The Cathar View: The Mysterious Legacy of Montségur: Over Twenty Visionary Contributions, Dave Patrick, Polair Publishing, 2012, 190539828X, 9781905398287, 288 pages. The thirteenth-century Cathars slaughtered at Montségur in 1244 today offer an alternative to mainstream Christianity that for many integrates better both with ancient pagan traditions and with modern ‘new age’ attitudes than does the Church. They are used to focus a sense of local pride and independence in the Languedoc of France and they still offer a symbol of largely nonviolent resistance against persecution and near-genocide. While they are the source for substantial studies into reincarnation, they also give us extraordinary detail to help us understand mediaeval life and the horror of the Inquisition. Their spirituality and what it stood for remain alive in countless exemplary ways. It is easy for the picture to become contradictory, contentious and confused. The Cathar View offers the perspectives of roughly twenty-five different contributors. They range from the scholarly to the ‘alternative’. Chapters take us from accounts of their predecessors, the Bogomils, through to a review of recent ‘heretical’ viewpoints about the Holy Grail - the basis of the Da Vinci Code and the burgeoning legend of Mary Magdalene. There are contributions about Cathar sympathizers such as Otto Rahn, who for many is the original for Indiana Jones, and we look at some of the occultists who have been intrigued by the Cathar inheritance, such as the mysterious Polaires. We take a loving look at the landscape of the Languedoc and what it holds for walkers and mystics alike. The seven sections of the book are History, Alternative Perspectives, Reincarnation and Memory, Historical Viewpoints, The Cathars and the Grail, The Cathar Landscape and The Cathar Legacy. In sum, this is a unique and valuable contribution to the literature about the Cathars or Albigenses, sympathetic to its subject and offering new clarity about what really underlay their intriguing beliefs. Dave Patrick, the editor, follows the format of two very successful titles to which The Cathar View now forms a companion: The View, which was about the spiritual legacy of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and The View Beyond, which dealt with Sir Francis Bacon and his programme of learning.

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Witchcraft in the Middle Ages, Jeffrey Burton Russell, 1972, History, 394 pages. Traces the origin, development and practice of medieval witchcraft throughout western Europe, and describes the movement's social and religious significance.

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A history of witchcraft sorcerers, heretics and pagans, Jeffrey Burton Russell, Brooks Alexander, Feb 20, 2007, Body, Mind & Spirit, 216 pages. A revised and updated edition of the classic study on witchcraft examines the historical, anthropological, and religious manifestations of witchcraft, from ancient times to the ....

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The thirteenth-century Cathars slaughtered at Montségur in 1244 today offer an alternative to mainstream Christianity that for many integrates better both with ancient pagan traditions and with modern 'new age' attitudes than does the Church. They are used to focus a sense of local pride and independence in the Languedoc of France and they still offer a symbol of largely nonviolent resistance against persecution and near-genocide. While they are the source for substantial studies into reincarnation, they also give us extraordinary detail to help us understand mediaeval life and the horror of the Inquisition. Their spirituality and what it stood for remain alive in countless exemplary ways. It is easy for the picture to become contradictory, contentious and confused. The Cathar View offers the perspectives of roughly twenty-five different contributors. They range from the scholarly to the 'alternative'. Chapters take us from accounts of their predecessors, the Bogomils, through to a review of recent 'heretical' viewpoints about the Holy Grail - the basis of the Da Vinci Code and the burgeoning legend of Mary Magdalene. There are contributions about Cathar sympathizers such as Otto Rahn, who for many is the original for Indiana Jones, and we look at some of the occultists who have been intrigued by the Cathar inheritance, such as the mysterious Polaires. We take a loving look at the landscape of the Languedoc and what it holds for walkers and mystics alike. The seven sections of the book are History, Alternative Perspectives, Reincarnation and Memory, Historical Viewpoints, The Cathars and the Grail, The Cathar Landscape and The Cathar Legacy. In sum, this is a unique and valuable contribution to the literature about the Cathars or Albigenses, sympathetic to its subject and offering new clarity about what really underlay their intriguing beliefs. Dave Patrick, the editor, follows the format of two very successful titles to which The Cathar View now forms a companion: The View, which was about the spiritual legacy of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and The View Beyond, which dealt with Sir Francis Bacon and his programme of learning.

Dave Patrick has spent much of his life on the Scottish east coast but now lives in central England. A former Shell Finance executive and trained facilitator, he moved into the area of complementary medicine in 2003 and qualified in Quantum Touch® therapy. He compiled The View in 2010 to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and followed it with The View Beyond, on Sir Francis Bacon. He sees the books he has edited as a physical manifestation of a spiritual life-journey. He is a member of The White Eagle Lodge and the Francis Bacon Society.

Colum Hayward is the author of Eyes of the Spirit: Working with a Spiritual Teacher and of a scholarly introduction to Arthur Conan Doyle's Book of the Beyond. He also contributed to the companion volumes in this series, The View and The View Beyond. He has a life-connection with the Cathars, from which his interest in the Cathars derives, but he holds a PhD in the field of English literature from the University of Cambridge and has written several scholarly articles. Interests have included mountaineering and rowing. He is presently Principal of the White Eagle School of Meditation.

If you're at all interested in the history, beliefs, and legends of the Cathars and about the development of esoteric Christianity in general, this is definitely the book for you! Dave Patrick has assembled short essays from 25 different individuals that, taken as a whole, put together many pieces of the puzzle. This collection of articles is at once heart-warming and inspiring, mystical but shocking, and, above all, sobering.

But these contemporary stories of people's searches, rediscoveries, past-life memories, and
perspectives about the "heretic" Cathars of the Languedoc is not just a fascinating read; it sparks a new hope that those gentle folks’ demise was, if seen over time, actually a victory - a victory over the historic cruelty, idolatry, and corruption of the Catholic Church. As some of the writers say, it's about the triumph of AMOR (love) over ROMA (the heavy-handed brutality of the Church).

We are reminded in some of the essays about the destruction of the entire city of Beziers in 1209 (where the papal legate is said to have told his soldiers, "Kill them all; God will know his own."), the siege of the great walled city of Carcassonne, and the torture and immolation of thousands of people in hundreds of villages and towns whose only "crime" was that they were free thinkers and did not strictly follow the commands nor submit to the interdictions of the Pope.

The most infamous slaughter has to be the torching alive of over 200 of the "pure ones" who, holding hands and singing, descended from the last major Cathar outpost fortress atop Montségur on the morning of 16 March 1244, and climbed onto the flaming pyre set by the Pope's and French King's mercenaries at the foot of the mountain. It is said that the previous night a certain "treasure" secured by four of the faithful was lowered from the fortress wall, and that the bearers scattered out into the countryside with their valuable possessions.

There are numerous theories of what the "treasure" consisted. It has been sought after by many treasure hunters. Nothing has ever been found, and it is suggested by more than one of this book's authors that it may have been a set of secret writings, such as a mysterious but often referenced "Book of Love."

The Cathars were extremely devout Christians in the sense that they thought themselves to be the true successors of Jesus and his disciples, adhering to what they believed were the tenets of Jesus himself. Their holy books included, foremost, the Gospel of John, purported to be written by someone who was an actual witness to the life of Christ.

They followed a lineage of Gnostic thinkers who yearned for truth through actual experience - like the Hermeticists of Egypt, the Platonists of Greece, the Essenes and the Manicheans of the Middle East, and the Bogomils of the Balkans. They were contemporaries of the Troubadours and were often protected and financed by the Knights Templars.

The Cathars have been criticised because they were dualists: they believed God did not create the material world with all its suffering but that matter was the realm of a lesser god - a demiurge who contrasted and opposed good with evil. They claimed this lesser god was the Yahweh of the Old Testament, a jealous and vengeful god - a god whose "flawed creation came about through a misguided desire to ape the true Creator." They read only the New Testament, and their "parfaits" or "perfecti" - those more advanced practitioners, both men and women who took a vow of celibacy - are said to have carried that book around with them.

As members of their communities, the Albingenses (another name for Cathars) engaged in simple but skilled vocations and possessed little material wealth. Many were vegetarians. However, they did not live lives of hermits or monks but interacted with society as a whole. Many with whom they came in contact converted to the Cathar Way, nobles and peasants alike.

They did not practice the usual sacraments of the Church, but, when an initiate was deemed ready, or on his or her deathbed, they performed a baptism of the Holy Spirit, a transmission of power, a laying-on-of-hands ceremony known as the "consolamentum" (meaning "with the sun in the mind") - a purification ritual that permitted the recipient to conquer the fear of death. They were accomplished healers, trained in clairvoyance and telepathy, and they believed in reincarnation so that through successive struggles within a material body the soul could finally obtain liberation and not have to return to the earthly realm of the evil demiurge.

The contributors to this present book include some famous writers and some heretofore relatively unknown. The synchronistic ways in which Dave Patrick met them all and included their offerings is a story in itself that he relates at the end of the book. Rather than cite them individually, I would
prefer here to give you a taste of what I consider the preciousness contained in this volume by quoting just a few of the many memorable words of the authors without attribution:

"It's hard for us in the twenty-first century to contemplate such barbaric acts as were perpetrated then, especially those that were in the cause of the Church - or is it? Have we learned anything at all in the intervening seven hundred years? In today's so-called civilised and enlightened world, such cruelty still persists. In Guantanamo Bay, Iraq, Syria and many other parts of the globe atrocities occur daily, but somehow we seem to be able to distance ourselves from the horror.... Have we become so desensitised by the deluge of media information that we no longer pay much attention to the coverage of such events?"

"There is no longer a sense of the sacred, for we are obsessed with glamour and triviality, cynicism, violence and the need for constant distraction. What kind of progress is this? What kind of culture? There is no suggestion here that we should return to a heresy but with discernment we should be able to see some of the wisdom in the philosophy of the Cathars."

This book was promptly shipped & in great condition. However, I was a little disappointed about the book. I thought there would be some new insights into the Cathars but it was just the same thing written by different authors. I guess there can be no definitive book on these 'mysteries beliefs' since no records have been found that came first-hand from a Cathar.

The thirteenth-century Cathars slaughtered at Montségur in 1244 today offer an alternative to mainstream Christianity that for many integrates better than the Church does with modern &lsquo;new age&rsquo; attitudes. Catharism is used to focus a sense of local pride and independence in the Languedoc of France and its martyrs offer a symbol of largely nonviolent resistance against persecution and near-genocide. While they are the source for substantial studies into reincarnation, they also give us extraordinary detail to help us understand mediaeval life and the horror of the Inquisition. Their spirituality and what it stood for remain alive in countless exemplary ways.

THE CATHAR VIEW offers the perspectives of roughly twenty-five different contributors. They range from armchair history to alternative and esoteric. Contributors include Shannon Anderson and Patrice Chaplin. Hear the results of an interview with Henry Lincoln (of The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail fame) and read a rediscovered article on the Cathars by legendary Thirties author Maurice Magre (The Return of the Magi). Read in full the inner encounter Grace Cooke had with one who conveyed the full spirit of St John.

Other contributions bring us into contact with Otto Rahn, who for many is the original for Indiana Jones, and we look at some of the occultists who have been intrigued by the Cathar inheritance, such as the mysterious Polaires. There is a memoir of the legendary Arthur Guirdham. Relaxing, we take a loving look at the landscape of the Languedoc and what it holds for walkers and mystics alike.

DAVE PATRICK, the editor, follows the format of two very successful titles to which The Cathar View now forms a companion: The View, which was about the spiritual legacy of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and The View Beyond, which dealt with Sir Francis Bacon and his programme of learning. A sometime Shell oil executive who left to pursue complementary medicine, he has spent most of his life on the East coast of Scotland.

The Cathar View: The Mysterious Legacy of Montsegur collects essays from twenty-five learned contributors, including a memoir of Arthur Guirdham, about the Cathars, a splinter sect of mainstream Christianity that was horrifically persecuted and exterminated in medieval times. Also covered is the faith's modern revival as neo-Catharism, and its interplay with the occult. An inset section of almost fifty color photographs illustrates this eclectic and multifaceted examination of a profound religious tradition, which explores with the tenets of the Cathars have to say about both mundane and spiritual life today. Highly recommended.

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