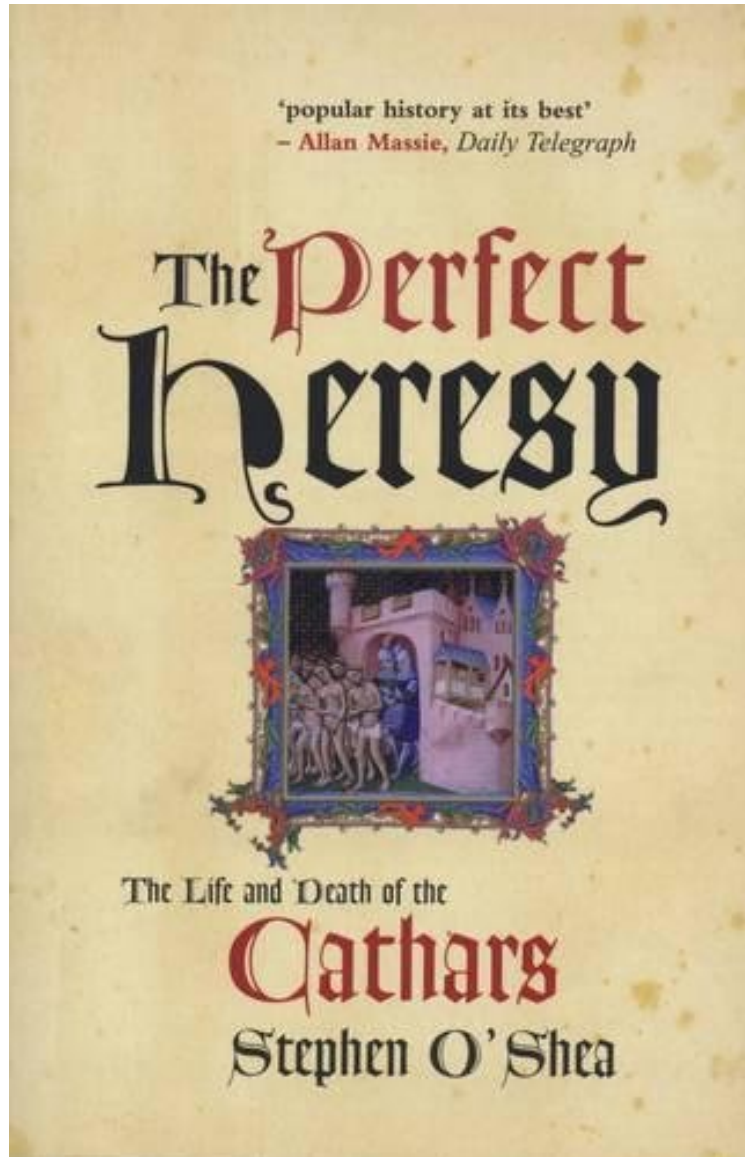


(Ebook pdf) The Perfect Heresy: The Life and Death of the Cathars

## The Perfect Heresy: The Life and Death of the Cathars

*Stephen O'Shea*

*audiobook / \*ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC*



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#439809 in Books imusti 2001-05-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.80 x .87 x 5.08l, .64 #File Name: 1861973500272 pagesPROFILE BOOKS | File size: 44.Mb

**Stephen O'Shea : The Perfect Heresy: The Life and Death of the Cathars** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Perfect Heresy: The Life and Death of the Cathars:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. a bit light, but it is a solid introduction to the CatharsBy Robert J. CrawfordAfter having truly loved the author's Sea of Faith, I was a bit disappointed with this book: it lacked a certain density, offered little on the Medieval context, and concentrated on stories at the expense of a deeper analysis. It did not, as is the author's stated intention, make me hungry for more as did his masterful Sea of Faith.That being said, this

is competent popular history that is essential to know, particularly if you want to understand French history. The story takes place during the great period of expansion following the Dark Ages: there are new technologies, a dynamic economy exploding with population growth, and a new openness to ideas about how society should be run. The Languedoc region, a loosely organized feudal domain south of the French kingdom and north of Navarre Spain, flourished in its independence, spawning not just poetry and a sensual life style, but an offshoot of Christianity that resembled the Gnostics of 2nd and 3rd C CE. According to Cathar theology, the world was a evil place that was made not by God but by the Devil. TO reach to the domain of God and overcome an endless cycle of sinful and blind reincarnation, adherents needed to renounce worldly pleasure and ambitions in order to become Perfects - wise ascetics who would transcend the evil world and enter the pure world of heaven. It was a joyful grouping, which apparently generated many ideas that would appeal to new age devotees at present, though in fact little is known about their beliefs and practices as no writings survive. Left to themselves and an easy-going count - the first in a bewildering succession of Raymonds involved in the conflict - the Cathars thrived for several generations to the growing alarm of Rome, where the Popes were refining a christian ideology as a power base to challenge the legitimacy of secular leaders. In this context, given Raymond's passivity and the enticements of a crusade far closer to France than the Near East (i.e. instant redemption of their sins and the opportunity for landless aristocrats to gain fiefs), it was only a matter of time before the Papacy focused on stamping out what it regarded as a heretical movement. Once the ax fell, the crusaders attacked the Cathars with an unrivaled brutality, wiping out entire villages and opening major cities, such as Caracassone, to takeover. This is a sad story that was a defining moment, not just for the expansion of the French Crown, but also as a testing ground for the development of the Inquisition, which led to the totalitarian ideologies of the 20C that used similar methods to guard the purity of their societies. As such, this is one of the most important episodes in European history. While the book is interesting and moves quickly, I just wish it had been more dense. Recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is a great text that opens to us a world that has ...By bill This is a great text that opens to us a world that has historically been closed off. Here we see how Christian theology and dogma was created to protect an otherwise problematic belief system. Douglas Thomas, author of African Traditional Religion in the Modern World 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is it! By JB1976 The definitive book on the Cathar heresy and the church's response to it. Readable and thorough. If this is a subject that interests you, as it must as you're reading this, you've found what you were after.

Eight hundred years ago, the Cathars, a group of heretical Christians from all walks of society, high and low, flourished in what is now the Languedoc in Southern France. Their subversive beliefs brought down on them the wrath of Popes and monarchs and provoked a brutal 'Crusade' against them. The final defeat of the Cathars was horrific with mass burnings of men, women and children in the village of Montailou in the Pyrenees.

.com Jongleurs performing troubadour poetry in fields and groves frequently dominate our images of Medieval Southern France. While the 12th century reveled in songs of deferred pleasure and adulterous fulfillment, the 13th, as Stephen O'Shea makes clear, took a marked turn toward the violent and intolerant. The Perfect Heresy: The Revolutionary Life and Death of the Medieval Cathars chronicles the Roman Catholic Church's crusade against--and ultimate annihilation of--the Albigenses, or Cathars, a group of heretical Christians who thrived in what is now the Languedoc region of Southern France. The Cathars held revolutionary beliefs that threatened the authority of the church. The world, they maintained, was not created by a benevolent God. Rather, it was the creation of a force of darkness, immanent in all things. They considered worldly authority a fraud, and authority based on some divine sanction, such as claimed by the church, outright hypocrisy. Innocent III, resolved to eradicate the Cathar threat to church authority, recruited the military powers of France, eager to expand their territory to the south. Together, they systematically exterminated the Cathars and their supporters in a series of crusades between 1209 and 1229. The Dominican-led Inquisition that ensued built upon this momentum of intolerance and tormented Europe for centuries to come. A journalist and translator, Stephen O'Shea relocated to Southern France for two years in order to complete his research. He writes clearly and with evident passion for his subject. Intended for the general reader, The Perfect Heresy includes historical background and explanations without interrupting the narrative flow; there is also an annotated bibliography to facilitate further reading. O'Shea's examination of the Cathars sheds important new light on Medieval France as well as on the timelessness of religious intolerance. --Bertina Loeffler Sedlack From Publishers Weekly Although its title and subject confound such a prospect, this broadly researched, well-crafted and extensive treatment of an extinct Christian heresy would make excellent beach reading. Investing his story with the pace and excitement of a novel, journalist and translator O'Shea skillfully brings to life the tale of the medieval Cathars. A group of Christian heretics living, predominantly, in southern France, the Cathars, also known as the Albigensians, claimed to be the true Christians. Members of a church that was characterized by a poor, ascetic clergy (known as the Perfect), they stood against the power, wealth and luxury of the clerics who owed their allegiance to the bishop of Rome. They adhered to a doctrine remarkably similar to that of the Christian Gnostics and challenged the authority of the Church, claiming Catholicism was a false religion; in return, they were exterminated by the Church in the first half

of the 13th century in "a ferocious campaign of siege, battle, and bonfire." O'Shea (Back to the Front) suggests that the harsh reprisal against this alternative sect both enabled the expansion of the French monarchy into the formerly independent region of Languedoc and created the first modern police state—the Inquisition. Cogently, provocatively and precisely argued, this volume is a sound and engaging exposition of a pivotal episode in European history. 15 bw illus. (Aug.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal

O'Shea (Back to the Front) chronicles the history of the medieval Cathars in what is probably the most user-friendly account to date. At times, the book reads like a historical novel, as characters like Simon of Montfort, Raymond of Toulouse, and Peter of Aragon assume real-life dimensions in their ongoing tug-of-war for control in southwestern France. The heretics of Languedoc are compellingly rendered, as are their dualistic beliefs and practices, which provoked Pope Innocent III's 1209 crusade. A cast of relevant historical figures with brief biographies is outlined at the beginning, maps of significant locales and battle sites are interspersed throughout, and helpful endnotes are provided. The book is marred, however, by the author's transparent loathing of medieval Catholicism and by some one-sided depictions of methods like inquisitorial procedure. Those seeking a tempered, objective, and scholarly presentation should consult other works (Malcolm Lambert's *Medieval Heresy*, Blackwell, 1992, for instance). Fierce bias aside, this book tells the story of the Cathars in a way that will appeal to and inform general readers. For most libraries.

DLoren Rosson III, Nashua P.L., NH Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.