship.

⁴² PVCE, 156, #321; PVC II, 22. ⁴³ PVCE, 155, #319; PVC II, 20.

⁴⁴ SCW, 46–7 *laisse* 81, 49 *laisse* 87; WTud, 194 lines 6–9, 204 lines 9–10.

⁴⁵ PVCE, 155 #319; PVC II, 20; SCW 58, *laisse* 114; WTud, 256 lines 29–32. The mercenary captains included Bausan, Bernard Bovon, and Gerald of Montfabès, castellan of the Montcuq given to Baldwin of Toulouse on the journey to the Agenais.

⁴⁶ PVCE, 155 #319, 156 #321; PVC II, 20, 22–3. ⁴⁷ PVCE, 156 #321; PVC II, 22.

He discussed the ruggedness of Penne's natural surroundings and its beauty as a site surrounded by streams, meadows, and woodlands. A twenty-first-century observer can add a few details to Penne's considerable advantages as an economic and military site. It is indeed a beautiful and fertile place, as the Cistercian monk says. From a military standpoint Penne is easily defensible: even today the ruins of its castle are accessible only on the southern side. Penne is the high point of a large flat area peppered with wooded hilltops like itself. From the top of its hill an observer can see twenty-six kilometers north across the Lot, undoubtedly a huge advantage when Penne was a border fortress. The southern view is more restricted, and in places from the top of the hill one cannot see past the roofs of modern houses further down the slope.

As the crusaders arrived before Penne early on the morning of 3 June 1212, Hugh of Alfaro made his final preparations by burning the unwallled lower town ("burgum inferius") to open his line of sight to the south and deny the crusader army any shelter.⁴⁸ Since the river side of Penne d'Agenais is sheer, and the crusade army came from the southeast, the crusaders must have established their camp in the recently burnt lower town, south of the inner fortress. The seneschal conducted a spirited defense from the start by having his men shoot arrows at the crusaders even as they pitched their tents in the burnt suburb. Some days after the crusaders began bombarding the keep with rock-throwers. The garrison replied with its own counter-fire. Even though the crusaders brought up more rock-throwers and even destroyed houses in the upper town, they could not weaken the exterior walls. Meanwhile, the weather grew hotter.⁴⁹

At this point in the siege Peter Vaux-de-Cernay makes an interesting observation. He remarks that "our count [Simon] had few knights, although he had many pilgrims on foot" ("comes noster paucos habebat milites, licet multos haberet pedites peregrinos").⁵⁰ Several assaults failed because the lightly armed and often unarmored troops were chased away by accurate stone-throwing from the walls. At several points aggressive sorties from the upper castle threatened the crusader siege machines and in general effectively harassed soldiers of the crusader army.⁵¹ Since the defenders of Penne acquitted themselves well the siege took longer than its planners had anticipated. Eventually many of the summer crusaders approached the end of their forty-day service. Because of this, Simon of Montfort had to recall

⁴⁸ PVCE, 155 #321; PVC II, 21. ⁴⁹ PVCE, 156 #322; PVC II, 23-4.

⁵⁰ PVC II, 24 #323. The translation in the text is mine. ⁵¹ PVCE, 156 #323; PVC II, 24.

the second army under his brother Guy, campaigning dozens of miles to the south, to reinforce his quickly dissolving army.

Guy's highly mobile army of crusader-pilgrims had conducted several successful raids in the Count of Foix's lands, effectively showing how impotent the latter was when faced with a sizeable force. This army captured and destroyed the small mountain town of Lavelanet, twenty kilometers southeast of Foix and killed enough of its inhabitants that many residents of the surrounding areas simply burned their towns and retreated farther up into the mountains.⁵² Guy's force then moved north into the region around Toulouse and ravaged other abandoned *castra* before he received word to join his brother at Penne d'Agenais. As this separate army made its way towards Penne d'Agenais, it continued to raid and destroy targets of opportunity. Outside a small, obscure mountain town of no strategic value called Penne d'Albigeois, nine kilometers south of Saint-Antonin near the Aveyron river, the crusaders destroyed crops and vineyards around the place but lost a knight to ambush by *routiers* of the garrison.⁵³ To his brother's relief and to the demoralization of Penne's defenders, Guy's army eventually made it to the siege. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay reported that the elder Montfort had his camp situated in the "west" (*occidentis*), presumably the southwest on the landward side of Penne. Guy pitched his camp in the "east" (*orientis*) and erected his own siege engine in order to bombard the fortress.⁵⁴

Although nine siege engines constantly bombarded Penne's walls, Montfort believed they were inadequate and so had an even larger one built. Far more serious than this was that many of the crusader-pilgrims in Montfort's army had completed their forty day's service. What with this and the eagerness of some to fight a more foreign enemy than the people of Occitania, Montfort's magnificent army of the late spring bled away. The Provost of Cologne had already departed as well as other German contingents and nobles. Some soldiers and other members of the crusade, including the Austrian Duke Leopold and the papal legate Arnaud-Amaury, traveled to Spain to fight against the Almohads, thus depriving Montfort of further manpower. The crusader-pilgrims who traveled to Spain that summer, however, contributed to one of the most

⁵² PVCE, 157 #326–27; PVC II, 25–7.

⁵³ PVCE, 157–8 #327; PVC II, 27–8. Penne d'Albigeois remains a remote place; the ruins of its castle look like a geological outcrop rather than fortifications.

⁵⁴ PVCE, 158 #328; PVC II, 28–9; SCW, 58 *laisse* 115; WTud, 258 lines 13–18.

significant victories in all of the *Reconquista*, the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa.⁵⁵

The reinforcements brought by Guy of Montfort did not help for long. Soon after they turned up at Penne the Archbishop of Rouen, the Bishop-elect of Laon, and their contingents made preparations to depart. Montfort received information that large units of fresh crusaders from France had reached Carcassonne, and he begged whomever he could to stay until this new army could get to Penne. Since Carcassonne is more than 180 kilometers from Penne, this would take some time. The Archbishop of Rouen graciously agreed to extend his stay until reinforcements arrived, but the Bishop-elect of Laon and his men refused to stay on.⁵⁶ Even Guy Vaux-de-Cernay and his nephew Peter left for Carcassonne for some unspecified reason, though they were not gone long.⁵⁷ The departure of Robert of Laon and a large part of the crusader army was a serious blow to Montfort. Their inopportune exodus laid bare how dependent he was on outside support.

Finally the big machine the chief crusader had ordered to be constructed was ready for use and William, Archdeacon of Paris, Occitan War veteran and enthusiastic amateur siege engineer, led its crew. This machine quickly began to weaken the walls of Penne and pulverize its interior buildings. The promised reinforcements eventually arrived from Carcassonne, including the Abbot of Saint Remigius at Reims, the Dean of Auxerre Cathedral, the Archdeacon of Châlons and substantial numbers of both knightly and common pilgrims. This freed the Archbishop of Rouen to depart for the north.⁵⁸ Though the defenders of Penne had done all they could to prepare for a long siege, they began to run short of food and, more importantly, water. Their wells had dried up, and even after expelling any remaining townspeople, by the third week of July they faced an increasingly dire situation.⁵⁹ Even though Montfort's manpower situation remained unpredictable, from the defenders' standpoint he appeared to have overwhelming forces. As days passed it became obvious that Raimon VI had no intention of aiding his son-in-law and seneschal.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ PVCE, 156 #324, 158 #329; PVC II, 24–5, 29–30 and footnote. 1; ATF, 894; *Annals of Cologne*, 826; O'Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade*, 70; Smith, *Innocent III*, 104. Now Bishop of Carcassonne, Guy acted as legate while Arnaud-Armaury crusaded in Spain.

⁵⁶ PVCE, 158 #329; PVC II, 29–30. ⁵⁷ PVCE, 158–9 #330, 161 #339; PVC II, 30, 38.

⁵⁸ PVCE, 159 #330–1; PVC II, 31–2; SCW, 58 *laisse* 115; WTud, 256, lines 3–4.

⁵⁹ SCW, 58 *laisse* 115; WTud, 256 lines 7–8, 258 lines 8–10; PVCE, 159 #332; PVC II, 32. Earlier (PVCE, 155 #319; PVC II, 20) Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says that Hugh of Alfaro had already expelled the townspeople, so who these people were is not known. Montfort forced them back into the *castrum*, a smart move to further weaken the garrison.

⁶⁰ SCW, 58 *laisse* 115; WTud, 258 line 12; PVCE, 159 #333; PVC II, 32.

The garrison began to make peace proposals before an assault could make their lives forfeit. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, Simon of Montfort wanted to storm the city or force it into unconditional surrender, but his lieutenants reminded him that the forty days would soon be up for yet more of his army. Moreover, no one outside the walls knew for certain how much longer the garrison could hold out. If the chief crusader planned to accomplish anything else that summer he had to seriously consider what the garrison of Penne d'Agenais was offering: surrender of the fortification in exchange for the freedom of the garrison to leave with their arms. After consulting his subordinates, Montfort decided to accept the offer, and Penne surrendered on 25 July 1212. The *castrum* was duly repaired and garrisoned by Montfortian troops.⁶¹ Penne d'Agenais proved that even a fortress built by Richard the Lion-Heart and manned by professional *routiers* could not hold out against the athlete of Christ's tactical skill and tenacity.

REVENGE AT BIRON AND THE SIEGE OF MOISSAC

While still engaged at the siege of Penne, Montfort sent a small army under Robert Mauvoisin westward further into the Agenais. He hoped to capture the town of Marmande, about fifty kilometers northwest of Agen. Marmande represented the farthest westerly town subject to the Count of Toulouse, and the chief crusader wished to send an unambiguous message that he intended taking all of Raimon VI's territories. Robert arrived before the town and soon ascertained that the inhabitants of Marmande were willing to surrender, though the garrison in the keep, consisting of some of the Count of Toulouse's sergeants, was not. He had a mangonel brought up to fire a few shots at the walls, allowing the garrison to capitulate honorably.⁶²

After the siege of Penne ended, Montfort immediately drove his army straight northward about twenty-seven kilometers to enact some personal retribution at Biron. This *castrum* belonged to the Count of Toulouse but was held by Martin Algai, the *routier* who had deserted Simon of Montfort

⁶¹ PVCE, 159 #333–4; PVC II, 32–3; SCW, 58 laisse 115; WTud, 258 lines 19–21. Allowing Hugh of Alfaro to leave may have been a mistake. He remained an implacable enemy of the crusade, participating in the battle of Muret in 1213, the second siege of Toulouse in 1217–18, and the battle of Baziège in 1219.

⁶² PVCE, 159–60 #336; PVC II, 34–5. Apparently Robert Mauvoisin did not have many men with him, so the garrison simply switched allegiance and remained in place. The townspeople of Marmande and their various garrisons changed sides several other times in the next few years, a process culminating in the massacre of the inhabitants by Louis VIII in 1219.

in the critical stages of the battle of Saint-Martin-la-Lande in 1211. He had remained neutral since then, though he used Biron as a base from which to strike out at his neighbors and other targets, some of whom who had complained to the chief crusader.⁶³ Montfort decided to make Martin Algai an object lesson for others considering desertion. His army was large enough to immediately surround Biron and successfully assault the bourg, driving the garrison into the upper fortifications. At this point the garrison tried to surrender in exchange for their lives, but Montfort did not intend to allow Martin Algai to escape. He agreed to spare the garrison if they turned their commander over to him. Justice was swift once Martin fell into the chief crusader's hands. Being a merciful man (according to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay anyway), Simon of Montfort allowed Martin Algai to confess his sins before having him tied to a horse, dragged through the ranks of the crusaders, and subjected to a humiliating public hanging.⁶⁴

Temporarily meeting up at Penne d'Agenais, Montfort took counsel with his advisors and waited for reinforcements working their way from Carcassonne via Cahors before taking his next step.⁶⁵ He wanted to extract every possible territorial and strategic gain while he still had a viable field army. With the support of his inner circle and the greater nobles, who included Aubry, Archbishop of Reims, and Alice of Montfort, he decided to besiege the town of Moissac, thirty-eight kilometers southwest of Penne d'Agenais on the Tarn.⁶⁶ His reasons for doing so are more complex than they appear at first glance. Obviously any medium-sized *castrum* partially belonging to the Count of Toulouse, occupying a strategic position near a river fork between the Tarn and Garonne, without substantial geographical barriers or a large militia, was ripe for seizure. Like many citizens of Occitania, the inhabitants of Moissac initially believed they could wait out a siege and therefore had not made their peace with the crusade. The abbot

⁶³ SCW, 59 laisse 115; WTud, 258 lines 28–30.

⁶⁴ PVCE, 160 #337; PVC II, 36–7; SCW, 59 laisse 116; WTud, 260 lines 1–6; R. de Boysson, “Les deux expéditions de Simon de Montfort en Sarladais,” *Bulletin de la Société Historique et Archéologique du Périgord* (1900), 270–81, especially 277–81, contains additional information about this incident and Martin Algai's background.

⁶⁵ PVCE, 161 #339; PVC II, 38; SCW, 59 laisse 116; WTud, 260 lines 12–14. William of Tudela writes that Alice of Montfort brought some 15,000 men for the army. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account differs substantially as to the number of reinforcements. According to him, the countess was accompanied by Guy Vaux-de-Cernay (and hence by Peter, an eyewitness) and a “few pilgrims on foot” (“pauca pedites peregrinos”). The weather was dreadfully hot and the pilgrims woefully unprepared, so both the Bishop of Carcassonne and Alice of Montfort walked occasionally, allowing the weaker crusaders to ride their horses. Based on Peter's account the number and quality of these reinforcements did not add much to the existing crusade army, although they managed to occupy and destroy some deserted *castra* along the way.

⁶⁶ PVCE, 161 #340, PVC II, 39.

of Saint Peter's monastery in Moissac, who shared lordship of the *castrum* with the Count of Toulouse, had earlier fled the town because its people refused to obey him, and he undoubtedly wished to have the town besieged and thus induced to be more compliant.⁶⁷ Steven Isaac suggests that Montfort besieged Moissac because the citizens had requested assistance from the Count of Toulouse, who responded by sending a *routier* unit to defend it. Hence he believes the presence of the *routiers* drew the ire of the crusade.⁶⁸ In any event, the *routiers* formed the hard core of resistance during the siege and undoubtedly prevented the town from falling sooner thanks to their presence and military skill.⁶⁹

By 14 August the crusader army arrived before Moissac. Because of the constant changing of troops in Montfort's army, the crusaders initially did not have enough manpower to surround the town entirely, though at first they probably controlled the southeastern part of it between the Tarn and the walls.⁷⁰ Although Penne and Moissac both had *routier* garrisons and were scenic and prosperous, that is where the resemblance ends. Moissac was located in a relatively flat area and was dependent on its walls for strength rather than natural terrain, though it contained abundant wells. There was a large hill to the northwest of the town, the heights of which gave the holder some advantage, but it had not been fortified prior to the siege and thus was vulnerable to a determined attacker.

In spite of the fact that tactically the siege of Moissac was easier to conduct than many of Montfort's other sieges, including Penne d'Agenais, the chroniclers report a particularly difficult, protracted, skirmish-ridden struggle. As the church bells of Moissac constantly rang out a challenge or warning, depending on one's perspective, the crusading army constructed siege engines and used them to some effect, although the defenders had also constructed machines and shot back.⁷¹ During the early days of the siege, before the *castrum* was surrounded, units of southern *routiers* climbed the hill on the northwest, firing crossbow bolts into the crusader camp even

⁶⁷ PVCE, 165 #353; PVC II, 50.

⁶⁸ Isaac, "Down upon the Fold," 313. Though concern over use of *routiers* had been one of the reasons for the Albigensian Crusade, it was relatively minor compared to heresy. Penne d'Agenais had been besieged because it was the one town determined to resist; the fact that its garrison consisted of *routiers* was incidental. That Moissac too intended to resist was the reason for the siege, not that *routiers* helped defend it.

⁶⁹ SCW, 59 laisse 117, 60 laisse 118; WTud, 262 lines 1–5, 264 lines 1–6. Not only did these men from Toulouse provide military expertise but they also constantly reassured the worried people of Moissac, falsely as it turned out, that the town could hold out against a siege.

⁷⁰ Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says nothing about the river hampering or impeding the army, which suggests that the crusaders must have controlled it close to the walls.

⁷¹ PVCE, 162 #341–2; PVC II, 39–41.

during church services and fighting fierce hand-to-hand combats with men sent up the hill to dislodge them. In order to lower morale and frighten the besiegers, the defenders cut dead crusaders' bodies to pieces.⁷²

As the siege of Moissac wore on into September additional crusader contingents arrived, including some under Renaud, Bishop of Toul. When sufficient manpower levels were reached the crusaders made a concerted effort to capture the hill for good and surround the town on all sides.⁷³ Crusader siege machines knocked huge holes in the walls of Moissac, further demoralizing the people inside.⁷⁴ Though the town was quickly surrounded, the defenders still managed to move in and out of the fortifications. When crusader wood-cutting parties ventured beyond their camp Montfort was forced to send armed escorts with them lest they be ambushed.⁷⁵ Even as the crusaders appeared to gain the upper hand during the dull but dangerous work of the siege, it proved a bloody stage for combat, ambushes, and near misses. In one episode, a large unit of defenders sortied outside the fortified walls in order to attack and burn as much crusader siege equipment as possible. In particular the defenders wanted to burn a siege cat. The fact that this piece of siege equipment is specifically mentioned suggests that the crusaders were close to assaulting the walls. Montfort himself responded with other mounted knights to repulse this sortie. There ensued a vicious hand-to-hand combat in which Montfort was surrounded by the enemy, wounded in the foot by an arrow, and his horse was killed under him. Two of his companions, one the steady William of Contres, helped protect him until Guy of Montfort and other mounted knights forced their way through and scattered the enemy. The Archbishop of Reims's nephew was not so lucky. During the skirmish four common soldiers (*garson*) defending Moissac captured, murdered, and dismembered him, throwing his remains over the walls.⁷⁶ The fact that these commoners did not even attempt to ransom their prize, in an age when knights and nobles commonly bought their way out of captivity, was a sobering reminder of the stakes of the Occitan War. One might argue that this was no different from what the crusaders had done to Martin Algai the month before, but it was. While perhaps of knightly rank,

⁷² PVCE, 163 #344, 346; PVC II, 43, 44.

⁷³ SCW, 60 laisse 119; WTud, 266 lines 1–2; PVCE, 163 #345; PVC II, 43–4. William of Tudela specifically mentions that the town was surrounded at the beginning of September.

⁷⁴ SCW, 61 laisse 123; WTud, 274 lines 3–6. ⁷⁵ SCW, 60 laisse 120; WTud, 268 lines 8–10.

⁷⁶ PVCE, 162–3 #343; PVC II, 42–3; SCW, 61 laisse 121–2; WTud, 268, 270, 272. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay and William of Tudela are particularly consistent in their description of this skirmish, the reasons for it, and the death of the archbishop's nephew.

Martin Algai was a *routier* of spurious background and occupation with a reputation for raiding his neighbors. What the four *garson* did to the archbishop's nephew was done to a noble by men of a distinctly inferior social rank not content simply to kill but determined to dismember and humiliate him in that death.

Our eyewitness, Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, suffered a close call himself. On horseback one day he ventured close to the *castrum* to advise the crusader-pilgrims firing petrary stones at the walls of Moissac. A *routier* crossbowman defending the walls deliberately shot at the robed Cistercian monk, the bolt piercing Peter's habit and lodging in his horse's saddle. Though neither Peter nor his horse sustained a wound the chronicler remarks how heinous it was that a nominal non-combatant, unambiguously clothed in monastic garb, should be targeted.⁷⁷ In aiming for monks or killing high-born prisoners the defenders were sending the message that even well-connected crusaders or churchmen would be killed like common felons if the opportunity presented itself.

The crusaders eventually drew close enough to the walls to attempt a breach by using the siege cat. Here our main sources disagree as to the sequence of events, but because Peter Vaux-de-Cernay was an eyewitness his account is probably closer to the mark.⁷⁸ According to Peter, a cowhide-covered siege cat was dragged by the crusaders across one defensive ditch, but the defenders of Moissac had built a wooden palisade in time to slow it down and allow them to dig another ditch. Behind this second ditch the defenders' mangonel provided effective counter battery fire at the crusaders' siege weapons as well as anti-personnel fire against those protecting the cat. The crusaders had to fill in the second ditch to gain access to the walls, but an assault seemed imminent to the extent that a force including Simon of Montfort and his brother Guy were inside the cat waiting to lead it. At sunset, just as had happened earlier in the siege, a large group of men carrying torches, dry wood, straw, tow, salted meat, fat, oil, and other combustibles, accompanied by crossbowmen, sortied out from the walls of Moissac to burn the cat. The men of Moissac lobbed a veritable storm of fire to destroy the cat and its unfortunate inhabitants. Crusaders desperately attempted to put out the flames with wine, water, and dirt, while

⁷⁷ PVCE, 163 #346; PVC II, 44–5. Peter seems to have forgotten that he was advising the petrary crew on where to fire, thus making himself a legitimate target.

⁷⁸ SCW, 62 laisse 123; WTud, 274 lines 11–18. According to William of Tudela, a large section of the wall fell into the moat or fosse surrounding the town, precipitating negotiation attempts by the people of Moissac.

others tried to drag the cat to safety and dislodge the lumps of meat and pots of oil from around it.⁷⁹

Because the cat was damaged and perhaps the men inside were rattled by their near-immolation, the defenders of Moissac won a temporary reprieve until the next morning. At that time the crusaders mounted an assault at several places along the fortifications and succeeded in battering in all the palisades on the walls and barbicans. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, the chanting of the Archbishop of Reims, the bishops of Toul and Albi, the Archdeacon of Paris, the Abbot of Moissac, and other monks and clergy on the hill to the southwest helped bring divine assistance, for the defenders fled from the remnants of the outlying fortifications into the last set of defenses.⁸⁰ It was only a matter of days, perhaps hours, before the crusaders breached the walls and the town was taken storm. By this time news had reached the inhabitants of Moissac that Castelsarrasin, seven kilometers to the south, had made terms with the crusade after its own *rouitier* garrison, led by Montfort's old foe Giraud of Pépieux, had abandoned it. Other towns, such as Verdun on the Garonne near Toulouse, had also surrendered.⁸¹

As the town and its fortifications stood ready for a final assault, Simon of Montfort agreed to a negotiated surrender on 8 September 1212. The chief crusader believed he would take heavy casualties in a general assault and thought in the process the *castrum* would be completely destroyed, depriving the crusaders of a possible base and the abbot, who held Moissac as a

⁷⁹ PVCE, 163–4 #348–9; PVC II, 45–6. It is possible that this attack was the same as earlier reported by Peter, PVCE, 162–3 #343; PVC II, 42–3, and William of Tudela, *SCW*, 61 *laisse* 121, *WTud*, 268, 270, except that in William of Tudela's incident Montfort skirmished with the southerners on horseback with many of his followers, while here he and his brother were actually inside the cat. Though there are some similarities, I believe these to be separate incidents.

⁸⁰ PVCE, 164, #350–1 and footnote 119; PVC II, 46–8 and footnote 2. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay does not mention where the assaults took place, but Guébin and Lyon believe they occurred at the Malaveille and the Saint Jacques' gates on the east and southeast side of Moissac. The Siblys follow Guébin and Lyon. Beyond the fact that Guébin and Lyon misspell Malaveille as Maraveille, an error which the Siblys repeat, there is no evidence to suggest that the assault occurred at these two specific places. To make things murkier, Peter states that the clerics who chanted the *Veni Creator Spiritus* to boost morale and confound the enemy were on the hill to the west overlooking the town. If they were, only God would have heard their words because the two gates mentioned are far out of earshot to those on the east side of the *castrum*.

⁸¹ PVCE, 164–5, #352; PVC II, 48–9; *SCW*, 59–60 *laisse* 117, 61, *laisse* 122, 62 *laisse* 125; *WTud*, 262, 264 lines 11–33, 272, 276 lines 1–7. William of Tudela reports that Castelsarrasin surrendered earlier in the siege, while Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says its surrender came after the assault and helped persuade the people of Moissac to consider capitulation. Perhaps Castelsarrasin surrendered early in the siege but the people of Moissac did not get the news until the crusaders were within breathing range of the walls.

fief of the Count of Toulouse, of his property.⁸² Both the major sources agree on the terms Montfort imposed on Moissac: the townspeople had to agree to hand over all *routiers* and any soldiers from Toulouse in the garrison, as well as to take an oath not to attack “Christians” (meaning crusaders). In order to avoid individual despoliation the citizens of the town paid a ransom of over 100 gold marks, and the Abbot of Moissac received partial control of the town as a fief from Simon of Montfort. There still remained the disposal of the 300 or more *routiers* and soldiers from Toulouse. Both sources report that the crusaders executed these men without trial or mercy.⁸³ The cold-blooded killing of the *routiers* at Moissac was legally justified, perhaps, but morally reprehensible. It should be understood that the crusader army had been battling tough units of *routiers* all summer, and the particularly vigorous defense of Moissac perhaps suggested to the crusaders that the only good *routier* was a dead one. The men of garrisons who held out too long, as at Lavaur in 1210 and now at Moissac, would not be given a chance to plead for their lives.

WRAPPING UP THE CAMPAIGN YEAR OF 1212

By Moissac’s surrender on 8 September all the significant towns in the Agenais, Albi region and in the Count of Toulouse’s western lands were friendly to or in crusader hands except for Toulouse and Montauban. The height of the campaign year had now passed, but Montfort still wished to accomplish other things before the season ended. Montauban lay some twenty-four kilometers southeast of Moissac and about forty-eight kilometers north of Toulouse. The citizens of Montauban had harried the crusade during the siege of Moissac. Some Montaubanais had surrounded and ambushed a crusader unit coming south from Cahors, compelling the chief crusader to send a mounted relief force led by Baldwin of Toulouse to rescue them. Baldwin’s troops accomplished this rescue in a single day, with no casualties, and even captured eight horses for their trouble.⁸⁴ After the siege of Moissac ended, the crusaders decided to besiege Montauban in order to avert other ambushes in the future. Besides the municipal militia, Roger-Bernard, son of the Count of Foix, had garrisoned Montauban with 100 horsemen. Like Moissac, Montauban sat in flat, defenseless terrain.

⁸² PVCE, 165 #353; PVC II, 49.

⁸³ SCW, 62 laisse 124; WTud, 276 lines 1–6; PVCE, 165 # 353; PVC II, 49–50. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says that it was the “pilgrims” (*peregrini*) who killed the *routiers*. For the exact terms of the agreement between Montfort and the abbot see *Layettes* 5: 67–9 #194.

⁸⁴ SCW, 61 laisse 122–3; WTud, 272, 274 lines 1–2.

It also resembled Moissac, however, in that it had stout walls, wide ditches, and a citizenry prepared for a siege. The chief crusader eventually chose not to besiege it, for a number of reasons. One, since it was late in the campaign year he might not have the manpower to see it through to the end. Two, though none of the sources mention it, Montfort must have realized that Montauban was already isolated and could eventually be brought to submission. Three, the Abbot of Pamiers asked for Montfort's help further south. Pamiers had been under blockade by the men of Auterive and the Count of Foix for some time, and the abbot feared that it could not hold out without military help or at least an appearance by the chief crusader.⁸⁵ A show of force south of Toulouse at this late date was both tactically and strategically prudent for Montfort because it would further weaken the area and the noble who remained one of his most capable enemies.⁸⁶

As Montfort made his way to the far south of his normal operating range, some late arriving German crusader-pilgrim units departed from Carcassonne and, under the command of Enguerrand of Boves, marched west to Saverdun.⁸⁷ The counts of Toulouse and Foix had decided for the moment to defend Saverdun against the crusade, but on hearing of the approach of Enguerrand and his Germans they fled north to Auterive.⁸⁸ When the crusader army followed them there, the two southern counts, true to form, abandoned the *castrum*. Montfort specifically garrisoned Auterive as a defense against southerners leaving Toulouse to go south.⁸⁹ Auterive was only twenty-eight kilometers south of Toulouse, so its capture further isolated the city and its count. Montfort now nominally controlled all the territory northwest of Toulouse (except Montauban), and also northeast, east and directly south of the city.

To cement his control before the campaign season ended, Montfort again exceeded his mandate by moving into the Comminges region of Gascony, southwest of Toulouse. In doing so he drew the attention of a concerned Pere II because the King of Aragon was overlord of the Count of Comminges. While the Count of Comminges's lands were not under suspicion of heresy, its count, Bernard IV, staunchly supported both the counts of Foix and Toulouse and provided active military support to the

⁸⁵ SCW, 62 laisse 125; WTud, 276, 278. William mentioned reasons one and three specifically; I assume that reason two was already known to the crusaders.

⁸⁶ PVCE, 166, footnote 127 brought this to my attention.

⁸⁷ PVCE, 166 #354–5; PVC II, 50–1; SCW, 62 laisse 125; WTud, 278 lines 15–17. Both Peter Vaux-de-Cernay and William of Tudela suggest these were noble crusader-pilgrims.

⁸⁸ PVCE, 166 #354; PVC II, 51. ⁸⁹ PVCE, 166 #355; PVC II, 51–2.

Count of Toulouse earlier that year.⁹⁰ The crusader army moved to Muret, less than twenty kilometers south of Toulouse, but was delayed several days on the east side of the Garonne because a bridge at Muret had been burned to slow down their advance. Montfort could have gone on with his mounted troops and was urged to do so by his marshal Guy of Lévis, but the athlete of Christ chose to delay until his crusader-pilgrims could make their way over the Garonne. He did this because he recognized their importance and contribution to the army and did not wish to be accused of abandoning men so critical to his operations. Once all had crossed the Garonne, they captured Muret without incident.⁹¹ Though their count had fought the crusade, the people of the Count of Comminges's territory had no stomach for resistance. Two of the leading churchmen in the area, the bishops of Comminges and Couserans, encouraged Simon of Montfort to seize as much territory as possible, indicating they knew their dioceses would not put up serious resistance. Montfort took as much as he could, destroying the rest in raids.⁹² Towns that willingly surrendered included Saint Gaudens, eighty-four kilometers southwest of Toulouse, Samatan, forty-two kilometers west of the city, and Isla Jordan, twenty-nine kilometers due west of the city. By controlling these towns, Montfort had now drawn a strategic noose around the city of Toulouse.

Tightening the noose before winter was another story. Montfort returned to Muret, but by now almost all of the crusader-pilgrims except for Frederick, Count of Toul, had departed northward, and he was left only with his winter cadre.⁹³ Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's uncle, now Bishop of Carcassonne, prepared the defenses of Muret in case of an incursion from Toulouse. Because Montfort's forces essentially surrounded Toulouse, his horsemen, in spite of their small numbers, raided almost up to the city gates. As Peter Vaux-de-Cernay noted, Toulouse was swollen with refugees from all the fighting that year. Not only were there dispossessed nobles (called *faidits* by the *Chanson*) who had fled their territories ahead of the crusader army, but also Cathars afraid for their lives, as well as *rouitiers* looking for employment or serving in the personal retinues of nobles. These refugees drained Toulouse financially and logistically, and Montfort's constant raiding raised the climate of fear. It also meant, however, that there were plenty of soldiers willing to venture out if Montfort's troops could not

⁹⁰ Yves Dossat, "Catharisme et Comminges," *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique, Littéraire et Scientifique du Gers* LXXVII (1976), 117–28.

⁹¹ PVCE, 166–7 #356–7; PVC II, 52–4.

⁹² PVCE, 167–8 #358; PVC II, 54–6; SCW, 62–3 laisse 126; WTud, 278 lines 1–8, 280 lines 9–11.

⁹³ PVCE, 168, #359; PVC II, 56–8; SCW, 63 laisse 126; WTud, 280 lines 12–13.

contain them in the city. The Count of Toulouse himself slipped out and crossed the Pyrenees to seek the King of Aragon's advice and assistance.⁹⁴

No sieges or pitched battles occurred between late September and December 1212, but the fall remained particularly active for raiding by both sides. If sieges were the bread and butter of the Occitan War, then raids were as common as oxygen. Montfort's men continued to raid very close to the city of Toulouse. Thus far in the crusade the southerners had proved abysmal at pitched battles and siege warfare, but in small skirmishes and raids they demonstrated their competence. That autumn Roger-Bernard of Foix slipped out of Montauban, north of Toulouse, and ventured deep into crusader-held territory as far east as the area between Carcassonne and Narbonne. Roger-Bernard and his men managed to capture a small, late-arriving party of crusader-pilgrims before they reached Carcassonne. The pilgrims were taken unawares and many were killed. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, however, some surviving knights, clerics, and others were taken back to Foix and cruelly tortured.⁹⁵ Throughout the autumn, on at least three different occasions, William of Contres, stationed in Castelsarrasin near Moissac, had to chase after southern raiders. On the first occasion, which occurred sometime in early October 1212, a large mounted band of southern *routiers* almost captured the town of Castelsarrasin, which had been in crusader hands since the siege of Moissac more than a month before. These raiders got away with sheep and other loot. William of Contres rode after the raiders with several dozen men and chased them back to Montauban, killing some but allowing several others to get away. On two other occasions southern mounted parties raided in the Agenais or close by Castelsarrasin, forcing William of Contres and his men out to try to kill, capture, or suppress the raiders. In a raid around the town of Castelsarrasin itself, William narrowly escaped death, injury or capture when the raiders surrounded him after his horse was killed by arrows, but his men broke through and rescued him. Nevertheless, William of Contres appears to have successfully contained southern raiding activity in his area, and his experience stands in for what probably occurred in many parts of Occitania that autumn.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ PVCE, 168, #359; PVC II, 57–8; see PL 216 cols. 739–40 and translation in PVCE, Appendix F (iv)(c), 310, for the papal letter mentioning Raimon VI's visit to the king.

⁹⁵ PVCE, 169, #361; PVC II, 60–1. Some of them evidently survived their ordeal, which included having their genitals pulled by ropes, because Peter Vaux-de-Cernay mentioned that a captured knight witnessed the torture of his fellow pilgrims and told the chronicler what happened.

⁹⁶ *SCW*, 63–4 *laissez* 127–30; WTud, 282, 284, 286, 288 lines 2–3. It appears that raiding was all southern forces could or were willing to do at that point. The raiders probably came from

Peter Vaux-de-Cernay reports some raids out of Toulouse into Gascony in December 1212, but they seem to have been so minor that he barely mentions them.⁹⁷ The campaign year was over.

The campaign year of 1212 was an almost unbroken string of military successes for the crusade and its chief crusader. Beginning the year on the defensive, by the end Simon of Montfort controlled all of the Count of Toulouse's major population centers in Occitania save two. He had triumphed in two major sieges and now seemed capable of keeping southern raiding to a minor nuisance. He must have been a happy and vindicated man that Christmas season, while his enemies may have wondered whether they would make it through another year. Though the people of Occitania did not know it at the time, their deliverance had already begun when Simon of Montfort attacked the Comminges region in the fall. At the beginning of 1213 the southern cause gained a powerful, reputable ally when the great crusader king, Pere II of Aragon, became an active participant against the crusade in order to defend not only his vassals but also his own political and military reputation.

Montauban, though they could easily have come from the Toulouse region. In the first raid William of Tudela says more than 1,000 southern mounted raiders participated, whereas William of Contres had only sixty men with which to face them. Earlier William of Tudela himself mentioned that Raimon-Bernard only brought 100 riders with him to garrison Montauban (*SCW*, 62 *laisse* 125; *WTud*, 276 lines 1–2), though they may have been reinforced by other troops. If the number 1,000 is accurate it is hard to believe that the raiders would run from crusader forces less than 10 percent of their number.

⁹⁷ *PVCE*, 171 #365; *PVC* II, 64–5.

CHAPTER 6

The athlete of Christ triumphs: late 1212 through Muret 1213

The year 1213 provided surprises, triumphs, and setbacks for all sides. December 1212 saw the promulgation of the Statutes of Pamiers, a set of rules by which Simon of Montfort intended to govern his territories. On the one hand, the fact that the chief crusader was able to implement these indicates he obviously felt strong enough to move beyond the conquest stage to that of governance and consolidation. On the other hand, the Council of Lavaur and the stripping of the papal indulgence placed great impediments on his ability to complete the conquest of the Count of Toulouse's territories or even hold on to what he had already acquired. Finally, the early autumn brought Simon of Montfort the greatest triumph a soldier could win in the Middle Ages: a decisive tactical victory in pitched battle over southern and Aragonese forces led by the King of Aragon.

There was one other change for the Occitan War, a historiographical one. From 1209 through 1212 William of Tudela's account is one of the two most important sources for the Occitan War, even if he wrote it in rhyme. His history begins to peter out at the end of 1212. He tangentially mentions the Statutes of Pamiers, Pere II of Aragon's military preparations to assist the Count of Toulouse, and ends with a prognosis of the fighting yet to come. The anonymous continuator carries on William's rhyme, his eye for description and detail, but falls short in objectivity. A loyal, orthodox cleric, William of Tudela occasionally criticizes the conduct of the crusade. The Anonymous is highly partisan and anti-crusade. While his descriptions of individual combats are good for those interested in stylized literature, they do not always appear to accurately describe actual battle. The Anonymous's strength lies in describing events directly concerning Toulouse because he probably came from there.¹ Like his predecessor's, then, the Anonymous's account remains an important source for the Occitan War, albeit not as good as William of Tudela or Peter Vaux-de-Cernay.

¹ Dossat, "La Croisade," 250–7.

THE STATUTES OF PAMIERS

In November 1212 Simon of Montfort gathered together the prelates and nobles of the region he controlled. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, Montfort wished to formulate fair rules for the Christian administration of his territories. He wanted to establish a set of principles regarding his vassals' rights and obligations as well as the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of the commoners in his conquered territories. As the Cistercian chronicler accurately points out, the rule of law had been weak in central Occitania, and Montfort's institution of unambiguous laws would be an improvement over the previous administration.² Undoubtedly there was a large measure of self-serving in Montfort's professed desire to bring law and order to the south. He desired validation for seizing territory and dispossessing nobles and knights. So while we can take Peter Vaux-de-Cernay at his word that Montfort wanted peace, law, and order for his newly conquered lands, what he really pursued was legality and legitimacy for his own position.

The composition and institution of the statutes was neither innovative nor unusual in most respects, as they were based on French law codes of the Paris region long in force in the north.³ Montfort chose twelve men to formulate the statutes: four churchmen, the bishops of Toulouse (Folquet of Marseille) and Couserans, a Templar and a Hospitaller; four knights, essentially Montfort's cronies; and four native southerners, two knights and two burgesses. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay notes that the four regional natives were deliberately chosen to show the fairness of the process, though one suspects that these men had more reason to be loyal to Montfort than to their own people. Many of the Statutes of Pamiers deal with mundane matters that need not concern us long, ranging from the baking of bread and regulation of commerce to the banning of prostitutes inside *castra* walls.⁴

What have more relevance here are the military or quasi-military clauses of the statutes. For example, clause 17 required Frenchmen who had received lands from Simon of Montfort during the conquest to provide him with knight service no matter when or where he was within his domain during time of war, the sole exception being if Montfort

² PVCE, 169–70, #362; PVC II, 62–3.

³ The most thorough discussion of this subject can be found in Pierre Timbal, *L'Application de la coutume de Paris au Pays d'Albigeois* (Toulouse: Privat, 1950). The Latin text of the Statutes is in Timbal's book, 177–84. For an English translation see PVCE, Appendix H, 321–9.

⁴ For more extensive discussions and implications of the Statutes of Pamiers, see *L'Épopée* I, 495–513; Timbal, *L'Application*.

traveled outside his conquered territories. This was a hefty demand to make of one's vassals, even by northern French standards, though it shows that Montfort anticipated that the war would continue for a long time.⁵ Even more telling is clause 18, which required that, for a period of twenty years after the promulgation of the statutes, soldiers provided for knight service by French landholders had to be French themselves.⁶ Clause 19 stated that knights (landholders) had to get the count's permission before leaving Occitania. If they overstayed the return date he gave them by more than four months without just cause their lands could be seized. Clause 20 compelled all landowners within Montfort's jurisdiction to hand over their towns and fortresses at the count's pleasure, giving him legal excuse to seize anyone's fortifications under any pretext. *Castra* and fortifications taken by the chief crusader were to be returned in the same shape after the crisis or need had passed. There were also penalties for failing to show up for the army after a summons, ranging from a 20 percent exaction of a lord's revenues to total forfeiture.⁷

The military clauses of the Statutes of Pamiers show the relative precariousness of Montfort's position. To demand knight service from only French knights of French landholders shows that after years of broken agreements and betrayal he no longer trusted the indigenous nobility. These rules were clearly designed to prevent the problems that had plagued him since 1209 by ensuring a trustworthy and loyal mounted force available for service at any point in time, including winter campaigning if necessary. Knights having to get "leave" before traveling out of the territory and being given a fixed time they could stay away suggests that even in December 1212 Montfort did not feel very safe and had to ensure he had an army at a moment's notice. Assizes for the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem also declared that a landholder could lose his fief for being absent over a specified period of time, but the preservation of the Latin Kingdom was a Christian noble's sacred duty, while the Statutes of Pamiers merely supported Montfort's position as feudal lord.⁸

⁵ PVCE, Appendix H, 323–4; Timbal, *L'Application*, 179; Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, 308–9.

⁶ PVCE, Appendix H, 324; Timbal, *L'Application*, 179–80. Clause 24 (PVCE, Appendix H, 325; Timbal, *L'Application*, 180) ordered indigenous knights to perform knight service as well, a seeming contradiction with clause 18. There is no way to resolve the contradiction, other than to suggest that Montfort's vassals might have indigenous vassals serving them.

⁷ PVCE, appendix H, 324–5, clauses 19–23; Timbal, *L'Application*, 180.

⁸ For how this worked out in the Latin Kingdom, see Prawer, *Crusader Institutions*, 346–57. Landholders could lose their fiefs if they were gone for a year and a day.

THE COUNCIL OF LAVAUR, LOSS OF THE INDULGENCE,
AND PERE II'S MILITARY INTERVENTION

The political and diplomatic events of that winter and spring are difficult to sort out, partly because of the time lag in communications between Rome and Occitania, but these events had severe long-term consequences for Montfort's enterprise and the crusade itself. In January 1213 a church council was convened at Lavaur, the purpose of which was to revisit the issue of Raimon VI's guilt in harboring heretics.⁹ At the same time Pere of Aragon decided to take a more active role in the region. He had been prevented from doing this prior to July 1212, until he and the King of Castile decisively defeated the Muslims at Las Navas de Tolosa. Because of this victory, military tensions had greatly eased in the Iberian peninsula, thus freeing Pere to intervene on behalf of his kinsmen and vassals in the north and perhaps even extend his own power. He had good reason to be alarmed about Montfort's continued military success, because the counts of Comminges and Foix were his vassals. Should Montfort hold on to the parts of their territory he had already overrun, the king stood to lose not only prestige but control and disposal over these territories. For all intents and purposes he had already lost control of the Trencavel viscounty and he did not wish to have his power in Occitania further eroded.

Though Simon of Montfort and Pere of Aragon arranged to discuss their growing differences neither stuck to the agreement, and southern forces raided into the Carcassonne area.¹⁰ On 16 January 1213 King Pere sent a lengthy request to the prelates assembled at Lavaur asking for the following: One, that the Count of Toulouse be restored to his property, or be allowed to purge himself of guilt by going on crusade to Spain or the Holy Land or that the prelates restore the property to the count's fifteen-year-old son (Raimon VII). Two, that Count Bernard of Comminges have his property restored, since he had never been accused of heresy. The count was prepared to do whatever was necessary to satisfy the church on that score. Three, that the Count of Foix be restored to his lands, since he was not a heretic. Like the Count of Comminges, he was willing to do what was required to satisfy the church of his orthodoxy. Four, that Pere's vassal Gaston of Béarn should have his lands restored, since some of his territory had been overrun by Montfort's men in the fall of 1212.¹¹ Pere's requests

⁹ PVCE, 173, footnote 5 contains an excellent summary of events leading up to the Council of Lavaur. It was called by the papal legate Theodisius.

¹⁰ PVCE, 172-4 #367-9; PVC II, 65-8; Smith, *Innocent III*, 121-4.

¹¹ PVCE, 174, #370-6; PVC II, 69-72; it is also contained in PL 216 cols. 839-40.

were certainly reasonable enough on behalf of Bernard of Comminges and Gaston of Béarn, since the only thing they were really guilty of was their military assistance to Raimon VI.¹² Perhaps Raimon-Roger of Foix had less ground to stand on, but he had never been formally dispossessed of his lands nor accused of heresy. The Count of Toulouse's case was considerably more complicated, but Pere remarked on Raimon's willingness to do whatever was needed to convince the pope of his orthodoxy. Pere's petition reflected the actions of an appropriately concerned kinsmen and overlord.

The prelates' response came a mere two days later, and the quickness with which they compiled a lengthy rejoinder, given the complexity of the issues, suggests a pre-determined response. The members of the council remarked that the church had treated the king well on numerous occasions already. They reminded Pere that Raimon VI had already had numerous chances to get back in the church's good graces but had continued his criminal behavior. The Count of Comminges had aided the Count of Toulouse, but being guilty only by association he could be absolved eventually and could then petition the church to have his lands restored. Among other things, Raimon-Roger of Foix was guilty of harboring heretics, and the prelates at Lavaur held him personally culpable in the ambush of the German crusaders at Montgey in 1211. Still, if he abided by the provisions given him in January 1211 and sought absolution, once it was granted his petition for restoration of property would be given a hearing. Lastly, Gaston of Béarn was guilty of supporting those who supported heretics and of employing *routiers*, some of whom had also committed sacrilege. He too, however, could have his case heard and perhaps gain his lands back once he won absolution.¹³

Pere II and his vassals lost this initial round, obviously. Undeterred, the King of Aragon immediately dashed off another letter to the prelates asking for a truce between the crusade and his barons to last at least until Easter (14 April), and preferably Pentecost (2 June) 1213. The prelates rejected this, thinking it would hamper recruiting efforts for the forty-day crusader-pilgrims that summer.¹⁴ It would seem that the King of Aragon had run out of arguments unless he appealed to a higher court, which, as it turns out, he

¹² Elisabeth Vodola, *Excommunication in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 24–32. It is unclear what their status was, but they may have been excommunicated *lata sententia*, a generally understood but not universal principle of canon law which automatically excommunicated those who consorted with known excommunicates.

¹³ PVCE, 175–9, #377–84; PVC II, 72–80, and in PL 216 cols. 840–2. The prelates' response listed many more crimes that each noble had supposedly committed. I have summarized the main ones here.

¹⁴ PVCE, 179, #385–6; PVC II, 81–2.

already had. In fact, the southerners had gained an even more powerful ally and soon received far better news than they could have hoped. Some weeks prior to the Council of Lavaur, in late 1212, Pere II had sent envoys to Rome bearing the same general requests later submitted to the prelates at the Council of Lavaur. On behalf of the king these envoys informed the pope that the Cathar heresy was essentially destroyed, suggesting that what Montfort was now doing went way beyond what the pope intended.¹⁵ Pere's ambassadors proved most effective at laying out the king's case. As Damian J. Smith states, they "weaved magic at the papal court."¹⁶ The pope responded to the king's entreaties at about the same time the Council of Lavaur was in session, so his letters were not received in Occitania for some weeks after the council concluded. These letters had serious long-term ramifications for the crusade. On 15 January 1213, Innocent sent a letter to the Archbishop of Narbonne, the papal legate Arnaud-Amaury. In it the pope suspended recruiting efforts for the south, and withdrew the indulgence for service in Occitania. His main reason for doing so was to pool all Christian resources and recruiting efforts towards a crusade in the Middle East.¹⁷

Two days later another thunderbolt descended from the heavens in a missive directed at Simon of Montfort. Innocent sharply rebuked the chief crusader for appropriating the lands of the counts of Foix and Comminges and of Gaston of Béarn. By taking land that ultimately belonged to the King of Aragon, Montfort had hampered Pere II's crusading efforts in Spain. Innocent also used a bit of Catch-22 logic against the chief crusader: since Montfort had taken oaths of loyalty from the citizens living in these areas, they must be loyal Catholics, since the athlete of Christ would not take the word of a heretic or those who supported them. Therefore, as Montfort had taken the oaths he was occupying the land of loyal Catholics, thus exceeding his directives and persecuting the innocent. The pope ordered Montfort to restore these territories, implying that if he failed to do so it would show the chief crusader to be working for personal gain,

¹⁵ PVCE, 185, #399, 199 #438; PVC II, 97, 128. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, the king also suggested that, since heresy no longer existed in Occitania, the pope cancel the indulgence there but continue to offer one to those crusading in Spain or assisting in the Holy Land. The chronicler has the pope's decision to discontinue the indulgence as a direct response to the king's request. Actually Innocent had already decided to pull the indulgence before the King of Aragon suggested it, as he made plans for what culminated in the Fifth Crusade.

¹⁶ Smith, *Innocent III*, 119.

¹⁷ PVCE, Appendix F, 308 (iv) (a) for the English translation; PL 216 cols. 744–5 for the Latin. Innocent III stated that the crusade had crushed the heresy, thus supporting Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's belief that the King of Aragon had convinced the pope of this.

rather than extirpating heresy and meting out justice against its supporters.¹⁸ On this last point, of course, Innocent was absolutely right.

On the next day, 18 January 1213, Innocent sent one more letter, this one addressed to his two legates, Arnaud-Amaury and Theodisius, and to Hugh, the Bishop of Riez. He blamed the legates for permitting Montfort's invasion of the Agenais (since it ultimately belonged to the King of England) and occupying territory belonging to the counts of Foix and Comminges and to Gaston of Béarn. Innocent was willing to believe that the Count of Toulouse's son, Raimon VII, did not bear the sins of his father and that Pere of Aragon could ensure, under his own guardianship, that the young count remained orthodox. Furthermore, the pope supported the King of Aragon's efforts to extinguish heresy from his vassals' lands and thought that Raimon VI should be allowed to do penance for any sins he committed.¹⁹ Though it took some time for Innocent's orders to reach Occitania, what they had to say must have come as a surprise for both sides. If the legates and Montfort complied with the pope's letters much of the ground the crusade had gained, especially that acquired during the successful campaign season of 1212, would be wiped out by diplomatic fiat.²⁰

Though his letters may appear to have been a bolt from the blue, Innocent's response to the events of the last three years is not surprising. Pere II's envoys had presented a detailed and persuasive case before the pontiff. Although the idea that heresy was waning in Occitania stretched the truth, multiple crusades meant a dispersion of resources. Innocent's preparations for a new crusade to the Holy Land made him predisposed to listen to those who seemed to offer a solution to the vast effort it would need to recruit people to it. Suspending the indulgence in favor of a centralized effort in the Holy Land would make it easier to recruit for an operation logistically far more expensive and physically dangerous than campaigning in Occitania. It is also true that Simon of Montfort had been perhaps too successful in his conquest and needed to be reined in a bit. Innocent displayed indecision over policy in Occitania at this point, an attitude that continued until his death three years later. He waffled as to whether the Count of Toulouse, or at least his son, should really be deprived of his lands even though the pope had instituted the crusade

¹⁸ PVCE, Appendix F, 308–9 (iv) (b), for the English translation; PL 216 cols. 741–3 for the Latin.

¹⁹ PVCE, Appendix F, 309–10 (iv) (c) for the English; PL 216 cols. 739–40 for the Latin. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay summarizes the text of this letter too; see PVCE, 199 #438; PVC II, 128–9.

²⁰ Luchaire, *Innocent III*, 202–7.

against Raimon of Toulouse in the first place and had done nothing to stop Montfort's aggression against the count's lands for over a year. He had now managed to be unfair to both sides. Even if the athlete of Christ had exceeded his authority by conquering areas not judged to be heretical – as he surely had – the pope manifestly did not understand the local situation and had cavalierly discarded the advice of his legates, who up to that point had no complaints about how Montfort had conducted the crusade. Innocent III's letters show that by now the pope, legates, and chief crusader were at odds as to the ultimate goal of the crusade. The pope's suspension of the crusade and indulgence threatened disaster for Simon of Montfort's campaigns that spring and summer of 1213 and beyond. As Peter Vaux-de-Cernay points out, few crusader-pilgrims would make the trip south that year, and of course it was these very men who allowed Montfort to take the offensive every summer.²¹

Until the pope's letters arrived in the south of course, both sides labored under another set of assumptions. Soon after the prelates and legates at Lavaur refused to grant any of his petitions, Pere II decided to become overlord for Toulouse and Montauban, and received oaths of allegiance from many of the leading nobles of the south on 27 January 1213. Those offering their allegiance to the King of Aragon included the counts of Toulouse, Foix and Comminges and their sons, and Gaston of Béarn. In addition the consuls of Toulouse, twenty-four in number, also swore loyalty to Pere II by name.²² This swearing of oaths by the consuls of Toulouse is surprising for two reasons. One, the fact that they now made common cause with any overlord, when they had been at odds with the Count of Toulouse as recently as 1211, suggests they viewed Simon of Montfort as a worse master than the one they had presently, or would gain through Pere. Second, Pere, who had been so scrupulous about his own rights as feudal lord, now made a bold move that went far beyond traditional Aragonese claims in Occitania. By agreeing to act as suzerain over the city of Toulouse and the Count of Toulouse, the Aragonese monarch had technically usurped the rights of the King of France, who by custom was the lord of the counts of Toulouse.²³ In other words, Pere's motives were not entirely innocent, as he stood to gain in lands and prestige if his new overlordship

²¹ PVCE, 201 #442; PVC II, 134.

²² PL 216 cols. 845–9; PVCE, 180 #388–9; PVC II, 83–5. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay also mentions that many *faidit* nobles and knights gave oaths to the king, but their individual names are not recorded.

²³ PVCE, 180 #389 and footnote 40; PVC II, 85; PVCE, 305–6 Appendix F (ii) for an English translation of a 1208 letter from Philip Augustus to the pope stating his overlordship of the Count of Toulouse; for the Latin see *HGL* 8, cols. 558–9.

held. Surely he was aware that by taking these nobles and lands under his control he had grossly violated custom and tradition and had less legal ground to stand on for it than Simon of Montfort.

In response to Pere's brash maneuver, the prelates and legates still at Lavaur wrote a missive to Innocent III listing further crimes of the counts of Toulouse, Foix, and Comminges. They urged the pope to continue supporting the crusade, in ignorance of course that letters from Rome were already on their way suspending the crusade and indulgence. Several other bishops also sent separate letters supporting continued crusading.²⁴ A few high-ranking clerics began a journey to Rome with these papers, including William, the redoubtable Archdeacon of Paris, but when they got to Provence and attended another church council at Orange in February, they may have learned of the pope's decision to suspend the crusade because the Archbishop of Arles, nine other bishops, and other prelates sent yet another letter supporting continued military activity in the south.²⁵ The original envoys continued to make their way to Rome to plead their case to the pope directly, though when they arrived their entreaties initially did not meet with a favorable reception.²⁶ It took several months for the envoys to convince the pope that he had been overhasty in his January letters suspending the crusade and indulgence.

As the prelates tried to influence the pope, on 22 April 1213 Innocent published *Quia Maior*, an encyclical considered by Jonathan Riley-Smith to be "possibly the greatest of them all" for its impact on the crusading movement.²⁷ *Quia Maior* was part strategic plan, part manifesto. In it Innocent outlines what he believed the true purpose of crusading to be, as well as how his new crusade to the East should be conducted and financed.²⁸ That the pope believed crusades to the Holy Land should take precedence over all other types of crusade activity drips off the pages. As for its repercussions for the Albigensian Crusade, in the document Innocent again

²⁴ PVCE, 181-4 #392-7; PVC II, 87-95 and PL 216 cols. 836-9, 843-4.

²⁵ PVCE, 184 #398 and footnote 64, 185 footnote 2, 185-6 footnote 4; PVC II, 95; PL 216 cols. 835-6. The issuing and receipt of all the letters by the various parties over a considerable time lag is quite confusing. The Siblys suggest a plausible chain of events which I have followed.

²⁶ PVCE, 185 #400, 199-200, #438-9; PVC II, 97-8, 128-32.

²⁷ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades. A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 143; Penny J. Cole, *The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095-1270* (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1991), 104-8. Riley-Smith succinctly sums up this encyclical's importance. Cole is valuable for the encyclical's impact on crusade preaching.

²⁸ *Quia Maior* can be found in PL 216 cols. 817-22 and in Georgine Tangl, *Studien zum Register Innocenz III* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1929), 88-97. An English translation from Tangl's Latin edition is available in Louise and Jonathan Riley-Smith, ed. and trans., *The Crusades. Idea and Reality, 1095-1274* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), 119-24.

revokes the indulgence for crusading in Occitania.²⁹ He states that the Occitan War has now accomplished its goals against heresy and that further crusading in the south is largely unnecessary. The pope ends his brief discussion of the Albigensian Crusade with the typical ambiguity he had always demonstrated towards it. He permits the continued granting of indulgences with the remission of sin for southerners, not outsiders, if they continue to fight against heresy.³⁰ This was supposed to allow the indigenous people of Occitania who did not plan to go to the Holy Land on the Fifth Crusade the opportunity to participate in some form of crusading activity. Since the pope had preached the Albigensian Crusade in the first place because southern nobles like Raimon VI were not doing their Christian duty, to all intents and purposes this last concession meant little.

By May 1213, however, Innocent partially came around to the conclusion that Pere II had overstated his case and had used Montfort's conquest as an excuse to make his own bid for suzerainty in Occitania. That month the pope wrote letters virtually negating what he had written in January to King Pere, Simon of Montfort, Arnaud-Armaury, and Folquet of Marseille. In this letter he told the Aragonese monarch that any agreement he had with the various counts and the people of Toulouse was invalid and that these men would have to be absolved before they might get their lands back. Innocent also mandated a truce between Pere II and Simon of Montfort.³¹ My words "virtually negating," used above, were chosen deliberately. Even though the tone of the letter suggests that Innocent expected things to go back to the way they were as of January 1213, i.e., those excommunicated then were so still, and the oaths of fealty sworn by the nobles and consuls of Toulouse to the King of Aragon were null and void, the pope only *threatened* to reinstitute the indulgence and crusade.³² In

²⁹ Tangl, *Studien*, 94; PL 216 col. 820; L. and J. Riley-Smith, *Idea and Reality*, 122. In the same sentence he revoked it for crusading in Spain as well.

³⁰ Tangl, *Studien*, 94; PL 216 col. 820; L. and J. Riley-Smith, *Idea and Reality*, 122; Rebecca Rist, "Papal Policy and the Albigensian Crusades: Continuity or Change?" *Crusades* 2 (2003): 99–108. Rist's article contains a good discussion of *Quia Maior* as it related to the Albigensian Crusade.

³¹ PVCE, 186–9 #401–11; PVC II, 98–105; PL 216 cols. 849–52. The content of the letters sent to each person was virtually the same.

³² PVCE, 189 #409, 200–1 #440–1; PVC II, 104, 132–4; PL 216 col. 851. A brief passage is worth quoting: "Illud autem excellentiam tuam volumus non latere, quod, si Tolosani ac nobiles sepedicti adhuc quoque in errore suo duxerint persistendum, nos per indulgentias innovatas cruce signatos et fideles alios precipimus excitari." ("We wish Your Excellency to be fully aware that *if* the Toulousans and the nobles named above persist in their error, we intend to renew our promises of indulgence and call out a fresh force of crusaders and the faithful.") The italicized "if" is mine; the translation is the Siblys'.

other words, as of May 1213 there was no papally sanctioned war for outsiders to crusade in Occitania nor any rewards for fighting it. Montfort's war of conquest no longer had unambiguous moral backing, and recruitment for his private enterprise of personal aggrandisement was quickly drying up.

One other potential problem with long-term implications arose early in the year. In February 1213 Prince Louis of France took the cross specifically to campaign in Occitania.³³ Evidently at that date he had not heard of Innocent's suspension of the crusade and indulgence. News of Louis's possible intervention, even with the considerable resources of the French crown, could not have come as positive news for Montfort. Outside interference could potentially muddy the lines of his authority, though Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says the prospect of French royal intervention was welcomed.³⁴ Ongoing conflicts with John of England that year meant there would in effect be no royal support (or hindrance) for 1213.³⁵ The prince did not redeem his vow until 1215.

Relations between Pere II and Simon of Montfort went from cool to hostile in the weeks following the Council of Lavaur. As overlord for the Trencavel properties, under feudal custom Pere could and did renounce his lordship over Simon of Montfort. Montfort sent Lambert of Thury to Pere pleading for reconciliation, but the king refused to entertain it. The chief crusader had banked on that possibility already and had previously drawn up a letter renouncing his homage to the Aragonese monarch. Once the king refused to reconcile or talk to Montfort, Lambert promptly delivered the letter and an oral message renouncing Montfort's homage to the king. The king and his court grew enraged because the letter meant Montfort had already anticipated the king's likely decision to refuse a diplomatic solution.³⁶ Pere II had Lambert of Thury, as the bearer of such bad news, arrested. The king and his advisors flirted with executing him, but eventually they released him.³⁷ From then on the chief crusader proceeded as though the crusade was still on; Folquet of Marseille and Guy Vaux-de-Cernay had both gone to Paris to preach for recruits.³⁸ That spring the King of Aragon sent his own envoys northward to engage in a propaganda campaign. Armed with multiple copies of Innocent's January letters

³³ PVCE, 191 #417; PVC II, 109–10. ³⁴ PVCE, 193 #421; PVC II, 113.

³⁵ PVCE, 201 #442; PVC II, 134–5.

³⁶ PVCE, 189–91 #413–16 and footnote 28; PVC II, 106–9. As the Sibyls point out, it was more customary for a vassal to renounce his allegiance but the lord could initiate the repudiation if he chose.

³⁷ PVCE, 190–1 #415–16; PVC II, 108–9. ³⁸ PVCE, 191 #418; PVC II, 110.

suspending both crusade and indulgence they had some success, though this was not the reason Prince Louis deferred his journey south.³⁹ Having already sought an annulment of his marriage to his current wife, Pere II attempted a marriage alliance with Philip Augustus, trying to win one of the French king's daughters, though in January Innocent III had already refused to annul the Aragonese king's marriage. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay suggests the Aragonese king was lobbying to win legitimacy for his control of Toulouse as well, since his overlordship over the count and city of Toulouse potentially infringed the French king's traditional rights.⁴⁰ Philip Augustus seemed sufficiently absorbed in his own problems and made no changes that year to his Occitan policies.

THE CAMPAIGN YEAR PRIOR TO MURET

After all the letters, admonitions, and reversals of policy, and the suspension of the crusade and indulgence, with the exception of Pere II's active military participation the campaign year began as if none of the preceding events had happened. By May the forty-day crusader-pilgrims began arriving and continued to do so throughout the summer, albeit in smaller numbers than in previous years. Whether these groups knew of the suspension cannot be determined, and quite possibly the first groups were unaware. The first crusader-pilgrims to arrive were knights led by the bishops of Orleans and Auxerre. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay records that originally the bishops had been part of a much larger crusader-pilgrim body that had delayed its departure from France for some reason, either because Philip Augustus needed men for his own summer campaigns or perhaps because they would not gain an indulgence if they served in Occitania that summer. Those who showed up were warmly welcomed by the crusader cadre and Montfort at Fanjeaux.⁴¹ For the time being, Montfort used Muret as his forward headquarters. Even with reinforcements from the north, during May Montfort did not dare attempt sieges against Toulouse or any other large fortification. There was little to do

³⁹ PVCE, 193 #420; PVC II, 113; Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus*, 209–10. In April 1213 Philip decided to invade his old Angevin rival's land of England, with papal sponsorship. Prince Louis was to lead the attack. John worked out his differences with the pope in May, stripping away Philip's moral justification for such a dangerous enterprise. The plans for the invasion fizzled out (for the time being at least), but things continued to heat up for the Capetian monarch throughout 1213 and the next year. He could not afford to have Louis in the south with forces and resources needed closer to home.

⁴⁰ PVCE, 192–3 #419–20; PVC II, 110–13.

⁴¹ PVCE, 194 #422–3; PVC II, 114–16. The bishops of Orleans and Auxerre were brothers.

except raid around Toulouse and attack small villages and *castra* still holding out against him. The Cistercian chronicler notes that within a small space of time (a few days) the army destroyed seventeen fortified places and substantial amounts of crops, fruit trees, and vines in the vicinity of Toulouse.⁴² One of the places seized was Pujol, a very small, one-tower fortification (*munitio*) located about thirteen kilometers south-east of Toulouse. Three of Montfort's knights, Peter of Sissy, Simon the Saxon, and Roger of Essarts, asked permission to use the fortress as a base from which to raid close to Toulouse. Montfort allowed them to do this even though the place was so close to Toulouse that it was vulnerable to attack.⁴³

In June Simon of Montfort began making preparations for the knight-ing of his oldest son Amaury, to take place on the feast of John the Baptist, 24 June. While he was preoccupied with this his brother Guy, with Theodoric, Abbot of Saint-Hubert in Liège, and Baldwin of Toulouse, moved into the Albi region to besiege the town of Puycelci, an inconsequential mountain *castrum* that had flip-flopped in loyalty against the crusade. Puycelci was about six kilometers southeast of Bruniquel, now held by Baldwin of Toulouse. Though Puycelci was small and not strategically important, as usual the chief crusader refused to allow even the smallest disloyal targets to defy him. Guy's army consisted of only a few knights but a sizeable force of crusader-pilgrim infantrymen ("plures pedites peregrinos") serving their forty days. Though the crusaders built rock-throwers to help weaken the walls, they still lacked the manpower to besiege more than one side of the fortifications, so they could not prevent people from entering or leaving Puycelci. As the siege progressed, the counts of Toulouse, Comminges, and Foix, the Seneschal of Catalonia,

⁴² PVCE, 194–5 #423 and Appendix A, 285–6; PVC II, 115–17 and footnote 3, 116–17. The word Peter Vaux-de-Cernay uses for these fortified places is *munitio*. This term has various meanings but here it appears to refer to nominally walled defensive structures or isolated fortifications, weaker than *castra*. The crusaders took these places with what amounted to nothing more than raiding parties. The chronicler notes that one Alard of Strépy and a few other knights declined to go on these raids with the rest of the army. Guebin and Lyon state that Strépy received a letter from his overlord, John of England, perhaps ordering him home.

⁴³ PVCE, 195 #424; PVC II, 118–19; WPE, chapter XIX, 43; WP, 76; Anonymous, "La prise de Pujol: signification de cet épisode à la veille de Muret," *Annales de l'Institut d'Etudes Occitanes* (1962–1963), 124–32; M. Victor Molinier, "Sur la prise et la démolition de la forteresse du Pujol par les Toulousains, pendant la Guerre des Albigeois, en l'année 1213," *Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres de Toulouse* 5 (1861), 11–27, especially 11–12, 25. The fortification does not appear on detailed maps of the area. Molinier describes the area in which the site is located and its construction in the early thirteenth century. The author of "La prise de Pujol" places it in the vicinity around modern Sainte-Foy-d'Aigrefeuille and Lanta.

and a large unit of *routiers* and knights arrived and entered Puycelci.⁴⁴ At daybreak Guillem-Raimon Montcada, the seneschal, sortied with the garrison and troops he had brought with him in an attempt to burn Guy of Montfort's siege engines. William of Ecureuil, a crusader knight and veteran of the siege of Termes in 1210, rode quickly to defend the petraries, and once again, as he had done three years before, singlehandedly defended his position until Guy, Baldwin, and some other knights got out of their tents to help him. The seneschal's men and the men of Puycelci then retreated back into the fortress. Because of this setback, the three southern counts decided not to try another attack, and they may have left the place with their men before the siege ended.⁴⁵

Guy and his forces continued to invest Puycelci until the forty-day period of service for his crusader-pilgrims expired. After many departed Guy decided to raise the siege, but at the last minute the men of Puycelci negotiated a settlement. They agreed not to "attack Christianity," and to capitulate if the *castrum* of Penne d'Albigeois, nine kilometers north, decided to surrender or fell.⁴⁶ This was unlikely to happen, since Penne d'Albigeois had successfully resisted Guy the previous year and ambushed one of his men, but the agreement allowed the chief crusader's brother to withdraw without losing face. At the conclusion of the siege, Guy and what troops he still had departed for Castelnaudary, where his brother set up a show-piece ceremony for the knighting of his oldest son Amaury.⁴⁷

The knighting accomplished on 24 June, Montfort and his son embarked on a series of raids southwestward, capturing some men of Toulouse before stopping at Muret. From Muret the brother-bishops of Orleans and Auxerre, who had participated in Amaury's dubbing, departed northward with their men as their forty days' service expired. Though they would be missed, the bishops and their troops had performed well and the

⁴⁴ John C. Shideler, *A Medieval Catalan Noble Family. The Montcadas 1000–1230* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 138–9. The seneschal, Guillem-Raimon of Montcada, was Gaston of Béarn's brother and inherited the viscounty of Béarn upon his brother's death in 1214.

⁴⁵ PVCE, 196 #427; PVC II, 121–2. On William of Ecureuil's defense of crusader siege machines at Termes, see Chapter 3, 87–8 and PVCE, 95 #179; PVC, 183. The chronicler does not indicate whether the three southern counts stayed for the duration of the siege, left immediately after the failed sortie, or departed sometime before its conclusion.

⁴⁶ PVCE, 196 #428; PVC II, 122.

⁴⁷ PVCE, 196–7 #429–31; PVC II, 122–4; Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. A. Manyon, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 2: 316; Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, rev. edn. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 26, 30. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay mentions that the ceremony was unique and had never been done before. This is not quite true; religious elements in knighting ceremonies had been around since the twelfth century. Montfort put on this elaborate production to further intertwine his secular, familial ambitions with those of the crusade.

crusaders were grateful for their contribution. Montfort and Amaury began to work their way farther to the southwest, where the chief crusader intended his eldest son to take control over some of the previously conquered areas of Gascony and to conduct campaigns against places there that still held out against the crusade.⁴⁸

It was at that point that Raimon VI came up with a modest but intelligent plan to reduce the pressure of crusader raids around Toulouse. As the focal point of resistance to the crusade, Toulouse already contained all the important southern commanders and their forces. The Toulousans despised Simon of Montfort for his abortive siege of the city in 1211 and for making them the butt end of constant raids and blockades since the fall of 1212. At the moment there were no large crusader forces operating in the vicinity of the city to keep soldiers bottled up there. Seeking approval from the consuls of Toulouse, Raimon VI proposed to bring a large force of his own men, contingents of the counts of Foix and Comminges, Spanish soldiers, *rouriers* from Toulouse, and the Toulousan militia to besiege Pujol, the small fortress given to Peter of Sissy, Simon the Saxon, and Roger of Essarts as a raiding base by Simon of Montfort in May. This large allied army probably contained more troops than the chief crusader had at the time. It left Toulouse for Pujol, and upon arriving the commanders besieged the small fortification with catapults and other siege equipment.⁴⁹ The three knightly commanders defending Pujol had very few troops. The Anonymous reports that the garrison consisted of at least sixty knights in addition to squires (*escudiers*), who were probably horse sergeants, and sergeants (*sarjans combatens*), most likely infantrymen.⁵⁰ Within a short time of the siege's commencement the crusaders knew they could not hold out, especially since there were no relief forces in the vicinity. Word of the garrison's plight did, however, reach the bishops of Orleans and Auxerre, who had only made it as far as Carcassonne, less than sixty kilometers away. They turned back from their homeward journey to rescue the knights and their men.⁵¹ Once the southern forces found out that a relief army was rushing to rescue Pujol, they redoubled their efforts to fill the fosses beneath the castle and then assault the walls. As the Anonymous does so

⁴⁸ PVCE, 197 #432-4; PVC II, 124-5.

⁴⁹ SCW, 66-7 laisses 132-3; *Chanson* II, 2, 4, 6, 8; PVCE, 197-8 #434; PVC II, 125; "La prise de Pujol," 126.

⁵⁰ SCW, 66 laisse 133, 67 laisse 134; *Chanson* II, 6 line 1, 10 lines 27-9. The sixty plus knights and squires (or horse sergeants) probably constituted the force used for raiding around Toulouse. None of the men in Pujol were crusader-pilgrims; the *Chanson* calls them *soldadier*, meaning they were paid. See Paterson, *World of the Troubadours*, 58 and Chapter 1, 17, for an explanation of this term.

⁵¹ PVCE, 197-8, #434-5; PVC II, 125-6.

well, he mentions that horsemen, burghers and sergeants all did their part by carrying debris to fill the ditches.⁵² Here our sources diverge on the events leading up to and after the surrender of the garrison. As southern assault parties armed with picks worked on the walls and their machines pulverized other parts of the fortifications, the defenders threw down stones and rocks and flung boiling water at them, but eventually the garrison had to retreat into the single tower.⁵³ Roger of Essarts was then hit in the head by an arrow and killed. Consequently the other commanders agreed to surrender Pujol on condition that their lives be spared, terms the coalition commanders accepted.⁵⁴ Before this could take place, word reached the southern army that Guy of Montfort was on his way to relieve the garrison.⁵⁵ The Count of Foix's son Roger-Bernard and some other southern knights, unaware of or perhaps ignoring the surrender, took advantage of the confusion and climbed into the tower, seizing the survivors of the garrison. As the chaos after the surrender continued, one of the surviving co-captains, Simon the Saxon, was killed by a mob of soldiers, perhaps Toulousan militiamen. By now word reached the southerners that Guy of Montfort was in Avignonet, approximately twenty-three kilometers distant, so the army and its captives departed for Toulouse.⁵⁶

According to William of Puylaurens and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, the crusader-prisoners were not destined to live very long in the city. A mob attacked and murdered many of the men in their prison cells, though some of the prisoners were hauled through the streets by horses before being hanged on gibbets, their bodies then thrown out of the city like garbage. At least one person was yanked from where he had been held in the church of Saint-Sernin du Taur and executed like the rest – a violation of the medieval concept of sanctuary, as William of Puylaurens notes.⁵⁷ While accounts of the specific events of the siege and aftermath of Pujol may

⁵² *SCW*, 66–7 laisse 133–4; *Chanson* II, 6, 8 laisse 133 lines 9–33, 8 laisse 134 lines 1–6.

⁵³ *SCW*, 67 laisse 134; *Chanson* II, 8, 10 lines 7–12; *WPE*, chapter XIX, 43–4; *WP*, 76.

⁵⁴ *WPE*, chapter XIX, 44; *WP*, 76; *PVCE*, 198 #434; *PVC* II, 126.

⁵⁵ *SCW*, 67 laisse 134; *Chanson* II, 10 lines 30–6; *WPE*, chapter XIX, 44; *WP*, 76. The *Chanson* suggests that the allied commanders heard of Guy of Montfort's approach and therefore agreed to end the siege and leave before the crusaders arrived. William of Puylaurens says the opposite, that Pujol surrendered before the southerners found out that a relief force was on its way.

⁵⁶ *WPE*, chapter XIX, 44; *WP*, 76, 78; *SCW*, 67 laisse 134; *Chanson* II, 10 lines 30–6.

⁵⁷ *WPE*, chapter XIX, 44–5; *WP*, 78–9; *PVCE*, 198 #435; *PVC* II, 126–7; “La prise de Pujol,” 130; Molinier, “Sur la prise et la démolition,” 19–20; Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 78–81. The Anonymous (*SCW*, 67 laisse 134; *Chanson* II, 10 lines 23–9) is the most divergent of the three major sources on the aftermath of Pujol. According to his account, no terms of surrender were discussed or given and Pujol fell by assault, thus legally allowing the execution of the men inside. Consequently the entire garrison of sixty knights and an unspecified number of horse sergeants and

differ as to details, all the major sources indicate that a substantial massacre took place. Like the crusaders, the men of Occitania were capable of committing atrocities, as they had already proved at places like Moissac the year before. Just as I have made no attempt to absolve the crusaders, there is no absolution for southerners who participated in the torture and massacre of prisoners. Yet it is understandable given the circumstances. For four years the people of the south had seen their homes invaded and their armies consistently lose against Simon of Montfort. Since 1211 the chief crusader had been at war with the city of Toulouse. He had kept it under a loose blockade for months, and the citizens had suffered greatly. Unsurprisingly, in the wake of a rare victory the winning side exacted vengeance on the losers.

For the entire southern cause – *faidits*, Aragonese, Toulousans – the victory at Pujol had come after a very long dry spell of defeat. In fact, Pujol was the first successful southern siege of the entire Occitan War. As a moral victory its value to the people of Occitania cannot be overstated, even though it was only a minor military defeat for the crusade. In addition, just as the crusaders' failure to take Toulouse in the summer of 1211 brought on a counter-attack that fall, the victory at Pujol of 1213 encouraged the southerners to begin an offensive against the army of Simon of Montfort. Now, of course, they had even greater advantages than those of 1211: the army, resources, and prestige of Pere II, and the lack of a lawful crusade or indulgence, which drew potential recruits away from the crusade. Guy of Montfort may not have wept in anger and despair as the Anonymous reports⁵⁸ (how could the author know this?), but the crusaders must have wondered whether Pujol's fall had shattered their aura of invincibility.

Upon hearing the news of Pujol's capture, those rushing from all directions to relieve it – like Guy of Montfort in Avignonet and the brother-bishops of Orleans and Auxerre, who made it as far as Castelnaudary, and Simon of Montfort in Gascony – did not bother to try and catch the allied army before it escaped behind the walls of Toulouse.⁵⁹ The crusaders soon received word that the King of Aragon was forming an army to attack them, while the crusader army remained woefully short of men due to the impact of Pope Innocent's winter and

infantrymen were killed, most being stabbed to death by swords. A few were hanged. While his version is reasonable, the details and specificity of the other two accounts, especially William of Puylaurens, suggest that some of the defenders of Pujol made it to Toulouse before being murdered.

⁵⁸ SCW, 67 *laisse* 135; *Chanson* II, 12 lines 1–7. ⁵⁹ PVCE, 198 #435–6; PVC II, 126–7.

spring letters on recruiting.⁶⁰ Because of this impending invasion, Montfort recalled his son Amaury from campaigning in Gascony, particularly since the King of Aragon would be marching through the region and Montfort was afraid that his son, still inexperienced in his first command and short of men, might be captured or killed. At the time of his recall, Amaury of Montfort was besieging Roquefort, a *castrum* on the Garonne river approximately sixty kilometers southwest of Toulouse. Just as Amaury was planning to abandon the siege to rejoin his father, the soldiers defending the town agreed to surrender and turn over sixty prisoners in exchange for the garrison being permitted to leave. Amaury accepted the terms and placed a couple of knights in the place in charge of a garrison.⁶¹ Pere's agents in the region had also been active, however, softening up the area by spreading the word that the Aragonese monarch was on the move and would take them under his protection if they went over to his side. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says that many places took advantage of the offer, no doubt confirming Simon of Montfort's distrust of southerners, but the Cistercian chronicler does not mention which ones defected.⁶² Simon of Montfort sent a letter to the king asking him to abide by the pope's letters mandating a truce over the entire region. Pere ignored the letter, continued to gather his forces, and made arrangements to employ *routiers*. Perhaps he was strengthened in his resolve by the fact that in a papal letter of 4 July 1213, Innocent III confirmed an old privilege dating back to Urban II that the Aragonese monarchs enjoyed exemption from excommunication except by the pope himself.⁶³ It appeared as though some kind of major showdown was inevitable in the late summer or early fall of 1213.

THE BATTLE OF MURET, 12 SEPTEMBER 1213

For those who study the military history of the High Middle Ages, Muret is one of the most tactically decisive battles of the entire period, placed in a small pantheon along with Hastings, Las Navas de Tolosa, Bouvines, and Courtrai. Of the four field battles of the Occitan War during the years 1209–1219 – Montgey, Saint-Martin-la-Lande, Muret, and Baziège – Muret was by far the largest and most tactically conclusive. It was also the only field battle where both sides consciously planned to fight in the open, as

⁶⁰ PVCE, 201 #442; PVC II, 134–5; SCW, 64–6 *laises* 130–2; WTud, 288 *laisse* 130 lines 8–13, 290 *laisse* 131 lines 6–17; *Chanson* II, 2, 4 lines 1–18.

⁶¹ PVCE, 201, #443; PVC II, 135–6. ⁶² PVCE, 201, #444; PVC II, 136.

⁶³ PVCE, 202, #445 and footnote 92; PVC II, 136–7; PL 216 cols. 888–9; Smith, *Innocent III*, 135–6.

Montgey, Saint-Martin-la-Lande, and Baziège were fought by one side either surprised or reluctantly brought to battle. An extremely newsworthy event in its own day, mention of Muret shows up in dozens of contemporary chronicles far beyond the borders of Occitania. In the modern age the battle generated great interest for military historians from the 1870s to the 1930s; up to 1914 it was viewed through the lens of Prussian success in the late nineteenth century and after 1918 through the pall of four years' trench warfare on the western front. Muret rivaled Hastings and Bouvines in popularity as the classic battle of the Middle Ages where knights fought each other in the best medieval tradition.⁶⁴ After a period of relatively intense analysis its popularity waned as French historians moved away from "événementielle" history to the *longue durée* and Anglophone historians simply lost interest. As a battle and event Martín Alvira Cabrer has recently resurrected Muret, but his conclusions have largely escaped the Anglophone world.⁶⁵ Even for those specializing in military affairs C. W. C. Oman's analysis of 1924 often serves as the main source for the battle, woefully misconceived and out of date as it is. Some factual errors and erroneous suppositions have continued to figure in accounts of the battle, compounding misconceptions of its importance to the Occitan War and for warfare of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. In spite of the ink spilled on the battle by modern scholars, there are no eyewitness accounts. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay was in northern France with his uncle.⁶⁶ If the chronicler William of Puylaurens actually served as Raimon VII's chaplain then he could have profited from the recollections of the last Count of Toulouse, who was sixteen at the time of Muret. Because of his age, the young count had been left out of the battle but in his golden years recounted what he observed from the hills to the west of the battlefield.⁶⁷

It took until September 1213 for Pere II to gather his army and march it across the Pyrenees to link up with Occitan forces. On his way through Gascony many towns and fortifications defected to him, further building

⁶⁴ Henri Delpuch, *La Bataille de Muret et la tactique de la cavalerie au XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Picard, 1878), and *La Tactique au XIIIe siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: Picard, 1885), 1: 180–259; M. Marcel Dieulafoy, "La bataille de Muret," *Mémoires de L'Institut National de France. Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 36.2 (1901), 95–134; Joseph Anglade, *La Bataille de Muret (12 septembre 1213)*, Toulouse: Champion, 1913; Hans Delbrück, *Medieval Warfare*, trans. Walter J. Renfro Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 413–14; Oman, *A History of the Art of War*, 1: 453–67; Hoffman Nickerson, "Oman's Muret," *Speculum* 6.4 (1931), 550–72, and *The Inquisition*, vii–xxiii, 151–69.

⁶⁵ Alvira Cabrer, *12 de septiembre de 1213*. At 600 pages of text not including appendices and a bibliography of eighty-three pages, this dwarfs all other works devoted to Muret in its range, analysis, and documentation.

⁶⁶ Dossat, "La Croisade," 224. ⁶⁷ WPE, chapter XXI, 48; WP, 82, 84.

momentum in his favor.⁶⁸ The timing of this expedition could not have worked out any better, as September was late enough in the campaign year that there would be few forty-day crusader-pilgrims in Montfort's army, and because of the suspension of the crusade there were fewer than usual. Thus the coalition forces would enjoy a significant numerical advantage over the crusaders.

The king marched his army to Toulouse, where in consultation with the nobles, *faidits*, and people of Toulouse, they decided to attack Muret first.⁶⁹ Muret had belonged to the Count of Comminges, but it had been seized by crusader forces in the fall of 1212 as Montfort tightened the noose around Toulouse. Since its capture as described earlier, Muret (like Pujol) had served as one of the primary crusader bases for raids into the regions surrounding Toulouse. Since Muret lay only eighteen kilometers south of Toulouse, also on the Garonne, it was an ideal place to besiege because southerners could easily bring in supplies and additional troops by water. Muret itself was a small *castrum* with weak fortifications. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, its crusader garrison was extremely small too, about thirty knights and a few footsoldiers ("militibus circiter triginta et paucis peditibus").⁷⁰ Muret served, however, as an important psychological point of pride for Simon of Montfort. If it were to fall as Pujol had, the crusaders' military reputation would continue to be eroded. Pere II knew this, too, and chose Muret partly because it would entice Montfort to save it, as the chief crusader had been unsuccessful in doing at Pujol two months previously. The militia of Toulouse, the contingents of the counts of Toulouse, Comminges, and Foix and the army Pere II brought with him formed the largest southern army ever raised during the Occitan War. Adding to their numbers were the small groups of *faidits*, the dispossessed knights and nobles of Occitania.⁷¹ The militia of Toulouse brought siege equipment and experience as well. In spite of their numbers, the Anonymous says that before they departed the city the Toulousans reminded Raimon VI of French military prowess, and the fact that the crusaders would be anxious to avenge what had happened at Pujol.⁷²

The southern–Aragonese coalition arrived before the walls of Muret on 10 September 1213. Immediately the militia of Toulouse set up their siege equipment, began a bombardment, and then successfully assaulted the

⁶⁸ PVCE, 203 #446; PVC II, 138. ⁶⁹ PVCE, 203 #447; PVC II, 138–9; WPE, chapter XX, 45; WP, 78.

⁷⁰ PVCE, 203 #447; PVC II, 138–9.

⁷¹ For a handy list of nobles and notables from both sides who participated in the battle, see Alvira Cabrer, *12 de septiembre de 1213*, 627.

⁷² SCW, 68 laisses 135–6; *Chanson* II, 12, 14, especially lines 9–15.

walls of the outer bourg as the garrison retreated into the keep. Before they were completely surrounded the knights of the garrison got word out to Montfort.⁷³ At that moment Simon of Montfort was already on his way to Muret with reinforcements and supplies, because he had suspected that the small *castrum* was ripe for attack due to its close proximity to Toulouse and its position on the Garonne.⁷⁴ The militia of Toulouse prepared for a final assault on the keep, but when Pere II found out about it he furiously ordered the consuls of Toulouse not to proceed. The Aragonese king had intercepted letters from the crusaders revealing that Montfort was on his way, and the monarch did not want the chief crusader to sense a trap or forgo an attempted rescue because the garrison had fallen or surrendered before he arrived. Pere planned to allow Montfort and his troops easy access over the Garonne so they could get into the *castrum*. Once that happened the allied army could surround and besiege virtually the entire crusader field army and perhaps destroy it in a single siege. The orders went out, and the militia of Toulouse left for their tents.⁷⁵

Montfort received the news while in Fanjeaux, about seventy kilometers southeast of Muret. Alice of Montfort told her husband about a nightmare she had had the night before, in which she had bled profusely from her arms, perhaps a portent of things to come. Montfort grew angry with her over this and expressed his disbelief in portents and dreams.⁷⁶ Montfort took what men he had with him towards Saverdun, intending to approach Muret from the south. Another message from the garrison at Muret reached him the following day on his way to Saverdun, informing him that the siege was growing more desperate. The garrison did not of course know that the king was deliberately holding back so that he could cordon off the entire crusader army once it entered the *castrum*. Montfort sent word to his wife, on her way east to Carcassonne, to send as many knights as she could to reinforce him. Once at Carcassonne she persuaded the Viscount of Corbeil, who had already served his forty days, to ride to Montfort's assistance.

Meanwhile, Montfort's force halted at Boulbonne, a Cistercian monastery about eight kilometers north of Saverdun. There he stopped to pray and get a blessing from the monks.⁷⁷ According to William of Puylaurens, when the sacristan of Boulbonne warned Montfort that he was facing a

⁷³ SCW, 68 laisse 137; *Chanson* II, 16, 18 lines 5–12; PVCE, 204 #448; PVC II, 140–1.

⁷⁴ PVCE, 204–5 #449; PVC II, 141.

⁷⁵ SCW, 68–9 laisses 137–38; *Chanson* II, 18, 20 laisse 138 lines 1–11; PVCE, 204 #448; PVC II, 140–1.

⁷⁶ PVCE, 205 #449; PVC II, 141–2. ⁷⁷ PVCE, 205 #450; PVC II, 143.

much larger army led by a highly skilled and experienced opponent, the athlete of Christ produced a letter from the King of Aragon addressed to a noblewoman in the diocese of Toulouse. In the letter the Aragonese monarch said he would drive out the French not because they were invading his vassals' lands but merely because of his love for her. Montfort seemed quite angry about the letter, because the king did not treat the chief crusader as a serious opponent and his reason for going to war seemed rather frivolous. Montfort's reasons for going to war against the king seemed far more legitimate, at least in his own eyes.⁷⁸ Montfort traveled on to Saverdun where he gathered his forces. In spite of what seemed to be an inevitable clash, for several days while Montfort was still on his way to Muret several prelates, including the Bishop of Toulouse, had been negotiating between the king, the count, and the people of Toulouse.⁷⁹ According to a letter sent by the southerners, at least some Toulousans were prepared to obey the pope and their bishop before the two armies came to blows. When Folquet asked Pere II for a safe conduct to pass through his lines to Toulouse for further talks the king refused, though the monarch facetiously gave his permission for the bishop to travel to Toulouse without a safe conduct. The two sides exchanged several additional letters before Montfort's forces arrived at Muret, but to no avail. Pere II was determined to prevent negotiations from weakening his coalition.⁸⁰

Montfort remained at Saverdun until the morning of 11 September. At dawn he heard mass, made his confession, and drew up a will, while the bishops accompanying him excommunicated everyone in the southern army except for the King of Aragon.⁸¹ Since Montfort anticipated encountering hostile forces before reaching Muret, the army left Saverdun

⁷⁸ WPE, chapter xx, 46; WP, 80. That the King of Aragon should send a letter to a lady and offer her a romantic reason for fighting seems perfectly plausible. The sources generally suggest that Pere II was a lady's man and therefore sending a note of this nature seems in character. However, just because he wrote a trivial reason for going to war to impress a love interest does not mean that this was his actual reason for fighting. Montfort was looking for psychological/divine support, and the letter suggested to him that his own reasons for fighting were far more righteous.

⁷⁹ PVCE, 205 #451; PVC II, 143; PVC III, Pièces Annexes #4, 200–5. For Folquet's and the prelates' specific efforts to secure peace in the days leading up to the battle see Schulman, *Where Troubadours Were Bishops*, 112–13.

⁸⁰ PVCE, 214–15 #471–3; PVC II, 164–8. This information comes from the legates and pro-crusade bishops' viewpoint of course, in their letter to the pope after the battle was over. If we take these men at their word it appears they made a genuine effort to avert bloodshed.

⁸¹ PVCE, 206, #453; PVC II, 144–5; see Chapter 6, 175. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay believes that for all practical purposes Pere II was excommunicated, but because of Innocent's confirmation of Urban II's grant, stipulating that kings of Aragon could not be excommunicated except by the pope, the prelates dared not include him.

organized into three different units (*acies*) or lines in case they had to fight along the road. Throughout the day the army cautiously moved northward, first through Auterive, about eighteen kilometers from Muret, then through a marshy area on the narrow road where they expected an attack at any moment. Their vigilance proved unnecessary as the journey was unimpeded the entire time, even at the bridge over the Garonne. The crusader army made it into Muret safely by the evening of the day they had set out. Some of Montfort's knights recommended he attack the coalition army without delay, but the chief crusader knew that after a day-long, tension-filled march his troops required rest. Even at this late hour the prelates with him hoped that negotiations could stave off a battle. Beginning that evening and continuing the next day almost until battle was joined, envoys from Montfort's army repeatedly tried to work out some sort of peace agreement or truce but in all instances were rejected.⁸² During the night reinforcements arrived from Carcassonne in the form of the Viscount of Corbeil and thirty knights.⁸³ Among these knights was William of Barres, Simon of Montfort's half-brother through his mother's second marriage.⁸⁴

Early the next morning, 12 September, the coalition leaders met to discuss their strategy for the coming day. According to the Anonymous, Pere II wished to attack immediately. The Anonymous includes an incident, however, that though smacking of hindsight may reflect what was actually discussed at the meeting. Raimon VI had repeatedly shown himself to be an ineffective tactical commander who showed little initiative (except at Pujol) and by the standards of the early thirteenth century was not particularly brave. That being said, unlike Pere II he possessed several years of experience against Montfort's army, and it was from this painfully derived wealth of knowledge that he offered a piece of advice that in retrospect might have prevented the rout the battle became. He suggested that the coalition fortify its camp and remain in it while allowing the

⁸² For the itinerary of the march and entrance to Muret, see PVCE, 206–7 #454–6; PVC II, 145–7; SCW, 69 laisse 138; *Chanson* II, 20, 22 lines 13–20. For the attempts at negotiation, see PVCE, 207 #456, 215 #474; PVC II, 147, 168; WPE, chapter XX, 46; WP, 80.

⁸³ PVCE, 205–6 #450–1, 207 #456; PVC II, 142, 148. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says that this unit first met Montfort at Saverdun, yet in the later passage it seems as though they had not encountered the chief crusader until Muret. Perhaps the unit did meet Montfort at Saverdun, then took a separate route from the rest of the army to Muret.

⁸⁴ PVCE, 206 #451; PVC II, 143–4; *Annales Monasterii de Waverleia*, in *Annales Monastici*, ed. Henry Richards Luard, RS 36, 2: 279. William of Barres came from a family which had the good fortune or dumb luck to be present at two other famous and decisive battles: Arsuf and Bouvines. For his father's role at Arsuf see Ambrose, *The History of the Holy War*, I: 93–4 lines 5793–7. For the younger William's presence at Bouvines see WB, 272 and William the Breton, *Philippide*, VIII, 81, lines 431–6.

crusaders to come out and attack. The southerners would hold their own cavalry in reserve until the crusaders were demoralized by crossbow fire and their multiple failures at piercing the defenses of the camp. Even if there was no decisive battle, the crusader forces would have to abandon Muret in a weakened state from battle and lack of supplies.⁸⁵ Which camp the count meant is unclear, because the Toulousan militia had pitched their tents immediately before the walls of Muret, while the rest of the coalition army was encamped to the northwest some distance away from the *castrum*. Hunkering down in a fortified camp was essentially what the Count of Toulouse had done during his own counter-offensive at Castelnaudary two years before. While that fortified camp had not prevented a crusader victory at Saint-Martin-la-Lande, it had blocked Montfort's army from attacking the Count of Toulouse's army directly. Perhaps it was with knowledge of this that one of Pere's Aragonese lieutenants, Miquel of Luesia, spoke out so strongly against arming the camp and waiting to be attacked by the crusaders. He all but called the Count of Toulouse a coward for suggesting it. In reply Raimon VI could only defend his honor by retorting: "all I can say is, be it as you wish, for before nightfall we shall see who is last to quit the field."⁸⁶ On that sour note the coalition forces prepared for battle.

The crusader side still labored under the belief that while negotiations lasted there was to be no fighting. While the coalition leadership engaged in debate about how, rather than if, they should attack, the crusaders waited for their envoys to come back with news. When the envoys returned, it was with information that the militia of Toulouse intended to abide by the oath of allegiance they had sworn to Pere of Aragon and would therefore obey his wishes. In a last-minute effort a priest hurried to Pere's tent to tell him that the bishops would personally come to him to plead for peace. Because of this Montfort allowed the gates of Muret's bourg to stand open.⁸⁷

Though not directly articulated by any source, the initial coalition plan of attack called for a strong assault by as many men as possible, ostensibly to destroy the crusader army by overwhelming numbers. Exactly which coalition units attacked the walls in the first assault is open to some interpretation, because clearly mounted men made a dash for the gates

⁸⁵ SCW, 69–70, laisse 139; *Chanson* II, 22, 24 lines 1–17; WPE, chapter XXI, 47–8; WP, 82.

⁸⁶ SCW, 70 laisse 139; *Chanson* II, 24 lines 18–25; WPE, chapter XXI, 48; WP, 82. The translation is Shirley's.

⁸⁷ PVCE, 208, #457, 215–16, #475; PVC II, 148–9, 168–9.

but the militia of Toulouse participated too. The initial assault was short and nasty, but the crusaders repulsed it and presumably shut the gates. The mounted men of the coalition forces retreated to their tents for a meal and to reformulate what they wished to do, but some of the militia of Toulouse continued to shoot crossbows, other hand-held missile weapons, and siege weapons at the walls of Muret.⁸⁸ This abortive assault convinced Simon of Montfort not to bother with further negotiations, and he told the prelates and the legate (Folquet of Toulouse, acting for Arnaud-Amaury) that the crusaders planned now to ride out and give battle. The bishops agreed and gave their unequivocal permission for the crusaders to attack.⁸⁹

There is a sense of inevitability about what happened next, partly because both commanders were anxious for a definitive contest. Ultimately neither general did so for practical reasons. The King of Aragon already had Montfort where he wanted him: enclosed in a town. The prudent thing to do, in keeping with standard ways of medieval warfare, would have been for a portion of the king's army to cross the Garonne and surround the crusaders, and either assault Muret from all sides, or simply allow starvation to finish the job. Rather than do this, Pere II was so confident that he wished to bring on battle as soon as possible. Two Catalan leaders and their cavalry still making their way to Muret had asked the king to wait for them, but he refused.⁹⁰ He showed additional misplaced self-assurance by allowing his adversary, uncontested, to leisurely march out of the *castrum* with all his horsemen and form them up for battle. The king must have believed that by beating Montfort in the field he would settle the crusade quickly and decisively. Montfort's reasoning for seeking battle is even more inexplicable. Everyone had told him, and he could see for himself, that he was terribly outnumbered. Moreover, instead of the lackluster Raimon of Toulouse or the wary Raimon-Roger of Foix he had to face a man of equal or superior talent, experience, and reputation. Montfort could have stayed in the *castrum* of Muret and, since the defenders in sieges always had great advantages over the attackers, it was certainly conceivable that the coalition army would fall apart due to the weather, lack of supplies, bickering among the leaders, or weakening of resolve. Seeking battle at Muret was, from both a tactical and a strategic standpoint, the dumbest thing Simon of Montfort could have done. Once he believed

⁸⁸ *SCW*, 70 laisse 139; *Chanson* II, 24 lines 26–35; *PVCE*, 216 #475; *PVC* II, 169.

⁸⁹ *PVCE*, 208, #458, 216 #476; *PVC* II, 149–50, 169–70.

⁹⁰ Jaume I, *Book of Deeds*, 24. The two nobles were Nunó Sanxes and Guillem of Montcada. The latter's father, Guillem Raimon, Seneschal of Catalonia, had tried unsuccessfully to relieve the crusader siege of Puycelci in June 1213.

that combat was inevitable it appears that he decided to risk all on a potentially decisive but also potentially disastrous contest, hoping to draw the allied army away from its tents and onto the open field.⁹¹ He had offered to battle his enemies before in the open, as in 1212, but one could argue that he knew beforehand that men like the counts of Toulouse or Foix would not take him up on his offers. Pere II was very different, of course, and now both men were willing to let God show his favor to one of them.

Although Montfort was a man of great faith, the stress of the coming conflict weighed heavily upon him. Since 10 September, two days before, the athlete of Christ had spent considerable time in various churches either getting a blessing, making his will, giving his confession, making vows, or commending himself to God.⁹² After announcing his decision to seek battle the chief crusader heard mass yet one more time before donning his armor. After he had done this he returned again to the chapel. As he knelt before the altar the leather brace to which his mail leggings were tied under his hauberk snapped. This was surely a bad omen right before a battle. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay he tried not to let this faze him, but merely called for a replacement.⁹³ The bad omens continued. In a raised area of the *castrum*, in full view of his own soldiers and the militia of Toulouse, as Montfort mounted his horse, one of the stirrup straps broke and he had to dismount and wait for the saddle to be repaired. To add injury to insult, as he mounted his horse again it drew its head back and hit the chief crusader's head so hard it stunned him.⁹⁴ This produced some harsh laughter and catcalls from the militia of Toulouse who witnessed the

⁹¹ SCW, 70 laisse 139; *Chanson* II, 26, lines 42–51.

⁹² These can be summarized in the following list: 10 September, prayer and commendation to the monks of Boulbonne (PVCE 205 #450; PVC II, 143); 11 September, confession and drawing of a will at Saverdun (PVCE, 206 #453; PVC II, 144–5); 11 September, heard mass at Saverdun (PVCE, 206 #453; PVC II, 145); also 11 September, prayer at a church, probably at Lagardelle on the way to Muret (PVCE, 207 #454; PVC II, 146 and footnote 3); 12 September, early morning mass at Muret, probably in the church of Saint James (PVCE 207–8 #457; PVC II, 148–9 and footnote 2; WPE, chapter XX, 47; WP, 80–2); 12 September, heard part of another mass at Muret in the citadel of the castle (PVCE 208 #458; PVC II, 150); 12 September, more prayer at the altar in the castle church (PVCE 208 #458; PVC II, 150). This constitutes seven different instances of church attendance in less than three days.

⁹³ PVCE, 208 #458; PVC II, 150. The Sibyls translate *brachile* as “girdle”; “brace” or “belt” seems to be more appropriate here.

⁹⁴ WPE chapter XXI, 47; WP, 82; PVCE, 208–9 #459; PVC II, 150–1. These incidents are not surprising for a man pumped full of adrenalin and making more hurried movements than normal, but they rather conveniently suggest that God was showing signs of his eventual favor, thus raising doubt as to their veracity. Still, William of Puylaurens's account supports Peter Vaux-de-Cernay in some of the details.

whole thing. Even in today's world a series of incidents like this right before a battle might unnerve a commander, but in a world more superstitious than ours Montfort has to be given credit for not losing his presence of mind. He did, however, shout in the direction of the Toulousans that he would before the end of the day "pursue you [them] with shouts of victory to the gates of Toulouse."⁹⁵

As the troops mounted, one of Montfort's knights suggested they do a count of the force, but the chief crusader told the knight it was unnecessary because God had given him enough men to beat the enemy.⁹⁶ This casual attitude towards numbers is not what modern readers want to hear when analyzing a battle. As in most medieval battles, the estimates of the numbers involved at Muret have generated their share of controversy. Nonetheless, they deserve to be scrutinized yet again to determine the degree of numerical disparity between the two armies and how that affected the outcome, as well as to figure out what kinds of soldiers actually participated in the battle. None of the sources is completely reliable, though the estimates for the crusader side are fairly consistent and believable. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay states that Montfort had no more than 800 knights and mounted sergeants and an unspecified number of infantry. The chief crusader prohibited the infantry from participating in the battle for several reasons.⁹⁷ One, the Cistercian monk states they were few in number, probably fewer than the crusader horsemen, so their contribution would be small. Two, these infantrymen would simply slow down a larger body of horse whose commander wished to engage the enemy as soon as possible. Three, Montfort had rushed to Muret in the first place to prevent its capture, so keeping the infantry back to protect the *castrum* only made sense. Four, the horsemen might eventually require protected shelter to fall back on, even in the case of victory. Therefore, leaving the infantry behind to protect the closest friendly fortification made sound tactical sense. In hindsight Montfort made the right decision, since the militia of Toulouse came back to besiege Muret after his mounted force left the town.

The figures mentioned for the crusader army by Peter Vaux-de-Cernay remain remarkably consistent in most of the other primary sources that

⁹⁵ PVCE, 209 #459; PVC II, 151. The quoted material is the Sibly's translation. Based on the outcome of the battle this seems rather too pat.

⁹⁶ PVCE, 209 #460; PVC II, 151.

⁹⁷ PVCE, 209 #460; PVC II, 151: "omnes autem nostri inter milites et servientes in equis non erant plus quam octingenti . . . paucissimos autem, quasi nullos, pedites habebant nostri; insuper et comes nobilis inhibuerat ne quis pedes egrederetur ad pugnam."

actually state a number.⁹⁸ William of Puylaurens estimates Montfort's army at about 1,000 armed men ("et alii multi ad mille numerum armorum").⁹⁹ William the Breton produces two sets of numbers in his works. A good source for other details, the *Gesta Philippi* states that Montfort had no more than 260 knights, about 500 horse sergeants and 700 crusader-pilgrim infantry, that is, not stipendiary or mercenary infantry ("ducentos et sexaginta milites . . . circiter quingentos satellites equites . . . et peregrinos pedites fere septingentos inermes").¹⁰⁰ Though William the Breton changed the numbers later when he composed the *Philippide*, he did not change the scale. In this later work he stated that Montfort had 240 horsemen, 700 *in equis famuli* and 300 footsoldiers.¹⁰¹ Pere II's son Jaume, who would have been a good source for the Aragonese, writes that Montfort had around 800 to 1,000 men on horseback.¹⁰² Ogerius Panis believes Montfort had 700 men ("illi de parte comitis Symonis non erant ultra septingenti").¹⁰³ Modern scholars who have discussed the battle of Muret have attempted to come up with the numbers of crusaders as well, though they do not differ substantially from what is offered by the chroniclers.¹⁰⁴ It is relatively easy then, to offer a plausible number for the crusader army at Muret: approximately 250–350 knights, 500–600 mounted sergeants, and, if we choose to use William the Breton's number in his chronicle, at most 700 crusader-pilgrim infantry. It is entirely reasonable to state that Montfort had something less than 1,000 horsemen at his disposal to fight the battle, and something less than 1,000 infantry to hold the *castrum*.

⁹⁸ WPE, chapter xx, 47; WP, 82; WB, 259; William the Breton, *Philippide*, viii, 231–2; Jaume I, *Book of Deeds*, 23; Ogerius Panis, *Annales*, ed. G. H. Pertz, MGH SS 18 (1863), 133; *Annales Monasterii de Waverleia*, 279. Even sources that do not mention a number state that Montfort had few troops. The Waverley Annalist for example, says the chief crusader suffered "in paucitate virorum suorum respectu multitudinis adversariorum."

⁹⁹ WPE, chapter xx, 47; WP, 82. ¹⁰⁰ WB, 259.

¹⁰¹ William the Breton, *Philippide*, viii, 231–2, lines 587–8: "Cujus erant equites cum quadraginta ducenti, / Septingenti in equis famuli, peditesque trecenti." It is unclear what William the Breton means by "equis famuli." It could refer to Montfort's personal followers, or to paid horse sergeants, as is suggested by the structure used in the *Gesta*.

¹⁰² Jaume I, *Book of Deeds*, 23. ¹⁰³ Ogerius Panis, *Annales*, 133.

¹⁰⁴ Delpech, *Bataille de Muret*, 16–17; Delpech, *La Tactique*, 1.2: 192–3; Dieulafoy, "La bataille de Muret," 108–9; Anglade, *La Bataille*, 24–5; Oman, *History of the Art of War*, 1: 455; Nickerson, "Oman's Muret," 554; Nickerson, *The Inquisition*, 154; Evans, "The Albigensian Crusade," 302; Strayer, *The Albigensian Crusades*, 93 and footnote 3; *L'Épopée* 11: 193–5; Sumpston, *Albigensian Crusade*, 166–7; Cabrer, *12 de septiembre de 1213*, 289–90, 626. This merely represents the more important secondary sources. For a longer list of the older French sources that mention the battle, see *L'Épopée* 11, 429–30 endnote 4.

The chroniclers do not attempt any semblance of accuracy in describing the numbers of the coalition army, offering us little help at reaching a plausible number of effectives for that side. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay understandably fails us, since he writes from the crusader perspective and offers the fantastic “almost 100,000.”¹⁰⁵ William the Breton’s *Gesta* only gives a casualty figure for the coalition side, but in doing so betrays a rather inaccurate scale: 17,000 dead.¹⁰⁶ In his *Philippide* he says the coalition army had 200,000 men, well off the scale of reality.¹⁰⁷ Most of the other chronicles that mention a number report only the number or scale of the casualties from the coalition side.

The lack of plausible numbers has necessitated much speculation by modern historians, several of whom have done no better than their medieval counterparts at coming up with a reasonable total of coalition soldiers engaged at Muret.¹⁰⁸ The most thorough analysis and critique of the numbers and secondary sources which estimate the coalition forces came from Ferdinand Lot’s 1946 *L’Art militaire*. By close examination and a dose of common sense, Lot worked out that the coalition army had about 1,600 horsemen and somewhere between 2,000 and 4,000 infantry.¹⁰⁹ Later scholarship on the demographics of Toulouse prior to the Black Death reinforced Lot’s conclusions on the Toulousan militia part of his

¹⁰⁵ PVCE, 209 #460, PVC II, 151. ¹⁰⁶ WB, 260.

¹⁰⁷ William the Breton, *Philippide*, 232 line 579.

¹⁰⁸ Delpèch, *Bataille de Muret*, v, 17, 20, 23, 25, 27 and *La Tactique*, 1.2: 194–201, 204, 222; Anglade, *La Bataille*, 49–50; Oman, *A History of the Art of War*, 1: 454, 461; Nickerson, “Oman’s Muret,” 557. Delbrück has a short but eviscerating critique of some of these authors in *Medieval Warfare*, 413–14.

¹⁰⁹ Lot, *L’Art militaire*, 1: 214–16. He suggests that Montfort had about 900 horsemen, in line with most other secondary scholarship, but he severely critiques the numbers of the coalition. Lot believes the largest total Pere might have had was 3,000 cavalry, consisting of 1,000 knights and 2,000 sergeants. But he immediately rounds the numbers down to 800 knights and 1,600 sergeants for a theoretical total of 2,400 Aragonese cavalry, because the two mounted contingents under Nunó Sanxes and Guillem of Montcada arrived too late to participate in the battle. Further reducing the scale, Lot doubts that the King of Aragon had the resources to muster 1,000 knights from his small kingdom, which would rival Philip Augustus’ ability to raise knights in a far larger one. Finally he thinks, and I agree, that one should take the Provençal or Occitan *cavalier* in the sense of all horsemen, not just knights, rather than automatically assuming that every knight brought two mounted squires or servants into battle, as Nickerson does in “Oman’s Muret,” 554. Lot argues that Delpèch’s figure of 1,500 cavalry for the counts of Toulouse, Foix, and Comminges is arbitrary, too high and without evidence to support it, so he rounds it down to almost half that, to 800. Lot’s final tally gives Pere II 800 Aragonese horsemen altogether and the Occitan contingents 800 or so, for a total of 1,600 mounted men to Montfort’s 900. As for the coalition infantry, Lot thinks it necessary to reduce the wild numbers to a tenth of previous calculations, to 2,000–4,000, and similarly to reduce the casualties that resulted. He bases this on the population of Toulouse according to the last census of the *ancien régime*, 1790. Toulouse had a population of 32,118 people that year.

analysis.¹¹⁰ Even Martín Alvira Cabrer, who has given the numbers the most recent serious examination, is forced to guess how many coalition troops participated in the battle of Muret. His estimates are substantially higher than Lot's but not outrageously so. He allows for a theoretical total of 1,000–2,000 Aragonese knights and horse sergeants, 1,000–2,000 Occitan knights and horse sergeants, and basically accepts Lot's total for the Toulousan infantry at about 2,000–4,000 men.¹¹¹

The crusaders now made their way up to the walls of Muret, some using these last moments to revere a wooden crucifix held by Folquet, Bishop of Toulouse, until the Bishop of Comminges realized this was a distraction and took the cross from his colleague in order to encourage the troops to march out of the town. The knights and horse sergeants left the town exhorted by the harangues and blessings of the bishops, including the Bishop of Comminges's promise that all who died in the battle would go directly to heaven, without a stay in Purgatory.¹¹² The gate from which the army departed has proved to be one of the most controversial aspects of the battle, because the primary sources that mention a gate explicitly contradict one another. The *Chanson* mentions the crusader army at the Salles gate, which was at the southwest corner of Muret, while William of Puylaurens says the horsemen rode out of a gate that faced east.¹¹³ This is an issue that cannot be solved based on the present contradictory evidence, even though historians have attempted to argue the validity of one side or the other without a clear consensus.¹¹⁴ There remains some justification for believing that Montfort's horsemen departed from the southwest Salles gate. Using it would have better kept the crusader horsemen out of view of the Toulousan militia besieging the north side of Muret, consequently allowing the crusader units to form up with less risk of being seen or harassed. Undoubtedly the militia of Toulouse did not see Montfort's force until

¹¹⁰ Wolff, *Les "Estimes"*, 93–4; Russell, *Medieval Regions*, 155–6. Wolff estimates the population of the city, including its suburbs, at about 32,000 in 1335. Russell summarizes Wolff's data but allows for a larger population for the city prior to the Black Death, perhaps as high as 40,000–50,000. The population of 1213 was probably smaller than either of the above estimates. If, however, we used either 1335 estimate as a basis for the possible size of the Toulousan militia in the field in 1213, then the 2,000–4,000 suggested by Lot remains plausible.

¹¹¹ Alvira Cabrer, *12 de septiembre de 1213*, 294–301, 627; Smith, *Innocent III*, 138, follows Alvira Cabrer. I thank Dr. Lucia Llorente for assisting me with Alvira Cabrer's work.

¹¹² PVCE, 209 #461; PVC II, 151–2; David S. Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War c. 300–1215* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 144–6.

¹¹³ SCW, 70 laisse 139; *Chanson* II, 26 lines 39–40; WPE, chapter XX, 47; WP, 82.

¹¹⁴ Delpech, *La Bataille de Muret*, 38–41; Delpech, *La Tactique*, 1.2: 213–18; Dieulafoy, "La bataille de Muret," 120–4; Anglade, *La Bataille*, 37–8; Oman, *A History of the Art of War* I: 460, 465–7; Nickerson, "Oman's Muret," 562–5 and *Inquisition*, 162; *L'Épopée* II, 207–8.

it was on the field, because the militiamen did not contest the army's passage as they might have had Montfort's men gone out the east gate. Once outside the walls Montfort had sufficient time to form his men into three lines or battles, as he had on the way to Muret a few days before.¹¹⁵ His half-brother William of Barres commanded the first line, while Montfort stationed himself in the third unit or "battle," both as a safety measure and so he could use this third unit as a tactical reserve.¹¹⁶

Though the Anonymous of the *Chanson* suggests that King Pere rode out hastily with his men to face Montfort, Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, the legates' letter and William of Puylaurens say the coalition army was already in formation waiting for the crusaders to ride to them.¹¹⁷ The king had adopted a similar formation to the crusaders', with three lines or units. The Count of Foix commanded the first rank, which consisted of the count's men and some Catalans.¹¹⁸ Unlike Montfort, the King of Aragon stationed himself in the second line, even though the more common tactical practice (at least according to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay) would have been for the king to stay with the third, reserve rank. Moreover, Pere had deliberately disguised himself in a borrowed suit of armor and was not immediately recognizable.¹¹⁹ Once placed on the field, the coalition forces appear to have remained stationary, waiting to meet the crusaders coming toward them.

As Montfort's army rode towards the king, the riders had to pick their way across some marshy areas and a stream and bypass the Toulousan militia besieging Muret from the north. The crusader lines then attacked much as they had at the battle of Saint-Martin-la-Lande two years before. William of Barres's unit rode for the center of the first rank commanded by the Count of Foix. What followed was a head-on collision as the crusader

¹¹⁵ PVCE, 210, #462, 216, #476; PVC II, 152–3, 169–71; WPE, chapter XXI, 48; WP, 84. The legates' letter states that the militia of Toulouse besieged Muret as Montfort's troops marched out of Muret, further supporting the idea that he chose a gate where he would not encounter them.

¹¹⁶ SCW, 70, laisse 139; *Chanson* II, 26 lines 56–8; PVCE, 211, #463; PVC II, 154; Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare*, 217–21. There was no universal tactical formation for medieval generals to use, but it was quite common for the tactical commander to remain with either the rear rank or reserve.

¹¹⁷ SCW, 70 laisse 140; *Chanson* II, 28 lines 1–6; PVCE, 210 #462, 216 #476; PVC II, 153, 171 WPE, chapter XXI, 48; WP, 82.

¹¹⁸ WPE, chapter XXI, 48; WP, 82.

¹¹⁹ PVCE, 211 #463; PVC II, 153–4; Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare*, 217–21. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay takes issue with the king for placing himself in the second line, suggesting that Pere was either foolhardy or cowardly. Though Pere's exact reasons for moving with the second line have to remain unexplained, positioning himself in a different rank and in someone else's armor would have kept him safer if the crusader army made the king their target. Since presumably one of Pere's men was wearing his armor and perhaps standing underneath his banner, drawing the enemy towards a false target made good tactical sense.

horsemen rode through, crushing the initial coalition line and crashing into the second. The second crusader unit followed the first, adding their impetus to the charge. In the third rank Montfort could only see that his first two units had disappeared in the fighting, so he quickly maneuvered his reserve to come around to the left and hit the coalition army from the flank.¹²⁰ At least one of the coalition lines was protected by a ditch, but Montfort unexpectedly found a path around it and was able to plow into the line. Montfort's unit encountered bitter fighting, as depicted by Peter Vaux-de-Cernay. During this fierce combat Montfort's left stirrup leather broke, probably the same one as had snapped when he tried to mount his horse before the battle began. Initially he caught his spur in his saddle blanket to keep his balance, but then his spur broke off and he had to fight from a sitting position. He personally punched an enemy knight under the chin after the knight had struck him on the head. By this time the coalition lines had buckled so badly that the Occitan and Aragonese horsemen began to retreat.¹²¹

What happened in the King of Aragon's part of the battle is a bit more problematic to analyze. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, the king was killed in the initial crush as the crusader lines sawed through his own.¹²² The Anonymous and William of Puylaurens contradict this, stating that crusader forces intentionally targeted the king. Since the king wore a borrowed suit of armor and the crusaders did not know this, they would have made for the king's standard and attacked the men huddled around it. The Anonymous reports that Pere shouted, "I am the king!" but could not make himself heard before he was killed in the melee.¹²³ William of Puylaurens says some crusaders deliberately made for the king's standard, slaying as many men as they could around it, but no one seems to have purposefully tried to kill the king. After the King of Aragon fell, according to William of Puylaurens, the coalition horsemen began to flee.¹²⁴ Montfort's first two units followed them, killing more as the southern cavalry retreated across the field. To his credit, Montfort exerted sufficient authority over his own unit to keep it together, and made it follow at a disciplined pace behind the other two lines racing after the coalition

¹²⁰ PVCE, 211 #463; PVC II, 154; *L'Épopée* II, 431–3 endnote 15. As with so much of the battle, what "left" refers to is open to speculation.

¹²¹ PVCE, 211 #463; PVC II, 154–5; WPE, chapter XXI, 48; WP, 84. ¹²² PVCE, 211 #463; PVC II, 153.

¹²³ *SCW*, 70 laisse 140; *Chanson* II, 28 lines 10–14; William the Breton, *Philippide*, VIII, 239–40. William the Breton's poem contains a fanciful account of the king's death in single combat with one of Montfort's horse sergeants.

¹²⁴ WPE, chapter XXI, 48; WP, 84.

horsemen. The chief crusader figured that in case these other units ran into trouble his own men would serve to rally them.¹²⁵ This turned out to be unnecessary because the demoralized southern horsemen fled without resistance.

The crusader charge turned out to be only the first phase of the battle of Muret. As the fighting took place between the mounted men on the field, the militia of Toulouse renewed their own assault against the walls of Muret, having hoped to capture it ever since the Aragonese king had denied them the opportunity a few days before. Neither the men in Muret nor the Toulousan militia knew what was going on in the field, but the men inside the *castrum* grew so anxious that Folquet of Marseille tried to reason with the besiegers, his own flock in other words. He sent a priest out to urge the Toulousans to surrender or at least cease fighting. As proof of his sincerity he gave the priest his own Cistercian cowl to show the men of Toulouse. Under the impression that Pere II had defeated the chief crusader, the Toulousans laughed at the idea of surrender and beat the messenger as a sign of their contempt.¹²⁶

Back on the field Montfort collected his men – now loaded down with spoils, including some of the banners of the coalition army – and all began making their way back to Muret. The militia of Toulouse saw the captured banners and probably assumed it was the king coming to assist them in their own siege efforts. By the time they realized that it was Montfort's, not the king's, army it was too late. The miraculous appearance of the athlete of Christ produced terror among the militiamen, causing them to abandon their fortified camp and possessions in front of the walls of Muret and race for the Garonne, to the boats tied up along its banks. With no semblance of order or discipline left, what followed was as close to gratuitous slaughter as it gets, as Montfort's horsemen cut down hundreds of Toulousans, as others in a panic could not make it into the boats and drowned in the Garonne.¹²⁷ The crusaders showed no mercy to the hapless militiamen, settling scores dating back to the failed siege of Toulouse in 1211 and avenging the men who had been captured and killed at Pujol that spring.

¹²⁵ PVCE, 211–12 #463; PVC II, 155.

¹²⁶ PVCE, 212 #464, 216–17 #479; PVC II, 155–6, 172–3. The legates' letter suggests that the men inside Muret already knew of Montfort's victory and tried to save the men of Toulouse from further slaughter by Folquet's gesture. This really does not make much sense, since surely the men of Toulouse would have known of the defeat before a bottled-up enemy did.

¹²⁷ WPE, chapter XXI, 48; WP, 84; SCW, 71 laisse 140; *Chanson* II, 28, 30 lines 17–34; PVCE, 212 #464, 216 #477; PVC II, 156, 171–2. Some of the horsemen who participated in the field battle fled to the river as well: the Anonymous says that one of King Pere's nobles, Dalmas of Creixell, helped fuel the panic near the river by telling the militia men that the king was dead.

Not yet realizing the completeness of his victory, it appears that only after the second phase of the battle did the chief crusader find out that Pere had died in the fighting. He rode back with some men to where the King of Aragon had fallen and viewed the body. Pere's corpse had already been stripped of its armor and clothes by some of Montfort's own infantry, who had ventured out to loot the dead after the militia of Toulouse had fled.¹²⁸ The Hospitallers would later ask for and receive the body for burial.¹²⁹ It is impossible to know what Montfort really thought about his fallen enemy. Even if he had wished it he could not have planned the king's unexpected death. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, Montfort mourned over the body. While Montfort and the legates undoubtedly respected the Aragonese monarch's military ability and his role as a crusader, his death was a considerable boon to Montfort's ambitions. Pere was the most dangerous individual Montfort had faced on the crusade, since his status as a sovereign king, general, and crusader matched or exceeded the chief crusader's own reputation. Outside of the fact that Montfort mourned the king as a fellow human being and crusader, the king's death could not have distressed him overly much.¹³⁰ The king being dead, Montfort's own reputation as a military commander was without peer, further emphasizing to the people of Occitania that he could not be defeated.

Whatever source or scale one chooses to use, the casualty figures indicate a lopsided victory by the crusaders. The legates' letter after the battle flatly states that the crusaders had lost only a single knight, probably during the field battle, and a few sergeants ("de militibus autem Christi unus solus . . . et paucissimi servientes").¹³¹ William of Puylaurens says much the same thing: the "church" side lost no one in the battle.¹³² Other sources confirm that few crusaders lost their lives at Muret.¹³³ As one might expect in a rout, the coalition side lost hundreds of men, perhaps thousands. As with all the numbers involved in the coalition side, the chroniclers do not report reasonable figures, but taken together they indicate the loss of life was extremely heavy. The legates wisely say that the number of killed was so

¹²⁸ PVCE, 212 #465; PVC II, 107. Whether the crusader-pilgrims realized it was the king's body cannot now be determined.

¹²⁹ WPE, chapter XXI, 48–9; WP, 84; *Gesta Comitum Barcinonensium*, ed. L. Barrau Dihigo and J. Massó Torrents, *Cròniques Catalanes II* (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1925), 53–4.

¹³⁰ SCW, 71 laisse 141; *Chanson* II, 32 lines 1–10. The Anonymus suggests that Montfort was in such good spirits, even after hearing of Pere's death, that he parceled out plunder collected on the field.

¹³¹ PVCE, 217#480; PVC II, 173–4. ¹³² WPE, chapter XXI, 49; WP, 84.

¹³³ WB, 260, says eight pilgrims ("octo . . . peregrinos") died on the crusader side; William the Breton, *Philippide*, 242–3 lines 859–63, also reports eight killed; Ogerius Panus, *Annales*, 133, says one knight and three sergeants were killed.

great that it could not be estimated correctly, and the later English chronicler Roger of Wendover says much the same thing.¹³⁴ William of Puylaurens calculates the loss of life at 15,000 for the coalition army.¹³⁵ William the Breton estimates that 17,000 of the coalition army were killed at Muret, and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay ventures a guess of 20,000.¹³⁶ Suffice it to say that if we use Lot's numbers as a reasonable estimate for the coalition army's numbers (1,600 horsemen and 2,000–4,000 infantry), and the chroniclers' casualty estimates, the entire coalition army would have died to a man. Modern estimates depend on how many one believes participated in the battle, so there is no consensus except that secondary sources typically follow the chroniclers' estimate of scale and suggest heavy casualties on the side of the coalition.¹³⁷ Some of the chroniclers provide additional qualitative information that points to a scale of death on the coalition side. The *Gesta Comitum Barcinonensium* mentions several Aragonese nobles who died, including Miquel of Luesia, who before the battle had scoffed at the Count of Toulouse's suggestion to fortify the coalition camp.¹³⁸ The militia of Toulouse had suffered particularly heavy losses, because the faster horses of the crusaders trapped them at the Garonne with no other option than to be cut down or drown in the river.¹³⁹ William of Puylaurens believed that virtually every house in Toulouse had someone to mourn because of the battle or the fear that those captured had been killed.¹⁴⁰ The Anonymous says that the news of the battle "echoed round the world" because of the shock of so many deaths.¹⁴¹

If we bookend the era with Hastings (1066) and Courtrai (1302), then Simon of Montfort enjoyed one of the most decisive tactical victories in the Europe of the High Middle Ages. Muret stands out as comparable to Hastings tactically and a greater battlefield achievement than Bouvines.

¹³⁴ PVCE, 217 #480; PVC II, 173; Roger of Wendover, *The Flowers of History*, 2: 93. Others, like Ralph of Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. Joseph Stevenson, RS 66 (London, 1875), 166, said that Pere's army was destroyed or "swallowed" ("toto exercitu suo absorbetur") without mentioning specific numbers.

¹³⁵ WPE, 48; WP, 84. ¹³⁶ WB, 260; PVCE, 213 #466; PVC II, 157.

¹³⁷ Oman, *A History of the Art of War* I: 464 suggests three or four thousand, a reasonable figure. As for earlier estimates by Delpech and others, they reflect the number of men they thought had engaged in the battle. A laundry list of these does not need to be repeated here, though Alvira Cabrer, *12 de septiembre de 1213*, 361–6 does the best job of assessing the later primary evidence.

¹³⁸ *Gesta Comitum Barcinonensium*, 54. The chronicler mentions that many other Aragonese nobles died in the battle, though curiously no Catalans.

¹³⁹ *L'Épopée* II, 222–3 mentions that mass graves found in the nineteenth century on the banks of the Garonne were probably those of some battlefield dead.

¹⁴⁰ WPE, chapter XXI, 49; WP, 86. ¹⁴¹ SCW, 71 laisse 140; *Chanson* II, 32 line 35.

Although substantially outnumbered, Montfort managed to kill the opposing general, decimate his horsemen and slaughter his footsoldiers while losing hardly any of his own men. Even if Hastings and Bouvines were greater in scale than Muret, neither was as complete a victory in the field. Few generals in the history of the world commanded the battlefield more totally than Montfort did that day in September.

The five-year-old Jaume of Aragon, Pere's son and heir and eventually a great conquering king in his own right, was residing at Montfort's own headquarters in Carcassonne during the battle. In recounting the deeds of his own active life decades later, Jaume provided the best contemporary reason for why his father lost the battle of Muret. Jaume believes that his father had failed to impose unit discipline on his knights, and that each lord or knight fought on his own, without coordination. He attributes the coalition loss to a combination of bad order, his father's many sins, and how hard the crusaders fought.¹⁴² The king was correct in his assessment. Even though Raimon VI himself had warned Pere of Montfort's fighting ability, the Aragonese monarch disregarded the warnings and consequently was not prepared for the business-like way in which Montfort conducted warfare. Pere II's overconfidence allowed his enemy to enter Muret unmolested, and then permitted Montfort's army to ride out over broken country, re-form, and fight without being attacked. Because he divided his forces, the king was unable to command the Toulousan militia while participating in combat on the other side of the battlefield.¹⁴³ In addition, Pere II may very well have fought and died with a hangover. King Jaume specifically mentions that his father had slept with a woman on the day of the battle and was so tired or hung over that at mass he stayed in his seat even during the reading of the gospel. Pere's pre-battle celebrations and libertine behavior may have compromised his judgment.¹⁴⁴

Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, the papal legates, and other contemporaries chalked up Montfort's victory to divine intervention on behalf of a pious and devout Christian knight.¹⁴⁵ Even though Montfort was a general of considerable skill, he was not necessarily a tactical genius.¹⁴⁶ Part of his victory can be attributed to his own soldiers. The army that accompanied

¹⁴² Jaume I, *Book of Deeds*, 24.

¹⁴³ See also *L'Épopée* II, 231–4, which evaluates the chronicle evidence accounting for Pere's defeat.

¹⁴⁴ PVCE, 213, #466; 217 #481; PVC II, 157–8, 174–5; Jaume I, *Book of Deeds*, 24.

¹⁴⁵ For a brief summary of the idea of God's judgment determining the battle see Martin Alvira Cabrer, "Le jeudi de Muret: aspects idéologiques et mentaux de la bataille de 1213," *La Croisade Albigeoise. Actes du Colloque de Carcassonne* (Carcassonne: Le Centre d'Études Cathares, 2002), 197–207, especially 203.

¹⁴⁶ Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare*, 282.

the chief crusader into the battle consisted of a small, compact force, mostly of his faithful veterans of long service, unlike the King of Aragon's disparate army, the Occitan half of which had repeatedly failed in siege and battle against the crusaders. From past experience, particularly since the battle of Saint-Martin-la-Lande in 1211, Montfort knew that if he attacked an enemy center quickly and forcefully the men receiving the blow would be unlikely to react quickly enough to parry it. The king could only mass so many men along a front to defend against the crusader charge. Since neither mounted force used missile weapons, only the front rank could participate in direct combat; this greatly reduced the coalition's numerical advantage against the opposing line of horsemen. Montfort achieved total surprise over the Toulousan militia by accident, not from careful planning. The chief crusader therefore displayed good command, control, and timing during the battle, but not brilliance. If one wishes to cite a personality trait that helped the athlete of Christ win the battle it would be his utter confidence in his cause, not his tactical sense. In fact, his willingness to engage a numerically superior enemy in the field with no visible means of retreat, no real manpower reserves, and few supplies was a foolhardy wager or leap of faith. As one supposes all generals must do in battle, both Pere II and Simon of Montfort gambled at Muret, but the latter drew the better hand that September day.

From the nineteenth century on historians have tended to exaggerate and misinterpret Muret's tactical and strategic importance.¹⁴⁷ Many have viewed it as an example of an all-mounted force triumphing over a mixed force of infantry and cavalry.¹⁴⁸ They are wrong. The battle of Muret was really two distinct conflicts. The first one pitted two mounted forces against each other; the second was an example of total surprise over an unprepared and preoccupied enemy.¹⁴⁹ Even if the battle halted Aragonese encroachment in Occitania, strategically the victory was really a stop-gap for Simon of Montfort. While Pere II had emerged as a great threat, his was a threat of recent vintage. In other words, while Muret removed the

¹⁴⁷ Nickerson, "Oman's Muret," 551–2; Kovarik, "Simon de Montfort," 376–9; Alvira Cabrer, *12 de septiembre de 1213*, part III chapters 2 and 3. Some, like Nickerson, suggest that if Montfort had lost at Muret it would have severely hampered the state-building process in France and in Spain. This assumes that modern France was an inevitable polity. Kovarik sums up what other scholars have said about Muret since the nineteenth century, most giving the battle an importance it simply never had.

¹⁴⁸ Delpech, *Bataille de Muret*, v; Dieulafoy, *La Bataille de Muret*, 96–8; Oman, *A History of the Art of War*, 1: 453; Nickerson, "Oman's Muret," 552.

¹⁴⁹ Oman, *History of the Art of War*, 1: 453. Oman made the same assessment, yet the opening sentence in this passage invalidates all he says after.

possibility of Aragonese military intervention or expansion of Aragonese royal government into Occitania for the immediate future, the crusader victory simply moved things back to the way they were before the King of Aragon intervened with an army. The enemies present prior to 1213 still existed, albeit cowed by the crusader victory. Montfort had chastised and weakened the most prominent lords and most important city in the region, but he could not destroy all his foes simply by winning one battle. He was still struggling with inadequate manpower and financial resources against a hostile people. In the last analysis Muret was an anomaly, the only time in the Occitan War when two generals concluded that fighting on open ground might be better than besieging or raiding. Nonetheless, on that September day Simon of Montfort, the legates, and the crusader army must have felt that the campaign of the last five seasons was now complete.

*From Muret to Casseneuil: September 1213
to December 1214*

In the wake of the Aragonese-Occitan defeat at Muret, one might have expected the chief crusader to take the offensive and attack Toulouse directly before the end of the year. On the contrary, in 1213 Montfort made no moves against the city. Even though militarily Toulouse had suffered a grievous blow by losing so many of its able-bodied militiamen at Muret, the city possessed strong walls and its inhabitants still harbored an intense hatred for Simon of Montfort. Taking the city would not have been easy, as events in the summer of 1211 had shown. Just as importantly, Muret had occurred late in the campaign season. Montfort's army was too small for the size and complexity a siege of Toulouse would entail, and he could not count on many reinforcements until the following spring. Even a summer campaign for 1214 was in doubt, since there was no indulgence for outsiders as per Innocent's letter of the preceding spring. In spite of his triumph at Muret, then, to attack Toulouse would be folly, so Montfort did not try it.

Instead, the seven bishops and three abbots with the army at Muret believed that the citizens of Toulouse would now be more amenable to reconciliation after such an obvious sign of God's disfavor towards them.¹ The prelates determined to reconcile the Toulousans to the church, probably based on instructions sent to the late Pere II and Folquet of Marseille on 21 May 1213.² This effort was temporarily successful through a use of persuasion and threat, though not completely on the church's terms.³ Raimon VI urged the leaders of Toulouse to accept whatever deal they could get from the church, for he intended to go see the pope himself and complain about Montfort's unauthorized seizure of his territories.⁴ According to several English chronicles, Raimon VI did not go to Rome after all but to John of England, his former brother-in-law and uncle of his

¹ PVCE, 217 #484; PVC II, 176. ² PVCE, 187-8 #405; PVC II, 102-3.

³ PVCE, 218 #484; PVC II, 176-8. ⁴ SCW, 71 laisse 141; *Chanson* II, 32, 34 lines 10-20.

son, for support and money. He stayed in England until the papal legate there, Nicholas of Tusculum, expelled him.⁵

In order for Toulouse to be reconciled, Innocent mandated that the people give guarantees, though just as with the military requirements for the crusade indulgence, the pope did not specify how it should be done.⁶ Typically the giving of hostages would be the most secure way to control a town's behavior, and this was the option the prelates attempted to press on the Toulousans. The prelates initially required 200 hostages from Toulouse, which was refused by the citizens. The leadership of Toulouse eventually agreed to provide sixty hostages, but when the time came for their collection the people refused to give any up.⁷ On this ambiguous note the Toulousans swore oaths of loyalty to Montfort and were left alone for the moment.⁸

A small unit of crusader-pilgrims consisting of a few knights and foot-soldiers ("pauci milites et pedites peregrini non multi") unexpectedly arrived in September under the command of Ralph, Bishop of Arras.⁹ Though few in number, they were enough to allow Montfort to go on an autumn raid into the Count of Foix's territories and destroy some non-fortified areas. The crusader army even got close enough to the city of Foix to set the outer bourg on fire.¹⁰ The rest of the autumn season indicates the relative success the battle of Muret assured for the chief crusader. Upon hearing of Montfort's victory at Muret, the people of Rabastens, a sizeable *castrum* in rebellion since 1211, abandoned the town, allowing Guy of Montfort to re-take it.¹¹ In spite of the athlete of Christ's victory at Muret, however, he had yet to convince many in the south that none could stand against him. Montfort moved his men farther east towards the Rhône region. Some nobles along the reinforcement route had actively hampered men from reaching the crusade, and he went there to put a stop to it.¹² By 17 October he had taken the important Cistercian abbey of Fontfroide under his protection, naturally enough since

⁵ Ralph of Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum*, 168; *Annales Monasterii de Waverleia*, 2: 277, 280; *Annales Prioratus de Dunstaplia* in *Annales Monastici*, ed. Henry Richards Luard, RS 36.3 (London, 1864–9), 39; Kay Wagner, "La Croisade Albigeoise vue par le chroniqueur Raoul de Coggeshale. Une interprétation de l'histoire sous l'angle du 'patriotisme' anglais," *Heresis* 35 (2001), 83–9, especially 85–7; Taylor, "Pope Innocent III," 210. The Count of Toulouse rendered homage to John during his visit and borrowed 10,000 marks.

⁶ PVCE, 187–8 #405; PVC II, 102–3. ⁷ PVCE, 218 #484; PVC II, 177–8.

⁸ SCW, 71 laisse 141; *Chanson* II, 34 line 20. The Toulousans were not formally reconciled to the church and the interdict lifted until April 1214. For details, see 204.

⁹ PVCE, 218 #486; PVC II, 178. ¹⁰ PVCE, 219 #486; PVC II, 178–9.

¹¹ PVC, 218 #485; PVC II, 178.

¹² PVCE, 220 # 487; PVC II, 179. Perhaps the latest reinforcements under the Bishop of Arras had reported this.

the Cistercians were ardent supporters of the crusade and risked possible retaliation from the locals.¹³ As he and the army approached Narbonne, however, the Narbonnais refused to admit him and his small army, even though Narbonne's archbishop, the Cistercian papal legate Arnaud-Amaury, was with the army.¹⁴ Montfort and his men had to spend the night in the orchards and woods around the city. Though the citizens of the next sizeable town, Béziers, allowed them in – as one would expect since Montfort was their viscount – at Montpellier the citizens again refused the crusaders entrance into the city. By the time the army reached Nîmes, whose inhabitants initially refused admittance, the chief crusader had grown so exasperated that the people of the town finally admitted him in fear of military reprisals.¹⁵ By early November, all the crusader-pilgrims under the Bishop of Arras had left, leaving Montfort only the small rump force of his cadre and paid troops.¹⁶ In spite of small numbers, Montfort attempted to make the Rhône valley safe for crusader-pilgrims by bringing several other lords in the area to heel on his way northward to Romans and Valence.¹⁷ As he continued to sojourn in Provence at the end of the year, with the Archbishop of Narbonne's assistance he worked out a marriage agreement between his son Amaury and the Duke of Burgundy's niece. He remained in the Rhône region until February 1214.¹⁸

As always, when the athlete of Christ believed all was secure it generally was not. In February 1214 southern-inspired *routiers* conducted a number of deep raids into Montfortian territory, destroying property as far east as Béziers. Far more serious than the actual raids were the terror and perception of crusader weakness they left in their wake, prompting those of doubtful loyalty to the chief crusader to rebel again. Countering this required a show of force, a difficult feat in mid-winter, but during the month of February Montfort and his tiny army destroyed a number of fortified places around Toulouse to demonstrate his control.¹⁹

While Montfort engaged in these suppressive activities, a group of southerners carried out one of the most daring and successful raids of the Occitan War. On 17 February 1214 Baldwin of Toulouse, William of Contres, and a small party of crusaders spent the night at the small *castrum* of Lolmie, about twenty-four kilometers northeast of Moissac. As Baldwin,

¹³ Catalogue des actes, 468 #72. ¹⁴ See chapter 5, 137.

¹⁵ PVCE, 220-1 #488; PVC II, 179-81. ¹⁶ PVCE 221 #489; PVC II, 181.

¹⁷ PVCE, 221-2 #489-91; PVC II, 181-4. Among these were Pons of Montclair and Adhémar of Poitiers.

¹⁸ PVCE, 222 #492; PVC II, 184-5; Catalogue des actes, 469 #74, 76. A deed of December 1213 puts the chief crusader in Valence; another in February places him in Béziers.

¹⁹ PVCE, 222 #493, PVC II, 185.

William, and their men prepared to bed down for the night, the knights controlling Lolmie, seeing the small numbers of the crusaders, sent word to a unit of southern knights and *routiers* at Mondenard, about nine kilometers directly south of Lolmie, and to Ratier of Castelnaud at Castelnaud-Montratier, eleven kilometers east of Lolmie, that Baldwin was in their *castrum* without much protection. Ratier of Castelnaud had participated as a crusader in the first action of the Occitan War at Casseneuil in 1209 and had sworn oaths of loyalty to the crusade in June 1212, so his about-face here seems inexplicable.²⁰ Yet Ratier switched loyalties easily and seemed anxious to strike a blow against the crusade in the name of southern independence. Baldwin, William of Contres, and a French sergeant, the garrison commander of Moissac, slept in different quarters inside the *castrum* of Lolmie. As Baldwin slept the lord of Lolmie locked him in his room and gave the key to Ratier and the *routiers*. Stationing men outside all the sleeping quarters of Baldwin's party, simultaneously the raiders broke down the doors to capture or kill as many French as possible. Though some of the crusaders got away in the ensuing chaos, including William of Contres apparently, Baldwin was captured.²¹

Initially his captors did not reveal what they planned to do but Baldwin's refusal to cooperate may have doomed him. They took him to Montcuq, a *castrum* which he had held as a fief from Montfort since 1212.²² While the townspeople of Montcuq swiftly repudiated their allegiance to Baldwin, when his captors insisted he order the French garrison controlling the fortress to surrender, Baldwin told the men inside to continue resisting until help arrived. In the meantime Baldwin's treatment by his jailors deteriorated to the point that they refused him food and water or even communion until the garrison surrendered one of its prisoners, a *routier* held in the castle. Within a few days the garrison surrendered anyway on the promise they would be allowed to depart the area unharmed, but the southerners broke their word, seizing and executing all of them.²³ Baldwin was taken to Montauban, second now only to Toulouse in terms of its importance as a center of resistance to the crusade. The Count of Toulouse was summoned to Montauban, where he brought the Count of Foix, his

²⁰ SCW, 18 laisse 13; WTud, 40 line 31; PVCE, 223 #495 and footnote 28; PVC II, 187. The assumption is that, along with the leading nobles of Quercy, Ratier of Castelnaud had sworn oaths of loyalty during the siege of Penne d'Agenais (PVCE, 157 #325; PVC II, 25). Peter Vaux-de-Cernay does not specify when he did so, however, only that Ratier had sworn loyalty to Montfort in the past.

²¹ PVCE, 223-4 #496-97; PVC II, 187-9; WPE, chapter xxii, 50; WP, 86. The lord of the *castrum* of Lolmie and his men are not identified.

²² PVCE, 154-5 #318; PVC II, 19. ²³ PVCE, 224 #498-9; PVC II, 189-91.

son Roger-Bernard and Bernard of Portella, an Aragonese knight and companion of the late King of Aragon. On the advice of Bernard and the others Baldwin was condemned and hanged, without benefit of confession or communion, ostensibly to avenge the death of Pere of Aragon, since Baldwin had been present at Muret and thus indirectly contributed to the Aragonese monarch's death.²⁴ Condemning him for participating in a fairly fought battle was to exploit a specious pretext. As far as Raimon of Toulouse was concerned, there were several reasons why he preferred Baldwin dead. One, Baldwin's disloyalty to Raimon must have been a constant embarrassment to the Count of Toulouse. Two, though Baldwin's possible claim to his brother's lands was at best a weak one, and none of the sources ever mentions him as a possible replacement, while he lived the younger brother could always be put forward as a potential successor to the elder.²⁵ Three, the southern resistance was delivering a clear message of terror to all who campaigned against them: Even high-born crusaders with influential relatives would be executed like common criminals. Four, by killing Baldwin, Raimon was reassuring the southern resistance that the crusaders were not all-powerful. Blows like this one, incredibly cheap but effective, could still weaken crusader resolve in Occitania without risking men and resources in sieges and battles.

Though undoubtedly Montfort mourned a loyal lieutenant's fate and contemplated retaliation for it, he had other troubles which did not permit him to dwell on Baldwin's execution. Since February 1214 the people of Narbonne had allowed into the city *routiers* and Aragonese who conducted raids into Montfort-held territory. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay correctly states that up to this point in the war the chief crusader had never shown any indication that he might try to seize Narbonne for himself or deprive its rightful lord of it. The chronicler does not reveal, however, that if Montfort became Count of Toulouse he had a tenuous tie to overlordship over Narbonne. Since the eleventh century the counts of Toulouse had claimed to be dukes of Narbonne and thus overlords over the viscounts. It is no wonder, then, that the people of Narbonne were ill-disposed towards Simon of Montfort.²⁶ Actually it was in his best interest to have some

²⁴ PVCE, 224–5 #500; PVC II, 191–3; WPE, chapter XXII, 50–1; WP, 86, 88; ATF, 902.

²⁵ He was not the only possible successor, though he had the best claim after the young Raimon VII. His niece, Raimon VI's daughter by his second wife, put forward a claim to Toulouse through her husband, Peter-Bermond, in December 1212. See PL 216 cols. 754–5 for the letter, and for an explanation of the claim, PVCE, 241, footnote 119.

²⁶ PVCE, 225 #501. See Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne*, 4, 16–17, 43, 52 and Emery, *Heresy and Inquisition*, 60–1 for the history of the title and dispute.

control over the large city, since Narbonne was the seat of the most prestigious prelate in Occitania and it occupied a key geographical position astride the main roads and passages west of Béziers.

Worry over a dubious title tells only part of the story. Montfort still possessed a most important hostage, Jaume I of Aragon, Pere II's six-year-old son. The young king had been in Montfort's care since 1211, ever since the two fathers arranged a marriage agreement between Jaume and Montfort's daughter.²⁷ In spite of the problems between king and count in 1213, the proposed marriage had never been canceled. Now that Pere II was dead, the Aragonese understandably wanted their young ruler back on native soil, even though Simon of Montfort made no plans to release the Aragonese monarch. That a usually scrupulous man like Montfort continued to hold Jaume as a virtual hostage does not say much for his character, but perhaps he still hoped for a marriage between the young king and his daughter, or at the very least believed that holding the king in his custody would keep the Aragonese at bay. If either one or both of these possible reasons is the true one – and there is no direct evidence in favour of either – they backfired, because Montfort's reluctance to part with the king convinced the Aragonese to make life miserable for him by raiding his territories until he released the king.²⁸

In March 1214 Montfort worked his way east to deal with the Narbonnais and suppress the raids of the Aragonese horsemen headquartered there. The arrival of 200 crusader knights under the command of William of Barres's father, also named William, augmented the chief crusader's small army. Their presence allowed Montfort to conduct his own devastating raids deep into the territory of the Viscount of Narbonne.²⁹ Eventually Montfort raided within sight of the city of Narbonne. Drawing up his men in three units as he had done at Muret, unlike at Muret he led the initial unit while the elder William of Barres commanded the third. It appears he came upon the city stealthily by a secret approach that kept his army out of view until it was close by one of the gates, perhaps the northeast one.³⁰ Before the crusaders could force the gate the militia of Narbonne mustered to its defense. The militiamen

²⁷ PVCE, 107–8 #211; PVC II, 209–10.

²⁸ Jaume I, *Book of Deeds*, 25; Shideler, *A Medieval Catalan Noble Family*, 135, 138, 147–51. One of the leaders of this activity was Guillem of Montcada, son of the seneschal.

²⁹ ATF, 902; PVCE, 226 #501; PVC II, 195. Both sources call them pilgrims, even though technically there was neither crusade to participate in nor indulgence to win.

³⁰ PVC II, 195 footnote 6. Guébin and Lyon say the northeast gate, though they give no evidence for why.

fought from slightly higher ground and in the end successfully repulsed this raid, to the extent that during the struggle Montfort's saddle broke and he fell off his horse. In fierce hand-to-hand fighting the men of Narbonne attempted to capture the chief crusader, and only swift assistance from the elder William of Barres, in reserve, drove the Narbonnais off and allowed Montfort and the survivors to escape.³¹ From Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's description Montfort had attempted the assault within a very narrow window of opportunity, and not surprisingly it failed. Still, the chief crusader had taught the Narbonnais a small lesson about how swiftly the crusaders could strike if given the right set of circumstances.

Meanwhile events from Rome prevented further combat, as word reached the south that a new papal legate was due to arrive and that until he did all parties were to cease their military activity.³² The new legate was Pietro of Benevento, Cardinal Deacon of Santa Maria in Aquiro, who replaced Arnaud-Amaury as the senior legate in Occitania.³³ Pietro appeared with several letters of instruction about what he was supposed to accomplish. One of 20 January instructed the legate to begin an inquiry as to whether Montfort could take the viscounty of Nîmes, which was under the suzerainty of the Count of Toulouse.³⁴ A letter of 22 January told the legate to reconcile the Count of Comminges and Gaston of Béarn to the church, while a letter of 25 January said to do the same for the Count of Toulouse.³⁵ Their contents must have been particularly galling to Montfort. He had every reason to believe that, based on the pope's letters of May 1213, it would take longer than eight months before these nobles were reconciled to the church. Also contained in the letter of 22 January were instructions for Simon of Montfort to hand Jaume over to the papal legate, who would presumably return him to the Aragonese.³⁶

³¹ PVCE, 226 #502; PVC II, 195–6.

³² PVCE, 226–7 #503; PVC II, 196–7. See also PL 216 cols. 955–6 for the pope's letter to various prelates of the south informing them of Pietro's appointment.

³³ WPE, chapter XXIII, 51; WP, 88. For his background see Dutton, "Aspects," 81, 102–5 and James M. Powell, "Innocent III and Petrus Beneventanus: Reconstructing a Career at the Papal Curia," *Pope Innocent III and his World*, ed. John C. Moore (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 51–62. No document exists officially replacing Arnaud-Amaury, but since he was no longer called legate or functioned in that role from the spring of 1214, it appears that his commission lapsed with the appointment of Pietro of Benevento.

³⁴ PL 216 col. 958. See also the discussion in PVCE, 226–7 footnote 44.

³⁵ PL 216 cols. 958–60. The letter of 25 January contained, verbatim, the same admonition to the Count of Toulouse as contained in Innocent's letter of 21 May 1213 (PVCE, 189 #409, PVC II, 104 and PL 216 col. 851): that if he continued defying the church and harboring heretics, Innocent would reinstitute the indulgence and renew the crusade. That means, of course, that at the moment there was no official crusade or indulgence for serving in it.

³⁶ PL 216 col. 959. PVCE 226–7 footnote 44 contains a partial translation of the pope's instructions.

As the various nobles and towns prepared to make their peace with the church, word reached Montfort that the *castrum* of Moissac, won at so high a cost in 1212, had renounced its allegiance in favor of the Count of Toulouse. The French garrison in Moissac had refused to surrender and had barricaded themselves in the fortress. The Count of Toulouse came to Moissac with a large unit of *routiers* and besieged the town for three weeks as Montfort rushed westward from Narbonne to deliver his garrison. As he got close, as usual the Count of Toulouse fled back to Toulouse, abandoning the siege.³⁷ Because Montfort no longer had to go to Moissac he continued to the northwest part of the Agenais. By 13 April he was at Penne d'Agenais, gathering his men to attempt the seizure of Le Mas d'Agenais, about fifty kilometers almost directly west of Penne, a *castrum* whose people had defected to John of England earlier that spring as the English king attempted to drum up loyalty in his ongoing struggle against Philip Augustus.³⁸ As Montfort hurried towards Le Mas he went to cross the Garonne by boat. A group of men from La Réole, almost twenty-eight kilometers farther west on the Garonne, contested the river passage with their own boats.³⁹ In spite of this Montfort and his men successfully crossed the river and blockaded Le Mas. Since the crusaders amounted to no more than a flying column, and thus had no siege engines or proper resources, they had to abandon the siege of Le Mas after three days. Montfort next took his horsemen east towards Narbonne, as earlier instructed by the papal legate. On the way east he received word to bring Jaume of Aragon, now in Carcassonne, with him to be turned over to the legate. At this point Montfort had no choice but to comply with the pope's orders and deliver the young king over to Pietro of Benevento. The chief crusader and legate met in Capestang, eighteen kilometers north of Narbonne, where Pietro finally took custody of the young child.⁴⁰

Montfort was powerless to stop the reconciliation of the southern nobles to the church. On 18 April, the counts of Comminges and Foix were restored to the church.⁴¹ Both nobles agreed not to support heresy or help

³⁷ PVCE, 227–8 #504; PVC II, 198–9.

³⁸ Catalogue des actes, 469 #78; PVCE, 228 #505; Warren, *King John*, 217–21; Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 193 and “Pope Innocent III,” 210–11; Gillingham, *Angevin Empire*, 104. More importantly, John was trying to build support for his campaign against Philip Augustus from the west as Otto of Brunswick moved from the northeast.

³⁹ PVCE, 228 #505; PVC II, 199–200; Warren, *King John*, 219, map on 220; Gillingham, *Angevin Empire*, 104. La Réole was a strategically important Angevin fortress on the Garonne.

⁴⁰ PVCE, 228 #505–6; PVC II, 201; Jaume I, *Book of Deeds*, 25.

⁴¹ PVCE, 227 #503; PVC II, 197–8. The Count of Foix had not been mentioned in the legate's instructions, but Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says Raimon-Roger came to the legate and asked to be reconciled.

heretics recover their lost territory and not to use *routiers*, nor give overt or covert assistance to the city of Toulouse until it had been formally reconciled back to the church. Both had to give up an important castle: in the case of the Count of Foix the castle of Foix itself; for the Count of Comminges it was to be Salies-du-Salat. To guarantee their good behavior each had to offer a son as hostage.⁴² Although neither the Viscount of Narbonne nor the Narbonnais had technically run foul of the church (they had, however, of Montfort), within a few days Aimery of Narbonne and the leaders of the town swore oaths to the church that they would not support heresy or *routiers*, nor hinder the crusade, in exchange for which they would not have to participate in it outside their diocese unless neighboring bishoprics got into a war against violators of the peace.⁴³ The papal-mandated reconciliations continued throughout the month. While the papal legate was at Castelnaudary, a delegation arrived from Toulouse begging for reconciliation. By this time they would have known the nature of Pietro of Benevento's instructions from the pope, and they tried to hasten the process. On 25 April seven counsels of the city promised on its behalf to abjure all heresy, succor no heretics, give no aid to the Count of Toulouse or his son, and turn over 120 of the greater (presumably in wealth and status) citizens as hostages.⁴⁴ The Count of Toulouse was formally received back into the church as well, after swearing two oaths pledging his obedience to the pope and placing his lands (which he said he gave to his son) into the legate's custody until he should obtain the pope's mercy.⁴⁵

On the surface it would seem that the Albigenian Crusade and Occitan War were over, since the church had readmitted all the major parties into its good graces. Pietro of Benevento had ostensibly accomplished in one month what had not been in almost six campaign seasons. Yet his achievement was more transparent than real. Though a man of obvious competence who enjoyed Innocent III's implicit trust, Pietro had not been in Occitania for long. He worked from orders given to him by a pope whose

⁴² *Layettes* 1: 399–400 #1068–9; *HGL* 8 cols. 643–6 #172. Both documents are alike in their specifications for each count. WPE, chapter XXIII, 52 and WP, 90, mention that the Count of Foix gave up the *castrum* of Foix to the Abbot of Saint-Thibéry, Bérenger, who in turn placed it in the hands of his nephew Bérenger as castellan.

⁴³ *HGL* 8 cols. 646–7 #173.

⁴⁴ *HGL* 8 cols. 647–51 #174; *Layettes* 1: 401–2 #1072; PVCE, 228–9 #507; PVC II, 201; Krehbiel, *The Interdict*, 154–155. The document in *HGL* states it was composed in Narbonne, not Castelnaudary.

⁴⁵ *RHGF* XIX, 210 footnote a; WPE chapter XXIII, 51; WP, 88; Jean-Luc Déjean, *Les Comtes de Toulouse 1050–1250*, 2nd edn. (Paris: Fayard, 1988), 311. His submission was confirmed by a bull from Innocent of February 1215, contained in *Layettes* 1: 410–11 #1099. See also PVCE, 229 footnote 55 for other details.

own out-of-date knowledge of the local situation was based entirely upon the last letter or visitor he received. While Pietro's inexperience perhaps predisposed him to fairness, swiftly reconciling the great lords and major towns did not address the change of lands which had occurred since 1209. Southern nobles were not about to let Simon of Montfort hold on to his territories, and the athlete of Christ had no intention of losing any of them. On the contrary he intended to expand what he held.

Units of crusader-pilgrims arrived from the north that April and throughout the spring and summer, as if the crusade had never ended and their participation would still earn an indulgence. Crusade preachers like Jacques of Vitry, Robert of Courçon, Guy Vaux-de-Cernay, and William, Archdeacon of Paris, had continued to preach in either defiance or ignorance as to what had transpired since the spring of 1213. The resident crusaders and their chief, fully aware of the reconciliations and the suspension of crusade and indulgence, began the campaign season as if nothing had changed, claiming they were hunting heretics or those who had explicitly defied the crusade.⁴⁶ So even though Simon of Montfort had lost the legal and spiritual high ground, he still commanded enough troops to conduct offensive operations. In effect Innocent III had lost control over his own crusade and the man who led it. The people of Occitania also lost out because the Occitan War continued, regardless if there were any lawful military targets for Simon of Montfort to pursue.

The previous season's hard preaching drew a sizeable army from the north, though Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's estimate of 100,000 horse and foot is a gross exaggeration.⁴⁷ Sometime after 3 May Montfort met up with the crusader-pilgrims at Saint-Thibéry, eighteen kilometers to the northeast of Béziers.⁴⁸ To take advantage of this temporary army he arranged for it to move through Carcassonne and then directly north into the Quercy region to raid the territories of Ratier of Castelnau, one of the nobles responsible for the capture and execution of Baldwin of Toulouse the previous February, as well as other enemies of the crusade in the northwest borders of Montfort's territories. Until mid-June the Bishop of Carcassonne, Guy Vaux-de-Cernay, and Guy of Montfort led the crusader-pilgrims while Montfort himself went east to Valence to pick up his future

⁴⁶ PVCE, 229–30 #508; PVC II, 202–4. ⁴⁷ PVCE, 230 #508; PVC II, 204.

⁴⁸ Catalogue des actes, 469–70 #79; HGL 8 cols. 651–3 #175; Joseph Dovetto, ed., *Cartulaire des Trencavel. Analyse détaillée des 617 actes 957–1214* (Carcassonne: Centre de Recherches et d'Information Historiques des Conférenciers, 1997), 166 #615. On 3 May Montfort was in Béziers receiving rights over the viscounty of Nîmes and Agde from its heir, Bernard Aton.

daughter-in-law. By 4 June he was back in Carcassonne, where the marriage between Amaury of Montfort and Béatrice of Viennois took place.⁴⁹

The crusaders under Guy of Montfort and Robert of Courçon moved through the Quercy region to a small *castrum* called Morlhon. Even though it was in an inaccessible place and well defended, the crusading army assaulted it and caused the town to surrender the same day. Rather than attempting to garrison such a small place the fortifications were destroyed. The crusaders found seven Waldensians among the people there, none of whom cared to be reconciled to the church. It had been years since crusaders had executed Cathars, and the Waldensians had never been a primary target of the crusade. Nevertheless heretics were heretics, and the crusader-pilgrims of the army took the opportunity to burn the Waldensians after they refused to recant.⁵⁰ The crusaders then moved southwest fifty-eight kilometers to destroy first Ratier of Castelnaud's seat, Castelnaud-Montratrier, and then Mondenard, twelve kilometers farther west.⁵¹ These two places had of course provided some of the men who had captured and executed Baldwin of Toulouse. Both were razed.

By 12 June, Montfort had moved west to join his army, stopping at Montcuq, twelve kilometers north of Mondenard. The people of Montcuq had evidently switched sides back to the crusade yet again after Baldwin's death and the massacre of the Montfortian garrison in February 1214. At Montcuq Montfort took the homage of Déodat of Barasc, a local lord who agreed to destroy two of his castles or pay a substantial fine of 10,000 Melgorian *sous*, no doubt to avoid the fate of Castelnaud-Montratrier and Mondenard.⁵² Montfort finally linked up with the army at Mondenard and proposed moving into the Agenais to deal with places that had renounced their allegiance to him that spring. By this time the crusader-pilgrims who had arrived with Guy Vaux-de-Cernay at Carcassonne in early May had done their forty days and left the army, presumably believing they had received an indulgence for their time.⁵³ Even with his now reduced force Montfort moved west eighteen kilometers north of Agen, swiftly capturing and destroying Montpezat d'Agenais because its defenders fled as the crusading army approached. In this corner of his northwest

⁴⁹ PVCE, 230-1 #510-II; PVC II, 206; a charter in *HGL* 8 col. 653 #176 confirms Montfort was in Carcassonne by 4 June.

⁵⁰ PVCE, 231 #513; PVC II, 207-8. ⁵¹ PVCE, 231-2 #514; PVC II, 208-9.

⁵² Catalogue des actes, 470 #81. For a discussion and approximation of the value of Melgorian *deniers*, see Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*, 137-8, 208. The earliest known rate of exchange comes from 1244. In that year 49 *sous* 2¼ *deniers* Melgorian equaled one pound sterling.

⁵³ PVCE, 232 #516; PVC II, 209-10.

territories Montfort attempted to render the towns he captured powerless to rebel again. Therefore he pointedly destroyed them, rather than attempting to garrison each and every one or depend on the fickle loyalty of the inhabitants.⁵⁴ As can be seen in subsequent events that summer and fall, Montfort desired a demilitarized zone that could not be garrisoned by any of his enemies or the inhabitants.

The diminished crusading army marched farther northwest into the Agenais, some thirty-two kilometers north of Monpezat d'Agenais and fifty kilometers northwest of Agen, to the *castrum* of Marmande, the farthest western possession of the counts of Toulouse now claimed by Simon of Montfort. Marmande had capitulated in the summer of 1212 to Robert Mauvoisin and a small crusade army after a token siege.⁵⁵ It had switched sides or surrendered to King John's forces in the spring of 1214. The question of who might claim Marmande was a royal mess, though John as Duke of Aquitaine still had legitimate overlordship.⁵⁶ The chief crusader, however, was determined to get the *castrum* back regardless of who had ultimate title to it. As the crusading army approached, one of King John's chamberlains or seneschals, Geoffrey of Neville, prepared to defend Marmande with a force of sergeants and the townspeople. Geoffrey hoisted his own standard over one of the towers as a gesture of defiance and resolve. Though initially both sergeants and citizens put up a credible defense, as the crusaders drew closer to the walls the townspeople fled into strategically placed boats on the Garonne and paddled away to La Réole. Unable to defend the walls now, Geoffrey of Neville and his sergeants retreated into one of the towers for a short time before surrendering. Though Peter Vaux-de-Cernay did not say how the two sides reached a surrender agreement or how long it took, eventually Montfort permitted the sergeants to leave the town unharmed. As Montfort's men pillaged the town it was brought to his attention that, as a *castrum* on the border of his possessions with good defenses, this was one fortification he might want to exempt from his current policy of destruction. Though all the towers save one and part of the walls were destroyed, Montfort installed a small garrison in the remaining tower before turning his army southeast, towards Casseneuil.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ PVCE, 232 #516–17; PVC II, 210; Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 193–4 and footnote 30. I follow Taylor's analysis in assuming the town captured was Montpezat d'Agenais and not Montpezat de Quercy, based on the logical itinerary of the crusader forces.

⁵⁵ PVCE, 159–60 #336; PVC II, 34–5. See also Chapter 5, 147.

⁵⁶ Taylor, "Pope Innocent III," 206–7.

⁵⁷ PVCE, 232–3 #518; PVC II, 211–12 and footnote 1 on 211; *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarium*, vol. 1, ed. Thomas Hardy (London: Public Record Office, 1833), 170 col. 1. See Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval*

THE SIEGE OF CASSENEUIL, 28 JUNE TO 18 AUGUST 1214

Casseneuil was about twenty-six kilometers north of Agen. It had a small role early in the Occitan War in July 1209, when a separate army operating in the Agenais had negotiated a settlement with the garrison and executed some Cathars there.⁵⁸ From 1209 to 1214 its inhabitants had avoided drawing the ire of the crusade. In 1214, however, its lord, Hugh of Revigan, brother of the Bishop of Agen, renounced his allegiance to Simon of Montfort, which he had first given in 1212.⁵⁹ At present the *castrum* served as a refuge for those who had fled the Quercy region ahead of the chief crusader, those thought to be responsible for the capture and execution of Baldwin of Toulouse, and *routier* knights perhaps serving as a garrison.⁶⁰ While the *castrum* of Casseneuil did not present the geographical difficulties of remote locations like Minerve and Termes, in a similar way its defenses would take both time and ingenuity to overcome.

Casseneuil remains a small town today, its original site still surrounded by rivers on three sides. It has long outgrown its medieval borders and its newer half lies on the west side of the Lot. In spite of the fact that much of the medieval *castrum* was protected by water, its southeast side was not. According to the editors of the Latin edition of Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, and to Michel Roquebert, the southeast side of the town was protected by a water-filled ditch some three hundred meters long, twenty-five meters wide, and fifteen meters deep.⁶¹ Even with its formidable man-made and natural defenses Casseneuil remained vulnerable, since it was located on flat ground and a high hill towered over it from the northwest, separated only by the narrow Lède river. (See Figure 8, p. xxiv.)

France, 193 footnote 30, for the identification of Geoffrey of Neville as the “chamberlain” (*camerarius*) mentioned by Peter Vaux-de-Cernay. The 1214 close rolls list Geoffrey of Neville as the seneschal of Gascony (*Wasconi*) as of 19 August. Taylor believes Neville was Martin Algai’s replacement. Montfort had had no qualms about executing a king’s man when he caught and hung Martin Algai in 1212, but the *routier* was raised from the dust whereas Geoffrey of Neville was not.

⁵⁸ *SCW*, 17–18 *laissez* 13–14; *WTud*, 38, 40, 42. See also Chapter 2, 36–7.

⁵⁹ For renouncing the allegiance, *PVCE*, 233 #519, *PVC* II, 213; for giving it *PVCE*, 153–4 #317, 157 #325; *PVC* II, 18–19, 25. Although no source attests that Hugh of Revigan personally gave his allegiance in 1212, the fact that his brother the bishop promised the support of the nobles of the region – and later many did give their allegiance during the siege of Penne d’Agenais – suggests Hugh was among them.

⁶⁰ *PVCE*, 233 #519; 237 #527; *PVC* II, 212–14, 222.

⁶¹ *PVC* II, 218 footnote 1; *L’Épopée*, II, 279, 281–2. Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 190–1 and footnote 21, follows the other two. Neither Guébin and Lyon nor Roquebert provide references for the presence of the ditch and the very precise measurements offered. It makes sense that there would be a dry or wet fosse because otherwise the town would be too vulnerable on that side. The ditch’s precise location and its dimensions are not apparent to casual observation.

The siege began on 28 June 1214 when Montfort arrived with the rump of his army. Because the crusader forces were initially too small to surround the town, Montfort elected to encamp on the hill overlooking the town from the northwest, called Pech Neyrat today. He chose this strategic location because from its heights one can easily see into the *castrum*, so undoubtedly the crusaders could see the defenders and even hear what they said in anything above a whisper.⁶² Within a few days the crusaders constructed siege machines and bombarded the walls. A few days after that, a unit of forty-dayers (*peregrini*) arrived to assist Montfort's men. With these increased numbers Montfort divided his forces in two, a tactical necessity, though dangerous, as subsequent events showed. He took one part of the army around the town from the northeast and encamped on level ground before the fosse on the southeast part of the *castrum*. He left the forces still on Pech Neyrat under the command of his son Amaury and the Bishop of Carcassonne to bombard Casseneuil from that side, while he constructed petraries to bombard the city from the side he occupied. Eventually even at night the crusaders constantly shot missiles at the town and its fortifications.⁶³

Just like other sieges of the Occitan War, Casseneuil offers us many anecdotes that breathe life into what happened during those weeks. After Montfort moved his camp, at dawn one day a large group of men from Casseneuil climbed Pech Neyrat and attacked the forces of Amaury of Montfort. Whether by accident or design, these men found Amaury's tent and tried to capture or kill him, but failed to do so before his men drove them off.⁶⁴ The crusaders were also concerned because several times messengers from inside Casseneuil escaped the blockade to send word to King John. On campaign against Philip Augustus farther north, John promised support and urged the defenders to hold on but he had neither the ability nor the manpower to be in two places at once. In other words, as even Peter Vaux-de-Cernay implies, the seriousness of the English king's problems elsewhere precluded him from rescuing Casseneuil. The possibility that he might, however, provided a constant source of worry for the men besieging it.⁶⁵ That worry only began to wane after the French victory over John's Welsh allies at Bouvines on 27 July prevented the English monarch from taking any offensive action on the continent.

⁶² On visiting Casseneuil I climbed Pech Neyrat. I could plainly hear children's voices from the northeast side from where I stood on the northwest.

⁶³ PVCE, 233–4 #520; PVC II, 214–15. ⁶⁴ PVCE, 234 #521; PVC II, 215.

⁶⁵ PVCE, 234 #522; PVC II, 215–16.

As the siege bogged down Montfort considered ways to break the deadlock. He asked one of his chief engineers to come up with a solution for crossing one of the bodies of water surrounding the *castrum*.⁶⁶ Initially the engineer designed a wood and wicker-work pontoon bridge to be rolled or dragged to the fosse on the southeast side of Casseneuil on barrels, which would presumably help keep it afloat when the bridge hit the water. Guy Vaux-de-Cernay supervised the construction of this effort while crusader-pilgrims supplied the labor. Once they finished construction the crusaders armed themselves and rolled the bridge to the bank of the ditch. Because the level of the water in the ditch was apparently significantly lower than the bank itself, the bridge left the bank at a steep angle, its heavy weight propelling it into the water like a missile. It immediately sank to the bottom and was lost.⁶⁷

The sinking of the pontoon bridge not only represented a significant waste of materials and man hours but must have embarrassed the crusaders. Determined to succeed, a few days later they built another bridge. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay is not as clear as he might be in his description, but it appears that, instead of a pontoon bridge, this second structure would function as a conventional bridge by resting on both banks above the water. The crusaders intended to protect this bridge by simultaneously launching a few boats armed with men. The second bridge was laboriously dragged to the bank of the fosse while the defenders of Casseneuil, who by this time had built their own petraries and knew a crossing was imminent, lobbed stones at them to great effect. To their humiliation and the men of Casseneuil's delight, as the crusader-pilgrims lugged the bridge to the near edge they found out that they had constructed this second bridge far too short to span the twenty-five-meter distance between the two banks.⁶⁸

After two dismal attempts the engineers who had designed, built, and hauled the two failed bridges were so disheartened that Simon of Montfort had to give them a pep talk, "consoling" (*consolans*) them before commanding them to try something else. This time the chief engineer came up with an entirely new idea, one that ultimately proved successful. The engineers built what amounted to a siege tower or house with heavy beams or skids at its base, its lower part formed of wooden planks and its flat roof constructed

⁶⁶ PVCE, 235 #524; PVC II, 217–18 #524. The carpenter's title, *artifex carpentarius*, could be translated as "master carpenter" as per the Siblys, but since the text also calls his helpers *artifices* this would suggest rather the word "engineer," as is commonly used in translations from other medieval texts. On siege engineers of humble backgrounds, see Rogers, *Latin Siege Warfare*, 241–3.

⁶⁷ PVCE, 235 #524; PVC II, 218. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account does not say how the bridge was to be moved or how it was to be floated, so I have followed the source as closely as possible as modified by common sense.

⁶⁸ PVCE, 235 #524; PVC II, 218–19.

of wicker or lattice-work hurdles. They protected the main wooden house by constructing a wall of hurdles on its roof behind which men would be stationed with tubs of water to put out any fires from incendiary devices. As a final bit of fire-proofing the engineer had ox hides draped over the front of the wooden house. On top of the first level the engineers constructed five more levels of hurdles. Each of the five upper levels had crossbowmen (*balistarii*) stationed in it to provide suppressive fire. The plan called for men stationed in the wooden house, protected by missile fire and incendiaries by the more solid wooden structure and its ox hides, to drag this entire structure to the bank of the fosse, and then from inside build a causeway across the moat, advancing the tower as dirt filled the ditch. The crusaders successfully hauled the tower to the fosse, while inside the first level men used baskets to fill the ditch with dirt, scrap wood and any other materials they could find. Though the men of Casseneuil kept up a steady barrage from their rock-throwers, the wicker-work hurdle walls on top of the lowest level prevented serious damage. Once the tower began to cross over the causeway the crossbowmen stationed in the upper stories kept the men of Casseneuil from firing incendiaries at the tower. As the tower drew closer to the far side, the defenders sent out a fire boat loaded with flaming wood and salted meat fueled by fat, but sergeants on the tower managed to destroy the boat before it reached the structure.⁶⁹

On Sunday, 17 August, the causeway had advanced to within feet of the opposite bank, so close that the crusaders exchanged lance thrusts with the defenders on the walls of Casseneuil. Montfort grew afraid that the defenders of Casseneuil might easily storm the tower and burn it. Even though adequate preparations had not been made, Montfort summoned his men that evening for an assault to seize the far bank below the walls of Casseneuil. Under the crusader clerics' singing of the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, the men of Montfort's army filed through a hole punched through the lowest level of hurdles of their tower and flung themselves on the opposite bank. The assault was successful except that now the defenders of the town began hurling rocks down on the men caught between the level space between the walls of Casseneuil and the fosse. All the crusaders could do on the night of 17 August was to destroy the wooden barbicans abandoned by their defenders outside the walls. Since there had been no advance preparation for an assault, the crusaders did not even have ladders to scale the walls, so the engineers worked throughout the night and the next day, 18 August, to construct enough ladders.

⁶⁹ PVCE, 236 #525; PVC II, 219–20 #525.

Seeing that the crusaders would most likely breach the walls the following morning, during the night of 18 August the *routiers* inside the town somehow escaped. How the *routiers* successfully fled Casseneuil is a mystery, since the town was surrounded by crusaders and several bodies of water. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, the only source for this episode, does not provide the answer. There are a number of possibilities one might suggest. Since the *routiers* were mounted and the crusaders were not, perhaps the mercenaries created a diversion by pretending to charge those on the near bank of the fosse but then simply rode over the crusader-built causeway before it could be blocked. Possibly the *routiers* escaped from some other corner of the town, and since the bulk of the crusader effort centered on the southeast, they could easily have fled by crossing the Lède river on the northwest corner if it was lightly defended. The Lède is not very wide – much less than a stone’s throw around the northern part of the *castrum* – and it seems entirely possible for a horse or a man to swim across or ford it. The *routiers* also might have crossed the Lot, which was probably the most lightly guarded of all due to its width, but its depth and swift current preclude a crossing without boats for all but the most confident swimmers.⁷⁰ With the most stalwart defenders gone, that night the crusaders broke through a gate and seized the *castrum*. Because of the length of the siege, which lasted from June to August, plus the fact that the town had fallen by storm, it should not surprise, even if it repels, us that once inside the crusaders killed as many people as they could find. The defenses of Casseneuil were destroyed and the revenues of the town handed over to Dominic Guzman and his assistants to fight heresy in another way: by preaching against it.⁷¹

The siege of Casseneuil ranks right up with Minerve and Termes as a tactical victory for Montfort. The three very different attempts to bridge the fosse surely demonstrate the chief crusader’s tenacity. Still, as a military target Casseneuil had less strategic value than many of the other *castra* Montfort had taken, representing as much a moral victory as a military

⁷⁰ PVCE, 236–7 #526–7; PVC II, 221–2. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay also does not say how many *routiers* there were. Obviously a small group of men would have had a better chance of slipping away.

⁷¹ Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus*, in *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum* XVI, ed. H. C. Scheeben (Rome: Historical Institute of the Preaching Friars, 1935), 43–4 #37; French translation *Le Libellus de Jourdain de Saxe*, in *Saint Dominique et ses frères: Evangile ou croisade?* ed. and trans. M. -H. Vicaire (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967), 81; M. -H. Vicaire, *Saint Dominic and his Times*, trans. Kathleen Pond (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 162–3; Bernard Hamilton, *The Medieval Inquisition* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1981), 60–1. The revenues of Casseneuil helped stimulate the formation of a permanent order of preachers. Recognized as a *bona fide* order by Pope Honorius in 1216, after 1233 the Dominicans eventually headed the Inquisition in Languedoc, an institution far more successful in suppressing heresy than the crusade ever was.

one. This victory had taken Montfort's army almost two months in the heart of the campaign season, expending valuable days that would no doubt be missed elsewhere. The chief crusader wasted little time savoring his success but went on the campaign trail again.

FALL CAMPAIGNS IN QUERCY, PÉRIGORD, AND RODEZ,
AUGUST TO NOVEMBER 1214

Because he wanted to use his remaining crusader-pilgrims before they departed, Montfort led his army north into the Périgord region, far from his traditional operating area. The southern edge of this region was considered part of the duchy of Aquitaine and thus allowed him to continue to invade John's properties even though crusader armies had never operated that far north before, and had no legal justification for doing so.⁷² Peter Vaux-de-Cernay explains that Montfort entered the area because it contained "enemies of the peace and faith" and *routiers*, but the chief crusader went there perhaps partly banking on John's inability to retaliate following his allies' defeat at Bouvines in July. This defeat had placed the king on the defensive in his northern territories, and he would not be able to offer any real support to his Occitan vassals. Since the people of this region had not encountered any first-hand fighting during the Occitan War, between their lack of preparation and the chief crusader's formidable military reputation, lately enhanced by the victory at Casseneuil, people in many towns such as Domme fled upon his approach.⁷³ Headquartering themselves at Domme, the crusaders sent out smaller parties to scout the area. Five kilometers to the northeast and across the Dordogne lay the strong *castrum* of Montfort (no ties to the athlete of Christ) under the lordship of Bernard of Cazenac and his wife, sister of the Viscount of Turenne. Its lord abandoned the town in front of the crusaders, and consequently the crusaders leveled it, though it was so well designed that it took several days to destroy.⁷⁴ While some crusaders stayed at Domme

⁷² Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 47, 198.

⁷³ PVCE, 237 #528–9; PVC II, 222–4. Domme lies on the south side of the Dordogne about sixty-two kilometers northeast of Casseneuil. Eventually the crusaders pulled down Domme's keep, consistent with what they had been doing the entire campaign season.

⁷⁴ PVCE, 237–8 #530–1; PVC II, 224–7. In destroying the *castrum* of Montfort the chief crusader gained a bitter enemy, as Bernard of Cazenac later lent considerable assistance at the second siege of Toulouse in 1217–18. Simon of Montfort formally dispossessed Bernard of Cazenac that September in favor of Bernard's brother-in-law, the Viscount of Turenne, who had pledged loyalty to the chief crusader at the siege of Casseneuil. For the viscount's pledge, see *Catalogue des actes*, 470 #82; for Bernard of Cazenac's dispossession, 471 #88.

and others razed Montfort, yet another group of crusaders made a bizarre discovery at Sarlat in a Benedictine monastery about six kilometers north of the *castrum* of Montfort. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, these crusaders found 150 men and women confined in the monastery in various states of mutilation, with either amputated limbs or gouged-out eyes, and women whose nipples had been torn off. The chronicler explains it was because Bernard of Cazenac and his wife were cruel monsters.⁷⁵ Peter did not witness this episode himself, so quite possibly the story that reached him had been greatly exaggerated. The crusaders also captured Castelnaud, five kilometers to the west on the south side of the Dordogne. About three kilometers northwest of Castelnaud on the north side of the Dordogne, the crusaders destroyed the keep and walls of Beynac, in spite of the protests of its lord, Gaillard of Beynac. Montfort had given Gaillard the choice of either returning the spoils from local churches or suffering the loss of his castle. When he did not comply the chief crusader carried out his threat.⁷⁶

His point made in less than a month, by the middle of September 1214 Montfort and his army were back at Penne d'Agenais. This northern adventure had been an extremely successful portion of the campaign year. By pacifying the region north of the Agenais, and destroying or occupying strategic fortresses on the Dordogne, Montfort had essentially established a *cordon sanitaire* north of the traditional demarcations of his territory proper, giving him a margin of safety from incursions from that direction. Back at Penne the chief crusader felt secure enough to order the destruction of all the fortresses (*munitiones*) in the Agenais diocese, essentially enlarging the demilitarized zone.⁷⁷

Montfort now seized more recently available opportunities. At the siege of Casseneuil in July, Robert of Courçon – cardinal, papal legate, and enthusiastic crusade preacher – granted the chief crusader the dioceses of Albi and Agen, and parts of the dioceses of Rodez and Cahors, on the grounds that they were “polluted” with heretics and could be confiscated to the crusade under Montfort’s mandate.⁷⁸ In September the Bishop of

⁷⁵ PVCE, 238 #530; PVC II, 226; Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 197–200. Taylor emphasizes that this region did not have a Cathar population. As for the alleged atrocities, Peter appears to have accepted them as fact even if he did not see any credible evidence of them. Therefore this remains an odd and unsubstantiated tale.

⁷⁶ PVCE, 238–9, #531–3; PVC II, 227–9. ⁷⁷ PVCE, 239 #535; PVC II, 229.

⁷⁸ *HGL* 8 cols. 653–5, especially col. 654; Catalogue des actes, 471 #85; Dutton, “Aspects,” 98–102. Robert extended his own jurisdiction without papal authorization. Appointed legate in France to preach the Fifth Crusade, he had actively preached the Albigensian Crusade (PVCE, 229 #508, PVC II, 202–3) knowing full well that the pope had suspended the crusade and indulgence for outsiders. Robert was briefly present at the siege of Morlhon and Casseneuil, thus adding an air of legitimacy to Montfort’s actions at those two places.

Rodez promised to support Montfort in any decision he might make about the territory.⁷⁹ Before the end of September Montfort moved from Penne d'Agenais about 100 kilometers northeast to Figeac. In a busy October there he served as Philip Augustus' justice, trying a wide variety of cases; received the homage of the lords of Capdenac, five kilometers southeast of Figeac; obtained from the Abbot of Figeac several of the Count of Toulouse's properties in the area; and acquired the castle of Peyrusse as a fief from the abbot, for which he would pay ten silver marks annually.⁸⁰ Mindful of the lateness of the year, by 7 November Montfort moved fifty-two kilometers southeast into the diocese and city of Rodez. Beyond the additional granting of territory to Montfort by Robert of Courçon, Henry, Count of Rodez, was accused of harboring *routiers* and potentially stood to lose his territories if he resisted the crusade. Initially the Count of Rodez attempted to opt out of Montfort's possible jurisdiction by claiming to be John of England's vassal, but his resistance was worn down in negotiation with the chief crusader, the Bishop of Rodez, five other bishops, and several other prelates. On 7 November 1214 Henry gave in to this prodding in the episcopal palace in Rodez and became Simon of Montfort's vassal.⁸¹

With his army getting smaller and the weather turning cold, Montfort attempted one last military action. While at Rodez he had demanded the surrender of the lord of Séverac-le-Château, who had a strong *castrum* located in tough mountainous country about thirty-eight kilometers east of Rodez. Its lord, Déodat, had employed *routiers* who terrorized not only the local area but also inhabitants within the diocese of Rodez. A robber prince in the tradition of Peire-Roger of Cabaret, Déodat felt he could hold out against Montfort because of the lateness of the year and the strength of his defenses. By now, however, the chief crusader had had years of dealing with nobles whose chief experiences of combat were spats with their neighbors and robbing travelers along the roads. Montfort sent ahead a reconnaissance-in-force commanded by his brother Guy, presumably to scout out the area around the castle. After a long night's ride Guy and his men unexpectedly appeared before, and subsequently seized, the undefended lower town of Séverac. In their surprise Déodat and his men fled to the upper walls of the *castrum*, abandoning the upper bourg right below the

⁷⁹ Catalogue des actes, 471 #86.

⁸⁰ PVCE, 239 #536–7 and footnote 109; PVC II, 230–1 and footnote 2; Catalogue des actes, 472 #89b, 90, 91, 92. As the Sibyls and the Latin editors point out, Montfort's hearing of law cases in Figeac demonstrated that he was acting as the Count of Toulouse, as Raimon VI had received the power of king's justice in Figeac in 1195.

⁸¹ PVCE, 239–40 #537; PVC II, 230–1; *HGL* 8 cols. 655–7; Catalogue des actes, 473 #93.

walls to Guy's men. Montfort followed with the main army and encamped below the walls by 16 November 1214.⁸² Within a few days the men of Montfort's army had constructed a petrary to bombard the *castrum*, though the defenders of Séverac had their own petrary to provide counter-fire. The crusaders thus conducted the siege of Séverac short of men, far from a safe base of supply, in unfamiliar, geographically hostile country in frigid conditions. Because the crusaders' arrival had been so unexpected, Déodat and his men had bolted to the upper walls short of food, water, and appropriate clothing and quickly began to suffer. After a few days of hunger, thirst, and exposure, Déodat asked for terms, which were accepted by early December 1214. Montfort offered generous conditions of surrender. In exchange for giving up the *castrum* of Séverac-le-Château (which he eventually got back anyway) and agreeing not to take reprisals against his own vassals who had already surrendered to the crusade, Déodat kept his lands and properties.⁸³

In spite of some setbacks Simon of Montfort had made the campaign year of 1214 as successful as the previous years. Baldwin of Toulouse's capture and execution, the military check before Narbonne, the reconciliation of major towns and the Count of Toulouse to the church, could have limited military effectiveness that year. On the contrary the chief crusader held a stronger position at the end of the year than the previous spring. The siege of Casseneuil added additional luster to his military reputation. Exceeding his mandate, he had traveled hundreds of kilometers in territory where there had been no war or crusade before. Through capture and destruction Montfort pacified not only his western borders with the King of England but his extreme northern and northeastern borders as well, thus leaving the upper half of his territories as secure as he could make it. He had done all of this, of course, in an increasingly murky moral atmosphere in which technically there was no crusade nor reward for fighting it, one in which papal legates exceeded their orders from the pope and where his army continued to occupy lands of nobles who, at the moment at least, were in the good graces of the church. Nevertheless the athlete of Christ's star continued to ascend, brighter than ever.

⁸² PVCE, 240 #538–9; PVC II, 232–3; Catalogue des actes, 473 #94; *HGL* 8 cols. 657–8. An act *in obsidione Severiaci* places Simon of Montfort there on that date. Laurent Albaret, "Le siège de Séverac par Simon de Montfort en 1214," *Heresis* 24 (1995), 53–66, provides good background and an analysis of the siege and its consequences.

⁸³ PVCE, 240–1 #540–1; PVC II, 233–6; Albaret, "Le siège de Séverac," 59–61.

CHAPTER 8

The two councils and Prince Louis's crusade, January–December 1215

The year 1215 was to be the least militarily active period between 1209 and 1218 as the people of Occitania waited to see if and how their world would change. From a political standpoint several important things happened during the year. Simon of Montfort spent most of it within a hair's breadth of gaining the church's sanction for his conquests. Though not quite as definitive as Montfort and many southern prelates hoped, the January 1215 Council of Montpellier made him the heir apparent to the Count of Toulouse's lands in the south. Final disposal of the lands, however, depended on the pope, who called what is widely regarded as one of the most important councils of the entire Middle Ages, commonly referred to as Fourth Lateran. Because a sizeable chunk of the council concerned events in Occitania, the main narrative sources of the crusade cover some aspects of the council in fair detail. The events of the Fourth Lateran Council brought out the quills of the Anonymous and William of Puylaurens, neither of whom left an account of what happened in 1214. Finally, during 1215 the chief crusader had to sit by as Prince Louis redeemed his vow and paraded in the south on his own crusade.

THE COUNCIL OF MONTPELLIER, JANUARY 1215

On 7 December 1214 one of the papal legates sent out letters announcing a council to be held at Montpellier, beginning on 8 January 1215.¹ Montpellier's considerable geographical and political distance from Toulouse and safe orthodox atmosphere meant that (theoretically) an objective decision could be made about the disposal of Raimon VI's lands without worrying about whether prominent protectors of Catharism or the Count of Toulouse might try to force an issue in their

¹ PVCE, 241–2 #542 and footnote 123; PVC II, 136; *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* 22, ed. J. D. Mansi (1767), reprint (Graz, Austria: Akademische Drück, 1961), cols. 950–1.

favor.² Still, as subsequent events were to show, the people of Montpellier were very antagonistic to the chief crusader. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay the council was well attended, with the Archbishops of Narbonne, Auch, Embrun, Arles, and Aix, and some twenty-eight other bishops present, as well as a host of regional barons and nobles. The people of Montpellier refused to allow Simon of Montfort into their town that January, and to avoid any hint of trouble he did not attend the sessions of the council but lodged in a neighboring *castrum* located about four kilometers southwest of Montpellier. He spent his days in the local house of the Knights Templar, just south of Montpellier but close enough so that the prelates attending the conference could consult him frequently.³

After hearing a sermon from Pietro of Benevento in the church of Notre Dame des Tables, the prelates and nobles retired to the legate's living quarters to discuss the decisions to be made. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, the legate asked for objective answers to a series of questions, and he expected the churchmen not only to respond but to recommend a course of action. The most important question, composed of three parts, can be summarized thus: Who would best honor God and the church in the city of Toulouse, keep peace the best in the territories held by the Count of Toulouse, and would extirpate heresy most effectively not simply in the lands held by the count but in all the territory the crusaders had conquered so far? Though Peter Vaux-de-Cernay insists that the prelates thought carefully about this and other questions, talking over the issues not only with fellow members of the episcopate but also with members of the local clergy who had traveled to the council, the odds were heavily in favor of Simon of Montfort.⁴ Raimon VI evidently believed he knew the outcome and, rather than listen to a foregone conclusion, traveled to Rome to deal with the pope directly.⁵ Perhaps, then, it surprised no one that the prelates unanimously recommended that Simon of Montfort be selected as "prince and monarch" ("principem et monarcham") over the patchwork

² *L'Épopée* II, 298–9; Augustin Fliche, "La vie religieuse à Montpellier sous le pontificat d'Innocent III (1198–1216)," in *Mélanges d'histoire du moyen âge dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951), 217–24.

³ PVCE, 242 #543–4 and footnote 127; PVC II 237–8 and footnotes 1 and 2; Dominic Selwood, *Knights of the Cloister. Templars and Hospitallers in Central-Southern Occitania ca. 1100–c. 1300* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), 44–6. The military orders stayed out of direct involvement in the Occitan War, though they buried Baldwin of Toulouse's body after his execution and also took Pere II's body after Muret.

⁴ PVCE, 243 #545; PVC II, 238–9.

⁵ *Layettes* I, 410 #1099. A bull of 4 February 1215 mentions that Raimon had recently visited the pope, thus most likely placing him outside Occitania while the Council of Montpellier met.

quilt of territories he had gained since 1209. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay writes as though a small miracle had made the prelates' decision unanimous, but we should not be so gullible; the chief crusader's seemingly unbroken string of military successes over the Count of Toulouse in the past five years had made Montfort *de facto* ruler already. Besides, some prelates, including Guy Vaux-de-Cernay, erstwhile Abbot of Cîteaux and now Bishop of Carcassonne, literally owed their positions as bishops to Montfort's success, while those who had their sees prior to the crusade, such as Folquet of Marseille, could anticipate a new effectiveness under Montfortian control.⁶

With the decision so handily made, it seemed necessary only to turn over the lands of the Count of Toulouse officially to Montfort as the prelates urged Pietro of Benevento to do.⁷ In spite of this, several impediments existed to the formal handing over of the Count of Toulouse's territories. Perhaps the most obvious one was that the Count of Toulouse had not been convicted of any crime warranting dispossession. On the contrary, his successful reconciliation with the church in April 1214 informed everyone of his good standing in the Latin Christian world, and hence there was no religious reason for him to lose his lands, certainly not at the hands of the church. In addition to this, as the Siblys have pointed out, giving over these territories to a new lord ignored the rights of the feudal suzerains of the disputed territories, encompassing four of the most powerful monarchs in Europe: The kings of France, Aragon, and England, and the Emperor of the Romans.⁸ Simply switching title to the new holder could not be done in a situation in which so many crowned heads had something at stake. Pietro of Benevento's formal reason, however, for not permitting the ruler-switch at the Council of Montpellier was that the papal legate, after rereading the letters from the previous January defining his mission, suddenly discovered that he did not have the authority to make such a transfer.⁹ This was certainly a weak reason: after all, since 1209 legates had been making up their own rules as they went along, hoping they would be confirmed by the pope. There may be additional reasons why the legate hesitated to endorse the chief crusader. Pietro appears to have been an unusually zealous stickler for following instructions *verbatim*. His willingness to reconcile Montfort's enemies back to the church, his insistence that Montfort hand Jaume over to him, all suggest that his refusal to exceed the mandate given to him by Innocent III meant he simply intended to adhere to the letter of the law, or to trump any argument put forward by pushing the

⁶ PVCE, 243 #546; PVC II, 239–40. ⁷ PVCE, 243 #547; PVC II, 240.

⁸ PVCE, footnote 133. ⁹ PL 216 cols. 955–6, 958–60.

final decision onto the pope. One still wonders, though, why he did not inform the members of the Council of Montpellier at the outset that no matter what their findings were, the final resolution would be referred to the pope. Pietro may have intended to go along with whatever decision the Council of Montpellier reached, but as it met it gradually dawned on him that to dispossess Raimon VI required greater authority than the conclusions of a regional council and that to do so would cause problems, not only at the upcoming general council but also with the various kings whose suzerainty was affected.

For the moment, then, the decision would have to wait on the pope. Bernard, Archbishop of Embrun, was sent with a clerical escort to Rome, bearing letters from Pietro of Benevento and members of the council announcing the council's findings. The delegation, including the legate, asked the pope to honor their decision by making Simon of Montfort Count of Toulouse and legal ruler over the territories he had conquered.¹⁰ Before the council broke up those who bore enmity to Simon of Montfort within the city of Montpellier almost had their day of reckoning with him, reminding the athlete of Christ of the constant danger he faced as a conquering ruler in Occitania. Pietro of Benevento and the other prelates invited Montfort into Montpellier to meet with them. The people of Montpellier had twice refused Montfort entrance into their city and they meant him to stay out. He went into the city accompanied by only a few knightly retainers, some of whom unwisely went on a walking tour of the city while he, his brother, and two of his sons met with the council. Some men of Montpellier organized ambushes for the chief crusader at various routes he might travel along after his meeting. Word reached him of the intended plot, and he left the city by another route, avoiding confrontation or assassination.¹¹

MONTFORT TAKES POSSESSION OF TOULOUSE AND OTHER
TERRITORIES, WINTER—SPRING 1215

Towards the end of the Council of Montpellier Pietro of Benevento ordered the Bishop of Toulouse, Folquet of Marseille, to travel to

¹⁰ PVCE, 243–4 #547; PVC II, 240.

¹¹ PVCE, 244 #548; PVC II, 240–1; Sumption, *Albigensian Crusade*, 178. Sumption suggests that Montfort was in Montpellier to accept his territories from the council, which he plainly was not. Sumption also says that the citizens of Montpellier disrupted the council while trying to kill Montfort, and that all, including the prelates, fled the city. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account does not indicate anything of the sort.

Toulouse in the name of the legate and take possession of Narbonnais Castle. This castle, which straddled the city gate and east road out of Toulouse to Narbonne, was the traditional seat and symbol of comital authority in Toulouse. That the legate chose Folquet of Marseille also indicated the low point to which the fortunes of both the citizens of the city and the Count of Toulouse had fallen. Folquet had always had a stormy relationship with the people of his diocese, dating back to when he first became Bishop of Toulouse in 1205.¹² Folquet had gone into what amounted to exile as the people of Toulouse soured against the crusade and its leader, and in 1213, when he had attempted to reconcile the Toulousans before the battle of Muret, he had been humiliated for his trouble.¹³ After a four-year absence, the ex-troubadour returned triumphantly that February to take control of Toulouse's most tangible symbol of temporal control. Even before Folquet arrived the people of Toulouse, eager to remain in the good graces of the church, forced the young Raimon VII, residing in Narbonnais Castle, to find lodgings elsewhere. The comital family now took up residence in the home of a prominent citizen, David of Rouaix, but they did not remain long in Toulouse.¹⁴ Folquet immediately garrisoned Narbonnais Castle with knights and sergeants paid for by the citizens of Toulouse. The Toulousans also sent more hostages to Arles, who joined the captives given up in the spring of 1214 in accordance with the reconciliation of Pietro of Benevento.¹⁵

After his abrupt departure from the Council of Montpellier Simon of Montfort acted as though final disposal of the Count of Toulouse's lands had taken place. Riding northeast sixty-five kilometers, by 30 January he was in Beaucaire on the Rhône. There the Archbishop of Arles enfeoffed the chief crusader with a number of properties formerly held from the archbishop by the counts of Toulouse. These substantial properties included the fortresses of Beaucaire and Argence and all the other strong places and villages of these areas in the dioceses of Arles, Avignon, Uzès, and Nîmes.¹⁶ A week later, on 7 February, Montfort was at

¹² *Layettes* 1, 296 #783; Schulman, *Where Troubadours Were Bishops*, 63. Folquet is first mentioned as bishop elect in a charter of 1205.

¹³ For a detailed itinerary for Folquet during his 1211–15 exile see the tables contained in Patrice Cabau, "Foulque, marchand et troubadour de Marseille, moine et abbé du Thoronet, évêque de Toulouse (v. 1155/1160–25.12.1231)," *Les Cisterciens du Languedoc XIIIe–XIVe siècles. Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 21 (1986): 174–5.

¹⁴ PVCE, 244–5 #549; PVC II, 241–2; WPE, chapter XXIII, 52; WP, 88, 90.

¹⁵ WPE, chapter XXIII, 52; WP, 90.

¹⁶ Catalogue des actes, 474 #95. Montfort paid a large sum for these properties, agreeing to give 1400 silver marks up front and pay 100 marks annually for them.

Pont-Saint-Esprit, forty-nine kilometers north on the Rhône, and, acting in all but name as the Count of Toulouse, bestowed the village of Milhau on the Bishop of Nîmes.¹⁷ After this trip Montfort traveled west. Sometime in February he passed through Béziers, where he gave some mills on the Orb river to the sacristan of Béziers and other possessions to Pons Aimery, a citizen of the town.¹⁸ By 6 March he was in Carcassonne, where he granted extensive properties to the Bishop of Uzès.¹⁹ The point of the above itinerary, at least the part which relates to the Rhône valley, is not to weary the reader with how many kilometers Montfort traveled but to show the chief crusader behaving as if he was the Count of Toulouse. As he had found so many times, acting as though he was in the right often created reality, although even he was not quite brave enough yet to style himself Count of Toulouse in his charters.

THE POPE'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL OF MONTPELLIER

When the Council of Montpellier met in January 1215, Raimon VI had been in Rome trying to keep his lands. Throughout Innocent's involvement in the Albigensian Crusade the pope had always been susceptible to the last bit of information he received regardless of the source, and he was often most sympathetic to those who pleaded with him face to face. Raimon's pleas that January had the usual effect. On 4 February 1215 Innocent III issued a bull stating that Raimon's case would be finally decided not simply by the pope but by a general church council.²⁰ At that time Innocent did not know that the Council of Montpellier had unanimously endorsed Simon of Montfort's take-over of Raimon's territories. To his credit, the February bull confirmed Innocent's usual practice of taking every precaution he could to ensure that a lord reconciled to the church was not deprived of his lands without due process. Just a few years before an even greater lord than Raimon of Toulouse had stood in danger of losing his lands. John of England's deep problems with the church had left him, by 1213, with the imminent threat of a French invasion with papal backing. To stave this off John had given his lands over to the pope that year and received them back as papal fiefs.²¹ In 1215 the pope also invoked

¹⁷ Catalogue des actes, 475 #96; *HGL* 8 cols. 658–9. Montfort did not use the title in the document.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 475 #97. ¹⁹ *HGL*, 8 cols. 660–3; Catalogue des actes, 475 #98.

²⁰ *Layettes* 1, 410–11 #1099.

²¹ Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy. The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 428–30; Warren, *King John*, 207–9, contains an English translation of the charter John signed giving over England and Ireland as papal fiefs.

an old custom according to which absolution and reconciliation to Christian fellowship, which Raimon surely had acquired in April 1214 under the auspices of the legate, did not necessarily mean the count regained or kept his lands and title. This custom dated back to the Investiture Struggle between the Emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII. Even though the excommunicated Henry received absolution from the pope at Canossa in 1077, this did not automatically give the emperor his lands and title back. Pope Gregory had left final disposition of Henry's lands to a church council. The earlier pope played much the same game as Innocent did in 1214–15: Gregory VII never recognized Henry IV's rival, the anti-emperor Rudolph of Swabia, yet the pope never formally granted the crown back to Henry either.²² Now, over 130 years later, Innocent followed this precedent, and his failure to formulate consistent policy unwittingly allowed the Occitan War to continue. Both Raimon VI and Simon of Montfort could believe the pope supported their case, thus giving both a reason to carry on the struggle.

At some point between February and April Archbishop Bernard of Embrun arrived in Rome to present the pope with the results of the Council of Montpellier. Swayed always by the latest bit of news, Innocent produced another series of letters that, while not as definitive as Montfort and others might have hoped, definitely strengthened the chief crusader's case. On 2 April 1215, letters were sent to Pietro of Benevento and Simon of Montfort, and one to the vassals, consuls, and other lords who held land from Raimon VI.²³ Though the three letters have slightly different wording and introductions, all three assign Raimon's territories and other conquered lands to Simon of Montfort. He was not to hold them as Count of Toulouse or by hereditary right, but as "custodian" until the ecumenical council made definitive arrangements. As custodian, Montfort could collect monies and other wealth to govern and defend the territories, as well as administer justice. The temporal and spiritual lords of the south and the papal legate were to offer help, assistance, and advice in administering and protecting the territories.²⁴ On the surface Innocent's letters greatly boosted Montfort's position and consequently weakened Raimon VI's, but in reality

²² Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy. Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982, 1988), 123–7; Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 116–18.

²³ *Layettes* 1, 413–16 #1113–15; PVCE, 248–50 #553–9; PVC II, 246–7, 248–52.

²⁴ PVCE, 249–50 #556–8; PVC II, 249–52; *Layettes* 1, 413–16 #1113–15. Montfort gained no title, but Innocent referred several times to the lands being in Montfort's "custody," so I have chosen that word for simplicity's sake.

they did little more than provide a thin papal veneer over the status quo. Montfort was already acting as custodian over the territories he controlled, collecting money and wealth, defending the territories, and administering justice. The pope had long ago lost control over the crusade and his affirmation of Montfort's position indicated he could do nothing to alter it. Innocent III chose not to take that final step and assign the lands to Montfort as hereditary ruler or grant him the title of count in Raimon's place. Had the pope done so, given Montfort's strong military position, his diplomatic abilities, and the support of the southern prelates and the pope himself, the chief crusader might have worked out a solution after the fact with the four suzerains whose fiefs he already controlled through military conquest. Yet even after being accused of protecting heretics, being excommunicated, and losing a badly fought war, the Count of Toulouse still had a chance to hold on to what he had and to regain what he had lost.

THE "CRUSADE" OF LOUIS VIII

In spite of an ambiguous, temporary settlement generally in Montfort's favor, other events, at least for a time, worried every one of the major actors of the crusade. That spring Prince Louis assembled an army and prepared to move into Occitania to redeem the crusade vow he had made two years before. From Philip Augustus' perspective the spring of 1215 was a perfect time for his son to fulfill his vow. There is no doubt, and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay confirms it, that the King of France's decisive tactical and strategic victory over the coalition army of Otto of Brunswick, the Flemish towns, and their English allies at Bouvines the previous year allowed the French monarch sufficient breathing space to consider intervention in the south for the first time.²⁵ A powerful army of veterans of both Bouvines and the Occitan War assembled at Lyon that April.²⁶ While at most times Montfort would have been overjoyed at the numbers and experience of this army, these veterans campaigned not under the command of the chief crusader but for a prince of France. The prince's army marched south from Lyon on Easter Monday (19 April) 1215 down the Rhône valley to Vienne, where Simon of Montfort met with the prince. Though Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says it was a happy meeting, Louis's presence in the south could not have been entirely welcome to the chief crusader at that moment.²⁷ Besides talking to Montfort, at Vienne Louis also met with the former legate and

²⁵ PVCE, 246 #550; PVC II, 242-4. ²⁶ PVCE, 246 #550; PVC II, 243-4.

²⁷ PVCE, 246 #551; PVC II, 244.

now partisan Archbishop of Narbonne Arnaud-Amaury, who asked the prince not to demolish Narbonne's city walls as punishment for its passive resistance to the crusade. In spite of the fact that the people of Narbonne did not like their austere archbishop and Montfort wanted the city punished for the way the citizens had treated both him and his family, Arnaud-Amaury still attempted to protect his episcopal rights as best he could, even against his former supporters.²⁸ For the moment the prince did not give the archbishop's plea an answer, since he wanted clarification of his own right to dispense justice from the papal legate, with whom he had not yet met.

As Louis and his army moved further down the Rhône valley south to Valence, he finally caught up with the cardinal-legate. Our sources disagree here as to the conference's atmosphere, but since Peter Vaux-de-Cernay stood much closer to the events his account must be given more weight. Though the Anonymous states that it was the legate who summoned Louis from France to redeem his vow, Peter Vaux-de-Cernay suggests the prince and his army were, initially at least, an unwelcome presence to Pietro. At the meeting in Valence between the twenty-eight-year-old prince and the legate, Peter Vaux-de-Cernay reports that the legate was unhappy that Louis had chosen to come at that particular time. From a political standpoint Louis's presence in the south could easily upset the fragile equilibrium imposed by Montfort after more than five years of fighting. The prince was making an appearance after most of the hard work of military conquest and subduing of heresy had taken place, so naturally those who had done the job might resent an outsider potentially reaping the spoils. The prince was aware of this underlying uneasiness, for in his talks with the legate Louis readily agreed to respect the present situation in the south as determined by Pietro.²⁹

Prince Louis continued moving south to Saint-Gilles, where he, Simon of Montfort, and the cardinal-legate received the pope's letters of 2 April giving de facto control of Raimon's territories to Montfort pending the outcome of the upcoming ecumenical council.³⁰ The prince and his army, Simon of Montfort, and the cardinal-legate now moved into Béziers, where

²⁸ PVCE, 250–1 #561; PVC II, 253–4; *Epistola Innocentii*, xvii, RHGF xix, 596 and footnote b; Raymonde Foreville, "Arnaud Almaric, Archevêque de Narbonne (1196–1225)," reprinted in *Gouvernement et vie de l'Église au Moyen-Âge* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1979), chapter xiv, 134. The walls of Narbonne were not the only issue between the archbishop and Simon of Montfort, as the two feuded over who could claim the title of Duke of Narbonne. In response to Arnaud-Amaury's complaints, in July Innocent wrote the chief crusader telling him to stop bothering the archbishop about the overlordship of Narbonne.

²⁹ *SCW*, 71 laisse 141; *Chanson* II, 34 lines 21–3; PVCE, 246–7 #552; PVC II, 244–6.

³⁰ PVCE, 247–8, #553; PVC II, 246–7.

Louis received a letter from the people of Narbonne pledging their obedience to him. In spite of Arnaud-Amaury's pleas and the protestations of loyalty by the townspeople, Pietro issued an order that Louis could demolish the walls of Narbonne, Toulouse, and other *castra* because of their resistance to the crusade, but was not permitted to harm any of the citizens. Though Louis acted immediately against Narbonne, he softened the blow by telling the people of Narbonne to destroy their own walls within three weeks under the supervision of two knights he sent to the city. The task was duly completed.³¹ The antagonism between Simon of Montfort and Arnaud-Amaury continued, to the extent that on 22 May 1215 Montfort became reconciled with Aimery, Viscount of Narbonne, over past differences. In the presence of Prince Louis, Aimery swore fealty and obedience to Montfort in a move demonstrating both men's growing antagonism towards the zealous churchman.³²

The prince's army, Simon of Montfort, and the legate moved farther west to Carcassonne, where in an assembly with the principal nobles of the crusading army and local bishops, Pietro of Benevento again proclaimed the pope's bull of 2 April giving Simon of Montfort control over Raimon's territories until the council could make final dispositions. Montfort and the legate made a quick side trip to Fanjeaux, and by a diplomatic sleight of hand the chief crusader also gained control over the *castrum* of Foix. Innocent's bull of 2 April 1215 had stipulated that Simon of Montfort should administer not only the Count of Toulouse's territories but all lands he had conquered, as well as those lands controlled at the moment by Pietro as legate. After taking oaths of obedience to the church and being reconciled the previous year, the Count of Foix had turned control of his castle there over to the legate, whose local agent was the Abbot of Saint Thibéry. Subject to the provisions of the latest bull Pietro scrupulously fulfilled his duty by officially handing over the administration of Foix to the chief crusader. Montfort promptly ensconced his own knights in the town.³³ Back in Carcassonne, as the prince and his army prepared to make a journey to Toulouse before departing for the north, Montfort sent his brother Guy and some of his knights to Toulouse ahead of the army to inform the Toulousans of the contents of the 2 April bull and take control of the city. Guy and his entourage rode to the city, garrisoned Narbonnais

³¹ PVCE, 250 #560, 251-2 #562; PVC II, 252-3, 254-5.

³² *Layettes* I, 417 #1119; *HGL* 8, cols. 659-60. Emery, *Heresy and Inquisition*, 61 suggests that Montfort assumed the title of duke, which he did not, though Aimery's pledge of loyalty was an acknowledgment of Montfort's right to do so.

³³ PVCE, 252, #564; PVC II, 255-6.

Castle and ordered the people of Toulouse to destroy the walls. The Toulousans reluctantly complied, but Peter Vaux-de-Cernay states that they did it out of fear of the prince's army rather than out of good will.³⁴ According to the Anonymous, the citizens pulled down the walls only after the prince, Simon of Montfort, and the legate entered the city. He constructs a fanciful tale that the three hatched a plot to sack and fire Toulouse, only refraining after Montfort decided it was better merely to expropriate the city's wealth.³⁵ This ludicrous story stands at total variance with the way Louis, Montfort, and especially Pietro had acted up to this point, though perhaps the story accurately expresses what many Toulousans thought about the three at that moment. Toulouse's ditches were filled, and many of its walls and towers pulled down, though Narbonnais Castle was preserved and had a Montfortian garrison installed.³⁶ By this time, early June 1215, Louis and his men had served forty days in the south, and with Occitania seemingly subdued they departed for home.³⁷ Although the legate and others perhaps had not initially welcomed Louis's decision to come south, the prince's presence in Occitania turned out to be a help rather than a hindrance to Montfort's ambitions by backing the chief crusader as he dealt with several of his enemies. As good as his word, during his forty days Louis had done nothing to undermine Pietro's settlement or undercut Montfort's authority but simply backed what the pope had decreed and the legate tried to carry out.

The rest of the year was almost uneventful militarily. Montfort remained in Toulouse until 6 June, after which he made a quick trip to Montauban to receive the homage of a few local lords.³⁸ He joined Pietro of Benevento in Carcassonne, and they traveled together as far east as the vicinity of Vienne, where the cardinal went on alone to Rome, his legatine duties in Occitania completed. Though he had not always favored Simon of Montfort, Pietro of Benevento was perhaps the most fair and consistent of all the legates in the south since 1209. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's final judgment on the cardinal reflects the respect he had for the legate's honesty and wisdom, something probably most would have supported, except for perhaps the Anonymous in the *Chanson*.³⁹ During the summer of 1215 Montfort perambulated to various places within his lands, signing charters

³⁴ PVCE, 252 #565; PVC II, 256–7. ³⁵ SCW, 71–2 *laisse* 141; *Chanson* II, 34, 36 lines 30–6.

³⁶ PVCE, 252 #565; PVC II, 256–7; SCW, 72 *laisse* 141; *Chanson* II, 36 lines 37–46.

³⁷ PVCE, 252 #566; PVC II, 257; SCW, 72 *laisse* 141; *Chanson* II, line 47.

³⁸ Catalogue des actes, 477 #104–5. This was the first time that Montfort ever set foot in Montauban. That he could do so now proves the strength of his position at the time.

³⁹ PVCE, 253 #567; PVC II, 257–8.

and settling disputes of various kinds – in other words, acting as a feudal lord might.⁴⁰ In September 1215 he traveled to Périgord on his northernmost border, the area anchored around the Dordogne which he had subdued in the summer of 1214. He moved to the *castrum* of Castelnau, whose French commander had not garrisoned it strictly enough so that its previous lord, Bernard of Cazenac, was able to seize the town back. Since operating against *castra* that switched loyalties was a routine, albeit infuriating, activity to the chief crusader, he besieged the place and swiftly recaptured it. As he had done on previous occasions to those who had rebelled against him, Montfort had Bernard of Cazenac's knights hanged for treason.⁴¹ Bernard of Cazenac himself got away though, nursing more grievances for which he would exact payment at the second siege of Toulouse in 1218. Castelnau was a minor irritant in an otherwise peaceful year in Occitania, either because people had accepted Simon of Montfort's control, or because they were marking time until the ecumenical council made its final dispositions.

THE FOURTH LATERAN COUNCIL, NOVEMBER 1215

Scholars have long viewed the Fourth Lateran Council as one of the most influential and important of all ecumenical councils. Called on 19 April 1213 to meet for November 1215, the council handled a number of thorny problems, the disposal of the Count of Toulouse's lands being only one item on the agenda.⁴² Innocent III intended Lateran IV to have the widest attendance of any ecumenical council to date, and he succeeded. Some 400 bishops and 800 abbots, priors, deans, and other church luminaries made an appearance in Rome.⁴³ Beyond the hundreds of churchmen from all over Latin Europe, the council drew most of the prominent church figures who had played a direct role in the Albigensian Crusade, including Folquet of Marseille, Pietro of Benevento, and Arnaud-Amaury. Several key lay actors from Occitania appeared at the council, too, including Raimon VI, his wife Eleanor, his son the young count who came from

⁴⁰ Catalogue des actes, 477–9; *L'Épopée* II, 339–44 sums up Montfort's summer activities nicely.

⁴¹ PVCE, 253 #569; PVC II, 259.

⁴² PL 216 cols 823–7 contains the summons and addressees; Raymonde Foreville, *Latran I, II, III et Latran IV* (Paris: Editions de L'Orante, 1965), 327–9 contains a partial translation of the summons. For a good discussion of the background and calling of the council see Alberto Melloni, "Vineam Domini – 10 April 1213: New Efforts and Traditional *Topoi* – Summoning Lateran IV," *Pope Innocent III and his World*, ed. John C. Moore (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 63–71.

⁴³ Morris, *The Papal Monarchy*, 447. The definitive work on the entire council is Foreville, *Latran*. She has a useful list of the major episcopal attendees broken down by ecclesiastical provinces on 391–5.

England, and Raimon-Roger, Count of Foix.⁴⁴ From the crusader camp Guy of Montfort attended, though the chief crusader did not, perhaps to show that he did not have anything to defend; to appear would only lend legitimacy to the arguments and pleas of those who did not like him.

In some ways past ecumenical councils had served as barometers of the religious and societal trends of their day, and Lateran IV certainly falls in that description. The participants attempted reform of various kinds and institutionalized some practices such as confession and marriage. The council also served as the forum for Innocent III to preach his new crusade to the Holy Land. In addition to the above concerns, the council not only dealt with a number of issues relating to heresy, but also with the ambiguity of a crusade that the pope had technically canceled more than two years before. Finally, the council had to face the difficult issue of the disposal of the lands now administered by Simon of Montfort, and deal with the lords who had lost them. This last aspect will be discussed first and in the most detail.

Beyond the extant canons and papal pronouncements that came out of the council relevant to heresy and crusading, the narrative sources of the Albigensian Crusade, particularly the Anonymous's *Chanson*, are rich in discussions that might have transpired over the question of Raimon of Toulouse's lands. The Anonymous has his actors give impassioned speeches on both the pro-Raimondine and pro-Montfortian positions, speeches they most likely never gave in the form he includes in his work (unless they rhymed them). Yet at many places the troubadour probably expresses accurate ideas about how various factions defended their positions at the council. Since the Anonymous invents the conversations as they might have unfolded over long discussions, it is easiest to summarize the main threads. The major positions on the disposal of lands can be divided into three camps. One position was held by that of the pope himself, and as we shall see, this was the most ambiguous one. A second one reflected those

⁴⁴ WPE, chapter xxiii, 52, chapter xxiv 53–4; WP, 90, 92; SCW, 72, *laisse* 142, 143; *Chanson* II, 36, 38 lines 9–15, 40 lines 7–11; Stephan Kuttner and Antonio García y García, "A New Eyewitness Account of the Fourth Lateran Council," *Traditio* 20 (1964), 124 lines 48–9 and 139; English trans. by Constantine Fasolt, "Eyewitness Account of the Fourth Lateran Council," *Medieval Europe*, ed. Julius Kirshner and Karl F. Morrison (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 369–76, especially 371. The young count had gone to England earlier in 1215, and father and son now met up in Rome. According to both William of Puylaurens and the Anonymous, for some reason the young Raimon VII traveled to Rome secretly dressed as a merchant's servant. The German writer of the "New Eyewitness Account" is the only source to mention Raimon VI's wife Eleanor being present at the Council. The document briefly summarizes all the actions of the council, albeit sometimes incorrectly.

who believed that one or more southern lords had been terribly wronged by the crusade and particularly by Simon of Montfort, a position expressed by various actors who defended either Raimon VI, Raimon VII, or the young Raimon Trencavel. Related to this second position was the personal plea and defense put forth by Raimon-Roger, Count of Foix, the next most prominent southern noble who stood to lose after the Count of Toulouse. A third represented those who supported Simon of Montfort, expressed by churchmen at the council but particularly by the Bishop of Toulouse, Folquet of Marseille.

According to the *Chanson*, Innocent III did not believe the Count of Toulouse was guilty of serious enough crimes to warrant his dispossession.⁴⁵ Whether or not he actually made the statements attributed to him by the Anonymous, Innocent's behavior in the *Chanson* is consistent in its inconsistency: he had wavered back and forth about Raimon's guilt and possible punishment since he first preached the crusade. Essentially the pope could not make up his mind as to the justice or efficacy of dispossessing a Christian prince not convicted (or even accused) of heresy. The pope's second thoughts were intensified by the uncontested fact that two innocent boys stood to be dispossessed of their patrimonies if the pope supported Simon of Montfort. All sides knew that Raimon VII and Raimon Trencavel were too young to have done anything that warranted losing their lands. Raimon VII was eighteen, and Raimon Trencavel was only eight years old in 1215. The young Trencavel, of course, had already been effectively dispossessed when Simon of Montfort became Viscount of Béziers in 1209.⁴⁶ The Anonymous depicts the pope as agonizing over whether the young Raimon of Toulouse should lose his lands, and this does not seem unrealistic for a churchman.⁴⁷ As a man of God and spiritual leader Innocent had as hard a choice to make as anyone could: what was the greater good, or to whom would the greater injustice be done: innocent children or a proven champion of the faith?

One of the most eloquent actors arguing in his own defense was Raimon-Roger, Count of Foix. At the council he engaged in a number of verbal combats and more than held his own. Raimon-Roger had been the fiercest and most militarily effective southern noble of the Occitan War, and the Anonymous suggests the count possessed great verbal ability

⁴⁵ *SCW*, 73 laisse 143; 76–7 laisse 147; 78 laisse 148; *Chanson* II, 42 lines 26–31, 60 lines 11–15, 66 lines 60–4.

⁴⁶ On arguments defending Raimon Trencavel, *SCW*, 76 laisse 146; *Chanson* II, 56, 58 lines 31–46.

⁴⁷ *SCW*, 79 laisse 149; *Chanson* II, 70 lines 40–6.

as well, even if the speeches in the *Chanson* are not his words verbatim.⁴⁸ In his speeches the count maintained that he had never been a friend of or supported heretics, a blatant falsehood rebutted by Folquet of Marseille. The Bishop of Carcassonne reminded the assembled councilors that Raimon-Roger's own sister was not only an open heretic but a professed perfect, a woman who still enjoyed her brother's support. Folquet added some other rejoinders, including the fact that it had been Raimon-Roger and his *routiers* who had wiped out the crusader-pilgrim army at Montgey and that the Cathars had a stronghold in the heart of the count's domains at Montségur.⁴⁹

The Count of Foix's defense in the face of the bishop's charges is particularly interesting. First of all, he answered that he had willingly given over the castle of Foix to the Abbot of Saint Thibéry and had donated money to Cistercian monasteries, proving not only his orthodoxy but his generosity to the church. Moreover, he did not control Montségur as it belonged to the Viscount of Béziers, i.e., Simon of Montfort. This last statement may have been technically true, but one need only consult a map to see that the city of Foix is far closer to Montségur than either Béziers or Carcassonne, making it theoretically far easier to control from a city in the Ariège than from one closer to Corbières. In point of fact, no one controlled Montségur except those actually inside the castle on top of the Pog. The count did not deny that his sister was a heretic, but simply reminded those present that just because his sibling was did not make him one. He added that, according to the terms of succession when he became count, his father had insisted that any of his children who chose could remain in the fiefdom of Foix and be maintained by the current count. So by family bequest, he could not turn his sister away.⁵⁰ Raimon-Roger also did not deny ambushing and destroying the crusader-pilgrim army at Montgey, or more widely mutilating crusaders he and his raiders had found along the roads since 1209. He justified this by maintaining that legitimate pilgrims on their way to legitimate pilgrimage sites like Rome had never been hindered but that he gladly mutilated the "robbers . . . traitors and oath

⁴⁸ That he spoke in his own defense is also suggested by William of Puylaurens; see WPE, chapter XXIV, 54; WP, 92.

⁴⁹ SCW, 73 laisse 144, 74–5 laisse 145; *Chanson* II, 44, 46, 48 especially lines 10–13, 48, 50 lines 5–25.

⁵⁰ SCW, 74–5 laisse 145; *Chanson* II, 50, 52 lines 33–48; HGL 8, col. 1150; Elie Griffé, *Les Débuts de l'aventure cathare en Languedoc (1140–1190)* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1969), 159–60 and *Le Languedoc cathare au temps de la Croisade*, 116–17, 120, 154. In 1204 Raimon-Roger's sister Esclarmonde became a Cathar perfect at Fanjeaux, though the document that mentions her dates forty years after her *consolamentum*.

breakers" who had claimed to be crusaders but attacked his lands.⁵¹ Finally the count even laid some counter-charges against the principal crusader apologist, Folquet of Marseille, saying that the bishop's slick defense of Montfort's attack and seizure of southern lands showed he still had too much of the troubadour about him and was trying to persuade the pope and council as an entertainer might, through emotion.⁵² In these speeches the Count of Foix (or the Anonymous) makes one of the most effectively stated portrayals of what he and dozens of other *faidits* felt about heresy and the Albigensian Crusade. His attitude reflected the easy-going attitude many Occitan nobles had towards Catharism, even those who had never openly supported it. Unafraid to admit that he had militarily contested the crusade, he saw the crusaders as nothing more than dissolute, invading land-grabbers, rather than people operating with pure motives trying to root out heresy. The sentiments attributed to Raimon-Roger of Foix therefore ring true and accurate.⁵³

After all the speeches and pleas, the vacillating pope decided to give Montfort all the lands that were still heretical except those that could be given to the original holders' widows or orphans.⁵⁴ Yet again the pope demonstrated ambiguity in this proposed settlement. This could have stripped Montfort of virtually everything he had worked for, since the heart of his new territory, the viscounty of Béziers, Carcassonne, and Albi, would go to the dead viscount's spouse or his son Raimon Trencavel. Since not one Occitan lord had been convicted of heresy Montfort would keep practically none of the lands he had seized from dozens of nobles. This pronouncement led to impassioned pleas from a number of southern bishops who supported Simon of Montfort's position and tied their own fortune in with his. These prelates knew that if they lost their champion they would probably be chased out of their bishoprics after the *faidits*, great and small, recovered their lands. Many of the bishops had come into their offices since the crusade began, and they recognized that their new-found effectiveness as vicars of Christ was due to the fact that they had a secular enforcer who rigorously defended the rights of the church.⁵⁵

⁵¹ SCW, 75 laisse 145; *Chanson* II, 52 lines 49–59. The brief translation in the text is Shirley's.

⁵² SCW, 75 laisse 145; *Chanson* II, 52, 54 lines 60–78.

⁵³ For another summary of this part of the Fourth Lateran Council see Foreville, *Latran*, 265–8.

⁵⁴ SCW, 77 laisse 147; *Chanson* II, 60 lines 15–20.

⁵⁵ SCW, 76 laisse 147; *Chanson* II, 58, 60 lines 3–8. For a good description of the weakness and ineffectiveness of the prelates in central Occitania prior to the Occitan War see Costen, *The Cathars*, 77–81. For Innocent III's attempt to make the bishops of Occitania zealous defenders of orthodoxy through threat and disposition see Helene Tillmann, *Pope Innocent III*, trans. Walter Sax (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1980), 245–6.

The most important spokesmen for Simon of Montfort were Folquet of Marseille, Garcias of Ort, the Archbishop of Auch, and Theodisius, erst-while papal legate to Occitania and now Bishop of Agde.⁵⁶ Many other prelates and secular lords lent their voices too when the time came. All argued similar positions, reminding the pope why the crusade had happened in the first place. Taking control away from the athlete of Christ would create a greater injustice than dispossessing two children. Simon of Montfort had fought loyally against heresy and its protectors at great personal risk since the first campaign season. It was only right that he retain the lands he had conquered. Folquet's speech drew wide support from many of the prelates at the council (the Anonymous says 300), who agreed that Simon of Montfort should keep the lands as lord.⁵⁷ Even though there was some equally impassioned pleading from the counts of Toulouse and Foix, the young Count Raimon VII and others including the Archbishop of York, the consensus of lords and prelates was that Raimon VI should lose his lands. According to the Anonymous the pope still remained torn between this consensus and the fear he was wronging innocents, and further muddied the waters by suggesting that he sided with the southern counts but could do nothing because the council had already passed judgment.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, the Count of Foix won a partial victory as the pope decided to give him back his comital city.⁵⁹

That is how things went according to the Anonymous. If we look at the official documents that came out of the Lateran Council the pope's stand on the preceding issues seems less equivocal, although some unclear portions remain. According to the pope's published verdict, released a few weeks later in December 1215, Innocent now formally granted Simon of Montfort most of what the chief crusader had conquered or sought to conquer since the fall of 1209. Specifically Montauban and Toulouse were

⁵⁶ WPE, chapter xx, 46; WP, 80; Dutton, "Aspects," 79–80. Garcias of Ort had been Bishop of Comminges and had supported Montfort's invasion in 1212. Theodisius became bishop in 1215. There is some debate about whether he was ever actually a legate, but he had certainly assisted a number of other legates in the south beginning with Milo in 1209.

⁵⁷ For Folquet's speech, *SCW*, 77–8 laisse 148 and *Chanson* II, 62, 64 lines 1–32, 34–9. For the Archbishop of Auch's comments, *SCW*, 78 laisse 148 and *Chanson* II, 64 lines 32–4. For Theodisius' speech see *SCW*, 79 laisse 149 and *Chanson* II, 68 lines 11–14. For the "group" pleas and comments to the pope for Montfort see *SCW*, 79 laisse 149 and *Chanson* II, 68, 70, 72 lines 17–69.

⁵⁸ *SCW*, 80–2 laisses 150–1; *Chanson* II, 72 (especially. lines 1–4), 74, 76 (especially lines 33–42), 78, 80 and 82 (especially lines 40–58).

⁵⁹ *SCW*, 82 laisse 151; *Chanson* II, 82 lines 62–3 and footnote 1. As Martin-Chabot points out, the Count of Foix did not receive the city back immediately. It took some time for the bureaucratic wheels to begin rolling, but the pope's assurance began the progress towards reinstatement.

mentioned as well as other territories.⁶⁰ The borders of this territory, never even hinted at by the pope, left a lot to interpretation, but control over the Toulousan and Trencavel heartlands was undisputedly Montfort's. He could do homage now for these territories, which in effect meant homage to the King of France, particularly for Toulouse, though technically the athlete of Christ might have to seek out three other overlords – the King of Aragon, King of England, and Emperor of the Romans – and do homage for areas under their suzerainty. Montfort had definitely won a substantial victory, which meant that others had definitely lost. Naturally none of the *faidits* dispossessed during the war had any hope of recovering their properties under him. Any vacant lands would go to his partisans under the pope's letter, as per the provisions of the Statute of Pamiers of 1212. Raimon of Toulouse was the biggest loser of all, certainly, since he was deprived of his territory and could no longer reside within it. He was to receive 400 marks a year from its revenues for his maintenance and that was all. Montfort did not get the entirety of the Count of Toulouse's landed property, since the pope specifically exempted the dowry lands of Raimon VI's fifth wife, Eleanor of Aragon, sister of the late Pere II. The lands comprising the dowry, which included the *castrum* of Beaucaire, were to be held until the young count Raimon VII came into his majority. Just as significantly, based on Innocent's settlement letter and a later letter from Pope Honorius to the young Raimon of December 1217, the marquisate of Provence was reserved for the young count if he remained a good son of the church.⁶¹ Thus substantial properties remained for the young Raimon's eventual use, even if the heart of his patrimony was given away to Simon of Montfort.

As of 14 December 1215 the pope was apparently unaware that Montfort had received Beaucaire as a fief the previous January from the Archbishop of Arles. Although the pope did not mention Beaucaire by name in the settlement letter, the Anonymous claims the pope explicitly said that Beaucaire was one of the territories reserved for the young count, foreshadowing the flashpoint of the young count's rebellion in 1216.⁶² In two later, separate letters written in December to Arnaud-Amaury and Montfort, the pope informed them that Eleanor was to be assigned 150 marks

⁶⁰ *HGL* 8 cols. 681–2 and *Layettes* 1, 420 #1132 are similarly worded except for the salutations; for an English translation see *PVCE*, 311–12 Appendix F (v).

⁶¹ *PVCE*, Appendix F (v) 311–12; *RHGF* XIX, 599; *HGL* 8 cols. 681–2; Honorius' letter, *RHGF* XIX, 643.

⁶² *HGL* 8 681–2; *Layettes* 1, 420 #1132; *PVCE*, Appendix F (v) 311; *SCW*, 83 *laisse* 152; *Chanson* II, 86 lines 45–8; *PVCE*, 254–5 #572; *PVC* II, 262–3; *WPE*, chapter XXIV 54; *WP*, 92. For the earlier granting of Beaucaire to Simon of Montfort see *Catalogue des actes*, 474 #95, and above, 221.

from the revenues of Beaucaire. Therefore, although Innocent did not formally acknowledge Montfort's control of Beaucaire, by insisting that he provide for Eleanor out of it the pope essentially acknowledged his possession of it. Thus as a result of the council Simon of Montfort received many territories from the church for which he did not yet have an overlord's support, but the exact opposite problem had been set up in others like Beaucaire: He had legal and political authority through his homage to the Archbishop of Arles, but not explicit papal support for this *castrum*. Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that when the young count's rebellion began in 1216, it started in a place for possession of which Simon of Montfort did not have the unequivocal backing of the church.⁶³ Finally, contrary to Innocent's initial agreement to give the Count of Foix his *castrum* back, the two papal letters of 21 December ordered the *castrum* held by the church (the Abbot of Saint Thibéry, in other words) until another inquiry could be held before final disposal.⁶⁴

The published canons of the Fourth Lateran Council were also quite emphatic in their specifications. Canon 3 strongly condemned heresy (as had the Third Lateran Council) and excommunicated those Christians who protected or supported heretics. This gave the chief crusader implicit support should he continue conquering parts of Occitania on the pretext of hunting heretics. Most important for the continuance of the Occitan War, however, and often lost in modern discussions, is that the council essentially reinstated the crusade in the south on the same terms as before 1213. It said, "Catholics who take the cross and gird themselves up for the expulsion of heretics shall enjoy the same indulgence, and be strengthened by the same holy privilege, as is granted to those who go to the aid of the Holy Land."⁶⁵ That one line demonstrates how much the lords and people of Occitania had lost. This reissued *carte blanche* for the athlete of Christ to continue on the same basis as before 1213. The fact that the council restored the indulgence for outsiders to crusade in the south is particularly surprising given that it had been stripped away because of the new crusade planned for Outremer. What the pope and the church believed had changed since 1213 cannot be decided with certainty. Perhaps those at the council assumed that now that the Albigensian Crusade was basically over, restoring the indulgence would not much affect recruiting efforts to the

⁶³ Potthast I, 439, #5010–II; *L'Épopée* II, 380; PVCE 311 footnote II.

⁶⁴ PVCE 312 Appendix F (v), *HGL* 8 col. 682; *Layettes* I, 420 #1132; *Litterae Innocentii*, RHGF XIX, 607 A; Potthast I, 440, #5014–15.

⁶⁵ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, I: 233, 234. The translation is the editors'.

East but would keep the threat of crusade alive against open heretics or those succoring them. Ironically, reviving the indulgence because the Albigensian Crusade was basically over invoked the very reason for which it had been taken away in 1213, because the crusade had largely succeeded. The Fourth Lateran Council of course spent the most space on canon 71, the planned crusade to the East. This canon specified that those who had made a vow could not get out of it, suggesting by implication that the pope and council meant the crusade to the Middle East to take priority over crusading in Europe.⁶⁶

In assessments of the councils of Montpellier and Lateran IV, and the Occitan War up to this point, one person incurs the most blame for the incompleteness of the settlement. This is neither Raimon VI as alleged protector of heretics nor Simon of Montfort as scourge of the south, but Innocent III as pope and sponsor of the crusade. From the beginning of the Occitan War Innocent not only failed to solve a single problem but caused far more. Preaching fire and sword, the pope forgot what that meant to those it was used against, and once he remembered he took away the tools needed for continued success, such as the indulgence. Lateran IV was the culmination of his vacillation. If we can believe the Anonymous, and the sentiments expressed are probably correct, Innocent could not make up his mind as to whether the crusade had done the right thing. Because of this ambiguity, he encouraged both sides to fight on. The crusaders could conquer and exterminate heretics, confident that in theory they might be joined by others from the north who wanted an indulgence. His suggestion to Raimon of Toulouse and Raimon-Roger of Foix that God would give them their lands if their claim was just simply encouraged them to defy the very crusade Innocent himself had instituted.⁶⁷ In other words, Innocent was playing both ends against the middle, and in his failure to come down firmly on one side or the other allowed both the Albigensian Crusade and resistance to it to continue.

The indecision and inspiring of false hopes continued after the council. By Christmas 1215 most of the people who had attended the council had departed, including Raimon VI and Raimon-Roger of Foix, who celebrated Christmas together in Viterbo. The young Count Raimon remained behind in Rome for some forty days after his father left, trying to see the pope face to face in order to personally plead his case. Eventually the pope granted him an audience. The teenager was understandably upset over what he perceived was his looming impoverished state, but Innocent

⁶⁶ Ibid., I, 267–8. ⁶⁷ SCW, 81–2 laisse 151; *Chanson* II, 80, 82 lines 40–58.

assured him that the lands reserved for his majority were more than enough to prevent this. Raimon VII told the pope that dividing his patrimony was intolerable to him, and since Simon of Montfort had taken his father's lands by war, perhaps he might win them back the same way. He asked the pope for support if he went to war with Montfort. Innocent neither encouraged or discouraged him, thus allowing Raimon VII to take what he wanted out of the conversation. He took it as implicit approval to hatch a rebellion in the next couple of months.⁶⁸ Perhaps the pope did not believe young Raimon had any chance of recovering his lands and chose not to crush the spirit of a young man unjustly punished enough already. This assumes, of course, that the conversation between the two as expressed by the author of the *Chanson* is accurate. Still, the pope's tendency to be persuaded by the last letter he read or visitor he saw places it within the realm of possibility for Innocent to have somehow offered encouragement to the young count, no matter how subtle, who took it as license to resist the crusade. With this ambivalent support Raimon VII now left Rome the same way his father had, and via Genoa joined his father at Marseille.⁶⁹

When the canons of the council and the pope's December letters were promulgated, all was quiescent in Occitania. The news of the council undoubtedly traveled fast, and perhaps Simon of Montfort had word before the beginning of the new year. If the chief crusader was in the least bit disappointed in not receiving absolutely everything of the Count of Toulouse's he gave no sign. He now had not only the backing of the highest religious figure but the added authority of the most comprehensive ecumenical church council ever held up to that point in the Latin Christian world. Upon hearing the news, probably with great joy and relief, Montfort's next step was to gain secular support from his most sympathetic overlord, Philip Augustus, King of France. Unbeknown to all, the news of Lateran IV reached Montfort at both the beginning and the beginning of the end of his official control in Occitania.

⁶⁸ SCW, 82–3 laisse 152; *Chanson* II, 82, 84, 86, 88. ⁶⁹ SCW, 83 laisse 152; *Chanson* II, 88 lines 66–71.

CHAPTER 9

The southern counter-attack begins: February 1216 to fall 1217

The year 1216 marked a distinct turning point in the fortunes of Simon of Montfort, the Occitan War, and the people of the south. The change need not defy explanation, although both the Anonymous and William of Puylaurens believed that God had either turned his favor away from the chief crusader or was testing him.¹ That the young count's uprising occurred on the eastern edges of Montfort's territories where there had been little combat is not surprising. The chief crusader's control in areas east of Béziers was weak in practice and tenuous in legality. The church's disposal of Raimon VI's lands was most ambiguous in the eastern portions, where the retention of the marquisate of Provence for the young Raimon gave him a toehold for mounting a rebellion. The towns and cities of the Provençal region and along the Rhône had never been centers of heretical activity and remained within the graces of the church. The culture they shared with their western neighbors made them hostile to the Albigensian Crusade. In particular the people of the heavily populated and prosperous areas of the Rhône valley had long resented their lands being the highway for the subjugation of the south. In harnessing this underlying hostility to the crusade, Raimon VII was about to show that even as a young, inexperienced leader – a teenager still – he could wage war more successfully than his father. Using his personality, youth, and innocence of the taint of heresy, the young count united a cowed people. Perhaps we should wonder not that Simon of Montfort prevailed so long in the south but rather that it took the nobles and people of Occitania so long to unite and fight successfully against him.

PARADE OF THE VICTOR AND PLANS OF THE VANQUISHED: MARCH–APRIL 1216

As 1216 began Simon of Montfort was at the peak of his military, political, and personal influence in Occitania, with one small exception. He had

¹ WPE, chapter xxv, 55–6; WP 94, 96; SCW, 92 laisse 160; *Chanson* II, 130 lines 10–26.

ongoing problems with Archbishop Arnaud-Amaury of Narbonne over who held the title of Duke of Narbonne, which carried with it connotations of control over the city. As mentioned previously, in February 1215 Montfort received the homage of Narbonne's viscount, Aimery, thus further alienating the chief crusader from the archbishop. Their estrangement grew worse when, during the Fourth Lateran Council, the archbishop supported the rights of Raimon VI over Montfort's. In the spring of 1216 the archbishop actually excommunicated Simon of Montfort and laid an interdict on his own people to prevent divine office being performed while Montfort was in the city. The excommunication caused little concern to the athlete of Christ.²

With the exception of this minor issue, on 7–8 March 1216 the chief crusader's success continued when he took formal possession of Toulouse and its citadel, Narbonnais Castle. In public ceremonies no doubt galling to many in the city, the citizens of the town and suburbs formally acknowledged Montfort as Count of Toulouse and titled him so in public records. Montfort determined to render Toulouse incapable of resisting him again, so in one of his first acts as count he ordered the further destruction of the city's fortifications, including demolition of more of the city walls as well as the internal walls of the bourg. Defensive ditches were filled and fortified towers within the town pulled down. All of this was in addition to the dismantling of fortifications in Toulouse carried out by his brother Guy the previous spring. To ensure that a Montfortian garrison could hold out in the citadel even if the city rebelled against them, on the eastern side of Narbonnais Castle workmen constructed a new gate so that the chief crusader could come and go without being observed by the Toulousans, and presumably so that troops could slip in and out of the castle without being seen. Further securing and isolating the Narbonnais Castle against enemies from the city, Montfort had a fosse dug between city and citadel and surrounded the castle with a palisade of stakes, preventing anyone from getting close to it on any side.³ This essentially made Narbonnais Castle a fortification independent of the city. In spite of the antipathy between

² For the events of 1216 and after see *Epistolae Honorii*, RHGF XIX, 620–2; Catalogue des actes, 484 #133; Foreville, "Arnaud Almaric, gouvernement et vie," 134–5; Alvira Cabrer, "Le 'vénérable' Arnaud Amaury," 30–1; Emery, *Heresy and Inquisition*, 61–2. Arnaud-Amaury wrote to Pope Honorius in September 1216 explaining his own actions and denouncing Montfort's usurpation of the title.

³ WPE, chapter XXIV, 54 and footnote 26; WP, 92; Catalogue des actes, 481 #120. For the earlier destruction in 1215, see PVCE, 252 #565, PVC II, 256–57, and SCW, 71–2 laisse 141; *Chanson* II, 34, 36 lines 30–42 and Chapter 8, 226–7. Chabot and the Siblys assume that the destruction noted for 1215 by the Anonymous and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay is the same as that mentioned by William of Puylaurens. William's account clearly places the massive demolition after the Fourth Lateran

Montfort and the people of Toulouse, as a gesture of good will he allowed the hostages of Toulouse taken by Pietro of Benevento in 1214 to return home.⁴

By that last gesture Montfort had two sides of the triangle necessary for successful lordship in the Middle Ages: one, church backing, and two, physical control and the ostensible loyalty of the population. He proceeded to acquire that last side: the backing of his feudal overlord, in this case the King of France, by making a triumphant journey through northern France. According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, Montfort's trip to France was a *tour-de-force* as people lined the route to congratulate him. Though the Cistercian monk mixes in biblical quotations directly paralleling Montfort's journey to that of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, the people of northern France only knew that the chief crusader had exterminated a horrible heresy and punished its protectors by dispossessing them. It is not too much to say that this joyous trip marked the very apogee of Simon of Montfort's life, as people everywhere saluted him on his way to the king's court.⁵

Once in the king's presence in April the chief crusader was formally enfeoffed by Philip Augustus as Duke of Narbonne, Count of Toulouse, and Viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne, and given all other lands and territories held of the King of France by the previous Count of Toulouse.⁶ According to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay the king and count enjoyed a cordial and friendly meeting, and this probably reflects at least the public view projected by the king. Surely in a perfect world Philip Augustus would have preferred it to be his own son doing homage for these territories, but at least with a northern Frenchman of impeccable loyalty controlling central Occitania Philip did not have to worry about his southern borders. It made political sense for him to graciously bestow on Montfort formal titles to territories already given to the chief crusader by an ecumenical council.

As the reader may have noted, the French king had no right to accept homage for a number of the territories listed in the document that recorded the ceremony. The King of Aragon had traditionally been overlord of the viscounty of Béziers and Carcassonne. Therefore Montfort should have received these lands not from the French king but from the young Jaume, just as the reluctant Pere II enfeoffed him with Carcassonne in 1211. The

Council and the formal recognition of Montfort receiving the city. Unless one believes that William's chronology was wrong, there is no reason to believe that there was only one round of demolition in 1215.

⁴ WPE, chapter xxiv, 55; WP, 94. ⁵ PVCE, 255 #573; PVC II, 264–5.

⁶ HGL 8 cols. 684–5 #187; PVCE, 255–6 #573; PVC II, 265.

only justification Philip may have had to become Montfort's overlord for the viscounty of Béziers and Carcassonne was the loose hegemony the French king claimed over all of Francia as *rex Francorum*. The acceptance of homage was further complicated if one notes that technically the counts of Toulouse owed homage to the Duke of Aquitaine/King of England for the Agenais. This could be gotten around, one supposes, because the Duke of Aquitaine in turn held his properties as vassal of the King of France, but cutting out the direct overlord was certainly a breach of custom. In addition, it was not in the French monarch's power to grant the title of Duke of Narbonne, since it had been invented by Raimon IV of Toulouse and dated back no farther than the late eleventh century: The stalwart First Crusader had assumed the title of duke without legal precedent in an attempt to give his own heterogeneous territories some coherence.⁷ The king's acknowledgment of Montfort as duke must have further alienated the Archbishop of Narbonne, since Montfort and Arnaud-Amaury were still feuding over the title. In the heat of Montfort's success, however, no contemporary writers noted any of these technicalities.

While the athlete of Christ celebrated in France, the vanquished counts of Toulouse had begun planning to take their territories back. In the spring of 1216 both were in Marseille, in the citadel of the viscounts of Marseille, when 300 notables from the Rhône valley, particularly lords from around Avignon, met with the Raimondines outside Marseille and pledged their loyalty to them. Though the numbers reported by the Anonymous are exaggerated, one of the citizens of Avignon reported that 1,000 horsemen and 100,000 others stood ready to help the counts win back their territories.⁸ They promised to help the counts win back not only their Rhône properties but also the heartland of their territories, Toulouse. Through hindsight the Anonymous has a spokesman from Avignon correctly predict that once a rebellion began the *faidits* would also rise up and support the Raimondines' effort.⁹ The next day, the counts and their 300-man escort rode to Avignon, about eighty-six kilometers away.

The counts now entered the heart of the marquise of Provence. This territory had of course been reserved by Pope Innocent at the Fourth Lateran Council for the young count, so it makes sense that the Raimondines retained at least the partial loyalty of people living in the region. The citizens of Avignon greeted father and son with the same triumphal joy that Montfort had received in the north of France. The

⁷ Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne*, 43, 52. ⁸ SCW, 83–4 *laisse* 153; *Chanson* II, 90, 92 lines 1–34.

⁹ SCW, 84 *laisse* 153; *Chanson* II, 92 lines 34–8; WPE, chapter XXV, 55; WP, 94.

overwhelmingly positive Avignonese response is somewhat inexplicable, since neither the old nor young count had demonstrated any military aptitude against the chief crusader. Yet clearly the people of Avignon willingly offered heavy manpower and financial support for a rebellion, as they encouraged the counts to spend the large sums required for success.¹⁰ With the spears and purses of the people of Avignon firmly behind them, the two counts continued their march twenty-one kilometers north along the Rhône to the city of Orange, where they consulted with William of Les Baux, “prince” of Orange, an old enemy of the Raimondine dynasty and loyal to the crusade. Nonetheless William of Les Baux swore “a treaty of love and friendship” with the counts. That he should have bargained with an old enemy does not make sense and may not have happened. If it did, perhaps at the time of the agreement William Les Baux was swept up by the moment, only to quickly realize the counts of Toulouse had no record of success. Apparently the treaty lasted little longer than it took to shake hands on it, because the Anonymous says just a few lines later in the *Chanson* that the cities of Orange and Courthézon, both belonging to William of Orange, allied themselves against the counts of Toulouse.¹¹ After this brief meeting the counts finally moved into the Venaissin, an area easterly equidistant from Avignon and Orange. There the counts received the enthusiastic support of several towns and garrisons in this area including Pernes, Beaumes, and Malaucene.¹² Far removed from where the Occitan War had been fought, most of the people of the marquisate of Provence kept their allegiance to the house of Raimon of Toulouse, and now threw their fortunes and manpower into a war which up to now had not involved them. Their willingness to do so served as a further indicator of the chief crusader’s widespread unpopularity among all the people of Occitania.¹³

The southern barons decided that the counter-attack would begin at the *castrum* of Beaucaire on the Rhône. A small but strategic site, Beaucaire was located about halfway between modern Avignon and Arles. The counts of Toulouse had a multitude of reasons for choosing this particular place to attack. As the birthplace of the young count, Beaucaire may have had some

¹⁰ *SCW*, 84–5 laisse 154; *Chanson* II, 94, 96, 98 lines 1–54; *WPE*, chapter XXV, 55; *WP* 94.

¹¹ *SCW*, 85 laisse 154; *Chanson* II, 98, 100 lines 55–8, 64–6; *PVCE*, 266–7, footnote 60.

¹² *WPE*, chapter XXV, 55; *WP*, 94; *SCW*, 85 laisse 154; *Chanson* II, 98 lines 59–61. See the map of this area in *L’Épopée* III, 10. Although the Anonymous only mentioned these three, it is likely that many other places in the region joined the rebellion.

¹³ For additional explanation of this area’s ties to the Raimondine dynasty of Toulouse, see Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne*, 261.

sentimental and symbolic significance for him.¹⁴ The young count must have had some reason to believe that the people of the *castrum* of Beaucaire itself, separate from the Montfortian-held citadel, might retain their loyalty to him, thus allowing a quicker and more complete isolation of the citadel and garrison. It certainly made sense to conduct a campaign in the proximity of loyal populations if possible. Since Beaucaire stood on a wide and well-traveled water highway, the Rhône, the transport of men and supplies would be greatly eased by bringing aid from towns and cities along its length in the marquisate of Provence like Avignon, or from further south like Arles and even Tarascon, right across the river from Beaucaire. Because of Beaucaire's strategic location on a major river, as long as the crusaders held it they could seriously disrupt traffic at that point.

The chief crusader had a somewhat convoluted legal claim to the *castrum*, since he had acquired Beaucaire only the year before and the Fourth Lateran Council had not confirmed the acquisition. As the reader will recall, the pope's letter announcing the deposition of Raimon of Toulouse after Fourth Lateran had exempted Raimon VI's wife's dowry from Montfort's control, a dowry which had originally included Beaucaire.¹⁵ From the chief crusader's standpoint he had two claims on the city. One, by papal decree after the Fourth Lateran Council he was to hold all lands that the crusade had won up to December 1215.¹⁶ Two, he had done homage for Beaucaire to its overlord, the Archbishop of Arles, in January 1215.¹⁷ Consequently, who should lawfully possess Beaucaire as of spring 1216 was not at all clear, and for that reason both sides saw it as a good test case for war to decide the issue.

Now that the counts had made the decision to attack Beaucaire, the young count took command while the old count departed for Spain, ostensibly to seek military, financial, and moral support.¹⁸ On the one hand, it seems rather odd that the old count should deprive his followers and allies of their most experienced leader and the man most wronged by the crusade. On the other hand, Raimon VI did not have any particular skill at fighting crusaders in spite of his long seasoning, so the southerners

¹⁴ WPE, chapter v, 18; WP, 38. ¹⁵ See Chapter 8, 234–5.

¹⁶ PVCE, 311 Appendix F (v); *HGL* 8 cols. 681–2 and *Layettes*, 1: 420 #1132.

¹⁷ Catalogue des actes, 471 #95; PVCE, 258 #575 and footnote 5, 6; PVC II, 267–8. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay said the King of France had specifically confirmed Montfort's control of Beaucaire, but the document does not mention the *castrum* at all. The Siblys provide an excellent summary of the legal problems over Beaucaire, pointing out that historians disagree as to who had legal title.

¹⁸ SCW, 86–7 *laisse* 155; *Chanson* II, 104, 106, 108; WPE, chapter XXV, 55; WP, 94.

were not losing their best general by any means. His departure simply acknowledged that his day had passed, and that whatever success his lineage might have in the coming fight would have to come from the new generation, that of his son. People undoubtedly had more sympathy for a nineteen-year-old boy who by any measure had done nothing wrong compared to the whiff of heresy and stench of defeat that hung over the sixty-year-old Raimon VI. In his parting words the old count advised the young count to nurture the support of his followers, particularly men from towns on the Rhône like Avignon and Tarascon and from places like Marseille, who would provide the backbone of the attack against Beaucaire. As well he urged his son to ensure control of the river, since it would be key in taking the citadel, a tidbit the Anonymous provides us from hindsight.¹⁹

THE SIEGE, COUNTER-SIEGE AND LOSS OF BEUCAIRE,
30 MAY TO 24 AUGUST 1216

All three of the major sources of the crusade contain accounts of the siege of Beaucaire, though the Anonymous provides by far the most detail. Because all three discuss it, however, we get a solid picture of what happened. Beaucaire was an interesting siege for several reasons. It was the first and only large-scale combat between 1209 and 1218 conducted in what had been the eastern holdings of Raimon VI, outside of Cathar country, in modern-day Provence. Beaucaire was also the first successful major siege of the war conducted by southerners, since Pujol in 1213 was a minor affair. The young count sent word for his followers to converge on Beaucaire, and his army, consisting of noble contingents, men from Avignon, Marseille, Tarascon, and Vallabrègues, first entered the western suburb, La Condamine. There he met with a delegation of leaders from the *castrum* proper, who cheerfully invited the young count into the town and offered his troops quarters in it.²⁰ At the same time as Occitan forces took control of La Condamine, boatmen from Avignon and Tarascon across the river isolated the fortress from the river side.²¹ They co-ordinated these maneuvers to achieve such surprise that before a blow had been exchanged the crusader garrison and fortifications were cut off.

¹⁹ SCW, 86–7 laisse 155; *Chanson* II, 104, 106 lines 13–30.

²⁰ PVCE, 258 #575; PVC II, 268–9; SCW, 87 laisses 155–6; *Chanson* II, 108 laisse 155 lines 47–9; laisse 156 lines 1–11.

²¹ SCW, 87 laisse 156; *Chanson* II, 108 lines 6–8, 110 lines 12–13.

The citadel of Beaucaire stood on top of some high rocks above the *castrum* overlooking the Rhône. In addition to a lower set of walls separating town from citadel, there was a higher set of walls on the hilltop, which, given the slope of the hill, made it extremely difficult to attack the castle from the southern side. Directly to the west of the main fortifications was an isolated tower known as the Redoubt or Redort, its purpose to guard the more gradually sloping western approaches to the main castle on the hill, as well as protecting the access road to the citadel (see Figure 9, p. xxv).²² The commander of the crusader garrison, Lambert of Thury (more commonly called Limoux), was a loyal Montfortian whose participation in the Occitan War began perhaps as early as 1209.²³ In 1211 men of the Count of Foix captured Lambert and Walter Langton, brother of Stephen Langton the Archbishop of Canterbury. The two of them endured harsh prison conditions before being exchanged for three Occitanian knights.²⁴ A man of some military skill and faultless loyalty to Simon of Montfort, Lambert of Limoux was a good choice as castellan in a hostile region, even if he tended to be unlucky.

The Anonymous does not give us any sense of the period in between the entry of the young count's forces into Beaucaire and Lambert of Limoux's realization of it. Perhaps within minutes, or hours at most, the crusader castellan decided to strike first and drive the young count's troops out before they were securely headquartered, or at least keep his enemy at bay and his defensive perimeter as large as possible. Lambert, his lieutenant and nephew William of la Motte, and the southern-noble-turned-Montfortian Bernard Adalbert²⁵ gathered what must have constituted a substantial proportion of their garrison, both horse and foot, and descended from the citadel into the town yelling "Montfort!" as their battle cry. If they initially surprised Occitan forces by this attack, the latter soon rallied under their own war cry of "Toulouse!" and a hand-to-hand and missile fight began in the streets of Beaucaire. The combat did not last very long, since

²² *L'Épopée* III, 15; PVCE, 238 footnote 5.

²³ Woehl, *Volo vincere*, 165–7; *SCW*, 28 laisse 36; WTud, 90 line 15; PVC, 84 footnote a and 2; Chapter 2, 34. William of Tudela initially calls him Lambert of Crécy, so he was known by three different names.

²⁴ PVCE, 127–8 #248, #250; PVC, 247–9, 250.

²⁵ *SCW*, 87 laisse 156, 100 laisse 166; *Chanson* II, 110 lines 15–16, 170 lines 40–1; *HGL* 8, col. 657. William of la Motte, along with his uncle, appeared on 7 November 1214 as a witness to the Count of Rodez's homage to Simon of Montfort. The Anonymous mentions other Occitan nobles fighting in the crusader ranks at different points of the siege, including Raimon of Rocamura, who held lands near Beaucaire. See *SCW*, 100 laisse 166; *Chanson* II, 170 line 50 and footnote 2 for information about this man.

the young count's men controlled the buildings of the town and threw stones from the upper stories down onto the heads of Lambert's men. The element of surprise long lost and heavily outnumbered, Lambert's men retreated back into the castle with the Occitan army at their heels. The French fought just as hard, however, and the southerners eventually broke off the engagement and went back into Beaucaire.²⁶ Raimon VII had his men build a barricade of stakes, presumably across the access road to prevent any subsequent sorties from the castle. By this time too his boatmen had seized control of the river bank, so the garrison could neither escape by nor have access to the Rhône. The young count then located his headquarters in the church and monastery of Saint Pâque in the northwest corner of Beaucaire, from where he would direct the blockade of the garrison.²⁷

Early in the siege and blockade southern forces focused their attention on the Redoubt, because it stood apart from the main fortifications but controlled the access road and western approaches. Though the exact process by which the southerners surrounded the Redoubt is not described by any source, the young count's army quickly encircled the tower under a shower of crossbow bolts and stones. The southerners placed fires all around the tower, producing a noxious smoke which choked the surrounded men so severely that one of the Occitan knights stationed in the Redoubt, Peire of Saint Prais, perhaps its commander, asked his fellow southerners for terms and the men in the Redoubt surrendered soon after.²⁸ We do not know how long the assault on the Redoubt took, nor how many men were in it or who they were other than Peire of Saint Prais, but evidently it fell in the first few days of the siege. With the Redoubt taken, Raimon VII's army controlled the access road and western approaches to the citadel. Since the boatmen of Avignon and Tarascon had destroyed the steps from the citadel down to the river, the garrison was now absolutely cut off from all supplies and water other than what it had on hand.²⁹ The besiegers, however, enjoyed an abundance of meat and grain brought from the surrounding countryside and along the river.³⁰ The loss of the Redoubt and the complete blockade of the citadel meant that only the garrison's defense kept the citadel from falling.

²⁶ SCW, 87–8 laisse 156; *Chanson* II, 110 lines 15–36; PVCE, 258 #575; PVC II, 269.

²⁷ SCW, 88, laisse 156; *Chanson* II, 112 lines 37–40.

²⁸ SCW, 88 laisse 157; *Chanson* II, 112 laisse 156 lines 41–2; 112, 114 laisse 157 lines 1–22 and footnote 2.

²⁹ SCW, 89 laisse 158, 90 laisse 159; *Chanson* II, 118, 120 lines 40–3, 124 lines 18–19.

³⁰ SCW, 89 laisse 158; *Chanson* II, 120 lines 43–8.

In order to protect their own men from any potential attacks from the citadel or those who undoubtedly would come to relieve it, Raimon Gaucelm of Tarascon suggested that the Occitan army build a wall to protect itself. The Anonymous fondly relates to his audience, as he would again about the second siege of Toulouse the following year, that the entire community of nobles, knights, ladies, young warriors (*donzels*), and stonemasons in Beaucaire constructed this defensive structure.³¹ There is little reason to doubt him, since everyone knew that the better and faster they constructed defenses the easier it would be to keep the siege going when Montfortian relief troops arrived. Though the wall's purpose is not in doubt, since the Anonymous says it was originally designed to prevent Lambert of Limoux from sortieing,³² its location has not been definitively determined.³³ Rapidly built by the southerners from both planks and stones, it had at least one tower built into the wall somewhere along its length. In apertures cut along it petraries were stationed to bombard the walls of the citadel and prevent counter-attacks.³⁴ The besiegers even built a large battering ram (*aries*), whose crew under the command of Guy of Cavaillon damaged the walls of the citadel and frightened the garrison.³⁵ The church of Saint Pâque received a permanent garrison, and the southern army stationed itself along the length of the new wall.³⁶

The attack on Beaucaire came as a complete surprise to Simon of Montfort, still hundreds of kilometers away in France, while Guy of Montfort and his nephew Amaury were 255 kilometers away near Toulouse when they received word.³⁷ Guy of Montfort immediately gathered what support he could as he traveled east, including Frenchmen like Hugh of Lacy and Guy of Lévis, and native Occitan nobles like Peire

³¹ SCW, 88 laisse 158; *Chanson* II, 116, 118 lines 1–35.

³² SCW, 88–9 laisse 158; *Chanson* II, 116, 118 lines 6–14.

³³ Although the Anonymous goes into great detail about the wall's construction, neither he nor Peter Vaux-de-Cernay discusses its location. Most secondary sources do not mention its construction, and two that do are at variance with each other. Sumption, *Albigensian Crusade*, 184–5 and map, has the wall built to the northwest of Beaucaire to connect the Redoubt to the walls of Beaucaire. *L'Épopée* III, 17–19 and map, suggests it was built along the northern side of the *castrum* proper. This makes sense if there was no wall there before, and of course a wall on this side would perform the task of preventing counter-attacks from the citadel. Either interpretation could easily be argued, but I follow a middle course and suggest the wall was constructed along the northern border of the town but extended to the northwest, more closely blockading the citadel and connecting it to the Redoubt.

³⁴ SCW, 88–9 laisse 158; *Chanson* II, 116, 118 lines 6–14; PVCE, 260 #580; PVC II, 273.

³⁵ SCW, 89 laisse 158; *Chanson* II, 118 lines 36–9; PVCE, 260 #580; PVC II, 273.

³⁶ SCW, 89 laisse 158; *Chanson* II, 118 lines 34–5. ³⁷ PVCE, 259 #576; PVC II, 269–70.

Mir. He was in Lavaur by 1 June 1216.³⁸ The Bishop of Carcassonne, Guy Vaux-de-Cernay, and his nephew, our chronicler Peter, joined the chief crusader's brother somewhere along the march. Meanwhile, after Simon of Montfort heard the news he rushed southward. By promising good pay he quickly hired 120 French knights to escort and fight for him in Occitania.³⁹ Thus the Occitan War entered a phase in which many more men in Montfort's army were paid stipendiaries, rather than retainers, friends, or the crusader-pilgrims who had made up the bulk of the forces in previous campaign seasons. The urgency of Beaucaire's predicament gave the chief crusader and his brother no time to raise the kind of army most useful at a siege. The necessity of getting to Beaucaire as fast as possible meant that most of the troops going there were mounted knights, not infantry or siege specialists.

Guy and his forces reached the city of Nîmes sometime late on 3 June 1216, an incredible journey of about 200 kilometers in less than three days.⁴⁰ After hearing mass, giving confession, and taking communion the next morning, Guy of Montfort's troops prepared to ride the last twenty-two kilometers to Beaucaire. Riding out of Nîmes, they fully expected and hoped to meet an Occitan army somewhere between Nîmes and Beaucaire. Instead they received word that the small *castrum* of Bellegarde, fifteen kilometers to the southeast of Nîmes, had rebelled and blocked the road that went through it. After consulting with his lieutenants Guy's forces rode to Bellegarde and seized it immediately. Once they had taken the *castrum* it was too late to ride the last twelve kilometers to Beaucaire, so they spent the night of 4 June in Bellegarde.⁴¹ Early on 5 June, after again hearing mass, Guy's troops rode to Beaucaire in battle order, formed up in three lines just as previous crusader armies in the south had been. When Guy's men arrived outside Beaucaire they saw the southern army actively besieging the citadel. Guy realized from the start that the southerners heavily outnumbered his small army, so he did not make his men attempt to fight their way through to the garrison. Nonetheless Guy's soldiers

³⁸ PVC II, 269 footnote 5; *SCW*, 89 laisse 158; *Chanson* II, 120 lines 56–61. Peire Mir had been in the crusader camp since 1211, after he defected from Peire-Roger of Cabaret in exchange for keeping his lands. See Chapter 4, 97. On Peire Mir's presence at Beaucaire see *SCW*, 94 laisse 161; *Chanson* II, 138 line 74.

³⁹ PVCE 259, #576; PVC II, 270; *Chronicon Universale Anonymi Laudunensis*, ed. Alexander Cartellieri and Wolf Stechele (Leipzig: Dyksche Buchhandlung, 1909), 82.

⁴⁰ ATF, 904; *L'Épopée*, III, 456, endnote 4. Alberic says Simon of Montfort got to Nîmes late on 5 June or early the next morning, whereas Guy of Montfort and his force had arrived there a day or two earlier.

⁴¹ PVCE, 259, #577; PVC II, 270–1.

moved close enough to the walls of the lower *castrum* to challenge their enemy to come out and fight them. Two southern knights ventured out and supposedly fought their crusader opponents to a draw, while others inside Beaucaire shouted battle cries and gathered close to the walls in anticipation of combat; but neither the crusaders, for lack of numbers, nor the southerners, out of fear of the crusaders' martial reputation, wished to fight in the open. Because his flying column did not have the supplies and equipment to defend itself from a concerted attack, Guy and his troops rode back to Bellegarde that same day intending to move further back to Nîmes the day after.⁴² Now that they knew the crusaders would return soon the southerners strengthened their defenses, tightened the blockade, and built additional siege weapons such as mangonels, while the communal militia of Beaucaire kept watch on the gates leading out of the *castrum*. The young count sent messengers to the nobles of Occitania and the towns of Provence as well as to all those who would fight for pay (*soldadiers*), encouraging them to come and assist him.⁴³

Simon of Montfort had desperately ridden hundreds of kilometers to reach Nîmes on 5 June. Upon arrival he sent word to his brother not to return to Nîmes the next day but to ride back to Beaucaire. By the morning of 6 June both armies were on the march: Guy's forces from Bellegarde, while Simon of Montfort, his hired knights, and whatever other paid troops he had scraped together took the route straight east from Nîmes. The armies linked up outside Beaucaire sometime that same day and marched to the site, setting up their tents and camp near the southwest corner of Beaucaire among the gardens and orchards of the *castrum*. After an initial council of war the crusaders fortified the camp with stakes and branches, many no doubt cut from olive trees torn up in the orchards.⁴⁴

As he often does, the Anonymous invents conversations on both sides to represent what people might have said or thought during the siege of Beaucaire. Even if these dialogues never took place verbatim, undoubtedly they accurately reflect actual attitudes. On multiple occasions, for example, the poet writes of the chief crusader's deep anger and bitter complaints at the unjustness of the young count's blockade and siege of the citadel.⁴⁵

⁴² PVCE, 259–60 #578; PVC II, 271–2; SCW, 89–90 laisses 158–9; *Chanson* II, 120, 122 laisse 158 lines 61–76, 122 laisse 159 lines 1–7. The Anonymous says Guy's army feared an attack from Beaucaire and forced the squires to keep watch all night.

⁴³ SCW, 90 laisse 159; *Chanson* II, 122, 124 lines 8–24; PVCE, 260 #579; PVC II, 272–3.

⁴⁴ PVCE, 260 #579; PVC II, 272; SCW, 91 laisse 158, 159, 92 laisse 160; *Chanson* II, 126, 128 lines 57–64, 70–2, 132 laisse 159 lines 59–62.

⁴⁵ SCW, 89 laisse 158, 91 laisse 159, 92 laisse 160, 94 laisse 162, 104–5 laisse 170; *Chanson* II, 120 lines 53–5, 128 line 69, 130 lines 15–26, 132 lines 50–8, 142 lines 7–22, 194 lines 3, 8–15.

At others, the Anonymous has his characters from both sides discuss the relative legitimacy of Montfort's and Raimon VII's claims to Beaucaire. Although he gives Raimon VII more convincing arguments, he offers sympathetic reasons why Montfort should control it.⁴⁶ The Anonymous also imagines the speeches the defenders in the garrison engaged in at various points of the siege. In the first of these speeches, soon after Guy of Montfort's arrival, the men in the keep discuss being cut off from their water supply from the river but note that they have food for two months. They could last even longer by eating their warhorses (*destriers*), something they actually ended up doing during the siege.⁴⁷

Soon after his arrival, perhaps as early as 7 June, Montfort tried to break the siege in one day by assaulting the *castrum* with his entire force. While he had acted impulsively on other occasions, as at Saint-Martin-la-Lande and Castelnaudary in 1211, and at the battle of Muret in 1213, by 1216 Montfort appears to have been growing increasingly impatient of long sieges. As the events at Beaucaire particularly irritated him, and since he did not have the skilled manpower at the moment to conduct a proper counter-siege, his decision to rescue the garrison quickly by storming the *castrum* must have seemed sound enough at the time. The sources do not say explicitly where this assault took place, but based on the position of the crusader camp it probably centered on the Vine Gate, the most southwesterly gate in the walls of Beaucaire, although it may have spread out along the whole south and southwest walls. As usual we cannot know or accurately calculate how many men either side had, though reckoning Raimon VII's men in the low thousands is within the realm of possibility and Montfort's in the hundreds is too, since Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says the crusaders had few infantry.⁴⁸ Given the athlete of Christ's exasperated state of mind, he made no attempt to disguise the coming attack or create some element of surprise, such as attacking at night. Both horsemen and what infantry the crusaders had with them simply charged the area around the Vine Gate, engaging in some fierce hand-to-hand fighting with the defenders. The attack quickly petered out below the *castrum* walls.⁴⁹ Guy of Cavaillon, one of the Occitan nobles fighting around the Vine Gate, captured a crusader knight named William of Berlit, who was summarily executed by being hanged from an olive tree. As a final insult, his captors chopped off his hands and

⁴⁶ SCW, 90–1 laisse 159, 92 laisse 160; 93 laisse 161; *Chanson* II, 126 lines 39–47, 130, 132 lines 28–49, 134 lines 8–27.

⁴⁷ SCW, 90 laisse 159; *Chanson* II, 124, 126 lines 25–38. ⁴⁸ PVCE, 261 #581; PVC II, 275.

⁴⁹ SCW, 92–4 laisse 161; *Chanson* II, 134 lines 1–7, 138, 140 lines 52–84, 88–90.

feet and shot the latter via a mangonel into the citadel to harass and discomfit Lambert of Limoux's beleaguered garrison.⁵⁰

After another contentious meeting with the leaders and prelates of the crusader army, Montfort realized that the only chance he had of relieving the garrison was to begin his own blockade and siege of the southern fortifications and the *castrum*.⁵¹ This was a bitter pill to swallow, because to prepare equipment was to acknowledge that he could not beat the southern army quickly, and thus he had already damaged his reputation by impulsively ordering the initial assault. For the first time during the Occitan War the unique situation of a siege and counter-siege began: Montfort besieged the young count's forces while the southerners in turn besieged the citadel. In the next couple of days carpenters and siege engineers began to arrive in the crusader camp to begin their work, though as it turned out they could not build enough of the necessary things to make the counter-siege successful. Montfort had carpenters build a siege tower and cat so that if he conducted another assault he could do it anywhere along the walls of Beaucaire. Both machines were stout constructions of iron, wood, and leather.⁵² He also had built a large petrary, which two sources report effectively smashed the wall near the Vine Gate and the crenelations on top of the *castrum* wall.⁵³

When all is said and done, however, Montfort's resources at this counter-siege were particularly sparse and that was evident from the beginning. There had been no crusader-pilgrims since 1214 (unless one counts those on Prince Louis's crusade of the year before), and the swiftness with which the siege started meant it would take some time for them to make their way south, if any ever did. Thus Montfort could not surround the southern army and blockade it. Furthermore, he did not control one inch of the Rhône river. In fact, the young count had already ordered southern boatmen to extend their mastery along it, so that eventually Occitans dominated every crossing between Beaucaire and Arles, more than fourteen kilometers downstream.⁵⁴ Presumably

⁵⁰ SCW, 94 laisses 161–2; *Chanson* II, 140 lines 85–7, 144 lines 32–5; PVCE, 261 #582; PVC II, 275. The name William of Berlit does not appear in any source besides the *Chanson*, but both the sources mention the execution and mutilation of a crusader knight.

⁵¹ SCW, 94–5 laisse 162; *Chanson* II, 142, 144, 146 lines 1–65, 148 lines 88–9.

⁵² SCW, 95 laisse 162, 96 laisse 163; *Chanson* II, 148 lines 90–3 and footnote 2, 152 lines 20–2. Though the Anonymous uses the word *castel*, which could mean just a tower, I follow Martin-Chabot here in thinking it was a moveable siege tower.

⁵³ SCW, 95 laisse 162, 96 laisse 163; *Chanson* II, 148 lines 94–6, 152 lines 23–7; PVCE, 261 #581; PVC II, 274–5.

⁵⁴ SCW, 95 laisse 162; *Chanson* II, 146, 148 lines 77–86.

southerners controlled the important crossings upriver to Avignon as well, though the sources do not say so. Thus the young count's men possessed naval supremacy on this fluvial highway and consequently had constant access to supplies. A dearth of supplies hurt the crusader army from its arrival and only worsened as the counter-siege continued. The only towns of any size loyal to Montfort in the region were Nîmes, twenty-two kilometers directly west, and Saint-Gilles, ancestral home of the Count of Toulouse and a much smaller town, about the same distance as Nîmes to the southwest. Since southern loyalists controlled the roads to these places, men loyal to the crusade traveling alone or in small groups risked torture and execution. Montfort was forced to detach large groups of knights from his already thin forces to escort the supply wagons.⁵⁵ Because the Occitan army was much larger than Montfort's, the constant threat of a sortie from the walls of Beaucaire meant that twenty-four hours a day he allocated fully one third of his knights to guard the siege equipment and repulse attacks.⁵⁶

The shortage of crusader manpower extended beyond the number of troops Montfort did or did not have to the *kinds* of men available for the counter-siege. In his account of Beaucaire, Peter Vaux-de-Cernay repeatedly uses the word "knights" or *milites* as the type of soldiers present in the camp. As escorts and defenders of machines knights performed well enough, though this was not necessarily the best use of their abilities. At Beaucaire Montfort had little luck in attracting skilled troops more useful at siege warfare. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay explicitly mentions that a lack of footsoldiers or infantrymen (*pedites*) precluded the chief crusader from building more than the single petrary, tower, and cat already constructed because he did not have enough infantry available to haul them into position. The few footsoldiers recruited in the local area were neither well trained nor very effective and consequently could not be relied on.⁵⁷ Thus the crusader-pilgrims who usually came each summer to provide their numbers and skills were sorely missed during this counter-siege. In addition to the crusader army's logistical problems it was too small and spread out to keep supplies or southern reinforcements from getting into the *castrum*, and since the young count had naval supremacy his army used the Rhône at will. Lords like Raimon of Montauban, other Provençal nobles, and *faidits* from the west managed to get by the crusader lines

⁵⁵ PVCE, 261 #581-2; PVC II, 273-5. ⁵⁶ PVCE, 261 #581; PVC II, 274-5.

⁵⁷ PVCE, 261 #581; PVC II, 275.

with reinforcements.⁵⁸ From the east men arrived almost daily, both knights on horseback and townsmen from as far away as Marseille.⁵⁹ The crusader camp received word that Raimon VI's mission to Spain was starting to pay off and that he had recruited knights from Catalonia and Aragon for a planned invasion of Toulouse.⁶⁰ Now God appeared to switch his favor to the young man unjustly deprived of his lands.⁶¹

Given the disparity of men and materials between the two sides, the southerners could afford to drag their siege out as long as the chief crusader counter-besieged them, well aware that every day cost Montfort far more in manpower, money, and supplies than it did them.⁶² Thus the siege and counter-siege continued through June and July 1216. As the garrison's food and water supply dwindled, sometime probably in July Lambert of Limoux flew a black flag from the keep signaling Montfort that supplies were running out.⁶³ The southerners began to experience some success in their own siege. Their rock-throwers damaged the citadel, particularly its top. Also troublesome for a time was the battering ram built at the beginning of the siege. Using the ram a crew eventually made a small breach at the foundations of the lower walls of the citadel close to the northwest corner of Beaucaire near Saint Pâque. As the ram battered away some quick-thinking defenders managed to lasso the head and pulled it out of its crew's hands.⁶⁴ Undeterred, the southern siege engineer (*enginbaire*) who had supervised the ram armed his crew with picks and secretly took them to the base of the rocks under the lower wall to hew their way into the citadel.⁶⁵ The garrison soon learned of these happenings, perhaps from the sound of the picks, but apparently could not see the engineers well enough to throw rocks down on them. Lambert's men soon came up with an effective counter-measure. Sewing sulfur and tow in a bag, they lit this concoction and lowered it on a chain close to where the southern crew was hacking away. So well did this flaming stink bomb work that the southern engineers soon abandoned their efforts.⁶⁶

⁵⁸ SCW, 95–6 laisse 162; *Chanson* II, 148, 150 lines 98–105. Other *faidits* or nobles mentioned by name are Isoart of Die, Guilhelm of Belafar, Guilhelm of Cotignac, Peire Bonassa, Peire of Lambesc, and Guigo of Gaubert.

⁵⁹ SCW, 97 laisse 163; *Chanson* II, 154, 156 lines 61–79. ⁶⁰ PVCE, 261 #583; PVC II, 275–6.

⁶¹ As an example of this constant theme as expressed by the Anonymous during the siege and counter-siege, see SCW, 96 laisse 163; *Chanson* II, 150 lines 4–9.

⁶² SCW, 96–7 laisse 163, 103 laisse 169; *Chanson* II, 150, 152, 154 especially lines 43–56, 182, 184 lines 4–42.

⁶³ SCW, 97 laisse 163; *Chanson* II, 154 lines 59–60.

⁶⁴ SCW, 97 laisse 164; *Chanson* II, 156, 158 lines 10–19; PVCE, 260 #580; PVC II, 273.

⁶⁵ SCW, 97 laisse 164; *Chanson* II, 158 lines 20–3, 159 footnote 2. Martin-Chabot suggests these rocks were on the river side of the citadel, though the Anonymous does not say.

⁶⁶ SCW, 97–8 laisse 164; *Chanson* II, 158, lines 23–8.

As the citadel's food and drink supply failed, the defenders waved napkins and hung an empty bottle from the top of the keep to inform Montfort that they could not hold out much longer.⁶⁷ Undoubtedly these signals could be seen by the southerners as well, which makes one wonder whether they should have been displayed at all. In desperation the chief crusader decided to try another assault on the *castrum*. Since one assault had already failed in the southwest corner, this time the crusaders decided to attack from the west, probably to seize that part of the siege wall guarding the western approaches. The Anonymous says the crusaders went up the *Poi dels pendutz*, "Hangman's Hill," northwest of the *castrum* underneath the Redoubt.⁶⁸ Once again the crusaders failed to camouflage their efforts under the cover of night but moved out in the middle of the day, giving the southerners ample time to move west of their makeshift wall to fight on the access road.⁶⁹ A skirmish involving both infantry and horsemen occurred, though the Anonymous no doubt exaggerated the numbers for the southern side, 15,000. The crusader knights charged up the road with Simon of Montfort and his lieutenants in front. Their assault had some initial success, but hundreds of men poured out of Beaucaire to attack the mounted men, while missile fire from the walls and hand-to-hand combat quickly unhorsed many of Montfort's knights. The heavy resistance caused the crusader army to retreat back down Hangman's Hill to their camp. In one of the Anonymous's imagined conversations a Montfortian lieutenant says the crusaders have taken heavy casualties in this assault and this they cannot afford.⁷⁰ Simon of Montfort impetuously tried one more assault that day, this time near their campsite at the southwest corner of Beaucaire. The crusaders' rock-thrower bombarded and broke through the Vine Gate and the siege wall behind it. Sergeants and crossbowmen pushed their siege tower and cat towards the walls while the crusader knights moved alongside, as all tried to force their way into the *castrum*. The two armies fought brutally hand to hand over possession of the gate for some time, but at nightfall the Montfortian army retreated yet again with nothing to show except more deaths.⁷¹

⁶⁷ SCW, 98 laisse 164; *Chanson* II, 158, lines 29–39.

⁶⁸ SCW, 98 laisse 164; *Chanson* II, 158–60 lines 40–8 and footnote 1.

⁶⁹ SCW, 98 laisse 164; *Chanson* II, 160 lines 58–64.

⁷⁰ SCW, 98–9 laisses 165–66; *Chanson* II, 162, 164, 166. For Alan of Roucy's comments about the casualties, see *Chanson* II, 166, 168 laisse 166 lines 5–9.

⁷¹ SCW, 99–101 laisses 166–7, *Chanson* II, 168 lines 11–20, 172, 174, 176 lines 18–60. Guilhem of Minerve participated in this skirmish on the young count's side. In 1210 he had surrendered the *castrum* of Minerve and sworn loyalty to the crusade in exchange for lands elsewhere.

The same day as the crusaders attempted their two failed assaults, southern forces using a *mostela*, translated as “weasel,” a covered structure smaller than a siege cat, struck at the citadel. Its crew pushed the weasel to one of the lower walls of the citadel while those inside worked on the walls with picks or pry bars before the garrison discovered what was happening. According to the Anonymous, the leaders of the garrison had been in conference discussing the ever more dire food situation. After eating the mules the men were now down to horseflesh, and their debate centered around whether they should eat each other once the horses ran out or sortie and die fighting. The news of the weasel’s presence drove everyone out to the walls, where a quick-thinking engineer took a pot of burning tar and threw it down on the weasel, quickly destroying it.⁷²

Since Simon of Montfort’s arrival at Beaucaire the crusaders had conducted three bloody and unsuccessful attacks. Clearly the chief crusader did not have the manpower to relieve his garrison yet he was not prepared to concede defeat. In another council one of his lieutenants, Foucaud of Berzy,⁷³ cautioned against another ill-conceived assault but instead urged Montfort to appear inactive for a few days in order to lull the southerners into inactivity. Since the direct approach had failed so far, perhaps subterfuge would have more success. He suggested a feint against the List Gate, at the far northwest corner of the *castrum*, a target that had not yet been attacked. The crusaders would not attempt to conceal this charge any more than they had done for the others. Once southern forces gathered to repulse this attack in the far corner of Beaucaire, at the height of the action a picked force of 100 horsemen would break away and gallop for the Vine Gate. Infantry concealed in the crusader camp would follow behind as a backup to secure the gate once the horsemen’s speed and element of surprise allowed them to fight their way into the *castrum*.⁷⁴

⁷² SCW, 99–100 laisse 166–7; *Chanson* II, 168, 170, 172 lines 12–70, 172 lines 1–17; PVCE, 261–2 #584; PVC II, 276; WPE, chapter XXVI, 57; WP, 96. The Anonymous’s account is the only one to mention the weasel. Through eight years of war this is the first time southern armies ever built equipment to support close assaults, though the crusaders had been doing it since 1209. Who the engineer in the citadel was is not known. Martin-Chabot translates “ric enginhaire” as “habile ingénieur” or “skilled engineer,” while Shirley calls him “chief engineer.” He is not identified by name, so we cannot know whether he was an engineer by profession or simply acted as one for the garrison during the siege.

⁷³ Foucaud of Berzy had served Simon of Montfort since the beginning of the war. See Woehl, *Volo vincere*, 156–9 for his background. As a mounted raider he led crusader forces to defeat at the battle of Baziège in 1219 (SCW, 184–6 laisses 211–12; *Chanson* III, 270–82). Captured there, he was executed in Toulouse after Prince Louis’s massacre of the people in Marmande (WPE, chapter XXXI 65–6; WP, 108, 110).

⁷⁴ SCW, 101–2 laisse 168; *Chanson* II, 178, 180 lines 1–44.

With some modifications the planning of this elaborate ruse continued for some days. The feint changed from the List Gate to the Cross Gate, still near the northwest corner of Beaucaire but not as far from the crusader camp. The proposal now called for the horsemen to ride north for the Cross Gate, leading the army, but if the gate appeared well defended the horsemen would reverse direction without attacking and ride quickly south to the Vine Gate as per the original plan. A force of crusaders concealed in the siege tower in the crusader camp and in the Hôpital, a building closer to the walls of the *castrum*, would run for the southwest gate to secure it as quickly as possible. As the southerners took their midday naps at high noon on 15 August, the crusader army began its attack by breaking through the wooden palisades around the Cross Gate. This attack initially caused more surprise than previous onslaughts, as indicated by a number of Beaucaire's defenders who ran for the river in a panic to get away.⁷⁵ In spite of the surprise, as the French rode rapidly up to the Cross Gate enough Occitan sergeants, archers, workmen on the defenses, and even townspeople (*poble general*) gathered to defend the gate. This convinced the French horsemen now to rapidly reverse direction and ride along the fosse for the Vine Gate. As they did so, crusader footsoldiers hidden in the cat and in the Hôpital surged out, breaking through the outer defenses of wooden palisades to assault the Vine Gate and clear a path for the horsemen. They quickly found that the Vine Gate too was well defended by a number of southern nobles, knights, and companies of archers and crossbowmen. Essentially another assault came to a halt amid missile fire and hand-to-hand combat.⁷⁶

After four failed attacks it was doubtful that the crusaders could re-take Beaucaire before the garrison had to surrender. For the next nine days discussions continued in Montfort's camp, but the mood of the crusader forces had turned against continuing the counter-siege. Things seemed so dire that even Simon of Montfort's brother Guy urged him to cut his losses and abandon the counter-siege. Sometime between 15 and 24 August a member of Lambert's garrison managed to get through the southern lines to inform Montfort that the men inside the citadel had been out of water, wine, and grain for the past three weeks.⁷⁷ At the same time Montfort grew increasingly worried that the city of Toulouse, or one or more of his other territories, would rebel if he spent more time on a fruitless enterprise.⁷⁸ For

⁷⁵ SCW, 103 laisse 169; *Chanson* II, 186, 188 lines 46–75.

⁷⁶ SCW, 103–4 laisse 169; *Chanson* II, 188, 190, 192 lines 76–123.

⁷⁷ SCW, 105 laisse 170; *Chanson* II, 194, 196 lines 1–35. ⁷⁸ PVCE, 261–2 #584; PVC II, 276–7.

the first time in the Occitan War, the athlete of Christ was forced to concede defeat in a major undertaking.⁷⁹

Through the mediation of an Occitan noble, Dragonet of Mondragon, the two sides worked out terms whereby Montfort recovered the men of the garrison and abandoned the counter-siege on 24 August 1216.⁸⁰ Though Montfort managed to save Lambert and his men, the Anonymous and the Cistercian chronicler disagree as to the exact terms under which he did so. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay insists the men of the garrison left with their possessions while the Anonymous says the exact opposite: that the men of the garrison left with nothing except the clothes on their backs.⁸¹ William of Puylaurens says the garrison surrendered in exchange for their lives, but he does not mention whether the men kept their possessions or not.⁸² What appears as a seemingly small disparity between the two sources is actually quite important, because the terms worked out show us the relative standing of Montfort's bargaining position at the time. If the men of the garrison left with their possessions as Peter Vaux-de-Cernay states, then the southerners were still sufficiently afraid or respectful of the chief crusader to grant what amounted to the most honorable terms. If the garrison left with nothing but their lives, this suggests Montfort was desperate enough to get them out at any cost, so he accepted a less honorable bargaining position. It is tempting to privilege Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account because he was closer to events, but he always makes out that Montfort acted honorably. One is inclined, therefore, to side with the Anonymous here, since Montfort would have most likely lost the garrison if he had not agreed to the more humiliating conditions.

The capture of a prosperous *castrum* in a strategic location by southern forces showed how vulnerable the crusaders were to a determined, well-supplied enemy. In the past, the chief crusader's martial renown had in large part compensated for his perennial lack of men and support among the indigenous population of Occitania. Granted he faced serious logistical and manpower issues at Beaucaire, but with the exception of the lack of infantry this was not a novel situation. Time and circumstances had

⁷⁹ That is unless one counts the first siege of Toulouse in 1211. Even a cursory comparison of the two suggests that the blood, treasure, and time spent on the counter-siege of Beaucaire dwarfed that spent on the half-hearted siege of Toulouse.

⁸⁰ ATF, 904.

⁸¹ PVCE, 262 #584; PVC II, 276–7; SCW, 105 laisses 170–1; *Chanson* II, 196 laisse 170 lines 36–49, 198 laisse 171 lines 1–6.

⁸² WPE, chapter xxxvi, 57; WP, 96.

prevented him from conducting the counter-siege of Beaucaire as effectively as he might have. His impetuosity and desperation in ordering multiple assaults had resulted in four failures and serious damage to his military reputation. Montfort had compounded the injury by hanging on at Beaucaire even when his advisors and brother questioned the wisdom of doing so. If the chief crusader had written the garrison off earlier he might have mitigated the effect of losing it, but by holding on to the bitter end he drew attention to the weakness of his position in Occitania and his own limitations as a commander.

AFTERSHOCKS AT TOULOUSE

As the crusaders were busily engaged at Beaucaire at summer's height, in July 1216 Pope Innocent III died at the age of fifty-five.⁸³ His death goes unnoticed in the main sources, perhaps because his support for the crusade remained ambiguous and he exercised little real control over events in Occitania anyway. His successor Honorius actually turned out to be more supportive of crusading efforts in the region.⁸⁴

By the day after the surrender, 25 August, Simon of Montfort had moved to Nîmes, where he issued a charter exempting the citizens of Nîmes from all tolls in his territories as a reward for their help during the siege of Beaucaire. Leaving a small garrison there he rode on towards Toulouse.⁸⁵ During the siege of Beaucaire numerous messengers from people in his western possessions warned him that the city of Toulouse was poised to rebel. According to the Anonymous there had been more than twenty such messengers in a month.⁸⁶ Montfort may have ended the counter-siege of Beaucaire partly out of fear that if he did not he would face rebellion farther west beginning with Toulouse. He summoned his vassals from the Toulousain, Carcassès, Razès, and the Lauragais as he rode through his western possessions. Sometime between the last few days of August and the beginning of September he approached Toulouse from the southeast, encamping just over eighteen kilometers away at Montgiscard. He sent some knights ahead to announce his coming and probably arrange

⁸³ Tillmann, *Innocent III*, 304. ⁸⁴ Rist, "Papal Policy and the Albigensian Crusades," 99–108.

⁸⁵ *HGL* 8 cols. 694–5; Catalogue des actes 484 #131. While at Beaucaire on 19 July, Montfort had confirmed the town government of Nîmes as well as all the rights the citizens had enjoyed under Raimon VI (*HGL* 8 col. 688; Catalogue des actes 483 #129). Both these grants appear to have been rewards for the town's loyalty during the siege of Beaucaire, since Peter Vaux-de-Cernay (PVCE 261 #581, PVC II, 274), says Nîmes was one of the two major towns of the area which supplied the crusader army.

⁸⁶ *SCW*, 106 laisse 171; *Chanson* II, 202 lines 46–9.

quarters for the rest of the army. During this same time the people of Toulouse were expecting an army from Spain led by the old count, an army which never materialized.⁸⁷ When it became obvious that no Aragonese army would be coming that campaign season, the people of Toulouse swiftly organized a delegation to meet Simon of Montfort and assure him of their loyalty before he retaliated against the city. As his army in battle formation proceeded along the road to Toulouse, an embassy of Toulousan knights and prominent burghers met Montfort on the road. These elites insisted that they and the people of the city had done nothing wrong. The city fathers played a double game here. Protesting their innocence when credible reports indicated a rebellion does not say much for their honesty. Montfort grew infuriated at their claims of innocence and told them of the “twenty messengers” who during the siege of Beaucaire had reported that the citizens were planning a rebellion. Irrationally, perhaps, he blamed the city of Toulouse for his loss of Beaucaire. Demanding hostages for the city’s good behavior and as surety for the money he planned to extract from its citizens, he had the members of this delegation arrested and sent to Narbonnais Castle. Montfort wanted to punish the people of Toulouse for their disloyalty and extort money from them to offset the expenses he had incurred at Beaucaire, and to pay his followers.⁸⁸

Hell-bent on teaching the Toulousans a lesson, the chief crusader now set in motion an unnecessary trauma and strategic blunder. Again the Anonymous invents many conversations as Montfort drew near to the city, but these probably reflect many of the attitudes of both sides. Some Toulousans insisted on their innocence; some suggested co-operating with Montfort. A few of Montfort’s advisors counseled him to cool down and go easy on the city. None of their advice changed his mind.⁸⁹ The more disreputable elements of the army, including sergeants, young knights, squires, and boys, rode into the city ahead of the main army and began their own exactions by breaking into houses and burgling them.⁹⁰ These men justified their behavior by telling the citizens to pay up to defuse the chief crusader’s anger against Toulouse. Their conduct may also reflect the fact that increasingly Montfort relied on paid troops more inclined to pillage and loot to recoup unpaid wages. He made no

⁸⁷ PVCE, 262 #585; PVC II, 277–8; WPE, chapter xxvii, 59; WP, 98. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says the count fled once he heard of the chief crusader’s coming, but there is no way of knowing whether there had been an army on the march. William of Puylaurens confirms that Raimon VI was in Spain trying to drum up support, but says nothing of an actual army.

⁸⁸ SCW, 106–7 *laissez* 171–2; *Chanson* II, 198, 200, 202, 204, 206. ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ SCW, 108 *laisse* 172; *Chanson* II, 208 lines 53–7; PVCE, 262 #585; PVC II, 277–8. This party may be the same one that Peter Vaux-de-Cernay mentions earlier.

attempt to stop his men from riding ahead and vandalizing. In fact he may have implicitly egged them on, since it appears his brother Guy rode with this party and made no moves to stop them.⁹¹

While many people across time and place permit their civil liberties to slip away without much thought, rarely do people allow their possessions and wealth to do the same. The brigandage caused by Montfort's advance party spread such alarm in the city that knights, citizens, and even the civic militia of Toulouse mobilized against the pillagers and began barricading the streets. A street fight broke out in parts of Toulouse, with the net result that the looters were forced to flee from the city. Startled and furious at seeing his men riding for their lives, the chief crusader ordered part of Toulouse set on fire in retaliation, a fact noted by every major source, including Peter Vaux-de-Cernay.⁹² In doing so Simon of Montfort made an absolutely asinine decision, as it proved that he ruled through violence, not legitimate authority. Few people will ever trust an arsonist to be fair and rational. Montfort's main force entered Toulouse from the southwest near Saint Stephen's Cathedral, where they encountered barricades and such heavy resistance by armed Toulousans of all classes that his men could go no farther. Attempting to find a less well-defended part of the city, the crusader army rode out quickly and circled to the north, intending to enter through the Cerdaña Gate in the southeastern part of the bourg (but northeast of the city proper). There too they encountered barricades and heavy resistance from the nobles, townspeople, and militia of Toulouse.⁹³ By nightfall the crusaders withdrew to Narbonnais Castle, where Montfort threatened to kill the hostages seized on the road earlier that day, while in the city the citizens of Toulouse battled the fires.⁹⁴ Though the people of Toulouse probably could have continued to resist, the city had few defenses thanks to the destruction of 1215 and 1216, which meant that it would be impossible to keep the crusaders out of the city for very long. The resulting street fighting would simply destroy more of their property. The next morning Folquet of Marseille, Toulouse's bishop and crusader plenipotentiary, began negotiations with the municipal leadership to end the crisis. The two sides met just outside and east of the city at Vilanova.⁹⁵

⁹¹ SCW, 108 laisse 172; *Chanson* II, 210 lines 93–4.

⁹² PVCE, 262 #585; PVC II, 278; SCW, 108–9 laisse 172; *Chanson* II, 208, 210; WPE, chapter XXVII, 58; WP 98. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says that Montfort ordered the fire because the party of knights sent ahead (the "pillagers" of the Anonymous) had been taken hostage.

⁹³ SCW, 109 laisse 173; *Chanson* II, 212 lines 97–104, 214, 216 lines 1–48.

⁹⁴ SCW, 109–10 laisse 173; *Chanson* II, 218 lines 49–58; WPE, chapter XXVII, 58; WP, 98.

⁹⁵ SCW, 110, laisse 173; *Chanson* II, 218, lines 59–67.

Owing to the city's continued vulnerability, the notables of Toulouse knew they were in no position to bargain.⁹⁶ Because their bishop promised that Montfort would be merciful, they did not haggle very hard for terms – something they regretted later. In the initial agreement Montfort demanded back and received the knights captured during the street fighting the day before. He next insisted on more hostages beyond the ones he already held from the day before. The Anonymous says the number seized filled up Narbonnais Castle.⁹⁷ The debate in the crusader camp revolved around how severe the punishment should be against Toulouse, though all agreed that the city should be permanently weakened.⁹⁸ At subsequent meetings with the city leadership Montfort had 400 more hostages taken and held in different towns across his holdings, while he expelled other notable families from the city minus their property. He ordered another round of demolitions throughout the city and bourg, and apparently any building, wall, or structure with any military or defensive capability, real or imagined, was pulled down.⁹⁹ Finally the greatest indignity of all was supposedly suggested by the Bishop of Toulouse himself: an indemnity of 30,000 silver marks in order to regain the good graces of the chief crusader.¹⁰⁰ The citizens of both bourg and city had until All Saints' Day next year, 1 November 1217, to pay the indemnity. Montfort's sergeants immediately began extracting payment by intimidation and physical threats.¹⁰¹ The hostage-taking and destruction of property may have been for legitimate military purposes, but it was also apparent that Montfort's penury motivated him to use Toulouse's movable wealth to alleviate some of his own financial difficulties.¹⁰² Temporarily neutralizing Toulouse only solved one problem: while the chief crusader remained in Toulouse he received word that the people of Saint-Gilles, one of two towns that had supplied him during the siege of Beaucaire, had allowed the young count

⁹⁶ *SCW*, 110 laisse 174; *Chanson* II, 218, 220, 221 lines 1–64. The notables of Toulouse held a preliminary meeting in the town hall before they went over to Vilanova. The main speaker at this meeting, the Abbot of Saint Sernin, recommended the Toulousans simply throw themselves on the chief crusader's mercy.

⁹⁷ *SCW*, 112 laisse 176; *Chanson* II, 230 lines 1–20.

⁹⁸ *SCW*, 112–14 laisses 176–77; *Chanson* II, 230 laisse 176 lines 21–88, 232, 234, 236, 236 laisse 177 lines 1–36, 238, 240.

⁹⁹ *SCW*, 114–16 laisses 177–9; *Chanson* II, 240, 242 laisse 177 lines 37–78, 244, 246, 248, laisse 178, 248, 250 laisse 179 lines 1–12; *PVCE*, 263 #585; *PVC* II, 278; *WPE*, chapter XXVII, 58; *WP* 98.

¹⁰⁰ *SCW*, 117 laisse 179; *Chanson* II, 252 lines 48–51; *WPE*, chapter XXVII, 58; *WP*, 98. Both sources agree on the amount imposed.

¹⁰¹ *SCW*, 117, laisse 179; *Chanson* II, 252, 254 lines 52–79; *WPE*, chapter XXVII, 58; *WP*, 98.

¹⁰² *WPE*, chapter XXVII, 58; *WP*, 98; *SCW*, 112 laisse 176; *Chanson* II, 232 lines 23–6. William of Puylaurens and the Anonymous both note Montfort's insatiable need for cash.

into the town over the objections of the abbot. The abbot and his monks abandoned the city, shouting an interdict on the people as they left, but the people of Saint-Gilles still went over to Raimon VII's camp.¹⁰³

Simon of Montfort remained in Toulouse from September to the beginning of November 1216. He next traveled west to Gascony to marry off his second son Guy to the Countess of Bigorre, and was at Tarbes in that territory on 6 or 7 November 1216. By the terms of the marriage Guy was to become Count of Bigorre, though problems within the county precluded the new count from controlling one of the more important towns of that region, Lourdes. After this Montfort returned to Toulouse, to supervise the continued mulcting of its inhabitants.¹⁰⁴

THE EARLY CAMPAIGNS OF 1217

By the Christmas season Montfort had every reason to believe that the coming year would not be a busy one. The people of Occitania in due course shattered that illusion. A Montfortian garrison remained in control of Foix, but in late 1216 or early 1217 the Count of Foix constructed a castle (*munitio*) called Montgrenier less than five kilometers from Foix.¹⁰⁵ Though any sensible commander loathed campaigning in the dead of winter, Montfort's counselors suggested he act swiftly against Montgrenier before it became too impregnable. The site of Montgrenier was considered a daunting piece of geography and winter conditions were going to make it even harder, but preparations began by 6 February 1217. The garrison of Montgrenier included its commander, the Count of Foix's son Roger-Bernard, several other nobles, and a strong force of knights and sergeants.¹⁰⁶ Though the weather was severe and the topography harsh, the prospect of besieging an isolated mountain fortress like Montgrenier did not discourage Simon of Montfort and his veterans, who had become highly skilled at just this particular task. Unlike at Beaucaire, Montfort's

¹⁰³ PVCE, 263 #586; PVC II, 278.

¹⁰⁴ Catalogue des actes, 485 #136; PVCE, 263 #587; PVC II, 279; *SCW*, 117–18 *laissez* 179–80; *Chanson* II, 254 lines 80–1, 256, 258 lines 1–15 and 257 footnote 2.

¹⁰⁵ Catalogue des actes, 484 #132; *Epistolae Honorii*, 617; Presutti, 30 #162; Potthast, 474 #5383–4; PVCE, 264 #588 and Appendix A (vi) 285–86; PVC II, 280 and footnote 2; *Chanson* II, 258 footnote 4. In September 1216 Montfort sent an agent to talk to Raimon-Roger but the subject matter is not available to us. Apparently nothing resulted from the talks. In December 1216 the new pope, Honorius III, declared that given certain guarantees Raimon-Roger was to get the *castrum* of Foix back. At the time the *castrum* was supposed to be in the Abbot of Saint Thibéry's custody, but it was not. It appears that Montgrenier was a stand-alone fortification, hence the term *munitio*.

¹⁰⁶ PVCE 264, #588–9 and footnote 46; PVC II, 280–1; *SCW*, 118 *laisse* 180; *Chanson* II, 258 lines 16–20.

troops successfully blockaded all the paths and passages around this mountain fortress, secure in the knowledge that no reinforcements would come to Roger-Bernard's aid in the dead of winter and that he had no way of re-supplying himself. Although the crusaders tried once and failed to storm the castle, from then on Montfort simply blockaded the site and waited the defenders out. Growing short of food and water, by late March the garrison asked for terms. As Peter Vaux-de-Cernay relates it, the crusaders did not realize how bad conditions were inside the fortifications, and had suffered their own privations, so they agreed to easy terms. Roger-Bernard surrendered Montgrenier on the day before Easter, 25 March 1217, agreeing to a one-year's peace with Montfort in exchange for himself and his men leaving the fortress under arms. After this was accomplished Montfort garrisoned the place with his own sergeants.¹⁰⁷

With the victory of Mongrenier under his belt and the weather now fine, in May 1217 Montfort began campaigning. In May he conducted operations against certain *castra* with *routier* garrisons high in the Corbières mountains. Some surrendered without a fight and the crusader army easily subdued others. On 22 May 1217 at the small mountain village of Montgaillard, forty kilometers southeast of Carcassonne, Montfort received the liege homage of the mountain noble Guilhem of Peyrepertuse, thus ending resistance in that part of central Occitania.¹⁰⁸

By the summer of 1217 events of the previous year had resulted in crusader-pilgrims from the north taking the cross and traveling south again as they had done before 1215. Girard, Archbishop of Bourges, and Roger, Bishop of Clermont, both of whom had taken the cross the year before, led a large force of crusader-pilgrim knights and sergeants to the south. The bishops and their men represented the first crusader-pilgrims to make the trip south since 1214 (with the exception of Prince Louis's crusade of 1215).¹⁰⁹ These reinforcements – unavailable during the siege of Beaucaire – allowed Montfort considerable freedom of action, but even with this army he did not attempt to re-take that particular town.

¹⁰⁷ PVCE 264–5, #589–90; PVC II, 280–2; SCW, 118 *laisse* 180; *Chanson* II, 258 lines 16–26. A southern noble, Baset of Montpezat, was killed or died during the siege. Midway through Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account he begins calling Mongrenier a *castrum* rather than a *munitio*. Perhaps this is wishful thinking.

¹⁰⁸ PVCE, 266 #591; PVC II, 282–3; Catalogue des actes, 486 #143.

¹⁰⁹ PVCE 266, 267 #592, #594 and footnote 64; PVC II, 283, 285–6; SCW, 118 *laisse* 180; *Chanson* II, 258 lines 25–8; Presutti, 48 #264; Potthast I, 478 #5424; Rist, "Papal Policy," 99–108. Honorius III had sent letters to the University of Paris in January 1217 asking the masters and scholars to preach to and exhort those planning to fight in the south. The Sibyls suggest the new flood of crusader-pilgrims that summer represented the result of this preaching.

He moved east into Provence during June and July 1217 to subdue towns in the county of Nîmes which had supported Raimon VII the previous fall. He tried to enter Saint-Gilles peacefully, as Raimon VII had done, but did not force his way in when refused entry by the townspeople. Traveling west about thirteen kilometers from Saint-Gilles, his army laid siege to Posquières (modern Vauvert). The rebellious lord of Posquières, Rostang, had declared Simon of Montfort his liege lord just the previous year in April 1216, and the chief crusader never let men who repudiated oaths to him get away with it.¹¹⁰ The crusader army soon captured Posquières and then moved north eight kilometers to Bernis, where after a short siege they successfully stormed the *castrum*. At Bernis Montfort did something he had not done for some time: he hanged many of the townspeople and knights (perhaps the garrison).¹¹¹ Whatever his reasons for ordering the executions, they helped the crusader cause by inspiring fear throughout the region and quieting almost all the towns west of the Rhône except Saint-Gilles and Beaucaire.¹¹²

Moving north up the Rhône valley sixty-three kilometers, in the middle of July Montfort stopped at Pont-Saint-Saturnin (modern Pont-Saint-Espirit) to meet with the new cardinal-legate Bertrand, cardinal priest of Saint John and Saint Paul.¹¹³ While there he made a short side trip to a castle called Dragonet held by Dragonet of Mondragon, who had served as intermediary in ending the siege of Beaucaire the year before. Though the Cistercian chronicler says the fortification was very strong (“*turrem fortissimam*”), the crusader army captured it quickly and imprisoned its garrison. After this the Archbishop of Bourges, the Bishop of Clermont, and their troops left the crusader army, having served their forty days.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Catalogue des actes, 482, #125.

¹¹¹ PVCE, 267 #594; PVC II, 286–7; SCW, 118, laisse 180; Chanson II, 260 lines 29–32 and footnote 1. Martin-Chabot says Montfort did so because he believed the townspeople to be relapsed heretics. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay does not indicate that. Accusing them of heresy would have more easily justified their murder. Montfort may simply have invoked the law of storm. Crusader-pilgrim armies such as this seem to have been more likely to execute people than Montfort’s cadre and paid troops.

¹¹² PVCE, 267–8 #594; PVC II, 287.

¹¹³ PVCE, 268 #595; PVC II, 287–8. For Bertrand’s appointment in letters of 19 January 1217, Potthast I, 478 #5425; Presutti, 48 #265; for his arrival in the south, PVCE, 266 #593; PVC II, 284; for general background on him and his role in the crusade see Dutton, “Aspects,” 107–14.

¹¹⁴ PVCE, 268 #595; PVC II, 288–9 and note a; SCW, 118–19 laisse 180; Chanson II, 260 lines 33–4; *L’Épopée*, III, 79–80, 461–2 endnotes 33 and 34. There are a number of problems in discussing this incident. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay’s version may be a later addition, and in fact the Latin editors place the account of Dragonet and several other passages in the notes rather than the text to emphasize this possibility. If we follow Peter Vaux-de-Cernay’s itinerary, he would have the crusader-pilgrims leave before the assault on Dragonet, though possibly Montfort seized this structure when he still had the

At this point, about mid-July,¹¹⁵ the legate suggested that Montfort cross the Rhône and venture eastward to subdue “disturbers of the peace.” Not only were these eastern lands free of heresy but the geography east of the Rhône was uncharted territory for the chief crusader and crossing the river was potentially dangerous. He might be trapped on the far side of the Rhône, far from a friendly base or supplies. Many of the river towns patrolled it to prevent crusaders from using or crossing it. If rebellion broke out in the western territories, Montfort might have trouble reaching them before serious damage was done. Nonetheless he took the gamble. At Viviers, twenty-five kilometers north of Pont-Saint-Espirit, the Bishop of Viviers arranged for boats to make a crossing, and the chief crusader began to ferry his army and the papal legate over. Any fears Montfort might have had about crossing the river were partially justified when Avignonese boatmen came up the river and other forces gathered on the far bank. Resistance evaporated, though, once Montfort got a few knights over to establish a beach head.¹¹⁶ The army faced no resistance east of the river all the way to Montélimar, a *castrum* just under ten kilometers from the river crossing at Viviers. Two kinsmen, Adhémar of Poitiers and Lambert of Montélimar, shared governance of Montélimar. Adhémar had defied the crusade and the papal legate Bertrand, so this trip east was partially designed to bring him to heel. His cousin Lambert, however, supported the crusade and admitted Simon of Montfort and his troops into the *castrum* of Montélimar.¹¹⁷

extra men. The Anonymous confirms that the crusaders took a fortress at about this time, supporting the additions to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, though the troubadour refers to the castle or tower as the “Bastida” rather than as “Dragonet.” Mondragon itself, presumably the place of origin of Dragonet of Mondragon, is only about six kilometers from modern Pont-Saint-Espirit, but it held a particularly strategic place near the confluence of the Rhône and its Mondragon tributary. The seizure of Mondragon or any hostile *castra* or fortifications in this area would have kept the Rhône that far north free for crusader traffic. The siege could have happened at any one of several places, though Mondragon itself should not be ruled out. In his endnotes Roquebert suggests that the *Chanson*’s “Bastida” and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay’s “Dragonet” were two separate sites, but the evidence is inconclusive. The *Chanson* states that because of the tower’s surrender, Montfort and Dragonet of Mondragon patched things up, which is possible given the important service Dragonet had performed for the chief crusader the year before. This reconciliation is confirmed in PVCE, 269–70 #599, PVC II, 293, though the Cistercian chronicler has a slightly different chronology for it.

¹¹⁵ Catalogue des actes, 487 #145. At Pont-Saint-Espirit on 14 July Montfort received the liege homage of Raimon Pelet, lord of Alès, who had sided with him in the rebellion of 1216.

¹¹⁶ PVCE, 268–9 #596–7; PVC II, 289–90; SCW, 119 laisse 180; *Chanson* II, 260 lines 35–8.

¹¹⁷ PVCE, 269 #597; PVC II, 290–1; SCW, 119, laisse 180; *Chanson* II, 260, line 42; WPE, chapter xxviii, 59; WP, 100. Lambert of Montélimar had stayed loyal to the crusade even in the spring of 1216, when so many others in Provence had declared their loyalty to Raimon VII; see SCW, 85 laisse 154; *Chanson* II, lines 65–8.

After a few days in Montélimar Montfort's army marched northeast again about twenty-nine kilometers to Crest on the Drôme river, destroying vineyards along the way.¹¹⁸ Adhémar of Poitiers held partial lordship over Crest, itself a strong and well-defended *castrum* garrisoned by local nobles and a strong group of knights and sergeants. The local bishops supported Montfort and within his army he had about 100 French knights sent by Philip Augustus to serve for a period of six months.¹¹⁹ Montfort conducted the siege of Crest with his customary vigor, but this was not a contest he wanted to see through to its conclusion. Adhémar had never been associated with heresy, and in fact he had participated in the crusade in 1209, but now Peter Vaux-de-Cernay (or his interpolator) accuses him of harboring heretics. The siege of Crest was less an action of the crusade and more about teaching Adhémar a lesson not to interfere with crusader-pilgrims as they made their way down the Rhône river valley. For his part the chief crusader did not want continued trouble with one of the great lords of an area that at best had only an indirect impact on his operations in central Occitania. In other words, it appears that Montfort desired to patch things up with Adhémar as quickly as possible because there were negotiations going on throughout the entire siege. In fact, after much discussion the siege ended when Montfort secured a marriage alliance between one of his daughters, Amicia, who had been previously affianced to Jaume of Aragon, and Adhémar's son William of Poitiers. To seal the arrangement Adhémar turned over several *castra* to guarantee his good behavior in the future.¹²⁰

It was in the middle of negotiations at Crest in late September 1217 that a messenger from the west arrived with a sealed letter for the chief crusader.¹²¹ Its contents revealed that the athlete of Christ's greatest fear had come to pass. While Simon of Montfort besieged and negotiated at Crest, hundreds of kilometers away, on 13 September 1217, Raimon VI had entered Toulouse with a small army and the city had risen in rebellion against

¹¹⁸ PVCE, 269 #598; PVC II, 291; SCW, 119 laisse 180; *Chanson* II, 260 lines 39–40, 262 line 43. The Anonymous's account presents some details out of order, as he has Montfort destroying the vineyards of "Valence" before the crusader force had reached Montélimar, still more than forty kilometers away.

¹¹⁹ PVCE, 269 #598; PVC II, 292.

¹²⁰ PVCE, 269–70 #599; PVC II, 292 and footnote 2 and 3, 293 and footnote 1 and 2; SCW, 119 laisse 180, 129–30 laisse 186; *Chanson* II, 262 lines 43–8, 302, 304 lines 34–74. The Anonymous says the defenders of Crest resisted until one of its co-lords, the Bishop of Die, ordered the garrison to surrender. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account seems more plausible. The marriage between Amicia of Montfort and William of Poitiers never took place.

¹²¹ SCW, 128–9 laisses 185–6; *Chanson* II, 300 laisse 185 lines 88–92, 300, 302 laisse 186 lines 1–33.

the crusade. After years of fighting Montfort had proved his military mastery over a huge territory (except the lower Rhône valley of course), but for all his skill he could not prevent rebellion. The coming months would see conflict boil over again like an angry pot. The heat and steam from this pot would destroy the hopes, dreams, and lives of many, including Simon of Montfort.

*The second siege of Toulouse and end of the chief
crusader: 1217–1218*

The second siege of Toulouse was the largest and longest one attempted between 1209 and 1218. In duration and intensity it rivaled famous crusader sieges in Outremer and others in western Europe of the High Middle Ages.¹ During its great length it exhibited virtually every type of military activity possible in the Middle Ages, from blockade, machine warfare, and infantry assault to hand-to-hand combat and amphibious attacks.

While heretofore Peter Vaux-de-Cernay has been our main source for so many details of the crusade, the quality and quantity of his coverage steeply declines for this period. The Cistercian chronicler devotes what only amounts to thirteen sub-headings' worth of text to this nine-month siege. While William of Puylaurens offers us more than he usually does, his account of the siege totals only one chapter of the printed text. As a critical source the *Chanson* comes into its own for this period, and we are dependent on it for many incidents that occurred during the siege. The Anonymous spends almost one third of the entire poem just on the second siege of Toulouse. When relying on this source so heavily we must keep in mind a repeated caveat: there are many – too many – invented conversations and speeches in the Anonymous's account. Still, when we get past the hyperbole, much of what he writes probably reflects what people actually thought and said. For the Anonymous the Toulousans are the real heroes of the war, responsible for liberating Occitania from Simon of Montfort's tyranny. In that sense the *Chanson* departs from a lot of troubadour writing because the focus of the story is not on nobles or knights but on ordinary men and women who rose to an extraordinary challenge and in doing so thwarted the plans of outside conquest, albeit temporarily. In telling the tale of the greatest human-caused crisis ever to hit his city, the Anonymous mentions many citizens of Toulouse by name, essentially enshrining them

¹ Philippe Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, trans. Michael Jones (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 101.

in the historical pantheon alongside more famous historical figures. The people of Toulouse did not defend their city for love of their count, though ostensibly that was their pretext for rebellion. The real reason is simple enough to figure out: Montfort's arbitrary treatment of the city in the fall of 1216 so increased their terror that as soon as someone raised the standard of rebellion the people of Toulouse eagerly rose up. Raimon VII's insurrection beginning in 1216 could not have flourished as it did in 1217 without this large Occitan city's assistance.

THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE SECOND SIEGE OF
TOULOUSE: FALL 1217 AND WINTER 1218

By the fall of 1217 the old count Raimon VI had spent the better part of eighteen months in Spain trying to drum up support for military action against Simon of Montfort. Egged on by *faidits* and the better-off families expelled from Toulouse in the fall of 1216, the old count finally made his move.² The autumn of 1217 was a perfect time to extend the rebellion. Although Raimon VI's attempt to bring an army into Toulouse in the fall of 1216 never materialized, while Montfort was besieging Crest more than 300 kilometers away in the fall of 1217 a southern or Aragonese army had a good chance of making it into the city before the chief crusader could head it off or defeat it. Even though Simon of Montfort had demonstrated his ability to quickly move troops vast distances, it would still be many days before he could reach Toulouse, and by then the city would be strong enough to defend itself. Even if a major undertaking this late in the campaign season seemed to be rather risky for a man of Raimon VI's dubious military competence, as usual late summer and early autumn served the defenders of Occitania far better than the chief crusader. The lateness of the season dampened reinforcement by northern crusader-pilgrims, so Montfort would likely be without a significant army until the following spring.

As had been the case before Beaucaire, Simon of Montfort conducted the second siege of Toulouse with little in the way of men, material, or money. Toulouse was so large in size and population that he would have needed thousands more men than he had to ever have effectively blockaded it. The crusade army could never do anything more than attach itself to one section of the walls and attempt to break into the city from that direction. In such an incomplete blockade, the natural advantages of the defense were

² SCW, 119–21, *laissez* 180–1; *Chanson* 11, 262 lines 56–7, 264, 266, 268, 270 lines 1–79.

greatly enhanced, since the southerners could re-supply themselves at will during the siege. Ironically, the fact that Toulouse had had so many of its walls pulled down between 1215 and 1217 gave the city an initial advantage because there were so many access points through which reinforcements and supplies could arrive. As a fortress now separate from the city walls, Narbonnais Castle proved to be essentially useless for controlling anything that went on within the city. (See Figure 10, p. xxvi.)

The old count made his way towards Toulouse from Spain, riding with the Counts of Comminges and Pallars, other *faidits*, a small army of knights, and Roger-Bernard of Foix. The latter's presence signaled the broken peace agreement with Montfort after he had surrendered Montgrenier the previous February.³ The southerners made their way up the valleys close by the Garonne and eventually tried to cross the river, but at the crossing at La Salvetat near Saint-Julien, about forty-six kilometers south of Toulouse, they encountered a weaker force than themselves led by Joris, an Occitan noble loyal to Montfort. The two sides skirmished over the crossing, but the southerners drove the Montfortians off with some dead and wounded.⁴ The southern force decided to enter Toulouse from the west, where presumably they were less likely to be seen by the Montfortian garrison in Narbonnais Castle on the east side. As Raimon VI and his men drew closer to Toulouse even the weather co-operated, producing a thick fog which masked their approach. A few prominent citizens expressed concern that the crusaders would find out about the old count's arrival anyway, so based on their advice Raimon VI's army quietly forded the Garonne near Bazacle Island, on the north end of the city proper, rather than crossing the bridge to Toulouse.⁵ The old count and his small army entered Toulouse through the Bazacle Gate on 13 September 1217 to a joyous welcome from a large crowd of all social classes.⁶

Now that their would-be deliverer was inside the walls, some Toulousans began to race through the streets retaliating against the

³ WPE, chapter xxviii, 59; WP, 100; SCW, 121 laisse 181; *Chanson* II, 270, lines 82–6.

⁴ SCW, 121–2 laisses 181–2; *Chanson* II, 270 lines 86–7, 270, 272 lines 1–25; *L'Épopée* III, 87–9.

⁵ SCW, 122 laisse 182; *Chanson* II, 272, 274, 276 lines 26–66; WPE, chapter xxviii, 59; WP, 100; Mundy, *Society and Government*, 13–14. The people of Toulouse had begun construction on a bridge over that part of the Garonne in 1212 but it was probably incomplete until after the siege was over, which is one reason why Raimon and his men forded the river.

⁶ On the date of 13 September see PVC II, 293 footnote 4; reception of the old count SCW, 122–3 laisse 182; *Chanson* II, 276 lines 67–79; WPE, chapter xxviii, 59–60; WP, 100. William of Puylaurens offers a very different picture of the old count's reception, saying that some in Toulouse believed his arrival would only bring Montfort's wrath down on them. Others fled to Narbonnais Castle, the bishop's palace, or the monastery of Saint-Sernin. The old count persuaded at least some of them to come back over to him during the next few days.

French in the city, killing those they could catch while chasing those they could not into the safety of Narbonnais Castle.⁷ It appears that only as these out-of-breath and frightened people made their way to the fortress did the garrison realize that an Occitan count was back in the city and that a Toulousan rebellion against Simon of Montfort had begun. Though some of the garrison immediately rode out to face the gathering crowds, they just as quickly retreated back into the castle without making contact.⁸ At that moment those living in Narbonnais Castle presented a particularly juicy target because Montfort's wife Alice, Guy's wife, his daughters-in-law married to Amaury and Guy, and some of his other sons, daughters, nieces, and nephews resided there.⁹ Acting as castellan, Alice of Montfort did not realize what had happened in the city until one of her lieutenants, Gervase of Chamigny, the seneschal of Toulouse,¹⁰ pointed out Bernard of Comminges's banner and guidon and surmised that the Count of Toulouse and Roger-Bernard of Foix were present. As if she really needed to hear it, another of her lieutenants urged Alice to alert her husband as soon as possible. In a bit of hindsight the Anonymous has this lieutenant suggest she tell her husband to disregard the cost of hiring sergeants and mercenary troops, which he did during the course of the siege. The messenger was duly sent.¹¹

Across the board the defenders of Toulouse realized that, due to the demolition of the previous two years, the city was incredibly vulnerable. In response many of the citizens began to rebuild old and construct new defenses to resist the inevitable attack by Simon of Montfort. The other major sources concur that the people enthusiastically built barricades, dug ditches, and re-built walls, towers, barbicans etc. They especially reinforced the area facing Narbonnais Castle, since that side was particularly exposed to sorties and missile fire from the citadel. Even the Abbot of Saint-Sernin and the Provost of Saint Stephen's Cathedral turned over their church buildings to the city's defense.¹² In order to cement the city's loyalty, at least for this time of crisis, one of the first things the old count did once inside the city was to re-establish communal government, including a "chief magistrate" (*viguier*, Shirley's translation) and a slate of officers

⁷ SCW, 123 laisses 182–83; *Chanson* II, 276, 278 lines 80–9, 280 lines 14–18.

⁸ SCW, 123, laisse 183; *Chanson* II, 280 lines 19–22. ⁹ PVCE, 270 #600; PVC II, 293–5.

¹⁰ HGL 8 cols. 701–2. In May 1217 Gervaise produced a judgment as Seneschal of Toulouse.

¹¹ SCW, 123–4 laisse 183; *Chanson* II, 282, 284 lines 23–35, 48–59.

¹² SCW, 123–4 laisse 183; *Chanson* II, 280 lines 1–5; 284 lines 61–78, 286 lines 84–5; PVCE, 270 #600; PVC II, 295; WPE, chapter XVIII, 60; WP, 100; M. Joseph de Malafosse, "Le siège de Toulouse par Simon de Montfort," *Revue des Pyrénées* 4 (1892), 1: 506–8, 2: 727–8. Malafosse's article contains a good short account of the defenses of Toulouse.

(the “Capitol,” Shirley’s translation).¹³ Though there still remains some debate, the latest consensus is that Montfort essentially exercised direct government over Toulouse after the Toulousans’ acknowledgment of him as count between April 1216 and September 1217, thus temporarily destroying what had been a vibrant but often intransigent city government.¹⁴ Conceding essentially the same government as they had had before 1216 cost Raimon VI nothing and secured the Toulousans’ eager support for his cause.

The first crusaders outside Narbonnais Castle to learn of the rebellion were the senior Guy of Montfort and his nephew Guy, both somewhere near or in Carcassonne. They quickly gathered an army and baggage train and rushed to Toulouse, arriving there early on a Friday morning, probably 22 September 1217.¹⁵ As his brother had tried before the walls of Beaucaire, Guy of Montfort attacked early without warning or preparation, perhaps unaware of the beefed-up defenses of the city. Dismounting his knights by the Montolieu Gate near the southeast corner of Toulouse, he left his baggage train to proceed on to Narbonnais Castle. The Montolieu Gate had no walls but a protective ditch dug since 13 September and wooden barricades blocking the street. Guy moved his men forward to storm the barricades, where in spite of a hard-fought defense by soldiers and civilians his troops forced their way into the city. Just as things looked bad for the defenders at this sector, Roger-Bernard of Foix and Peir Durban, lord of Montégut, rode to the citizens’ defense; they too dismounted and fought hand-to-hand. Their timely arrival turned the struggle in favor of the defenders, and Guy of Montfort’s men withdrew out of town. Now that the barricades were in some disarray, however, Guy’s men mounted their horses again and rode back into the city, where they got as far as the Saint James garden before heavy resistance forced them out one last time. The defenders in Toulouse captured some of Guy’s men during the fighting

¹³ SCW, 124–5 laisse 183; *Chanson* II, 284, 286 lines 79–83.

¹⁴ For the debate over whether Montfort actually dissolved the old city government see Mundy, *Liberty and Political Power*, 85–9; Limouzin-La Mothe, *La Commune de Toulouse*, 139–43. Mundy suggests that Simon of Montfort abolished the consulship; Limouzin-La Mothe suggests it continued, with some modifications, under the chief crusader. I follow Mundy, believing that Montfort substituted some other form that allowed him more power over the city.

¹⁵ PVCE, 270 #600; PVC II, 295; SCW, 125 laisses 183–4; *Chanson* II, 286 laisse 183 lines 88–9, laisse 184 lines 4–11. The *Chanson* says it was early morning on Friday when Guy arrived. Martin-Chabot, 287 footnote 5, suggests it was 22 September, which Shirley, footnote 3, follows. Alice of Montfort’s messenger probably got out of the city on 13 September, and Carcassonne was ninety kilometers along his likely route. If Guy was actually in the *castrum* of Carcassonne he would have just heard the news on Friday, 15 September. Between gathering troops and a baggage train the most plausible date for Guy’s arrival before Toulouse would be Friday, 22 September.

and promptly hanged them.¹⁶ The arbitrary torture and execution of captured crusaders continued throughout the siege.

Possibly Guy intended these initial assaults as feints to draw attention away from Narbonnais Castle, since it could easily be surrounded and isolated. Even the *Chanson* mentions that Bernard of Comminges kept a close eye on the castle side and the baggage train outside it, either expecting an assault from that direction or contemplating one of his own. Guy of Montfort's chastened men now reinforced the citadel and occupied the nearest houses to it to enlarge their defensive perimeter.¹⁷ Both sides began calling for reinforcements. Since Alice of Montfort's messenger had gone east, Guy of Montfort, now in charge at Toulouse, sent word westward to the Archbishop of Auch, while Raimon VI dispatched a messenger to his son in Provence.¹⁸ As word spread *faidits* by the dozen and their men poured into Toulouse in support of Raimon VI.¹⁹ The crusaders stationed in and near Narbonnais Castle could do nothing to stop them from entering the city.

It took some time before Alice of Montfort's messenger reached her husband at Crest. The messenger found Montfort in late September amidst negotiations for ending the siege there. Though only the Anonymous reports Montfort's reaction to hearing news of the uprising, if we believe his account the chief crusader concealed his knowledge of it until after he arranged the alliance and marriage plans. By the time others found out what had happened he was already on the road to Toulouse.²⁰ As he traveled westward a flurry of letters poured forth from his secretaries to bishops loyal to him as well as to the papal legate Bertrand, asking them to bring as many men as they could. He reached Baziège, twenty-two kilometers southeast of Toulouse, on a Sunday, either 1 or 8 October 1217. In a preliminary meeting between Montfort, the legate, other prelates, and his lieutenants on the road to Toulouse, they decided that the crusaders would offer no quarter during the siege, even to the more prominent southern nobles, a decision championed by the cardinal-legate himself.²¹

¹⁶ SCW, 125–6 laisse 184; *Chanson* II, 286, 288, 290 lines 12–69; WPE, chapter xxxviii, 60; WP, 100.

¹⁷ PVCE, 270, #600; PVC II, 295; SCW, 126 laisse 184; *Chanson* II, 290 lines 57–61.

¹⁸ SCW, 127 laisse 185; *Chanson* II, 294, 296 lines 50–62.

¹⁹ SCW, 127–8 laisse 185; *Chanson* II, 296–9 lines 64–79 and footnotes. In this passage the Anonymous mentions eighteen prominent Occitan nobles or *faidits* as well as the fact that they brought contingents with them.

²⁰ SCW, 128–30 laisse 185–6; *Chanson* II, 300 lines 88–92, 300, 302, 304, 306 lines 1–82; WPE, chapter xxxviii, 60; WP, 100.

²¹ SCW, 130 laisse 186; *Chanson* II, 306, 308 lines 100–10. As usual this is dependent on whether one believes the speeches the Anonymous gives to his characters. It is certainly plausible that both papal legate and chief crusader took a hard line, given what had happened to some of Guy of Montfort's men captured earlier by people in the city.

The following morning Montfort and his men arrived at Toulouse.²² He mustered his men very soon after, perhaps that day, to storm the defenses and take the city. None of the three main sources gives the location where this attack occurred, though all mention that an assault led by Simon of Montfort took place early in the siege. Most likely it happened east of Narbonnais Castle around the Montolieu Gate. As in the initial attacks at Beaucaire Montfort made no attempt to hide his intentions, so the people defending the area had plenty of warning. The Toulousans supplied the troops around the barricades with tubs of arrows, crossbow bolts, and buckets of stones to throw at the crusaders. All were armed with close-quarter combat weapons such as axes and clubs.²³ With “Montfort!” as their battle cry, the chief crusader and his lieutenants, riding in front of the army, approached the defenses of the city and entered the kill zone of missile fire. One knight got close enough to actually throw a bucket of dirt into the ditch around the gate before he was killed. Intense missile fire from bows, crossbows, and stones shot from a mangonel tore holes through the crusader ranks as they advanced. According to the Anonymous’s incredibly graphic account, the only one to offer details, the defenders defeated this assault by the quantity and accuracy of their missile fire rather than a close-quarter melee. The junior Guy of Montfort suffered a serious chest wound when a crossbow bolt pierced his armor, thus making him the most prominent crusader wounded or killed since the execution of Baldwin of Toulouse in 1214. Guy’s own father-in-law, the Count of Comminges, supposedly shot the bolt.²⁴ Just like every crusader assault since Beaucaire this latest one failed. It cost Montfort’s army perhaps one third of their number, as many as 160 killed and wounded. This defeat demoralized the

²² PVCE, 270-1 #601-2; PVC II, 296-8; SCW, 130-1 *laissez* 186-7; *Chanson* II, 306 lines 87-99; *Chanson* III, 8 lines 3-5; *L’Épopée* III, 96. The *Chanson* states Montfort reached Baziège on a Sunday, while Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says he was in Toulouse on 1 October (*kalendae octobris*), a Sunday. Even if he stopped at Baziège that day, it would only have taken him an additional day to ride the twenty-two kilometers to Toulouse, so he should have been in Toulouse by 3 October at the latest. Roquebert suggests Montfort arrived in Bazièges either on 8 or 15 October, which seems too late unless he tarried for some reason. Since no source mentions a specific delay, 8 October is the latest Sunday worth considering for Montfort’s arrival.

²³ SCW, 131-2 *laisse* 187; *Chanson* III, 8, 10, 12, 14 lines 8-83. Lines 8-10 and 39-52 of the *Chanson* contain two instances of the crusaders’ determination not to allow quarter to the defenders of Toulouse. In the latter passage the cardinal-legate exhorts the men about to assault the Montolieu Gate to kill every person they can get their hands on.

²⁴ SCW, 131-3 *laissez* 187-8; *Chanson* III, 14, 16 lines 84-7, 16, 18, 20, 22 lines 12-68. The Anonymous is the only author to mention the junior Guy of Montfort’s chest wound (lines 32-42), though his account is confusing. At one point (lines 65-7) the author has Montfort’s marshal remark to the chief crusader that his son had been wounded and his brother (Guy) killed, clearly incorrect as the senior Guy of Montfort lived another eleven years.

crusaders, and some of Montfort's Gascon allies snickered at the setback. At the same time it raised the spirits and resolve of the people of Toulouse.²⁵

After two failed assaults the crusader camp had long discussions about what to do. The Anonymous of course takes us right into the middle of these discussions and again, offers a reasonable scenario of what might have transpired, and he is supported by Peter Vaux-de-Cernay. Montfort felt he had done the right and honorable thing by besieging Toulouse. A few of his men suggested he had become too interested in personal gain, and some urged him to reconsider the siege, but it was way too early for him to contemplate this.²⁶ Instead, Foucaud of Berzy, the source of many wily ideas, formulated a way around the crisis by proposing that the crusaders build their own town parallel to Toulouse, probably anchored around Narbonnais Castle, for defense as well as a direct but non-military way of blockading and economically strangling the city. A properly planned and fortified town could keep the crusader army safe from southern sorties, as well as offering a secure base from which to operate against the city. Additionally a permanent compound would provide quarters and a ready-made market for the summer crusaders coming south in the spring. What with this "New Toulouse" and continued raiding into the countryside around the city the crusaders would eventually weaken those in Toulouse to the point where they would either enter into negotiations or surrender, or make them ripe for assault. Realizing the ingenuity of this plan Montfort accepted it right away.²⁷

One large problem remained. As long as the Garonne and its two bridges²⁸ were in southern hands the people of Toulouse could get in and out of the city easily, protected by the river itself on the west side. By seizing both sides of the river the crusaders could slow or stop river traffic from reaching Toulouse, prevent foot and animal traffic from going in and out of the city via its bridges, and allow easy access for supplies and manpower for Montfort's own army from the Archbishop of Auch's possessions further west in Gascony. The plan now was to have two blockade points, the current one to the east of the Garonne around the

²⁵ *SCW*, 133–5 *laissez* 188–9; *Chanson* III, 22, especially lines 70–4, suggesting one third of the crusader force was wounded or killed in the assault; 24, 26, 28, 30, especially lines 75–6 for the 160 killed or wounded men; *PVCE*, 271 #603; *PVC* II, 298; *WPE*, chapter XXVIII, 60; *WP*, 100. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay and William of Puylaurens say little about the assault beyond noting its failure.

²⁶ *SCW*, 134–5 *laisse* 189; *Chanson* III, 26, 28, 30 lines 15–76.

²⁷ *SCW*, 135–6 *laisse* 189; *Chanson* III, 30, 32, 34 lines 77–113.

²⁸ Mundy, *Society and Government at Toulouse*, 12–13. The third bridge, the Bazacle, had been under construction since 1212 but was not far enough along to support traffic.

Montolieu Gate and one to the west of the river in the suburb of Saint-Cyprien. In order to carry this out the chief crusader needed more soldiers, but the lateness of the season was not conducive to gathering men for a campaign likely to last a considerable time. Nevertheless, Montfort sent word out to his vassals to join him immediately or be accused of defiance and lose their property.²⁹

Construction began immediately on the new town. Montfort's men fortified it with all the standard defenses of the early thirteenth century, including walls, ditches, gates, chain-barriers, and salients. One can assume that given the hastiness of the fabrication and the proximity of the southerners, the defenses were more *ad hoc* than the Anonymous suggests, and that many of the structures and fortifications of the new town were probably made of wood. Lots within the town were granted for private residences and a market began, not simply for military supplies but also for regular commercial goods.³⁰ Soon Simon of Montfort led a portion of his army across the Garonne, leaving the main camp under his son Amaury. The sources do not mention where and how he crossed, but a later passage of the *Chanson* suggests he and his men rode to Muret, seventeen kilometers south, and crossed the Garonne by the bridge reconstructed after the battle of Muret. Across the river from Toulouse, the crusader army took up quarters in the unfortified suburb of Saint-Cyprien which occupied the inner bend of the Garonne's west bank. Since the men of Toulouse knew of Montfort's crossing, they garrisoned the fortified towers on Toulouse's two working bridges to prevent Montfortian troops from seizing them. This initial occupation of Saint-Cyprien occurred without resistance, though a crusader knight who either attempted to cross a bridge or perhaps ford the river from Saint-Cyprien was captured and hacked to death.³¹

Now that the chief crusader had split his army in two, both halves were more susceptible to attacks from Toulouse. Their isolation from each other made soldiers in both camps quite jumpy, particularly those in the unfortified suburb of Saint-Cyprien. Behind their walls and towers facing both crusader forces, southern archers and sergeants kept up a constant rain of missiles, further unnerving the besiegers.³² The unease in the crusader ranks increased to near-hysteria after they received information that the

²⁹ SCW, 136 laisse 189–90; *Chanson* III, 34 lines 114–25, 34, 36 lines 1–12; PVCE, 271 #603; PVC II, 298–9.

³⁰ SCW, 137 laisse 190; *Chanson* III, 38, 40 lines 56–69.

³¹ SCW, 137 laisse 190; *Chanson* III, 40, 42 lines 70–86; PVCE, 271 #603; PVC II, 299. The Anonymous does not say whether this man tried to cross a bridge or ford the Garonne. The context suggests he tried to ford the river.

³² SCW, 137 laisse 190; *Chanson* III, 42 lines 87–9.

Count of Foix and Dalmas of Creixell, a Catalonian noble, had arrived in Toulouse with their contingents. Montfort had to personally calm his jittery men after they heard the news. In a fit of desperation Montfort decided to assault Toulouse once again before more men could get in, but his lieutenants persuaded him not to because they believed he would fail.³³ After a short occupation of Saint-Cyprien Montfort decided to retreat and reunite his inadequate forces. Rather than go the way they had come, that is, march down to Muret and cross the bridge there, this time the crusaders arranged for boats to ferry them down the Garonne to Muret. We do not know why they decided to do it this way, though perhaps it was thought to be less fatiguing to the men and horses. As the crusaders marched out of the suburb, southerners crossed the bridges behind them and harassed the retreating army, causing panic at the river bank as men and horses were loaded into the boats. Initially Montfort and his knights covered the retreat as the rear-guard, but frightened men caused a bottleneck at the river, forcing him to fight his way into the press to ensure order. What happened next reveals the very real dangers to which the commander often exposed himself. Still mounted, either he tried to jump off his horse into a boat or his horse simply lost its footing on the river bank. Montfort and his horse, both wearing armor, plunged into a deep part of the Garonne, causing terror in the ranks as the chief crusader sank beneath the surface. Though Peter Vaux-de-Cernay reports that Montfort rose out of the river, hands clasped in prayer, both he and the Anonymous agree that the athlete of Christ was plucked from the water and hauled into one of the boats. His horse drowned, however, proving how close Montfort himself had come to a watery end.³⁴ Order was finally restored, and the rest of the men, horses, and equipment embarked. The boats then descended the Garonne until they reached Muret, where the army crossed the bridge and rejoined the main force.³⁵

Now that the crusaders were reunited, both besieged and besieger formulated plans for what would surely be a long siege. The people of Toulouse continued to strengthen the city's fortifications and began the construction of more mangonels, catapults, and a trebuchet specifically to attack Narbonnais Castle.³⁶ On 1 November 1217, during the first six weeks of the siege, the city government also agreed to hire and provision both

³³ *SCW*, 138 laisse 190; *Chanson* III, 42, 44, 46 lines 90–137.

³⁴ *PVCE*, 271–2 #603–4; *PVC* II, 299–300; *SCW*, 138–9 laisse 190; *Chanson* III, 46, 48 lines 137–52.

³⁵ *SCW*, 139 laisse 190; *Chanson* III, 48 lines 154–6.

³⁶ *SCW*, 141 laisses 191–2; *Chanson* III, 58 lines 107–10, 62 lines 1–11; *PVCE*, 272 #605; *PVC* II, 300–1.

knights and other soldiers from outside the city. They sent procurement agents as far afield as Rocamadour, over 130 kilometers north of Toulouse. Recruits gained in the Quercy would link up in the Périgord region under the leadership of Bernard of Cazenac, the *faidit* lord who had evaded Montfort twice before in 1214 and 1215 and had several grudges to settle with him. The counsels of Toulouse intended to have these reinforcements at Toulouse by Easter.³⁷

The siege of Toulouse soon became a multi-dimensional conflict. The crusaders concentrated their efforts on the southeast corner, in and around the Montolieu Gate, where bloody but ineffectual combat occurred between the archers and sergeants of both sides, who refused to offer quarter to those captured during the fighting.³⁸ The southerners put their efforts into weakening or destroying Narbonnais Castle, whose chief resident after Lady Montfort was Bertrand, the papal legate. The southern siege crews were so successful against the castle that Bertrand lived in constant fear of being killed by a missile flung by a siege engine.³⁹ In effect these were parallel but ineffectual sieges, with neither side able to blockade the other as both provisioned and reinforced themselves at will.

Besides the stalemate at Toulouse, Montfort suffered a diplomatic reverse. In late 1217 or early 1218 the Count of Foix left the siege of Toulouse because Pope Honorius finally confirmed Innocent's pledge, given at the Fourth Lateran Council, to return the city of Foix to Raimon-Roger, in exchange for which the Count of Foix would withdraw from the siege of Toulouse.⁴⁰ To see an implacable enemy leaving an active campaign should have boosted the crusaders' morale, but in fact it weakened it as their old nemesis received his lands and wealth back as if he had never been punished for his work against the crusade. Besides, the count's son Roger-Bernard, himself an oath breaker against the chief crusader, remained in Toulouse with no doubt the bulk of the men his father had originally brought to the city.

At around the same time Montfort sought to neutralize any potential problems from the people of Montauban. Montauban, the other large city

³⁷ *SCW*, 141 laisse 191; *Chanson* III, 60 lines 118–24; *HGL* 8 cols. 706–10. For operations against Bernard of Cazenac see Chapters 7, 213–14, and 8, 228. While the *Chanson* says that this course of action was decided by 1 November, a formal document stating what they were doing does not emerge until January 1218. That document mentions the provision of food and shelter to soldiers from outside the city.

³⁸ *SCW*, 141–2 laisse 192; *Chanson* III, 62, lines 10–14.

³⁹ *PVCE*, 272 #605; *PVC* II, 300–1.

⁴⁰ *SCW*, 142 laisse 192 and footnote 1; *Chanson* III, 62–3 lines 15–18 and footnote 5; *Epistolae Honorii*, 643–4; Pressutti 1: 236 #1423; Potthast 1: 497 #5646; *PVCE*, 275–6 #606D; *PVC* II, 309–10.

in the Count of Toulouse's territory, had successfully resisted the crusade for years, though by June 1215 relations between that *castrum* and the chief crusader had warmed to the point that he peacefully entered the city to accept the homage of some nobles.⁴¹ By late 1217 or early 1218 the crusaders began to suspect that the people of Montauban, forty-nine kilometers away, supported the current rebellion in Toulouse in some fashion. Montfort detailed a small detachment of soldiers from the Agenais, including his seneschal there, Philip of Landreville,⁴² and Arnold, Bishop of Lectoure, to secure Montauban's good behavior by taking hostages. Somehow the people of Montauban got word to Toulouse of this vulnerable crusader force and its intent. The Count of Toulouse sent a large force to the *castrum* of Montauban, perhaps as many as five hundred according to Peter Vaux-de-Cernay. At night, while the crusaders lay sleeping in different quarters throughout the city, the people of Montauban barricaded the houses and even lumped firewood near the doors to immolate the crusaders should they try to escape. Raising the battle cry of "Toulouse!" the townspeople and Raimon's men attempted to seize or kill this small crusader force. Though the crusaders were initially disoriented as they roused themselves from a deep sleep, they quickly realized what was going on and after some tough house-to-house fighting managed to hold their own to the extent that Raimon VI's men retreated out of the town. In retaliation the crusaders sacked Montauban and set it on fire.⁴³

With the exception of the above incident, for which we have no date except that it occurred probably in late 1217 or early 1218, events during the siege of Toulouse are not well documented between November 1217 and Easter (15 April) of 1218. Simon of Montfort had grave concerns about finances and a crippling manpower shortage throughout this period. Though preachers actively recruited in northern France, the fruits of their labor, both crusader-pilgrims and paid soldiers, would not be harvested until spring.⁴⁴ For the tired soldiers and civilians behind and before the walls of Toulouse there was constant missile fire from siege weapons, bows, and crossbows which made conditions hazardous and miserable for

⁴¹ See Chapter 8, 227.

⁴² *Layettes* 5, 77 #225 lists Philip as the seneschal for the Agenais as of May 1216.

⁴³ PVCE, 272–3 #606; Annie Lafforgue, "Naissance d'une ville (12e–13e siècle)," *Histoire de Montauban*, ed. Daniel Ligou (Toulouse: Privat, 1985), 40.

⁴⁴ *SCW*, 142–3, laisse 192, 148 laisse 195; *Chanson* III, 64, 66, 68, 70, lines 27–99, 90 lines 5–8; WPE, chapter XXVIII, 60; WP, 100. These anxieties come to light in the form of speeches by Montfort, Bishop Folquet, a veteran crusader and now mercenary (*soldadier*) Robert of Picquigny, and Montfort's lieutenant Guy of Lévis.

them without producing any appreciable results.⁴⁵ Throughout this period the crusaders could not enforce a blockade, so southern supply convoys continued to make their way into Toulouse.⁴⁶

During the coldest part of the winter months the crusaders attempted another assault to end the stalemate, perhaps taking advantage of the fact that frozen ditches could be more quickly crossed. Among the crusade leaders a few believed that after months of inactivity, an early morning assault by both infantry and horsemen might succeed in drawing defenders out of the fortifications and allow some crusaders to work their way into the city. While the sources do not indicate exactly where and when this assault took place, it probably occurred around the Montolieu Gate where the crusaders had conducted most of their previous operations. The crusaders used a picked force of both infantry and cavalry led by Amaury of Montfort. Even though his father went along he recognized that Amaury had to get more experience handling troops. As had happened during previous attempts, the defenders of Toulouse were not taken by surprise by this assault and refused to leave their defenses to engage the crusaders. In heavy fighting around ditches, gates, and walls, the crusaders forced their way through the outer ring of fortifications but had to retreat before making it into the city. Thus this third assault on Toulouse ended as badly as the other two, with dozens of men and horses lying dead in the frozen ditches before the city.⁴⁷

In consultation with Montfort, his advisors, and the papal legate, the preaching campaign was redoubled during the early winter months after the latest failed assault. Bishop Folquet traveled directly to Philip Augustus to recruit crusader-pilgrims from France and other northern areas, including Brittany, Poitou, Normandy, Champagne, Flanders, Anjou, and Germany.⁴⁸ Alice of Montfort and Simon's chaplain, Master Clairin, also went north to recruit, with Alice targeting her important relatives but especially her brother, the Constable of France. The papal legate Bertrand wrote to Rome to get preachers sent even farther afield to preach the crusade.⁴⁹ In a bit of foreshadowing, the cardinal suggested that perhaps Prince Louis ought to come to their aid with an army as he had in 1215, and indeed would do again in 1219. As a symptom of how dangerous things had become, as these messengers began their journey the

⁴⁵ WPE, chapter xxviii, 61; WP, 102; SCW, 147 laisse 194; *Chanson* III, 88 lines 86–9.

⁴⁶ SCW, 147 laisse 194; *Chanson* III, 86, lines 72–5.

⁴⁷ SCW, 144–5 laisse 192–3; *Chanson* III, 70, 72 lines 98–120, 72, 74, 76, 78 lines 1–72.

⁴⁸ SCW, 146–7 laisse 194; *Chanson* III, 80, 82, 84 lines 24–49.

⁴⁹ SCW, 146, laisse 194; *Chanson* III, 82 lines 31–5.

Anonymous says they traveled “through the woods” to avoid bands of *faidits* guarding the roads.⁵⁰

By mid-April shortly before Easter the weather finally warmed. Well aware that within a month thousands of crusader-pilgrims would arrive, the defenders of Toulouse wished to deal Montfort's still small army a blow before he was reinforced. For the first time the defenders attempted their own assault against the crusader camp. Southern nobles, knights, and *faidits* on horseback led the initial attack, with Toulousan militiamen following behind. Their aim was to seize the crusader camp while its leaders were absent at a meeting and others rested in their tents.⁵¹ This camp was probably the “New Toulouse” as described by the Anonymous, though Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account suggests a temporary tent village rather than a town. Among the leaders of this southern attack were Raimon VI's son-in-law, the former *rouitier* Hugh of Alfaro, who had effectively led the doomed defense of Penne d'Agenais in 1212.⁵² The first wave of southern horsemen easily fought their way into the outskirts of the camp, surprising even the crusade leaders who rushed to get into their armor. Initially only one crusader knight, Peter of Voisins, and an unnamed knightly associate led the defense of the camp before being surrounded and cut off. As he fought for his life Peter of Voisins fell off his horse and had to battle his way towards the crusader side. Many in the crusader camp still remained unaware of what was going on, but at least Simon of Montfort, several of his companions (in the Anonymous's account Peter of Voisins is among this group), and some knights and mounted sergeants managed to arm and armor themselves. Once equipped the chief crusader led a mounted counter-charge to rescue Peter of Voisins and drive the southerners from the camp. In his haste to rescue Peter of Voisins Montfort drew so far ahead of his followers that he too was cut off from his men and almost captured or killed. As he engaged in hand-to-hand combat with several enemies, his horse missed its footing and part of the saddle broke, throwing him to the ground. He managed to land on his feet and quickly remounted. As more and more crusaders poured out of the camp, the southern horsemen began to retreat back into Toulouse. On their heels, however, came a second wave of fresh horsemen and the militia of Toulouse. A fierce melee developed in the open area near the Montoliu Gate between the crusader camp and the walls of Toulouse. Eventually the

⁵⁰ SCW, 146, 147 laisse 194; *Chanson* III, 82 lines 36–9, 84 lines 58–61.

⁵¹ SCW, 147–8 laisse 195; *Chanson* III, 90, 92, 94 lines 1–40; PVCE, 273 #606A; PVC II, 304.

⁵² See Chapter 5, 143–7.

southern forces broke off the combat and streamed back into the city.⁵³ In the wake of this combat the Anonymous portrays the southerners as if they had won a victory and Simon of Montfort as if he had been defeated, even though it was the southerners who had failed to attain their objective and retreated from the field.⁵⁴ Still, strategically even if the southerners had not captured the crusader camp, they had shown their confidence and skill in co-ordinating their own assaults and this further deflated crusader morale. Since Beaucaire the people of Occitania had lost their fear of Simon of Montfort and his military reputation continued to sink.

THE SUMMER SEASON BEGINS, MAY 1218

By the first weeks of May the second siege of Toulouse was seven months old, a fact noted by Peter Vaux-de-Cernay.⁵⁵ Thus in duration it eclipsed every other military operation of the Occitan War. In these weeks the Countess of Montfort and Bishop Folquet arrived in Toulouse from the north of France. With them came a large army of crusader-pilgrims. Two of our main sources are so consistent about this arrival that they even mention some of the same leaders.⁵⁶ In his eagerness to make the maximum use of a forty-day army Montfort wanted these new recruits to cross the Garonne immediately and take up the positions in Saint-Cyprien abandoned in November. With frequent foreshadowing though often close to the mark, the Anonymous describes a disagreement between one of the new arrivals, Amaury of Craon, and the chief crusader. Amaury believed the men and horses of the crusader-pilgrim army were too worn out from their recent journey to instantly leap into action, and the other newly arrived barons agreed. Contrary to Simon of Montfort's wishes, they moved into "New Toulouse" to rest.⁵⁷ Amaury of Craon's defiance

⁵³ SCW, 148–50 laisse 195; *Chanson* III, 92, 94, 96, 98, 100, 102 lines 41–127; PVCE, 273 #606A; PVC II, 304–5. Both the Anonymous and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay offer reasonably similar accounts of this skirmish, though they differ in some details. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay says it was an attack of Toulousan horse and foot, contradicting the Anonymous's version of a noble and *faidit*-led mounted attack. Another difference concerns the role of Peter of Voisins, who in Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's version appears to have been on guard in the camp whereas in the Anonymous's he is part of Montfort's counter-attack. Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account of Peter Voisins's role during the skirmish is probably correct, since he knew the crusader principals and the Anonymous did not.

⁵⁴ SCW, 150 laisse 195; *Chanson* III, 102 lines 128–43.

⁵⁵ PVCE, 273 #606B; PVC II, 305. "Cum jam elapsis septem mensibus . . ."

⁵⁶ PVCE, 273 #606B; PVC II, 305–6; SCW, 151 laisse 196; *Chanson* III, 104, 106, 108 lines 34–54. Leaders mentioned by both sources are Michael of Harnes and Amaury of Craon. Here Peter's list ends, but the Anonymous also mentions Walter Langton, William of Mello, Gilbert of les Roches, and Albert of Senlir.

⁵⁷ SCW, 152 laisse 196; *Chanson* III, 108, 110, 112, lines 68–110, 114 lines 1–2.

suggests that confidence in Montfort's military ability had sunk so that now even newcomers felt brave enough to challenge his authority. At the same time the defenders of Toulouse, aware of the reinforcements, continued to strengthen their fortifications by building walls, battlements and digging ditches.⁵⁸

Soon after the crusade leadership agreed to divide the much enlarged army in two with one half to occupy Saint-Cyprien again. Simon of Montfort led out a large army consisting of crusader-pilgrims and paid *routiers*, crossbowmen, and archers.⁵⁹ The number of men, their noisy departure, and the fact that they marched due south tipped off those in the city that the crusaders were probably going to attempt a river crossing and seize Saint-Cyprien. The crusaders had no idea that the defenders of Toulouse had been busying themselves, perhaps for some time, on making sure a second occupation of Saint-Cyprien would not be as automatic as it was the previous November. In the fall of 1217 the suburb possessed no defensive fortifications at all, while by May 1218 the besieged had dug a massive series of ditches across the fields outside it to make an approach difficult for both infantry and horses. Roger-Bernard of Foix brought a large force of horsemen, burgher militia, archers, and sergeants across the bridges to defend Saint-Cyprien. He then deployed his troops along the river bank between Saint-Cyprien and its bridges, the gardens on the outskirts, and houses within the suburb.⁶⁰

It must have shocked the crusaders to find the suburb defended and fortified. Nonetheless the army stormed the defenses in an attempt to drive the southerners out. Because of the extensive network of ditches, the crusaders were restricted to the roads leading into the suburb, and the army, particularly the mounted men, had trouble deploying. After fierce fighting in the ditches, gardens, and streets of Saint-Cyprien, the crusaders fell back with aggressive southerners on their heels. This retreat and chase caused some in the army to panic, run to the river and attempt to swim to one of the islands close by the bank. Montfort stabilized his troops, but he was compelled to pitch camp not in the suburb as planned but on the banks of the Garonne outside it. As both the Anonymous and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay relate, the setback at Saint-Cyprien demoralized the crusaders.⁶¹ In Toulouse the defenders kept up the pressure against the main crusader

⁵⁸ *SCW*, 153 laisse 197; *Chanson* III, 116 lines 30–5.

⁵⁹ *SCW*, 153–4 laisse 197, 156 laisse 198; *Chanson* III, 116, 118 lines 40–72, 128, 130 lines 27–30.

⁶⁰ *SCW*, 154 laisse 197; *Chanson* III, 118, 120 lines 73–85.

⁶¹ *SCW*, 154–5 laisse 197; *Chanson* III, 120, 122 lines 86–117; *PVCE*, 273–4 #606B; *PVC* II, 306–7.

camp on the east side of the Garonne. On the same day that Montfort tried to storm Saint-Cyprien, two siege engineers, Bernard Parayre and a Master Garnier, received instructions to attack Narbonnais Castle. With the people of Toulouse toiling on the ropes of the traction trebuchets the engineers began a furious bombardment of the citadel walls. This hailstorm of stones wreaked havoc on the castle defenses, heavily damaging gates, ramparts, bastions, and arrow slits in the towers.⁶²

Despite Montfort's large army the situation now appeared bleak. That evening, however, the weather intervened to swing the balance back in the crusaders' favour, an occurrence about which both the Anonymous and Peter Vaux-de-Cernay provide similar details. Late in the day it began to rain, initially disheartening the men attempting to pitch camp near Saint-Cyprien and cheering the defenders as they waited for the crusaders to abandon their tents as the fields and river banks flooded. Most unexpectedly, this heavy rain continued for another three days and actually began to wreak more havoc on the defenders than it did on the crusaders. The Garonne rose far beyond its banks, causing widespread damage. The flooding broke both the bridges connecting Saint-Cyprien to Toulouse. It left parts of the New Bridge intact, including two fortified towers with their garrisons of Toulousan militia, but the men were cut off from both shores. In addition to these catastrophes, flooding damaged mills on the river, parts of the city of Toulouse, and destroyed, inundated, or swept away many of the defensive barriers and ditches in Saint-Cyprien.⁶³

As soon as river levels began to recede, flashes of the old Montfort initiative, daring, and luck reappeared. Without warning or fanfare he attacked the southeast corner of Saint-Cyprien along the river bank. Before the defenders in the suburb could react the crusaders managed to occupy the entire bank along the east side of Saint-Cyprien. As his headquarters he used the New Hospital, built only a few years before in 1213 on the river bank near the New Bridge, where he stationed both *routiers* and crossbowmen.⁶⁴ The army built barricades, ditches, and walls along the banks to prevent attacks from southern defenders still within the suburb, though the defenders appear to have abandoned the suburb, as the sources do not

⁶² *SCW*, 155 laisse 198; *Chanson* III, 126 lines 1–9.

⁶³ *SCW*, 155–6 laisse 198; *Chanson* III, 128, lines 13–24; *PVCE*, 274 #606B; *PVC* II, 307. The Anonymous says the rain lasted three days; Peter Vaux-de-Cernay states that all the flooding took place over one night.

⁶⁴ John Hine Mundy, "Charity and Social Work in Toulouse, 1100–1250," *Traditio* 22 (1966): 222–3, 286. Based on the physical location of the New Hospital, this is most likely the one used as Montfort's command post.

mention them again. Now that the chief crusader controlled parts of both sides of the Garonne, boats from as far as Agen, ninety-seven kilometers away, could bring in plentiful supplies for his men.⁶⁵

For the next few actions on the river front the Anonymous is our only source. In addition to his fortifications, Montfort's men constructed several siege engines protected by targes, whose crews immediately began to pummel the closest bridge tower, cut off by the floods and broken bridge.⁶⁶ The defenders in Toulouse, so confident less than a week before, were now in a quandary about how to relieve the towers isolated over the Garonne. First they reorganized themselves, with Bernard, Count of Comminges, taking charge of the defenses. In conjunction with Roger-Bernard of Foix, the city government of Toulouse mounted a relief effort for the bridge towers, whose garrisons were short of food and military supplies. Masters of all trades, skilled workers of various types, particularly carpenters and boatmen, and experienced soldiers gathered at the entrance to the New Bridge on the Toulouse side to somehow find a way to get to the towers.⁶⁷ The task was daunting. The river had probably still not receded completely and was filled with debris and large chunks of the bridge. People lined the river bank, not sure how to proceed. Finally an Aragonese squire, Perón Domingo, leaping from pile to pile, skillfully navigated his way across the debris to tie a rope to a rock or post near the closest tower to Toulouse. Thanks to this courageous act, people were able to fill two boats with supplies and used the rope to row out to the nearer tower. The carpenters then jury-rigged a bridge out of rope and wooden wreckage to quickly relink the city and the nearer tower.⁶⁸

The span separating the two towers had fewer ruins breaking the water and a swifter current, making a replication of Domingo's feat impossible. For a time the towers were connected by rope, though whether this had been in place before the floods or only since the bridge fell is not mentioned. Men used the rope to pass food and crossbow bolts from the near tower to the far tower, but its capacity was of course quite limited. Since Montfort's siege machines continued to batter away at the tower closer to Saint-Cyprien, getting more supplies and defenders to it was imperative.

⁶⁵ SCW, 156, laisse 198; *Chanson* III, 128, 130 lines 25–39; PVCE, 274 #606B; PVC II, 307.

⁶⁶ SCW, 156–7 laisse 198; *Chanson* III, 130 lines 38–9, 134, 136 lines 98–9.

⁶⁷ SCW, 156–7 laisse 198; *Chanson* III, 130, 132 lines 40–71.

⁶⁸ SCW, 157 laisse 198; *Chanson* III, 132, 134 lines 72–81; Malafosse, "Le siège de Toulouse," 2, 74; *L'Épopée*, III, 122. No other information is available about Perón Domingo. Presumably he was a *routier* from Aragon or had arrived with Dalmas of Creixell.

Eventually necessity overrode caution for one knight, Hugh of La Mota,⁶⁹ who had participated in the southern defense since the beginning of this siege. He volunteered to captain a boat loaded with men to reinforce the far tower. A second boat filled with supplies, captained by some of the counsels of Toulouse, accompanied him. Due to the swift current Hugh and the members of his boat could not reach the tower and were swept down river. The second boat captained by the counsels managed to disembark its supplies and make it back across.⁷⁰ These feeble efforts were not enough to save the tower closer to Saint-Cyprien. Montfort's catapults and mangonels continued to bombard this tower, causing heavy damage to the structure itself as well as wounding and killing the men defending it. Another twenty-four hours of heavy punishment finally convinced the survivors in the tower to abandon it.⁷¹ Montfort and his "stick-carriers" triumphantly raised the crusader banner over the tower, their fortunes resurgent.⁷² The tower nearer to Toulouse remained in southern hands, however, and to ensure it held out, boats from Toulouse patrolled the river around it. Thus began a systematic harassment by southern archers of boats on the Garonne and those within arrow shot on the west bank, which included the wounding of horses as they were led to the river to drink. The crusaders attempted to keep these boatmen at bay by using their own archers stationed near the river and in the Saint-Cyprien bridge tower.⁷³

THE FINAL PHASE, JUNE 1218

In June 1218 the second siege of Toulouse entered an intense period of military activity. In spite of the latest crusader successes, Toulouse was still far from blockaded, and supplies and men continued to arrive. When the defenders of Toulouse captured crusaders they tortured them in various

⁶⁹ See *SCW*, 127 laisse 185; *Chanson* II, 298 line 74, 299 footnote 5; *Layettes* I, 249 #710. At Montauban in 1203 Raimon VI took under his guard and protection a William de la Mote and his son Raimon. Martin-Chabot loosely suggests Hugh may have been a member of this family, though his name or a variant of it is not mentioned in the document.

⁷⁰ *SCW*, 157 laisse 198; *Chanson* III, lines 87–97. The account is confusing here. It does not specifically mention two boats, yet says that Hugh never made it but the consuls did. Hugh of La Mota evidently survived, because he was present at Prince Louis's siege of Toulouse in 1219.

⁷¹ *SCW*, 157 laisse 198; *Chanson* III, 134, 136 lines 98–110. What happened to the defenders is not mentioned. It appears that they somehow got away. Since Montfort bombarded the tower for another "night and all day" after the counsels' supply boat reached the tower, perhaps by then the river level and current had receded sufficiently for boats from Toulouse to rescue them.

⁷² *SCW*, 157 laisse 198; *Chanson* III, 136 line 110–11 and footnote 1. The Anonymous uses the term *bordonier* here, a slang term for pilgrim, just as William of Tudela did when describing the siege of Saint-Antonin in 1212.

⁷³ *SCW*, 158 laisse 199; *Chanson* III, 136, 138 lines 13–16.

ways, including gouging out their eyes, cutting out their tongues, dragging them behind horses, hanging them, and burning them alive. Some were cut into pieces and shot by trebuchet into the crusader camp or against the walls of Narbonnais Castle.⁷⁴ In late May or early June 1218 Bernard of Cazenac arrived in Toulouse with a large mounted contingent consisting of *faidits* and a sizeable unit of *routiers*, here called “Bramanso” or “Brabançons,” perhaps a total of 500.⁷⁵ The Anonymous, certainly no fan of Montfort, uses the term *soldadier* for Montfort’s hired men at the siege – a more generic and benign term for a wide variety, type, and social classification of men who fought for pay.⁷⁶ In other words, the specific use of “Brabançon” here and elsewhere in the Anonymous’s account of the siege refers to landless, rootless but professional units in the pay of the southern defense. The noise of Bernard of Cazenac’s arrival carried across the water to Saint-Cyprien. Hoping that this noise represented shouts of desperation as the news sunk in that the Saint-Cyprien bridge tower had fallen, Simon of Montfort crossed the river to converse with his lieutenants on the other side, where he learned the clamor was actually the city celebrating the arrival of Bernard of Cazenac’s reinforcements.⁷⁷

To keep pressure on the people of Toulouse, on 2 June 1218 Montfort led a group of horsemen and scouts out in a raid to destroy crops and vineyards in the gardens around the Oratory Elm district, an area which lay beyond the walls to the northeast of the city and bourg.⁷⁸ Though this was outside the city proper and hence beyond its protective ring of reconstructed walls, there had been some ditches dug and other fortifications constructed around there. Inside the city men slipped out to engage this raiding party before it damaged the nearby fields and orchards. As is usual in the Anonymous’s description of combat, it was apparently hotly contested hand to hand, and for this particular action he lists by name some twenty-seven crusader nobles and knights besides Simon of Montfort who participated.⁷⁹ Led by Roger-Bernard of Foix the defenders consisted of a cross-section of people of whom ten nobles, knights, or *routiers* are mentioned by name, including Brabançons and sergeants of various kinds.⁸⁰ As the

⁷⁴ PVCE, 274 #606C; PVC II, 307–8. ⁷⁵ SCW, 158, laisse 199; *Chanson* III, 138, 140 lines 17–47.

⁷⁶ Paterson, *World of the Troubadours*, 58; Chapter 1, 17–18.

⁷⁷ SCW, 158 laisse 199; *Chanson* III, 140 lines 36–47.

⁷⁸ For a discussion of where this was, see *Chanson* III, 142–4 footnote 3.

⁷⁹ SCW, 159–60 laisse 199–200; *Chanson* III, 142, 144 lines 65–93, 146, 148, 150, 152 lines 1–35.

⁸⁰ SCW, 159–60 lisses 199–200; *Chanson* III, 142 lines 71–7, 150 lines 23–6. Among the southern leaders were Elias of Albaroca, a commander of Brabançons, and Bernard of Navarre, another prominent commander of *routiers*.

fighting continued some of the defenders, mostly poorly trained Toulousans, began to run away, even swimming ditches to get back to the city. As they did so, some crusader Bretons and Flemings chased after them towards the city gates, bearing torches to try and burn what they could. The better trained southern sergeants and young knights resisted the crusaders' entry and turned them back. Their task of destruction among the fields and orchards now roughly accomplished, the crusader raiding party went back to its camp.⁸¹

The next day, Pentecost (3 June 1218) Sunday, Montfort consulted his advisors once again about how to end the siege. He informed the assembled company that his hired soldiers and other units receiving pay or maintenance had refused to continue because they had not been paid for some time.⁸² Growing increasingly desperate, Montfort told them that workmen would begin building an extremely large siege cat (*gata*) with which he hoped to assault the defenses. According to the Anonymous's description, the engineers fashioned a far larger and better constructed cat than one might typically see at a siege. In fact, it was probably more like a siege tower with multiple stories. In addition to the necessary hides to protect it from incendiaries, for extra strength its construction incorporated iron and steel. If we believe the Anonymous's numbers, Montfort intended the cat to hold 400 horsemen and 150 archers as its moving garrison.⁸³

As work on the cat continued, Ralph of Nesle, Count of Soissons, arrived before Toulouse with a large army of crusader-pilgrims. Although the conversation between Montfort and the count may not have occurred in the manner reported by the Anonymous, his account nonetheless appears truthful. Montfort revealed his desperate financial straits to Ralph and offered the count a substantial portion of Toulouse's plunder if he and his men would join Montfort's troops in an immediate assault on the city. The Count of Soissons diplomatically declined both the offer of spoils and the invitation to attack the city at that moment. He suggested that when Toulouse was taken Montfort should pay his soldiers before

⁸¹ SCW, 160–1 *laisse* 200; *Chanson* III, 142, *laisse* 199 lines 67–8; 152, 154 lines 36–64; WPE, chapter XXVIII, 61; WP 102. The Anonymous calls these Bretons and Flemings “foreigners” (“gens estranha”) suggesting they may have been *routiers*, particularly since “Fleming” was a common term used for a *routier*. Yet he also says they were unarmed or armored (“desgarnit”), which may mean they were actually poor forty-day crusader-pilgrims. William of Puylaurens mentions this assault but provides no details.

⁸² SCW, 161 *laisse* 200; *Chanson* III, 156 lines 65–79.

⁸³ SCW, 161 *laisse* 200; *Chanson* III, 154, 156, 158 lines 80–94; WPE, chapter XXVIII 61; WP, 102; Rogers, *Latin Siege Warfare*, 233. William of Puylaurens also calls this machine a *catus*, cat. Perhaps it was to be long rather than tall, which might indicate why the term “cat” was used instead of “tower.”

dispensing any wealth to the crusader leadership. He also intimated that perhaps Toulouse's fall would not happen during his own forty-day period of service, no doubt after he viewed the size of the city and the small portion the crusaders were blockading.⁸⁴ As the crusader ranks continued to swell, the defenders of Toulouse became increasingly worried, but in early June the young Count Raimon VII finally arrived in his capital, which raised the defenders' morale as they loudly shouted of their young savior's presence in the city and made death threats to the "stick-carriers." Symbolically the Anonymous says that Montfort's banner fell off the captured bridge tower near Saint-Cyprien, proof that Montfort the "lion" would fall.⁸⁵

Montfort crossed the Garonne again to supervise the construction of more defensive fortifications in Saint-Cyprien and to draw up plans to capture the bridge tower on the Toulouse side of the river. The crusaders turned the New Hospital of Saint-Cyprien into a fortress, surrounding it with defensive walls and a fosse. Even though they controlled points on both sides of the river, they had yet to stop river traffic from reaching the city, prevent missile fire from boats on the river or reduce the threat of an amphibious landing at either the New Hospital or the Saint-Cyprien bridge tower. Taking the Toulouse-side bridge tower would place the crusaders within striking distance of the city from the west side. Thus began sustained warfare over control of the river and the Toulouse bridge tower. The crusaders and southerners fought boat to boat on the water and near the base of the tower. After a day and a half of battling in this way, and even though the southerners brought reinforcements of sergeants and archers to help the Toulouse tower, Montfort's men made an amphibious landing and captured the tower for a brief time. They destroyed the jury-rigged rope and wood bridge constructed in May and now seemed in effective control of the remnants of the bridge. They did not retain it for very long because a force of southern knights, sergeants, and citizens on the banks of the river began bombarding the tower from a mangonel. Since the crusaders in the Toulouse bridge tower could only be supplied and reinforced by water, it quickly became obvious that they could not sustain themselves under the heavy barrage. Consequently they abandoned the tower and set fire to it. Their retreat acknowledged the fact that the southerners retained naval superiority over the Garonne as southern boats continued to patrol it and deliver supplies to the city.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ SCW, 161–2 laisses 200–1; *Chanson* III, 158 lines 102–5, 158, 160 lines 1–41.

⁸⁵ SCW, 162–3 laisse 201; *Chanson* III, 160, 162, 164 lines 42–77.

⁸⁶ SCW, 163–4 laisse 201–2; *Chanson* III, 164, 166 lines 78–105, 168 lines 1–21.

This became manifest when the defenders of Toulouse undertook a daring amphibious operation of their own. A force of 163 Toulousans, Brabançons, and German *routiers* crossed the Garonne to storm the crusader defensive works in Saint-Cyprien. The crusader knights closest to the incursion, Joris and Peter of Voisins, armed and gathered their men just in time to engage in a savage battle on the river bank. The fighting was so close to the water that fully armored men fell in and drowned. The crusaders turned back the assault, but it reminded them that they did not control the river and that the southerners had finally learned to attempt aggressive and daring maneuvers they would not have tried in previous campaigns.⁸⁷ The capture and swift abandonment of the Toulouse bridge tower, and the failed but audacious southern amphibious assault, led to yet another meeting of the worried and divided crusader leadership. The real or imagined sentiments reportedly expressed there by all parties revealed what the reader should already know: after eight months of blockade and fighting the crusaders stood no closer to taking the city of Toulouse than when they first arrived. The city was well fortified and supplied and had plenty of manpower to resist the siege. Some in the crusader camp recommended abandoning the siege and making peace with the Count of Toulouse, since the chief crusader would still be the acknowledged Viscount of Albi, Béziers, and Carcassonne and could easily survive without controlling the city of Toulouse. Only two people seemed willing to continue regardless of the present circumstances, but they were the two that mattered most: Simon of Montfort and the papal legate Bertrand. The legate chastised those who advised abandoning the siege, and he encouraged Montfort to continue it.⁸⁸

THE CAT, THE RATS, AND THE END: LATE JUNE
TO 25 JULY 1218

The next day Simon of Montfort decided that the crusaders would try again to storm the walls of Toulouse, because the great siege cat was finished and could be used to support their effort. Besides the crew inside, Montfort himself and many others risked great danger by pushing from outside the cat to help haul the huge beast to the city defenses. As the cat drew within missile range of the defenders of Toulouse, a well-aimed stone from a trebuchet hit one of the upper stories, cutting loose the hides which protected it. Since without its protective covering it was vulnerable to fire,

⁸⁷ *SCW*, 164 laisse 202; *Chanson* III, 168, 170 lines 22–52.

⁸⁸ *SCW*, 164–6 laisses 202–3; *Chanson* III, 172, 174 lines 53–100, 176, 178 lines 1–32.

the attack was aborted. The crusaders turned the cat around and began dragging it back to their lines. Before it was out of range, another trebuchet missile smashed into the back of it, destroying parts of it and killing several of the crew. Those pushing outside the cat immediately ran off to avoid another shot, and in spite of Montfort's shouted orders to come back and get the machine out of missile range, many abandoned the cat and left the chief crusader out in the open by himself. Somehow those left inside managed to get themselves, Montfort, and the machine to safety.⁸⁹

While this was going on the Count of Toulouse and some of the southern leaders considered what to do if the cat actually made it across the ditches to the Montolieu Gate. The Count of Comminges astutely observed that as long as the crusaders concentrated their energies on the construction, repair, or operation of the cat, they were less likely to devote men or resources to raiding through the countryside. Both Roger-Bernard of Foix and Bernard of Cazenac belittled the danger the cat presented, believing it could be dealt with long before it actually did any damage. Another noble suggested they extend the defenses around the Montolieu Gate farther out, to the extent of building regular walls of stone and wood in back of the ditches to make it harder for the crusaders to press an assault there. Since the Montolieu Gate had been a weakly fortified area from the beginning of the siege – one of the reasons why the crusaders continued to assault it – a concerted effort to build these fortifications began. This major undertaking by the Toulousans cost them dearly in wounded and killed, but successfully extended and strengthened the defenses.⁹⁰

Soon the crusaders dragged the cat once more to the ditches of Toulouse, before the new walls were completed. This time wicker shields protected the men and knights dragging it from the outside. Like the first time, as the machine drew within missile range the defenders of Toulouse pelted it with stones shot from all sorts of weapons and trebuchets which knocked holes in it and chunks off it and hurt those both inside and outside. The Toulousans even made a joke of it, crying, "By God, Dame Traitor Cat, you will never catch rats!"⁹¹ The increased defenses around the ditches now made it even harder for the crusaders to get close.⁹² Again the crusaders broke off their attack as both sides plotted their next move. In spite of the fact that the defenders of Toulouse had twice kept the cat from

⁸⁹ *SCW*, 166, laisse 203; *Chanson* III, 178, 180 lines 33–63.

⁹⁰ *SCW*, 166–7, laisse 203–4; *Chanson* III, 180, 182, 184 lines 64–114, 186 lines 1–10.

⁹¹ *SCW*, 168 laisse 204; *Chanson* III, 186, 188 lines 11–26. The translation in the text is mine.

⁹² *WPE*, chapter xxviii, 61; *WP*, 102.

breaching the defenses, many inside the city believed it would only be a matter of time before the cat cracked the walls unless they tried to destroy it first. One of the counsels of Toulouse, Master Bernard, argued before an assembled crowd of barons and Toulousan notables that they should sortie and wreck the cat. Several of the assembled nobles concurred and agreed to go along.⁹³ Their determination resulted in a grand assault, perhaps the largest one attempted at the second siege of Toulouse.

As the defenders of Toulouse prepared for their assault, by 24 June 1218 the mood in the crusader camp was blacker than ever. In recent weeks Montfort's prosecution of the siege had begun to draw sharp criticism from several crusader-pilgrim barons, particularly Amaury of Craon and to a lesser extent the Count of Soissons.⁹⁴ The accumulated stress of years of combat, frustration, triumph soured by betrayal, and anxiety about money had begun to catch up with the chief crusader. He appeared to be fast losing his ability as a commander. Now even the papal legate Bertrand rebuked Montfort for his inability to bring the siege to an end.⁹⁵

On Monday 25 June 1218 the defenders of the city made their most concerted, unified sortie with the express purpose of demolishing the cat. This was a joint effort between Toulousans and men who had come from outside the city; over a dozen *faidit* knights or nobles are mentioned by name as participants.⁹⁶ It began in the early morning, the attackers taking advantage of the fact that some crusaders were still suffering from the after effects of the celebrations and feasting on Saint John the Baptist's the day before and were sleeping it off, while others attended divine service. In order to throw the crusaders further off guard as to the main objective, the assault troops divided themselves into two forces, one to attack the crusader machines and cat, the other to storm the New Toulouse camp.⁹⁷

Even as related by the favorable Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, Montfort's own conduct prior to the assault indicates that he responded lethargically to the oncoming crisis and underestimated the magnitude of the threat facing him. He was informed that men were massing in the fosses around the Montolieu Gate, sure signs of an impending attack, but he did nothing about it. At the time the messenger relayed the news, Montfort was

⁹³ SCW, 169–70 *laisse* 204–5; *Chanson* III, 192, 194, 196 lines 103–39, 196 lines 1–5.

⁹⁴ SCW, 165–6 *laisse* 202–3; *Chanson* III, 172, 174 lines 72–89, 176 lines 4–10, 18–27.

⁹⁵ WPE, chapter XXVIII, 61; WP, 102. William of Puylaurens specifically comments on both Montfort's extreme fatigue and the legate's criticisms.

⁹⁶ SCW, 170–1 *laisse* 205; *Chanson* III, 196 lines 6–57.

⁹⁷ PVCE, 275 #607; PVC II, 310–12; SCW, 171, *laisse* 205; *Chanson* III, 200 line 56. The Anonymous says that many of the crusaders were drunk.

listening to Mattins. Only after hearing it did he put on his armor, but then stopped to hear mass in the chapel of Narbonnais Castle. It was characteristic of Montfort to attend mass before a potentially serious or decisive conflict, as he had done at Muret almost five years before: in spite of the entreaties of a series of messengers bringing ever more dire news of the southern attack now underway, he insisted on hearing the mass through. All three of the main sources state to varying degrees that the chief crusader's heart was not in it anymore.⁹⁸ As the southerners advanced, fighting broke out in at least three different places: on the river between sergeants and sailors, around the Montolieu Gate where the crusader cat and other siege weapons were, and in the crusader camp itself.⁹⁹

Eventually Montfort mounted his horse and led a counter-attack by his lieutenants and crusader-pilgrims against those attacking the camp, swiftly driving them back to their own defensive ditches before the Montolieu Gate. Here the southerners stopped retreating and under the protection of heavy missile fire from their own trebuchets, a mangonel, arrows, and crossbow bolts, stabilized their lines around the gate. Under this withering barrage, the crusader-pilgrims in turn retreated back to their camp, while the more heavily armored knights, including Montfort, stayed to defend the siege engines from another sortie. They attempted to protect themselves against the stones and arrows raining down on them by hiding behind wicker shields (*cledis*) in front of the machines.¹⁰⁰ Many of the knights had managed to stay mounted during the fighting so far, but now they and their horses endured intense missile fire from machines and crossbows shot from Toulouse's defenses. Some of these missiles began to find their mark. A crossbow bolt hit Guy of Montfort's destrier in the head. As the horse reared in agony, another crossbow bolt lodged itself in Guy of Montfort's groin. Guy managed to ride the horse a few feet towards his brother before he fell to the ground, still capable of a little dark humor as he remarked that a wound so close to his testicles would turn him into a Hospitaller, in other words a neutered knight.¹⁰¹ The chief crusader stood fast with his retinue in front of the machines, all of them enduring wounds from arrows and stones, including Montfort himself, who received five minor arrow wounds in spite of his armor. As the barrage continued, the athlete of Christ's luck finally ran out as a lethal stone hit its mark.

⁹⁸ PVCE, 275–6 #608–9; PVC II, 312–13; SCW, 171 laisse 205; *Chanson* III, 202, 204 lines 73–86.

⁹⁹ SCW, 171 laisse 205; *Chanson* III, 200–2 lines 61–72.

¹⁰⁰ SCW, 171–2 laisse 205; *Chanson* III, 204, lines 87–107; PVCE, 276 #610; PVC II, 314.

¹⁰¹ SCW, 172 laisse 205 and footnote 1; *Chanson* III, 204, 206 lines 108–20. The humor is suggested by Shirley.

According to all three of the major sources a stone thrown from a mangonel killed Simon of Montfort. The stone tore through both his helmet and his head, its size and force crushing his skull, smashing the front of his face to a pulp and knocking him to the ground. Though he may have had time to commend himself to God as Peter Vaux-de-Cernay insists, the wound was so catastrophic that he died in a matter of seconds.¹⁰² According to the Anonymous the mangonel that killed him had a female crew, showing that the courage and perseverance of the commoners of Toulouse finally did the great crusader in.¹⁰³

Although two crusader knights mounted beside the chief crusader immediately threw a blue cape over the body lying on the ground to hide the fact that their leader was dead, the event could not be kept secret and the news spread quickly to both sides. The people in the city announced it to the world through shouts of joy and the peals of church bells. As one might expect, news of Montfort's death temporarily destroyed crusader morale. The crusaders in Saint-Cyprien and along the river on the west side of the Garonne reacted by abandoning not simply their positions but much of their equipment, including pack-animals, tents, armor, and cash. In their haste to get away some were captured.¹⁰⁴ The army on the east side of the river pulled back to Narbonnais Castle, abandoning the siege equipment near the Montolieu Gate. The defenders of Toulouse followed in their wake and burned this equipment, particularly the siege cat, detested symbol of Simon of Montfort's bellicosity.¹⁰⁵

Within twenty-four hours of Montfort's death the crusade leaders met in Narbonnais Castle to decide what to do next. In the absence of a military leader the legate Bertrand conducted the meeting, but by quick consensus the assembled barons and prelates decided that Amaury of Montfort, Simon's eldest son, should inherit all his father's fiefs in the south and de

¹⁰² PVCE, 277 #612; PVC II, 315–16; SCW, 172 laisse 205; *Chanson* III, 206, 208 lines 121–9; WPE, chapter XXVIII 61; WP, 102. Both William of Puylaurens and the Anonymous say he died instantly. All agree on the location of the wound and the fact that a shot from a mangonel killed him.

¹⁰³ SCW, 172 laisse 205; *Chanson* III, 206 lines 122–4; Finó, *Forteresses de la France médiévale*, 153. In the church of Saint Nazaire at Carcassonne, and partially reproduced in Finó, is a carved but worn "siege stone" of thirteenth-century vintage purporting to show Montfort's death. In the relief there appears to be a crew of women crewing a traction trebuchet (not a mangonel as mentioned by Peter Vaux-de-Cernay, the Anonymous, and William of Puylaurens). According to legend, this stone and the female crew carved on it depict the second siege of Toulouse, but actually there is nothing definite to prove it. The traction trebuchet places the stone circa early thirteenth century or later, but Toulouse came under siege again in 1219 and 1240. This stone could commemorate one of those later sieges.

¹⁰⁴ SCW, 172–3 laisse 205; *Chanson* III, 208, 210 lines 130–61.

¹⁰⁵ SCW, 173 laisse 206; *Chanson* III, 213 lines 1–11.

facto military command of the crusade. The papal legate made plans to renew the preaching campaign up north, with particular emphasis on persuading Prince Louis to lead another army south the following spring to help subdue the resistance.¹⁰⁶ The capture of Toulouse remained the immediate goal, but in the meantime the crusader army stayed within the confines of their camp at “New Toulouse” for the next several days until the following Sunday, 1 July 1218, when during heavy rain storms men ventured out again to renew the blockade around the Montolieu Gate.

Sometime later in July, the crusaders tried one more assault against the Montolieu Gate’s defenses, hoping once and for all to carry the city by storm. Why they believed they could achieve this when all previous attacks had failed is not explained, but it suggests an increasingly impatient and desperate leadership anxious to get things over quickly as the siege dragged on into its tenth month. Perhaps they believed the people of Toulouse were complacent, thinking the crusader army incapable of offensive action while it was still recovering from Montfort’s death. The crusaders carried out this last assault in three phases. In the first a force of men loaded up carts filled with burning wood and vines and together with torches ran toward the Montolieu Gate and its wooden defenses, hoping to burn them down. In the second phase the incendiary bearers retreated while a large army of infantry swept by them to attack the southerners rushing to defend the gate and put out the fires. As this combat ensued, the crusader knights armed themselves for the *pièce de résistance* and attempted a mounted charge into the city. After protracted fighting around the gate and heavy casualties on both sides the crusaders called off the attack, thus adding one more failed assault to their total.¹⁰⁷

After the last failure the crusader leadership was divided about whether to continue the siege or abandon it. The senior Guy of Montfort, on the mend after the groin wound received on 25 June, believed that with his brother’s death and the current lack of success they should abandon the siege. Though Amaury protested that this would only weaken his own position in Occitania, another baron, Alan of Rouchy, pointed out that the defenders in the city still had high morale and more than adequate provisions to hold out, whereas their own supplies were dwindling. Apparently Amaury could not sufficiently discount this, and the decision was made to raise the second siege of Toulouse on Saint James’s Day,

¹⁰⁶ SCW, 173–4 laisse 206; *Chanson* III, 212, 214 lines 12–50; PVCE, 277 #613; PVC II, 316–17; WPE, chapter XXIX, 62; WP, 104–5.

¹⁰⁷ SCW, 174–5 laisse 207; *Chanson* III, 216, 218, 220, 222 lines 1–85.

25 July 1218. As they departed the crusaders attempted to burn their camp of “New Toulouse” and Narbonnais Castle, but the people of Toulouse put out the fires before either could be destroyed. In their hurry to abandon the siege the crusaders left a lot of equipment behind, but among the things they carried away safely was the body of Simon of Montfort, which was interred in the church of Saint Nazaire at Carcassonne soon after.¹⁰⁸

The campaign year of 1218 actually was far from over, but even then both sides believed they had turned a corner. As a quasi-personal enterprise commanded by Simon of Montfort the Occitan War had run its course, and the success enjoyed by Simon the elder in Occitania would not be repeated by his son. The people of the south, particularly those of Toulouse, no doubt hoped in the coming months that the worst of their suffering had passed, and that as the crusade weakened under the less formidable Amaury their life would eventually return to something like the *status quo ante bellum*. They were completely wrong of course. The crusade did not wane and the corner turned in the summer of 1218 was not that of a resurgent south but a shift away from papally sponsored private enterprise to the royal political agenda of the Capetian house, another thing entirely.

¹⁰⁸ SCW, 175–6 laisses 207–8; *Chanson* III, 222, 224, 226 lines 86–132, 226 lines 1–2.

Aftermath and epilogue

EVENTS AFTER THE SECOND SIEGE OF TOULOUSE AND PRINCE LOUIS'S SECOND SOJOURN IN THE SOUTH

The cardinal-legate and Amaury of Montfort sent earnest entreaties to Pope Honorius and Philip Augustus via the bishops of Toulouse, Tarbes, and Comminges, and to Amaury's mother Alice.¹ The pope did his best to help in spite of the fact that the military phase of the Fifth Crusade was well underway. Burdened as he was with this large undertaking to Outremer, Pope Honorius showed a generosity and sympathy to the Albigensian Crusade lacking in his predecessor.² Upon hearing of Simon of Montfort's death Honorius issued a series of letters concerning events in Occitania. On 30 July he issued a bull granting a full indulgence for all those who crusaded in the south just like the crusaders received for their efforts before Damietta.³ As usual there were no specific requirements for earning this indulgence, so it appears that it was granted by the same specifications as for earlier recruiting calls, the forty-day period. A few weeks later on 12 August the pope wrote a letter to Philip Augustus, mentioning the indulgence again and urging the king to send Prince Louis south to aid Amaury of Montfort.⁴ The pope followed this up by sending a letter on 13 August to Louis himself asking the same thing.⁵ Amaury of Montfort was confirmed in his properties and titles in another letter on 17 August.⁶ With papal backing and the promise of an indulgence Prince Louis took the cross for the second time on 20 November 1218. Devout as he may have been, Louis's determination to campaign

¹ PVCE, 278 #617; PVC II, 319–20; SCW, 176–7 *laisse* 208; *Chanson* III, 228, 230, 232 lines 29–75.

² On Honorius' attitude towards the Fifth Crusade and Albigensian Crusade respectively, see Rist, "Papal Policy," 99–108.

³ *Layettes*, I, 466–7 #1301; Rist, "Papal Policy," 105. ⁴ Potthast, I, 517 #5889; Presutti, I, 263 #1578.

⁵ Potthast, I, 517 #5890; Presutti, I, 264 #1582; PVCE, 278 #617; PVC II, 320.

⁶ Potthast, I, 517 #5893; Presutti, I, 264 #1583.

specifically in Occitania was not the action of a zealot anxious to redeem his vow in the quickest way possible but rather that of a calculating man exploiting opportunity where he saw it.⁷

We do not have much information for what happened between August and the end of the year 1218, and what we have is often garbled or incorrect.⁸ As one might have predicted, the war did not go well for the crusaders after they raised the siege of Toulouse. In the second half of September and October 1218, Amaury of Montfort confirmed some deeds and took the homage of a few of his followers in Albi, Moissac, and Gontaud.⁹ In late 1218, Joris, an old Occitan ally of the crusade, went on a raid in the Count of Comminges's territory and experienced some success. He and his raiders rode to Meilhan, about sixty-five kilometers west of Toulouse. The citadel at Meilhan contained a Montfortian garrison, but the town had rebelled against it. Bernard of Comminges, son and heir of the count, gathered a mounted army to stop Joris's raiding and take out the garrison in the castle. His force managed to surprise Joris's men, who did not expect a southern army to appear so suddenly before the walls of Meilhan. In some quick but nasty skirmishes and an assault on the fortress, the southerners defeated Joris's mounted raiders and forced the garrison to surrender. Joris, the castellan, and the survivors became prisoners.¹⁰

The year 1219 was an active one militarily, though quite different from the previous years because it represented the wave of the future: crusader-pilgrim armies in 1219 and later were outfitted and led under the imprimatur of the French royal government. In the spring of 1219 Amaury of Montfort led his small army into Comminges to avenge Joris's defeat and capture the year before. The new chief crusader seized or besieged several towns and defeated their garrisons, and it is on this optimistic note that Peter Vaux-de-Cernay's account comes to an end.¹¹ Amaury of Montfort then moved north into the Agenais to besiege the town of Marmande. It had changed hands several times during the war but after 1214 was no longer controlled by the crusade.¹² Hoping to end the siege quickly,

⁷ PVCE, 278–9 #619; PVC II, 321.

⁸ WPE, chapter XXIX, 63 and footnote 67; WP, 104. For example, William of Puylaurens says that Amaury of Montfort besieged Castelnaudary immediately after the siege of Toulouse, an event that did not happen until 1220.

⁹ Catalogue des actes, 492 #166, 167, 168.

¹⁰ SCW, 178–80 *laisses* 208–10; *Chanson* III, 236 lines 106–9, 238, 240, 242, 244, 246, 248, 250 lines 1–143, 252 lines 1–7; *L'Épopée* III, 146–9.

¹¹ PVCE, 279 #620; PVC II, 322–3. ¹² For its fall in 1214 see Chapter 7, 207.

Amaury's men stormed the defenses, but the defenders fought them off.¹³ For the moment the crusaders settled down to blockade the *castrum*. In the meantime the most skillful southern commander, the Count of Foix, raided successfully eastward into the Lauragais. The young Count Raimon VII left Toulouse with his own riders and linked up with the Count of Foix, the two together representing a sizeable mounted force. A small ad-hoc army of northern lords and knights, commanded by Foucaud of Berzy, assembled to check the southern raiders. Near Baziège, about twenty-two kilometers southeast of Toulouse, crusaders and southerners met in pitched battle for only the fourth time since 1209. Surrounding the crusaders' smaller force and picking them off with lightly armored horse archers, eventually the southern knights charged their bewildered crusader counterparts. In the end, the joint force decisively defeated Foucaud of Berzy, capturing the leaders and wiping out the rest of their men.¹⁴

Impotent before the walls of Marmande, and greatly angered upon receiving the news of the defeat at Baziège, Amaury of Montfort ordered another unsuccessful assault against the defenses. Despite this second failed attempt, continued influxes of troops allowed the young commander to tighten the blockade around the *castrum* and completely control river traffic on that part of the Garonne.¹⁵ In May of 1219 Prince Louis brought south a large and well-equipped army. He first used his crusade army to settle old political scores by seizing the Angevin-held port of La Rochelle from its English owners.¹⁶ Then he joined forces with Amaury of Montfort before the walls of Marmande, and their huge army successfully assaulted the outer defenses. Being completely surrounded by an extremely large army led by a royal prince terrorized the people and garrison in Marmande. Negotiations followed soon after, and the leaders of the garrison, including its commander Centule, Count of Astarac, surrendered to Prince Louis.¹⁷ If the leaders, defenders and townspeople had had any inkling as to what might happen next, perhaps they would have fought on. After the surrender had already been agreed to in the crusader camp, the Bishop of Saintes argued that the leaders and people of the *castrum* should be put to the sword for their intransigence and heresy, even though there was no proof

¹³ SCW, 181 laisse 210; *Chanson* III, 252, 254, 256, 258 lines 13–40.

¹⁴ SCW, 181–6 laisses 210–11; *Chanson* III, 258–80; WPE, chapter XXIX, 63; WP, 104, 106.

¹⁵ SCW, 186–7 laisses 211–12; *Chanson* III, 280 lines 181–4, 282, 284 lines 1–22.

¹⁶ SCW, 187 laisse 212; *Chanson* III, 284 lines 23–32; WB, 319 #233; WPE, chapter XXX, 64; WP, 106. Both the Anonymous and William the Breton describe a very numerous and strong army. It may have been the largest crusader army since 1209.

¹⁷ SCW, 187, laisse 212; *Chanson* III, 284 lines 33–43; WPE, chapter XXX, 64–5; WP, 106, 108.

that there were any Cathars in Marmande.¹⁸ As a massacre increasingly appeared to be in the offing, some of the nobles in Louis's army protested about the disposal of the Count of Astarac, who had surrendered and therefore deserved to be treated with the courtesy of a defeated noble enemy. When the Archbishop of Auch pointed out that if Centule of Astarac were executed the southerners might retaliate by killing Foucaud of Berzy, still in southern custody after his capture at Baziège, the military and religious leadership spared the Count of Astarac's life and those of four other nobles.¹⁹ After this the men of the joint Capetian-Montfortian army, in a far more cruel and unjust way than had happened in Béziers a decade before, began a systematic slaughter of the men, women, and children of Marmande and those who had fled there from other places. Though one might see exaggeration in the Anonymous's description of so many bodies hacked to pieces that they "lay on the open ground as if they had rained down from the sky," the scale of the slaughter was such that even the northern chronicler William the Breton, a strong supporter of the French monarchy, states that 5,000 citizens and others were killed.²⁰ Even if we choose to disbelieve some of the Anonymous's details and the number given by William the Breton, there appears to be little doubt that a horrible mass killing, beyond the ordinary even in this war, took place at Marmande in 1219.

The joint Montfortian-royal army, estimated by the Anonymous at "1,300 thousand," now moved eastward to try to take the jewel of Occitania, Toulouse.²¹ The Anonymous describes the harried preparations of the people of Toulouse in the same vein as he did when they prepared for the second siege of Toulouse in 1217. With their history of success at resisting the crusading army dating back to 1211, the Toulousans knew they could expect even less mercy than was shown to the people of Marmande.²² Though the Anonymous describes in great detail the Toulousans' actions prior to the appearance of Prince Louis, his account

¹⁸ Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France*, 217–19.

¹⁹ SCW, 187–8 laisse 212; *Chanson* III, 286, 288, 290 lines 44–90; WPE, chapters XXX–XXXI, 64–5; WP, 108, 110. An exchange of prisoners evidently took place, because Foucaud of Berzy led raiding expeditions in 1220. That year he and his brother John and their raiding party were captured again. This time they were taken to Toulouse and beheaded.

²⁰ SCW, 188–9 laisse 212; *Chanson* III, 290 lines 90–104; WB, 319 #233. The translation in the text is Shirley's.

²¹ SCW, 189 laisses 212–13; *Chanson* III, 290 lines 105–6, 292, 294 lines 1–18. The Anonymous says that 5,000 (*cinc melia*) bishops, archbishops, abbots, Templars, monks, and canons accompanied the army as well.

²² SCW, 189–94 laisses 213–14; *Chanson* III, 294–320.

ends before the siege begins. Our last major source, William of Puylaurens, does not say much about this third siege. With his great numbers Louis surrounded Toulouse more effectively than Simon of Montfort ever did, even gaining the Saint-Cyprien suburb. In spite of this, Louis had no more success than the athlete of Christ, and his great army accomplished virtually nothing. Then, inexplicably, Louis raised the siege, destroyed his siege equipment, and went home.²³ Beyond the obvious reason that the prince's army had fulfilled its forty-day requirement and was going to melt away, William the Breton said the prince had conducted the siege lukewarmly ("tepede oppugnauerunt").²⁴ Certainly Toulouse's reputation for withstanding sieges – against Henry II of England and twice during the Occitan War – probably did not give the prince much confidence.

FURTHER EVENTS OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Warfare and political strife did not end in 1219, of course. The people of Occitania resisted the crusade and French government for another decade. Desultory warfare continued between Amaury of Montfort, Raimon VII, and other southern lords. By 1222 Amaury of Montfort had decided enough was enough. Twice that year he tried to cede the viscounty of Béziers and his claim to the Count of Toulouse's lands and title over to the French crown, but Philip II remained reluctant to get involved in Occitan affairs.²⁵ In 1224 Amaury tried again, and Louis, now King of France after his father's death in 1223, agreed to accept Amaury's cession.²⁶ Thus ended one family's attempt to carve out a dynasty on a starvation diet of men, meager financial assistance, and inconsistent church support.

In 1226 King Louis brought the full vigor and legality of a royal army with him to Occitania. In his third sojourn in the south he took the submission of many large *castra* and cities, including Carcassonne, but had to besiege Avignon for three months before it surrendered, during which time disease decimated his army. After Avignon fell it appeared that finally the crusaders could declare victory, but the status of Raimon VII had still not been definitively determined. Nevertheless, Louis went on a victorious perambulation of the south before he died somewhat suddenly at age thirty-nine, probably from dysentery.²⁷ Since he left only a twelve-year-old

²³ WPE, chapter xxx, 65; WP, 108. ²⁴ WB, 319 #233. ²⁵ HGL 6, 546, 561. ²⁶ HGL 8, col. 789.

²⁷ WPE, chapters xxxiii–xxxiv, 71–4; WP, 118, 120, 122; Roger of Wendover, *The Flowers of History*, 2: 309–13; Sivéry, *Louis VIII le Lion*, 400–4. Roger of Wendover states the king died either of dysentery or from poisoning, more probably the former since his army had suffered from the disease before the walls of Avignon.

son behind him as heir, the weakness of the regency government gave Raimon VII breathing space for three more years.

Raimon VII continued the war, but with the weight of the French royal government against him it was now a waiting game to see how long he could last. A soft-hearted man with a wicked sense of humor, incapable of even hating his nemesis Amaury of Montfort, Raimon VII had grown up knowing nothing but war and death and wished to get out from under the pressure before it killed him.²⁸ In 1229 he signed a peace treaty ending major military operations and brought his lands formally into the French orbit. He retained his lands and titles for life, but upon his death they would go to his daughter. His only legitimate child and heir, Jeanne, was eventually given in marriage to King Louis IX's brother, Alphonse of Artois. As per the treaty's terms, if no issue came from this marriage the lands held or claimed by the counts of Toulouse would escheat to the French crown.²⁹ Jeanne of Toulouse and her husband died childless in 1271 within days of each other, so central Occitania became part of the French royal domain.³⁰

Even by 1271 the religious heresy which had caused the Occitan War in the first place had not been solved. Cathar strongholds capable of defending themselves remained through the middle of the century, but agents of the crown reduced and destroyed these over several decades. Although the story of this is just as compelling and horrifying as the Occitan War, the operations involved with besieging these places, most notoriously at Montségur in 1244, where two hundred or more people lost their lives after the stronghold surrendered, were more constabulary and less military endeavors.³¹ While the Albigensian Crusade successfully, though unintentionally, enlarged the crown and state of France, its avowed purpose of exterminating heresy and punishing its supporters had been a relative failure. Conceived as a broadsword when a surgeon's scalpel would have been more useful, the crusade was incapable of excising the cancer of heresy.

²⁸ WPE, chapter xxxii, 68–9; WP, 114. During a truce between the two nobles in 1223, Raimon VII actually spent the night in Amaury's company. Raimon started a rumor that he had been arrested by Amaury, which started a panic within his own ranks until he revealed it was a joke. Both would-be counts of Toulouse had a good laugh over it.

²⁹ WPE, Appendix C, 141 paragraph 16; *HGL* 8, col. 888. Most of the treaty is translated in WPE, Appendix C, 138–44. For the Latin see *HGL* 8, cols. 883–92.

³⁰ WPE, chapter XLIX, 122; WP, 200; Charles T. Wood, *The French Apanages and the Capetian Monarchy, 1224–1328* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), 40, 72.

³¹ WPE, chapter XLIV, 107–8; WP, 172, 174, 176; William Pelhisson, *Chronique (1229–1244)*, ed. and trans. Jean Duvernoy (Paris: CNRS, 1994), 56.

Undoubtedly the Occitan War drove Catharism into hiding by making it extremely hazardous to preach and practice its doctrines openly. Ironically, however, it made the practitioners of heresy more insidious and clever at keeping hidden. Ideas and religions are hard to destroy by military conflict, and the Cathar heresy was no exception. Since hearts and minds could not be captured by armies or police operations, eventually the church found the solution by instituting the Inquisition. Though its Spanish cousin is more famous as a repressive instrument, the Inquisition as a supra-episcopal institution was forged and sharpened on the people of Occitania. After 1233 the Dominicans took charge, and it was the inquisitorial techniques they developed and demonstrated in such places as Toulouse in 1245–6 and elsewhere that really destroyed Catharism.³² Episcopal inquisitions, usually more sporadic than that of the systematic Dominicans, also had some successes by the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. These included the Bishop of Pamiers's inquisition of the inhabitants of Montailou, made famous by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and others.³³ As a living religion Catharism appears to have been eradicated by the 1330s, surviving only in history and myth as a curious theology with a bloody end.

PEOPLE

No one doubts that the Occitan War and Albigensian Crusade had a great impact on the lives and livelihood of the people of the south, particularly on some of its nobles. The old Count of Toulouse, Raimon VI, died in 1222 at age sixty-six in his comital city, probably from a stroke. As he passed out of this life he kissed a cross sewn on a cloth, proof that to his dying breath he was an orthodox Christian. The church did not agree. He was excommunicate when he died; his well-meaning son tried and failed over the next two decades to have his father buried in consecrated ground.³⁴ As mentioned above, Raimon VII remained Count of Toulouse until his death in 1249 at age fifty-two. In 1241 he participated in a rebellion against the king, but this was one of those rather common-or-garden squabbles between a

³² For the best discussion of how the Inquisition in Occitania worked in practice, see Pegg, *The Corruption of Angels*. For its general workings and historical development see Bernard Hamilton, *The Medieval Inquisition* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), chapters 3–6.

³³ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montailou. The Promised Land of Error*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); René Weis, *The Yellow Cross. The Story of the Last Cathars 1290–1329* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000).

³⁴ WPE, chapter XXXII, 67–8, chapter XLV, III–12; WP, II, 180, 182; Dejean, *Les Comtes de Toulouse*, 327.

lord and his vassals and had nothing to do with religion. In 1243 Raimon was reconciled to Louis IX. In 1247 he took the cross to participate in Louis's first crusade, but died before he ever left Europe.³⁵

The fortunes of other southern nobles waxed and waned, but many indigenous families survived the crusade. One of the more interesting stories is that of Raimon Trencavel II, the son of the Viscount of Béziers who had died in his own jail at Carcassonne in 1209. The young Trencavel's rights as Viscount of Béziers, Albi, and Carcassonne had been brushed aside throughout the crusade. Understandably he grew up a resentful young man. In 1224, after Raimon VII and Roger-Bernard of Foix retook Carcassonne, they made the young Raimon viscount again, but he lost the viscounty two years later when Carcassonne submitted to Louis VIII.³⁶ By 1240, Raimon Trencavel II, now a mature if not wise man, gathered some other nobles and a small army and attempted to win back the patrimony he never had. He unsuccessfully besieged Carcassonne and went into exile in 1241.³⁷ In 1246 he reconciled himself to French rule and was pensioned off with a small property. His son went on Louis IX's second crusade in 1270.³⁸

Raimon-Roger of Foix, the only military leader of skill on the southern side between 1209 and 1218, continued to resist the crusade until his dying breath. He died of an ulcer while besieging Mirepoix in 1223.³⁹ His line not only outlasted the crusade era but positively flourished. His grandson, Roger-Bernard III, rebelled unsuccessfully against the French authorities in 1272. Imprisoned for a time, he recovered his lands.⁴⁰ The line continued to increase its power and influence so that by the mid-fourteenth century the Count of Foix was one of the most important nobles in southern France.⁴¹

Swept into power by church backing and Simon of Montfort's military skill, after his death most of the northerners soon vanished into obscurity. Very few successfully integrated into their new homes as did Guy of Lévis, whose line became the lords of Mirepoix.⁴² Most lost their lands in the early 1220s or were discouraged enough to leave Occitania voluntarily. As for the Montforts: Guy of Montfort, Simon of Montfort's second son, was

³⁵ WPE, chapter XLIII, 104–6, chapter XLVI, 112–15; WP, 168, 170, 172, 184, 186.

³⁶ Graham-Leigh, *The Southern French Nobility*, 45.

³⁷ WPE, chapter XLI, 95–8; WP, 154, 156, 158, 160; Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition*, 153–5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 155. ³⁹ WPE, chapter XXXII, 68; WP, 112. ⁴⁰ WPE, chapter I, 124–5; WP, 204, 206.

⁴¹ Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War II: Trial by Fire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 182–4, 483–4.

⁴² WPE, chapter XLIV, 108; WP, 176; *HGL* 6, 656–47.

killed besieging Castelnaudary in 1220.⁴³ Amaury of Montfort was not the man his father was, as he could not stomach spending the rest of his life fighting foes that never quit. A few years after ceding his claims to the Occitanian lands to the crown, and after his maternal uncle, Matthew of Montmorency, died, he became Constable of France.⁴⁴ A prestigious title did not help Amaury's bad luck, since he had very little to show for a lifetime of expending wealth on a fight he did not win. In 1239 he sailed for Outremer on crusade but was captured in Gaza and imprisoned in Egypt. Ransomed eventually but broken in health, he died on the journey home.⁴⁵ Of course the most famous Montfort son played no role at all in the Occitan War, being ten years old at the time of his father's death. The younger Simon, however, became perhaps the most prominent non-royal political figure in thirteenth-century England and for the anglophile world far exceeds his father's notoriety. The two Simons shared more than a name: the younger Simon exhibited many of his father's traits, especially his sense of rectitude, prickly sense of justice, moral inflexibility, and tenacity.⁴⁶ Simon of England rose to great heights, marrying a sister of King Henry III of England and offering perhaps the most serious political challenge of the century to the crown. He met a violent end at the battle of Evesham in 1265, part of an interesting legacy.⁴⁷

POLITICAL LEGACY FOR THE SOUTH

Before the end of 1209 the war had largely ceased to be about exterminating a heresy and was more about who would have political control over central Occitania. By Pere II's death at Muret in 1213 it appeared as though the majority of what scholars have called Occitania would end up in the hands of a new dynasty, though the heresy which spawned the war still survived. The military success of the athlete of Christ caused, and his death intensified, a power vacuum. Neither the Raimondines nor the Montforts could have imagined that it was only a matter of time before someone bigger than both of them filled the void. This "someone" was not the church, though that institution and its pope set the conditions which caused the war and

⁴³ WPE, chapter XXIX, 63; WP, 104.

⁴⁴ *HGL* 6, 639; Rhein, ed., *Les Actes des seigneurs de Montfort*, 220 #217, 327–8 #XLIV.

⁴⁵ Michael Lower, *The Barons' Crusade. A Call to Arms and Its Consequences* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 170, 176; Sidney Painter, "The Crusade of Theobald of Champagne and Richard of Cornwall, 1239–1241," *A History of the Crusades 2: The Later Crusades 1189–1311* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 470–80; *HGL* 6, 639.

⁴⁶ Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, 4–7. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 21–5, 340–42.

assisted its main prosecutor at select points. As Robert Bartlett says of the papacy's direction of crusades in general, however, "it should be clear that orchestration is not the same as playing the instruments."⁴⁸ The church lost direct authority when it allowed its chief crusader to equate the goal of exterminating heresy with a personal quest for power and enrichment. Even after Montfort's death the church harbored no pretense at controlling events, since Honorius simply gave Amaury of Montfort his father's lands and the responsibility for defending them.

Prior to Muret, Occitania could have become the northernmost province of a greater kingdom of Aragon. The Aragonese monarchy had a history of being able to work through serious cultural, political, and even religious differences, as the lands of the count-kings were very diverse yet held together nicely under a series of able rulers. Adding to this polyglot state another geographic bloc, whose people were closer to it culturally and linguistically than they were to the French, is not beyond imagining. The Albigensian Crusade actually opened a window of opportunity for the Aragonese monarchy that would have taken another generation or more of marriage alliances to create. The crusade, in other words, allowed Pere II an influence he could not have had under any other circumstances. Militarily, politically, and by reputation he became Simon of Montfort's greatest foe. His untimely death meant the Aragonese would not be able to intervene again for some time, and by then it was too late.

So the Aragonese were out after 1213. Only ten years old at Simon of Montfort's death, by the time King Jaume reached his majority his ability to substantially shape anything in Occitania was pretty much gone. The Aragonese crown still retained properties in Occitania until 1258, but had little political influence. Thwarted in the north, Jaume directed his energy, ambition, and talent away from Occitania, further south in the Iberian peninsula and across the Mediterranean. That only left one authority capable of sealing the vacuum, and after 1218 the time had come to begin.

Any idea that central Occitania would stay independent after the Occitan War began to evaporate over the course of it. When one strips away the tangled political layers, most of the region was still part of the late antique *regnum Francorum*, a tie that had been more or less maintained since the sixth century. The Albigensian Crusade notwithstanding, Occitania had no immunity from northern military incursions, which had occurred under the Carolingians and during the "forty-year" feud

⁴⁸ Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 20.

between the Angevins and the counts of Toulouse.⁴⁹ Before 1214 the Capetian royal house had fought a war for survival ever since Henry II of England managed, through marriage and inheritance, to control more of France than the French kings. The Angevins met their match in Philip Augustus, however, and after 1189 the French crown began to aggressively assert its authority over the traditional lands of the Franks. By 1204 the Capetians had Normandy and most of the Plantagenets' continental territory save Gascony, which took a couple more centuries to acquire. After winning the battle of Bouvines in 1214 the crown feared no royal or imperial rival on its northern or eastern borders. By 1216 the French were so strong they turned the tables on their ancient foes by invading England. Their half-hearted attempt failed of course, though it demonstrated both the new-found confidence and the ability of the Capetian monarchy to project power where it wanted. The end of the English adventure in 1217 left the French free to exploit opportunities elsewhere as they arose, and Montfort's death in 1218 gave them the chance for a crack at it in the south within a few years. We can perhaps applaud Philip Augustus and Louis VIII on their ability to exploit a contingency, but they did not have the prescience to know that Occitania would become French. It was not at all inevitable, contrary to what some have written.⁵⁰

The old view of national inevitability has died out. Its replacement is no less misguided. In our post-modern, post-national, pro-diversity world the tone in a lot of writing is that the Occitan War and eventual French acquisition of the region were a terrible shame, akin to what happened to the Native Americans in the United States and other parts of the Americas.⁵¹ Many still mourn what happened and romantically side with the losers.⁵² Teaching at a small, conservative college in the deep south of the United States, one is privy to all the ways in which romance and nostalgia over a lost cause can be perpetuated and misused. The peoples of both regions, and other romantics, wistfully ponder a past not only

⁴⁹ Bernard S. Bachrach, *Carolingian Warfare. Prelude to Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 33–4; Roger Collins, *Charlemagne* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 69–70; Benjamin, "A Forty Year War," 270–85.

⁵⁰ Nickerson, "Oman's Muret," 571; Belperron, *La Croisade*, 472.

⁵¹ Stephen O'Shea, *The Perfect Heresy. The Revolutionary Life and Death of the Medieval Cathars* (New York: Walker and Co., 2000), 6–7. O'Shea's work is a good example reflecting popular opinion. About Arnaud-Amaury's supposed statement of "Kill them All!" before Béziers he says: "the phrase neatly illustrates the homicidal passions at work during the Albigensian Crusade." He begins a paragraph on page 7 with "The crusade's two decades of salutary slaughter . . ."

⁵² Barber, *The Cathars*, Chapter 7 has an especially good description of how twentieth-century people, particularly the French themselves, have viewed the events of the war and crusade.

gone, but never really there. The American south has produced countless fables like *Gone With the Wind*, just as Occitan separatist and other romantic movements wax nostalgic about a lost world of courtly love, singing troubadours, regional autonomy, and a pacifistic religion.⁵³ Entrepreneurs and the tourist industry have enthusiastically exploited this nostalgia. Any tourist traveling in “Cathar country” can see that Catharism is big business, and the plight of the Cathars has provided fodder for numerous fictional works and off-beat internet sites.⁵⁴

Though the Occitan War and crusade was disruptive and destructive, its effects on Occitan culture, language, and troubadour literature should not be overstated.⁵⁵ In a perceptive comparative study, James Given examined the conquest experience of Languedoc and Wales, both of which largely occurred in the thirteenth century.⁵⁶ He found that as far as “conquest” in a military, political, linguistic, and cultural sense goes, that of Occitania was much more shallow than that of Wales. Compared to other famous conquests in western Europe, such as Ireland or the Iberian peninsula, or central or eastern Europe, in Prussia or Livonia, imposition of a northern or French “core” culture on the Languedocian “periphery” was much less deep or extensive than in other places.⁵⁷ In other words, the indigenous nobility of the south, with some notable exceptions of course, by and large retained their lands, wealth, and social prominence long after the Occitan War ended.⁵⁸ The commerce and infrastructure of the south were not destroyed in the long term by the military operations of the crusade, and Occitan wealth remained in the south—as opposed to being shipped out, as happened to the Welsh.⁵⁹ Occitania therefore kept a greater sense of its own institutions and identity free from outside rule compared to many other regions. This certainly bears thinking about to maintain our perspective.

⁵³ Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 208–13; Vera Mark, “In Search of the Occitan Village: Regionalist Ideologies and the Ethnography of Southern France,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 60 (1987), 65.

⁵⁴ One need only google “Cathar” to find both books and websites. Need I mention the cottage industry in works of quasi-fiction that connect the Cathars with the Templars or some other sort of bizarre concoction?

⁵⁵ As a good corrective see Strayer, *The Albigensian Crusades*, 168–9. ⁵⁶ Given, *State and Society*.

⁵⁷ Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 31–9, 55–9. In fact Occitania does not make the cut as a conquered territory in Bartlett’s book.

⁵⁸ Graham-Leigh, *Southern French Nobility*, 167–9.

⁵⁹ Given, *State and Society*, 134, 136, 138, 144–6, 148–52.

Lost in many scholarly accounts and popular offerings is the fact that what happened in 1209 was a war over territory. Along the way what constituted the bulk of medieval warfare – raids and sieges – took place along with some nasty atrocities perpetrated by both sides. The people and institutions which began the Occitan War started with one set of motivations and assumptions, but those who had to fight it or defend against it quickly substituted another. A small army led by a man who personified thirteenth-century values (no matter how repugnant to us), supplemented with reinforcements from the north, sought to hold off the material and personnel resources of an entire region and almost succeeded. The crusader-pilgrim and cadre armies led by Simon of Montfort had no technological advantages over their enemies and far more disadvantages. They controlled small bastions of uncertain loyalty, encountered unpredictable and spotty reinforcement (particularly after 1213), dealt with untrustworthy allies who switched their allegiance at a moment's notice, and suffered the inherent stress and danger of surviving in hostile territory year after year.

The outsiders possessed military experience and skill and were commanded by a leader absolutely convinced of his own ability and position. These critical factors allowed the crusaders to prosecute the war successfully for almost nine years. While they did not win every time, under Simon of Montfort the odds were in their favor until 1216. Beaucaire shattered the aura of invincibility around the chief crusader and by 1218 Montfort appeared to be losing his skills as time, age, and exhaustion began to catch up to him. Still, Simon of Montfort strategically outgeneraled every one of his opponents and on any given day was the best tactical commander on either side. Some of his opponents possessed good military qualities, but not in the same combination. No less an opportunist than the chief crusader, Raimon VI demonstrated good political skills on occasion but was generally a poor military leader, both vacillating and unenergetic. He botched the counter-attack of autumn 1211, probably the best opportunity he had to defeat Montfort and end the war. His son, the young count, showed courage and military promise from an early age as demonstrated at Beaucaire, but his abilities only became fully realized after Montfort's death. His defeat at Saint-Martin-la-Lande notwithstanding Raimon-Roger of Foix was a superb tactical commander and the best field general on the southern side, but he lacked the breadth of vision, prestige, and power to organize a systematic defense of the region. As a commander who co-engineered one of the great military victories of the High Middle Ages, by 1212 Pere II had even better military credentials than Montfort. He made poor decisions at Muret and certainly suffered from over-confidence.

Pere II's unwillingness to wait for all his troops, his insistence on facing Montfort in the field rather than bottling him up in Muret, and his inability to co-ordinate his mounted troops with the Toulousan militia cost him a battle, his life, and Aragonese influence over Occitan affairs.

In the end Simon of Montfort largely drove the crusade in Occitania between 1209 and his death by charisma. Personality-driven enterprises are only as effective as the person leading them, and by 1216 the lack of real institutions to support his leadership were beginning to show, and clear for all to see by the second siege of Toulouse. His death opened the door for the French crown, and after that the personalities of individual leaders were subsumed to the power, economic wherewithal, prestige, and legality of the nascent state. The resources of the state dictated that Occitania would become part of France after 1224. By the 1230s the founding of a papal inquisition ordained that the people of the region would remain orthodox. The Occitan War set the stage for these sea-changes and thus deserves its place in remembrance and the historical record. The struggle on both sides is not forgotten.

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