***The Demonization of Male Sexuality in the Bogomil and the Italian Cathar Creation Myth as the Basis of Feminist Misandry and Gynocentric Gender Roles!***

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While there are slight differences between Cathar and Bogomil versions in the creation myths as we will outline here the two alterations which at a first superficial sight may seem to be contradictory reveal themselves in fact upon a further and deeper inspection as a complementary picture of the heretic misandry as reflected in their correlating creation myth that served as metaphysical basis for feminist and misandrist demonization of male sexuality. Those are these very myths that have depicted men in terms of a rapist and as a bestial being by his nature. Let's begin first with the Bogomil version. In this heretic and Gnostic creation myth the first man – a female – was in a way a consequence of this cosmic struggle between good and evil; the being thus created in a female form was meant to bring solace into the lives of sentient beings, using her love in order to appease the aggression planted in the world by the destructive (mail) forces. In retaliation, the destructive forces collected body parts from the most ferocious of animals, and fashioned out of them a being outwardly resembling the woman, but endowed with the male demonic qualities of its maker and compelled by its sex drive. Here we can already see most of the attributes of modern feminist as well as general misandry. The demonic depiction of the obsessive male sexuality, the description of men as ugly animals, the allegedly inherent evil and violence of men and many more, Moreover, the union of the first woman with a man was depicted according to this misandrist creation myth as a rape and thus subsequently her being “descended” to lust which brings another two crucial elements of the modern misandrist and feminist environment namely the fallacy of rape culture, the feminist ideas of all men as being nothing but rapists as well as pure nature of the woman as an asexual being who does this only to tame the demonic male. Further in this creation myth the first man whose savage breast is soothed by the woman’s influence produced modern men, in whom the two elements (divine and demonic) gradually became so thoroughly commingled that they lost their bearings in the world of value. Spiritual clear-sightedness was supposed to be restored by Priest Bogomil, who preached the idea that people could be saved by rejecting the allegedly objectification of women which is another yet powerful analogy to modern day feminism. This is the way of the female divine love to be first of all reborn in women’s hearts and to restore the world to original harmony and save it from men. In the last analogy we also find the conceptual basis for the chivalric ideal of a male subjugation to a woman as a part of ending suffering.

However, although already taken to extremity in the cathar troubadour culture of Aquitaine and Southern France under the reign of Queen Eleanor, most of the demonization of male sexuality in terms of the misandrist feminist core beliefs as well as the gynocentric gender roles as will be explained in the paragraphs below was shaped in its fringe, neither in the Bogomil Balkan or the Cathars of Southern France but based on the shared heritage in the Cathar communities in northern Italy. Some of the more infamous writers are Christine de Pisan, Lucretia Marinella and of course the German first male feminist Heinrich Cornellius Agrippa. Anyway, the Cathar creation myth presents a narrative that aims at explaining one of the most impossible contradictions in any monotheistic tradition namely how the physical world came to be, despite God's absolute goodness, through demonic evil which in the Gnostic heretical teachings was a God himself, sometimes referred as Satan, meaning and depicting the dualist concept in terms of the struggle between a good (Gnostic God) and an evil (biblical)God. The most detailed Italian example is the creation mythos narrated by the captured perfect Andreas to Gregory IX. In that account, the devil in the form of a great dragon, together with the fallen angel Lucifer which in the Gnostic tradition was understood as the evil deity, trapped captured angels in bodies, and then Lucifer repented and made humans mortal and thus ultimately able to escape their bodies. Cathar missionaries' accounts mostly agreed on the trapped angel, the satanic formation of humankind, and the consequential belief that marriage and procreation are evils because they not only result in a disastrous continuation of the devil's plot in the form of children and spirits, again trapped in body, materiality and physicality but in fact this was possible through rape which also serves as the basis of the feminist narrative that all sex including the marriage is rape and non-consensual. Those accounts differed, however, in their investigation of human identity. The notion of dualist creation opened up the possibility of rethinking concupiscence and human sexuality. The Interrogalio lohannis, a Bogomil text seemingly carried by Nazanus to Italy and circulated from about 1190, sets out the dualist teaching on sex. This text implies that sexual craving and sexuality itself are the source of evil, damaging to us and alien to our identity. This point of view is drastically different from the Catholic understanding of both gender differences as well as sexuality itself as being instilled by God and eternal. The text describes in detail the evil God's creation of human sexuality. This evil God molded a male and a female body out of clay and then told two angels to enter into the bodies. After they entered into the bodies, "the angels grieved deeply that they thus had a corporeal form enforced upon them and that they now existed in different forms." In other words, among other they also wept to find that they had bodies that were sexually differentiated, male and female.

Anyway, when the evil God commanded them to "perform the works of the flesh in their bodies of clay," the newly corporal angels lacked the knowledge of how to do it so the evil God had to find a way to endow them not only with physicality but with lust too. His plot included the creation of Paradise in Eden, where he literally dumped lust into their heads and here comes the misandrist point: "Entering into the form of the serpent he deceived the angel who was in the form of a woman and poured out lust for sin upon her head, and the lust of Eve was like a burning oven." It then goes on and tells us that he "made his lust with Eve with the serpent's tail" – a depiction that not only denotes to rape but in fact to a form of cuckoldry and that will be clearly evident in other accounts, some of whom will be discussed immediately. It is important also to note that in Agrippa's exegesis on Genesis we find the same motive of the serpent as an archetype for men as well as the depiction of its shape as the male organ including the idea that Eve, an archetype for women, was raped by an archetypal man (the serpent represents male energy/Satan/evil God). Then Adam was endowed with concupiscence too. The Dominican Moneta of Cremona in his 1241 exposition against the Cathars not only expands on this nature of human sexuality in its demonic origin but also strengthens the above depiction and conclusion that Eve was raped through an act of cuckoldry and male conspiracy. Moneta writes that Cathars "believe that the bodies of men and women were made by the devil, and the difference of shameful members, whence they say comes all damnable carnal coition." He repeats a Cathar version of original sin:

***"Satan shut another angel into the body of a woman made from Adam's side while he slept. With her Adam sinned. Adam's sin, they declare, was carnal fornication, for they say that the serpent came to the woman and corrupted her with his tail; and from that coition Cain was born, they say"***

***"They also say that: the woman, accustomed to concupiscence, went to Adam and showed him how to copulate with her, and persuaded him. And just as Eve persuaded him, so Adam committed the act; and this, they declare, is the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"***

In other words, and as having all the stories in mind, the account tells that while Eve having been raped through an act of cuckoldry through that act itself Cain was conceived whereas she later came not on her own terms but being forced through the plot of Satan, the evil God, and persuaded Adam to mate with her. Whereas, in practical terms female hypo-agency goes as back as to the Roman empire in terms of its practical legal application, however, the metaphysical concept can be traced back to monotheistic religions including Judaism as well as Christian heresy. Consequently, this creation myth explains the basic nature of human sexuality between men and a woman as evil and bestial lust, resulting or originating from the male nature in its most primal terms (the evil God), which then first creates sexual differences through an act of rape and cuckoldry and then as the result makes the lustful female nature. While this creation myth is at the same time also rooted in misanthropy as its derivative it's also misandrist. Thus by setting the equation of misandry as being equal with misanthropy it therefore also successively elevates women automatically above men to the level of Goddesses. This misandrist notion is of course clearly evident as a Cathar and Bogomil influence on the writings of Heinrich Cornellius Agrippa and especially in his work on the preeminence and the superiority of the female sex. These accounts of Adam and Eve as well as the creation myth in Genesis itself as I elaborated in one of my other discourses on the matter share the idea that it was the serpent who was ultimately responsible for human concupiscence and sexuality including the gender and sex differences themselves. The serpent represented the bestial and evil masculine lust as well as being an archetype for men and the male energy: his tail became the devil's phallus as also depicted by Agrippa in terms that its shape was a symbol for the male organ. He raped and corrupted Eve and taught her the sexual act; she then in return, against her will and reluctantly having to follow his plot, corrupted Adam. It is the basic notion of the feminist narrative of toxic masculinity where men are both the evil perpetrators of female abuse and oppression as well as in the same time the victims of their own toxic masculinity hence the Serpent's depiction was not only an archetype for Adam as representing all men but at the same time also an archetype for the toxicity of the male nature as the dynamic that underlies obnoxious and abhorrent masculinity in general. It is the metaphysical basis for the feminist belief that all men and masculinity are toxic and evil by their nature.

As we have already said this becomes evident in the "De Originali Disputabilis Opinionis Declamatio", where Agrippa deals with the specifics of the Christian concept of original sin and the fall which is a full – fledged exegetical work where he applies the allegorical method of exegesis on Genesis 1 – 3. In a dedicatory letter to Theoderich Wichwael, titular bishop of Cyrene and Suffragan Bishop of Cologne, he claims that he offers an entire new perspective and that he is unaware if anyone before him had come to such conclusions. Instead, that his opinion is based on his own consideration of the problem. However, as we have seen and not only as Marc Van Der Poel notes that "Agrippa's interpretation bears similarities with "the circle of certain heretics, notably the Cathars, in addition to openly being based on the Corpus Hermeticum but in fact they were rooted in the Bogomil creation myth with whom it was in itself adopted by the Cathars. However, although Van Der Poel's assertion is true, we can assert that it's not about a certain probability of some Hertics that may influenced Agrippa but as I have proven Agrippa's understanding and worldview is directly linked and derives, is inspired and influenced by itself from the Cathar and Bogomil teachings. Furthermore, a crucial aspect of Agrippa's exegesis, in addition to his allegorical interpretation of the persons involved in the fall, is his understanding of the exact nature of the original sin. Quite simply put, it consisted in the act of sexual intercourse between Adam and Eve, to use the succinct formulation of Van Der Poel. It undoubtedly alludes to his heretical and especially Cathar origins. Indeed, in harmony and in sync with the Cathar and Bogomil teachings, the openness and fierceness of Agrippa's attack not only on human but especially on male sexuality is stunning and astounding. "My own opinion", says Agrippa, is that the original sin was nothing else but the carnal copulation between man and woman. Then he continues and states: "the serpent does not only stand for sensuality, it represents the vary carnal desire and it is no wonder that its shape resembles the male organ".

This also does not differ a lot from the mainstream misandrist version of the Christian-Judeo biblical theology and in fact incorporates a slightly different version of it. In this biblical myth about human origin and destiny, there are three main actors that is a) the serpent; b) two humans – namely Adam and Eve. In other words, as a symbolic representation male vs. female energies we have first of all the serpent that is whether seen as a) personal representation of an animal or b) collective representation of 1) all animal or 2) a metaphor or analogy for humanity, it is referred to as male (energy). Then we have Adam which naturally represents men and male energy while Eve stand as an archetypal representation of women and female energy. In sum, metaphorically we have representation of two male energies and a female one. Now, let's dive more into the details. Anyway, it is important to say that philologically the biblical text actually does not attribute the main fall to Eve but the snake which means that is the male not female energy that brought this evil and led to the fall of Adam and Even. In a fact, not only we see here in a way that reminds us on heretical teachings an attribution and the equation of the serpent's male energy to Satanic male forced, not only we see again maybe the most earlier origins of the male depiction as an evil beast but also the concepts the women being taken advantage by men as well as that it's them that are the source of it all.

Anyway, because of the Fall, God does not punish only Eve but in fat all of the actors. The biblical depiction of the serpent's punishment is very interesting. First he is the first one to be punished which shows the gravity of the deeds thus symbolically the male energy has the main responsibility for the fall. Second there is also the punishment itself. In chapter three the Bible says: And the LORD God said unto the serpent: 'Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou from among all cattle, and from among all beasts of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. The depiction of the punishment here is crucial as "upon thy belly shalt thou go" is interesting as it gives us the notion the serpent was standing on the on its which strengthens our notion of a male. Then, God punishes and expels Adam and Eve from the paradisal world of Eden into the temporal world of conflict and chaos. However, the interesting thing is that Adam is at least at fault or actually not at fault at all but is still punished. Yet, before discussing his punishment it is interesting to scrutinize Eve's punishment. Now, when cherry picking the story through selective reading and interpretation especially also the wider context of biblical text other external religious sources her punishment as "he shall rule over thee" seems to support the idea of the unfair treatment of her. However, in the wider context especially in the context of Adam's punishment that exhibits male reality and oppression we read "And unto Adam He said: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.

So being actually a reflective myth of existing gynocentric reality, according to the biblical version of this story "Eve's alleged subjugation or her Husband's rule in the greater context is Adam's slavery to his wife as being the sole breadwinner or practically as we would say and use modern terminology being a walking ATM as well as the female privilege of have this all without having to do anything for it. In a wider sense is the three P's or the "PPP" that is the protector, the provider and procreator while being also the earliest and most primitive source of female hypo-agency that was brought as a legal phenomenon to fruition in the Roman Empire partially probably through Christian influence that inherited it from the common Jewish denominator of the Bible as well as the various esoteric and heretic teachings Anyway, according to some post-biblical versions, which exhibit the gynocentric tendency to present women as victims to disguise this matrix, most of the guilt, however, belongs to Eve and her female descendants, this as we see not only isn’t the but also do not exhibit the mainstream theological line. On the other hand, according to the most recent interpretation, religious as well as secular, that are rooted in feminist misandry, mainly from the Cathar heretic Gnosticism but also from the mainstream theological line that are continuation of the traditional misandry now not only all of the guilt belongs to men and not only that they conspire against women, take control and oppress women but that they are evil by their nature

Now, back to Agrippa. So. exactly as we have expressed above, Agrippa then continues and writes: "the serpent I consider to be our disposition towards the senses and the flesh. Or rather, the male genital organ of carnal desire, the creeping member, the lustful member, devious in various ways which tempted and deceived Eve". Thus as I have outlined in the discourse about the Bogomil creation myth, Agrippa fortifies the accusation of Even as being in fact raped by a man (the serpent as an archetype of male energy) and thus also establishes the feminist and misandrist depiction of men as being snakes and rapists. In Agrippa's worldview the sexual act is not only bad in general terms or as such but by constituting or being equal to rape. Thus consequently the original sin according to Agrippa is not the carnal knowledge or the sexual act itself but equals and is rape. In other words, the rape of Eve not the sexual act itself was the original sin. Thus for Agrippa the carnal craving manifested and embodied as rape forms the very core of original sin and not merely the consequence of it as was thought and understood by mainstream Christian theology. As a result of his worldview, Agrippa adheres to the idea that the heredity nature of the original sin as an archetype of the rape of women by men is not only manifested through the sexual intercourse but it is now that all men are also rapists too. In fact, those are the feminist core beliefs especially in the third wave but also prior to it as labeling all sex even consensual as rape including marital sex, seeing all men as rapist and making all men responsible for the action of a single men while the woman is nothing but and always the victim. The latter is also the basis for the feminist narrative known as the personal is the political.

An alternative way to explore Cathar understandings of sexuality and gender which served as the basis for feminist misandry is through examining their practice in daily life. Here it is extremely helpful and important to consider not only the participation of women in sustaining and spreading Gynocentrism through the dualist heresy known as Catharism in France and Italy, in the first half of the thirteenth century and later, marking the time and the beginning of the most primitive development of the proto feminist era but also their involvement in medieval everyday life. In fact, as we will immediately see it was much greater than the previously assumed and passively attributed role generally assigned to women in medieval times. It was both built upon the gynocentric heritage of Eleanor of Aquitaine including her courts of love and the code of Poitevin as well as all of them being a reflection of this heretical society as those dynamics already prevailed for a longer and earlier period of time as the Cathars have penetrated and settled in the region of southern france. This is an important link and piece of history as it shows a co-mutual effort of medieval men and women in establishing the gynocentric culture which then later gave rise to feminism and its inherent misandry.

The records of the inquisition which survive in France show this dynamic very clearly. There is an evidence for those previously prevailing dynamics of female participation and active roles already in 1230s which bear witness to such tendencies, for these carefully recorded depositions and sentences reveal in many examples women who become perfectae or female clerical leader of the Cathar church and many more who were credentes, the lay followers of the religion. Those were these female lay followers who provided economic support and shelter for the perfecti which means that women were neither segregated from economic, social as well as religious life as well as the decision making process. So, the participation of women in Cathar society was commonplace and not unusual. In fact, it continues much older European tradition as those of the Celts which once again show a consistent line of female integration in Christian and otherwise medieval European society. In essence, the Cathar Church was divided into two classes: the perfecti and the credentes. The perfecti were a small minority among the Cathar society who had received the consolamentum in a special ceremony, vowing to live lives of absolute purity, pacific, chaste, without property, eating and drinking only what was strictly prescribed. Their lives were devoted to preaching, conversion and contemplation. The credentes from which the secular Troubadour culture arose by ways of philosophically emanating concept from the religious realms into the secular spheres as described at the beginning of the chapter did not take vows of this kind, but outwardly at least, integrated with the society around them, participating in economic life, marrying and bringing up families and engaging in warfare when the occasion arose. Generally, they received the consolamentum from the perfecti when on the point of death.

In a striking resemblance to the importance of female druids in Celtic civilization Cathar Women went even a step further ahead of their more ancient sisters and not only became perfectae but sometimes were brought up with this specific purpose in mind and dedicated to such a life from birth. An example of this kind is recorded in the deposition of Arnaude de Lamothe, from Montaubon, who appeared before the Inquisitor Friar Ferrier in 1244. She recoiled that in 1209 when she was still a girl she and her sister Peronne had been handed over by their mother, who was a lay follower, to heretics, who took them to the house of a perfecto called Pancia at Villemur. The dynamics described in this account are very important and we will be dealing with them a few paragraphs later. Anyway, the arrangement described above was a kind of convent for female heretics. Here they stayed for about four months until they were taken to the house of Raymond Aymeric, the deacon of the heretics at Villemur. In the presence of a large gathering of Cathars they received the consolamentum, thus entering the ranks of the perfect. Austorgue, the mother, had evidently selected these two girls to become perfectae from her seven children mentioned in the deposition. The account as we have said is also important for another reason. It clearly shows and not only brings an empirical evidence of such occurrences but also exhibit the fact that father had most probably not much to say about the destination of his off springs. In other words, we can see here that even in medieval Europe women had maintained the informal power within the domestic sphere namely the decision making process about home or domestic economics as well as the future of the off spring who should also take care of their parents and elderly. In a wider sense it shows and bears another evidence for the matrifocal – gynocentric nature of European feudal society. According to the same account, Bernard de Lamothe, who was probably an older brother, eventually became 'the Cathar bishop of Toulouse", and the other four (two girls and two boys) were followers in the sect. So, the mother clearly decided about the future of her sons too not only that of the daughters.

Either way, Arnaude and Peronne lived at Panda's house for another year after 'ordination' until the arrival of the Albigensian Crusade in the vicinity forced them and their companions to flee. This marked the beginning of a life spent 'on the run" during which Peronne died, and which finally ended with the arrest of Arnaude by the Inquisition. The sisters were taken from house to house and farm to farm or they lived in cabins or huts built in the woods, sometimes staying overnight or for a few days, at other times remaining for as long as a year and on one occasion for three years when they lived in a cattle-shed. Food supply was brought to them by lay followers, who guided them from place to place and provided shelter. Besides the fact that this technical life style in the woods and the food being offered by believers reminds us and draws an interesting parallel to the life style and practice of Buddhist monks living in the woods and going for alms as it is an evidence to the Buddhist – Manichean heritage of the Cathars through the link of 10th century Bogomil heresy of the Balkan, in fact, being a direct derivative of this Bulgarian heretical movement that spread to western Europe and France from the North over the Danube and the southern root via Northern Italy, it also shows that besides the persecution of the inquisition female followers felt quite safe to spend their time alone in the woods without the fear of being assaulted (whether sexually or otherwise). In comparison early Buddhist accounts tells us that this was one of the reason why in the tome of the Buddha and later female Buddhist nuns as standing opposed to monks resided in monasteries designed for both sexes for this very reasons of security (not necessarily in terms of sexual assault but in general terms).

At one point, about two years after the flight from Villemur, frightened by persecution, they returned to Montauban and put aside the sect of the heretics and ate meat and they were reconciled by the bishop of Carcassonne. Although remaining in contact with the heretics, they did not resume the life of perfectae for eight years, when they entered a convent of female heretics at linars and received the cansolomentum once more, this time together with their mother. The perfectae were also involved in more secular activities. The evidence of inquisitorial sentences and depositions strongly suggests that a rigid separation from the material elements of the world, which represented their ultimate goal, was not fully achieved by many of the perfect, male or female, and that the necessities of everyday life led them to participate in economic activity to on extent not entirely compatible with their professed views on the nature of evil. Those Perfectae either gave or sold a variety of goods to their supporters including bread, fish, wine, clothing, bags, linen, cloth, shoes and wax. They undoubtedly handled money, for they sometimes paid for food and accommodation provided for them and sometimes made monetary gifts or loans to believers. Food and drink were also readily provided by the female believers: bread, fish (especially eels), vegetables (cabbages, lettuce and onions are particularly mentioned), grain, fruit, oil, cakes, wine and cider, are among items given. When food was not donated, the heretics arranged for its purchase.

Moreover, a certain Raimonde Salinera testified that she often sold her bread to certain female heretics and that she had many times brought fish and other necessities for them, 'at their request and with their money'. This is one of the clearest evidence that women did not only had access but also possessed and were in control of their own money and finances. Clothing, bedding, linen, woollen threads, bags, dishes, and gifts of money (or in one case a pound of pepper, presumably to be used as currency) were among non-food items donated or bequeathed by female followers. Female followers provided essential support in other ways too: Bernarde Targuier lent money to Bernard de Lamothe (which again shows that women had not only access to family finances but had also control over the decision making process), the bishop of the heretics, Humberge Paline, 'received goods given to them', Berbeignueira, the wife of Lobenx from Puylaurens, looked after items of value for the heretics, including a book, 60 solidi in money and a piece of wax, Berengere, the wife of Assalit de Monts, 'handed over the legacy of a certain perfected heretic to the heretics', and Maria, the widow of a certain Hughes, went out to buy clothes in which a certain dead heretic was buried. This also shows that women were not only were not excluded from social as well as religious life but also not segregated from economical endeavors as well as financial decisions whether for themselves and others. The accumulation of such events clearly shows not only a tendency as it is not some coincidence but a deep and profound dynamic in which women controlled human as well as financial resources (which for sure at least largely but as we will see certainly not exclusively were provided by men).

Furthermore, as there was no land inheritance in the middle ages as we might understand it in modern terms, while land belonged to the royal institution and the church, medieval inheritance simply meant the permission to stay and not be thrown off the land based on the male military service. In fact, it was not a male privilege or privilege at all but a sort of payment for the services of men from which the landlord gained profits whether material or immaterial. So, while especially for the poor masses inheritance per se as we have seen was the mere allowance to stay on the land as long as the military service was provided "inheritance" as such had simply a symbolic meaning while in addition the typical southern nobility went as far as to take away even this symbolism from men and therefore tended to exist on divided lands or within a collective lordship, in which male and female heirs might hold jointly, and in which there was little loyalty to the Count of Toulouse, the nominal overlord. It meant that although serving in the military men were deprived of this symbolism that were granted to women as unearned merit and privilege hence they even didn't have to fight for it as men. Thus, in the early middle ages the access of a woman to all or large parts of the family property was therefore not uncommon as standing opposed to the misandrist myths as spread by feminists. Additionally, as inheritance as we have seen did not truly existed (not forbidden for women only which is a common feminist fallacy) women were dowried not because they were bought by men but again while it was forbidden for men to inherent anything too they still had to give dowry to the woman to secure her in the case of divorce and not for the benefit of the husband in the same dynamic as it exists today in the Muslim Arab Gynocentric society or like in the Thai society as a form of social security net. Therefore, if we take all the accounts and conditions into consideration, the role of women as whether land-holders or the financial-economic gatekeepers remained important and secure thus consequently their social influence was considerably high. So, in a way all the above dynamics and more as we will discuss below started the social, economic and societal tendencies of women later obtaining more and more such unearned privileges, whether symbolic or very actual ones, that not only marked the beginning of women being put on the pedestal without having done anything for their privileges and men serving them as slaves. As I have said those dynamics are already reflected in the code of Poitevin declaring men by queen Eleanor of Aquitaine as the thing of a woman while it will later be taken to extremity within the context of European gynocentrism, modern feminism and subsequently its inherent misandry.

Hence, in this kind of social structure, where women controlled economic as well as human resources within the family as well as high societal status including symbolic as very actual ones, it is not difficult to imagine the influence of the matriarchal figure, presiding over the co-heirs and maintaining a strong grip upon family ties and attitudes. Based on a longer established line and heritage of heretical gynocentrism and Eleanor's legacy, an implicit recognition of the importance of this structure in southern society is contained in article 46 of the Statutes of Pamiers, imposed upon languedoc by the victorious Simon de Monfort in 1212, which forbade noble women to marry an indigenous person during a period of ten years without the consent of the count, a position which Monfort held de facto at that time. This southern aristocracy felt no community of interest with the local clergy. Petty seigneurs, confined to their share of the co-seigneury, found a display of anti-clericalism a convenient pretext for the usurpation of church lands, an attitude which perhaps reflected the policies of leaders like the Counts of Toulouse and the Counts of Faix. Pierre des Voux-de-Cernay describes in detail the atrocities committed by Raymond-Roger, the Count of foix, among which was a murderous attack upon the canons of St. Antonin of Pamiers, when they objected to the establishment of the count's aunt, a perfected heretic, as head of a Cathar house in the tawn. While these attitudes can be exaggerated - the crusading tradition was strong in the south and the Military Orders were well-established there - nevertheless, it does seem that such a society presented no united authoritarian front to deviation and heresy. Catharism and Waldensianism flourished in the south, because the crust of repression, so much thicker and more uniform in the north, was thin and brittle in the south. According to another crusade chronicler, Guillaume de Puylaurens, the knights of languedoc rarely vowed their children to the priesthood, apparently because they sow Catharism as a better alternative, more suited to their needs and attitudes. Jordan of Saxony, the second master-general of the Dominican Order, maintained that the perfectae were assured of a steady supply of girls from the noble families of the Lauroguais 'by reason of poverty', a reference to the practice of holding through co-seigneurs.

The importance of the matriarchal figure has already been suggested above as in regard to the account of the women and girls dedicated to spiritual life all recalled that either grandmothers or mothers or both but never fathers had been the ones initiating those decisions. When coupled with the code of Poitevin and Eleanor's courts of love, it is also the same preserved dynamic underlying the modern mindset of family courts where mothers are seen as the soul instance to decide over the child's future as the man is nothing but still the thing of a woman. In other words, it is still the mother today who decides over the human resources and the financial state of affairs of the family. In fact, as the non-religious leaders of Aquitaine and elsewhere (and as standing opposed to the church) have accepted and embraced the secular elements of the Cathar religion, the code of Poitevin and Eleanor's courts of love are mirroring and are an unavoidable reflection of those Cathar beliefs and heresy. A closer look at one particular family whose account was brought above (and there were many) shows the relationship between social structure, heresy and the position of women in less general terms as discussed above but in very specific context. In such circumstances the importance of female influence within the family structure is hardly to be doubted. Equally, a social structure which permitted strong feminine influence also offers examples of determined women who were prepared to defy their families who unsurprisingly appear in all of those accounts. It's another striking dynamic to modern feminist tendencies to destroy the nuclear family whether through divorces, single parenthood and by many other means.

Anyway, another relevant factor concerns the relatively advanced aspect of urban development of languedoc. The prevalence of heresy in the region has often been so ascribed for this was supposed to promote the free movement of traders and their goods, and with them, heretical ideas, possibly derived from the eastern lands in which the Manichaean heresy found its origins, and to which many western merchants travelled. There is certainly some truth in this explanation, for the most urbanized regions of western Christendom - apart from Languedoc, northern Italy, Flanders, Champagne, and the Rhineland – do seem to have been most prone to outbreaks of heresy, but perhaps it might be better to change the emphasis and suggest that the existence of the urban environment was more important in encouraging the appearance of ideas and beliefs already in existence, rather than simply as a means of importing ideas and beliefs from outside. Certainly the latter helped ignite the former, but dualism was latent in Languedoc in the first place. This may help to explain the pre-prominence of women, for women played a proportionately greater part in the industry and commerce of most towns than they did in the militaristic sphere of society which perfectly fitted into the gynocentric feudal societal contract of men as being cannon fodder. Anyway, although men were also doing all the hard and dirty work as well as being the provider the major industry of the towns of Languedoc, that of textile manufacture, was by no means exclusive to men, as the examples cited above illustrate. Research into the guild records of Toulouse shows that in the statutes on cloth-making of 1227, which are the earliest known for the city, women were admitted both as masters and as artisans, apparently on an equal basis with men, while spinning may well have been an exclusively feminine occupation completely refuting the feminist narrative of women being subordinate chattels as the evidence brought proves that they even were masters of men in various professions. Later guild records of the city, between 1279 and 1322, show that five crafts specifically allowed the membership of women, but Sister Mulholland, who did the fundamental research on this, thinks that women 'shared in the industrial life of the city wherever the work of the craft was appropriate and possible' and that therefore other guilds must have admitted women too. The legislation of 1227 dearly favors the dominus or domina of the crafts, for they controlled both the raw materials and the outlet for the finished products, so perhaps Catharism gave the artisans on opportunity to escape the economic subjugation which their work involved, enabling them to gather together in the houses so frequently mentioned in the depositions, rather like the beguinoges which become increasingly common in northern Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In the bottom line when we weave and interlace all evidences together women did not only not were exploited, oppressed or submissive and subordinate status but given the whole picture they were the privileged, entitled and exalted class in society and while it's clear that for the poor and oppressed masses of society, both for men and women, the situation was catastrophic, at least they were so in relative terms to the poor men.

Moreover, although the philosophical, and psych-cognitive realm is more important as the practice itself emanates in first place from the philosophical, the psycho-cognitive or spiritual realm too, thus working and influencing each other reciprocally, historians of religion have learned in recent decades from sociologists and anthropologists—notably Pierre Bourdieu—that belief systems can also be taught through practice. That is, people learn understandings of the social order, authority, and even cosmology through models of behavior, repeated gestures, and practices." Behavioral philology is also a similar field to such dynamics. So, not only inquisitors but especially the Cathar laity accused of heresy in the thirteenth century were quick to insist that practice implied belief. It is this dynamic that enables us to gain insight and understanding into the immense role of women in medieval time and especially their elevation over men. Based on those undercurrents, some Cathar lay follower defended themselves or family members against a charge of Cathar heresy by pointing to marriages and offspring. In Vicenza in 1287, the beneficiaries of the long-dead Marco Gallo sought to avoid a post-mortem condemnation for heresy that would strip them of their property. They produced witnesses to prove that he had not been a heretic: he had a wife, "stayed with her in marriage while he lived, according to the custom of the Roman church and by her had many sons and daughters." He also received the sacrament at death."' As Prancesca Tognato points out, this defense the ardent call of the weaver in Toulouse accused of heresy: "I am not a heretic, for I have a wife and I sleep with her. 1 have sons, I eat meat, and I lie and swear, and I am a faithful Christian." Belief and practice were bound up together. So, a lot of the practice of the French Cathar women we have already elaborated above therefore the next inevitable question will be about the nature of practice of Italian Cathar women! How many female perfects there were for example? To what extent did they actually play priestly formal roles or roles that changed the gynocentric balance between the genders – of course favoring, elevating and granting female a much higher status in society? The answers, not surprisingly is that although the extent of women's formal involvement as Perfectae may varied by town and by social status the preeminence and higher status rooted in informal power remained.'' For example, Master John, author of Pietro Parenzo's *Leggenda* tells us that it was two female missionaries who succeeded in spreading the Cathar faith in Orvieto at the end of the twelfth century, and a group of pious matrons who were first persuaded by them. Thus, he described a special initial impetus from female preachers.

There is also evidence that this pattern continued to persist. Some Orvietan women were of course very religious, like Bonadimane, who testified to a healing miracle of the Franciscan Ambrose in 1240 and then was convicted post mortem of Cathansm in 1268. ' Little clusters of female penitents existed in Orvicto as in other Tuscan and Umbrian towns. A hint of a circle of religious women appears in a benefaction in

the 1251 will of Gastia, daughter of Stefano di Falko: she left four libre on behalf of her soul, with forty soldi to be given "to those women whom her mother knows," and her heir was termed her friend, Madonna Tedora." In 1268, one-third of the Orvietans sentenced for heresy were women: twenty-eight out of eighty-five. At least fourteen were widows, and most

of these were the widows of convicted Cathars. At times, being the main force in spreading the heresy (which means dominating formal power) as well as incorporating the embodiment of informal power (not because of misogyny) as in the case of Domenico Toncelle, the inquisitors targeted the female relatives of important dead men but not the men themselves (because given the sum of their power they were even stronger than those powerful men themselves). There were close ties between some of the women sentenced, like Bellapratu and her daughterin- law Grana, furriers' wives who lived in the same household, and the three Guidutie sisters. Small groups of women were sentenced together, perhaps reflecting their close association." Female perfects were uncommon in Orvieto: five are mentioned in the 1268 sentences, compared to at least thirty-two male perfects, or about 15 percent.39 However, one active female perfect was at the center of a little network of women, all from interconnected families of the merchant elite: the perfect Ricca is mentioned in the sentences of all three Guidutie sisters, as well as those of Vianese, the wife of the merchant Giovanni Claruvisi, and Camera, the widow of the early popular leader Rainucci de Aran, It was Ricca who came at the summons of Verdenovella to console the dying servant woman Dyambra.41 Her active role may have been more acceptable in merchant houses than in those of the nobility. The Toste, who lived in the style of the minor nobility despite their lack of titles, had little contact with female Cathars: no Toste sentence mentions Ricca or any other perfects.

On the other hand, in Florence, it is clear that in the 1240s, clusters of women were again at the center of the faith. Evidence survives from the depositions of 31 people who were questioned by the Dominican inquisitor in the1240s. The inquisitors were not obviously targeting women still showing some sentiments of male chivalry in protecting women despite their power: the dossier was assembled in order to obtain a heresy condemnation of two powerful and defiant brothers, Pace and Barone del Barom. Two of the documents are, in fact, summaries of testimony that list what could be proved against the Baroni and leave out information about other possible Cathars. Despite the fact that the targets were two men, over half of the witnesses were female: seventeen of thirty-one witnesses. Furthermore, the number of convinced Cathars who were female was significantly higher which again is a derivative not only of their powerful status but in fact them standing at the center of formal religious sources of their formal power. The witnesses named at least fifty-three perfects, or people who received the consolation. Of that group, at least twenty-three were women—over 40 percent. The stones in the depositions suggest the special involvement of women from minor elite families. When the inquisitors adduced evidence against Rinaldo de Pulci, they drew entirely on women. First, they cited three female perfects, Biatrice de Sizis, Albense of Siena, and Contelda, who admitted that they had been consoled in his house and had stayed there for a time. Furthermore, "noble ladies and other women worthy of faith" claimed "that they saw Torsello and other consoled heretics often perform the imposition of hands in his house." Finally, it was proved by "other women who were believers and have returned to the faith and by a certain female servant of his house, that they often saw heretics in the house." As we have elaborated in many of our discourses the power of balance which reflected and mirrored the misandrist ideal of medieval Gynocentrism as understood by Eleanor of Aquitaine and spread by the troubadours was already broken in many places in Europe thus the Cathar practice in Florence is just another example for those gynocentric undercurrent already mirroring and reflecting feminist matriarchal dynamics and tendencies that resulted in the break the balance of formal and informal power within the contemporary gender roles, though within limits, leading to the elevation of women and the devaluation of men. Elite men in Florence like Barone del Baroni for example started to make the formal bow of reverence to perfected women. Additionally, women did also teach and even preach. "There are striking Florentine references to women teaching the Cathar faith. The Baroni brothers admitted that they learned heresy from their mother, the consoled Cathar Belliotta.

In addition, we find five more times, where people mentioned women teaching other women. For example, before Albense became a perfect, she stayed in a hospice for four months to learn Cathar doctrine from two female perfects, Fioretta and Meliorata. Johanna, the wife of Locteringhi, testified that she was first taught by a woman named Aspecta. Madonna Adalina, wife of Albizo Tribaldi, described the preaching of a Sienese woman who was a Cathar visionary. She saw Madonna Tedora "with a certain Sienese woman who closed her eyes like a person who is sleeping and raised up her voice on high and began to speak and preached, and [Adalina] staled that "I (the Sienese woman) said that Torsello and Marco and others stood at the feet of majesty dressed in clothing ornamented with precious stones." Torsello had been the Cathar bishop of Florence, Marco perhaps the perfect called Marco of Montefiascone in several sentences. The unnamed woman lifted up her voice to preach of a vision depicting an afterlife that rewarded and justified Cathar perfects. In sum, the practice of Cathar women in Orvieto and Florence did deny contemporary gender roles: female perfects broke with familial expectations and rejected dowry, marriage, and childbirth to pursue autonomous religious careers, and at times played a sacerdotal role. Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison in an extensive study of inquisitorial records from southern France argued that this role was very limited: female perfects were less apt than males to travel and preach, more apt to remain enclosed in a hospice. It was only during the period of active inquisitorial persecution that: women played a more active role. We need more thorough study of the Italian female perfects, but the evidence examined here as well as that above suggests that they did not only had independent lives but were also very influential. They did not live quietly in houses; they were neither properties nor were they chattels of their husband or anyone else. Women who wished so did administer, they took part in the religious life, incorporating and being valid, pervasive and extremely influential part of the spiritual elite, this holding formal power almost as men did as well as exclusively keeping all of the informal power. Their actions, their status is a clear evidence that patriarchy or patriarchal authority was nothing than a myth and especially a lie invented by feminist and their supporters. They did not challenge anything, any patriarchal authority or norms but simple worked for female supremacy

At the same time, the practice of female Cathars was not altogether anomalous. In fact, although initially the catholic church tried to maintain the traditional balance, they gave rise, inspired and served as role models for Catholic women who remained within the Catholic Church in the early thirteenth century to go the same root in adopting the misandrist gynocentric ideal and thus through the enormous influence on the clergy to make them to support, adopt and then actively participating in the spread of the gynocentric culture. The repudiation of marriage and family became a standard element in the lives of the saints, far more important to Catholic than to Cathar piety. The Florentine noblewoman Umiliana dei Cerchi was a contemporary of the Cathar women discussed here, and she probably knew them. Her vita includes episodes in which she vividly repudiated her roles as wife, sister, and daughter. Women like the Franciscan Angela of Foligno shaped their piety in accordance with the new misandrist and proto feminist ideal as propagated by the Cathars – especially the women: Angela actually prayed for the deaths of her family members and believed that her husband, children and mother died by God's will because they were obstacles to her religious vocation. As we have said this is one of the more vivid and evident example for medieval misandry and devaluation of men. In the early thirteenth century, some Italian religious women enjoyed extreme independence. Clare and the early Franciscan women, for example, were not enclosed in convents, and Clara Gennaro speaks of female followers of Clare wandering barefoot allbvover northern Italy. Clare herself at times came close to a sacerdotal role, as in a miracle story in which she deployed the Eucharist against Muslim troops. Clusters of female penitents also enjoyed lives that were not constrained by a rule. The papacy and bishops moved energetically to control and define these female religious movements, imposing Benedictine monasticism, thus enclosure, on Clare and her followers, and institutional order, in the form of rules under the aegis of the mendicants, on the penitents. As Anna Benvenuti Papi has shown, marginal, irregular religious women in Tuscany came to be constrained by the mendicant orders. The Franciscan and Dominican hagiograpbers who recorded their lives and miracles shaped the texts to embody specific models of female piety. Despite those attempts the perspective of Catholic women described above, efforts to repress Catharism as heresy and to place female piety under institutional controls not only were doomed to fail but failed at last

***Marriage***

Another modern feminist principle was already to be found in the heretical Cathar belief that a woman's role as wife and mother has no value, since giving birth and nurturing children only perpetuates the evil of existence in the body. It is normally understood in terms of their primal origin. However, understanding the above creation myth its and another layer to this condemnation. In this interpretation and context, the body could not define people's roles in the Cathar faith: both sexes could become perfects, preach, and administer the sacrament. This is not only the basic narrative of all modern feminism but especially the left one. Whereas in the sphere of the ascetic religious Cathar elite such an attitude maybe incorporates less male exploitation on a personal level while the public still exits, however, the same dynamic exhibits a pervasive dynamic of male exploitation for the secular gynocentric society of the laity. The best way to understand this dynamic in those term is to observe the modern ones where women continue to reign over the informal power but aim and strive to take all the formal power from men. This of course has created yet another pervasive frontline between Cathars and Catholics was marriage. The Catholic Church at the end of the twelfth century redefined the sacrament of matrimony in terms not of sexual consummation but of free choice, and some scholars have argued that this shift was an effort to vindicate marriage in response to the Cathar attack. I suggest that the accusation that Cathars deny marriage was not merely a Catholic diatribe against them (because it allegedly helped them to justify the extension of clerical control over marriages) but in fact was a necessity as the marriage as the fundamental unit of society was endangered. The Cathar attack on the matrimonial institution is reflected today in modern feminism and is and was constantly under attack by almost all feminist thinkers. Thus although at times the Church went to find their basic attempt to stop the Cathar war on family was as I said a matter of reality and necessity.

As present-day feminist leaders state in the below quotes the marriage has to be destroyed:

According to Linda Gordon: "***The nuclear family must be destroyed, and people must find better ways of living together.... Whatever its ultimate meaning, the break-up of families now is an objectively revolutionary process"***

**Sheila Cronin,** the leader of the feminist organization NOW,stated*that "****Since marriage constitutes slavery for women, it is clear that the women’s movement must concentrate on attacking this institution. Freedom for women cannot be won without the abolition of marriage"***

Andrea Dworkin is the most ultimate expression of the above misandry by stating that **"*Marriage as an institution developed from rape as a practice".***

And of course Catherine MacKinnon which said that ***“All sex, even consensual sex between a married couple, is an act of violence perpetrated against a woman"***

Anyway, it is clear that many of the people, especially because of the extreme heretical misandrist and misanthropist nature of their teaching were attracted to Catharismbecause aversion to sex and marriage in first place and not so for political ends which comes at the second place. Both the religious Cathar ideal in the first place as well as the great period of legal and bureaucratic creativity in the twelfth century in the second place brought about a fundamental reexamination of marriage. The central issue was the potential sanctity of matrimony and its inclusion in the *list of* sacraments. Marriage and conjugal relations were understood, beginning with Augustine, to produce three goods: offspring, faith, and indissolubility. These goods outweighed the evil of sensual pleasure in intercourse and justified marriage and conjugal relations, though only insofar as they were intended to produce children. The idea that marriage is a *sacramentum* also derived from Augustine. From the twelfth century on, as the definition of the sacraments became more precise, there was considerable discussion of exactly what in marriage constituted the sacrament, and many theologians believed that consummation, the sexual union of man and woman, was required for a marriage to be perfected, and thus sacramental. As Seamus Heaney demonstrates, Roland Bandinelli first argued, in his *Summa* of 1143, that the visual sign of marriage was sexual union, signifying the invisible union of Christ and the Church."

This understanding of marital sexuality conflicted with the long tradition of condemnation of sexual pleasure. The canonist Huguccio made the extreme argument that sex was only without sin if without pleasure, a view that was not easily reconciled with the idea that sexual union in practice could perfect a sacrament. The discussion over the position of marital sexuality and the relationship between sexual practice and the sacrament led to a new spiritual assessment of marriage, considered in terms not of physical consummation but of consent and the will. With Alexander III, and then Innocent III, free choice came to define the sacrament of matrimony: present consent between legitimate parties made a marriage, regardless of consummation. Scholars have suggested that this rethinking of Christian marriage was in part a response to Catharism. Theologians justified marriage by highlighting its spiritual potential rather than its procreative purpose. However, on the one hand one can also see it as a case where the Cathars were useful opponents: the exclusion of Catharism helped in classifying marriage and some aspects of gender definitions. Yet, in the great scheme of things it was not enough as it gave rise to feminism that endangers humanity through the destruction of marriage even more. Some anti-Cathar polemicists stressed the idea that the dualist condemnation of marriage led to practices against nature. As we saw, authors included in their attacks on the Cathars the charge that they encouraged sodomy and incest. Rainen Sacconi, in his 1250 *Summa,* wrote that "a belief common to all Cathars is that carnal matrimony has always been a mortal sin and that in the future life one incurs no heavier penalty for adultery or incest than for legitimate marriage, nor indeed among them should anyone be more severely punished on this account. Raineri surely knew better: he was, he tells us, a "former heresiarch, now by God's grace a priest in the Order of Preachers, although unworthy. James Capelli, who took pains to be accurate and defended the perfects from the charge of sexual debauchery, insisted on their denial of all marriage: "They babble that no one can ever be saved in matrimony.

Indeed, these most stupid of people, seeking the purity of virginity and chastity, say that all carnal coition is shameful, base, and odious and thus damnable." When these preachers emphasized the attack on marriage and childbirth as heretical, they were building a Catholic view of sexual and marital normalcy that reinforced a specific understanding of sexual difference as well as their own authority. Clearly, many townsfolk were alienated whether by the religious extremity of the Cathars or the exercise of jurisdiction over marriage by Catholic clergy, and surely Catharism was appealing in part because the perfects did not interfere with marriages except to condemn them. As Duby has argued, for the laity the purposes of marriage and codes governing it were very different from those of reform-minded clerics who defined the sacrament in terms of present consent. Marriage concerned children, property, and inheritance, it was not possible for everyone because of the expense: a marriage required a dowry, and might produce offspring with claims to property whereas most of the masses were slaves and even not in this place. As a result, concubinage was common, judging from the recurring presence in civic court records of women termed the concubine of so-and-so. Thus, in one seduction case mentioned, the man told the woman he wanted to live with him that if she bore children then his father could be persuaded to allow them to marry, despite her lack of a dowry. She apparently was not convinced. The story suggests the gap between their understanding of what marriage meant, in terms of heirs and property, and the canonical definition: in law, the two had only to exchange words of present consent and they would have been married. There is evidence to suggest that theologians' definitions of matrimony nevertheless affected Orvictans, in that the local bishop and the papal curia did step in and adjudicate their marriages. In 1205, an Orvietan marriage case was appealed to Innocent III. A knight sought to annul his marriage, claiming consanguinity in the fourth and fifth degree. His wife demonstrated, in response, that they had been married at least eighteen years and had at least three children. Innocent wrote to Bishop JVlatteo to uphold the marriage. The knight's motives are not clear from the letter— whether or not, the heirs were living, for example—but he presumably wanted a new marriage. Innocent, in this case, closed the loophole that would have allowed the knight to repudiate his wife and take another also showing that women were protected and men couldn't treat them as chattels, or property whatever feminist propaganda they may use/

In this period of sharp antagonism between the Orvietan bishop and some local elites, the bishop put the new definition of marriage in terms

of present consent into practice and used it to exercise authority. A cluster of texts in the episcopal registers reveals the bishop adjudicating marriages— in at least one case, on the grounds of present consent. A list of excommunications and absolutions by Bishop Ranerio (1228—48) includes two "pro uxore," on behalf of or because of a wife, though the

exact nature of the disputes are unstated.' The record of one marriage case, heard in 1212 by Bishop Giovanni, was copied and preserved in the register, perhaps at Bishop Ranerio's instance. It is an important early example of an Italian episcopal marriage case. Significantly, at least one man from a Cathar house was present. The plaintiff, a man called Oderisio de Celle, claimed as his wife a noblewoman named Riciadonna, arguing that she had consented to the union. The simple exchange of *verba de presenti,* present consent, between two eligible people was enough in 1212 to contract a legitimate marriage. The case followed canon law procedure. Oderisio, after his oath of speaking the truth, stated that he was married to Riciadonna: he had sworn to accept her as his wife and given her a ring, and she had consented and sworn just as he did, in the house of Gerardini near Bagno, on the sack near the hearth. This was done in the presence of three witnesses. Riciadonna after her oath of speaking the truth stated that she had never consented to him: neither had she first consented, nor first touched the book; she never kissed him to indicate that she accepted him as her man. He had used force to place her hand on the book, but she had not sworn; he gave her two rings but she rejected them both.

Legal proof required at least two witnesses. Oderisio produced three; each was sworn, testified to these points, and then was questioned. Paltonario— a cleric, although he was a subdeacon and had neither tonsure nor clerical habit—reported the marriage vow: when Oderisio placed the ring on Riciadonna s finger, he said, "By this ring which I place on your finger, you are my wife, and I am your husband." Paltonano insisted that he knew Riciadonna consented because she had extended her finger and accepted the ring, although he did not hear what she said. A layman named Angelo also testified that she consented. Asked whether Oderisio had been joking, he responded that he saw him kissing her many times. In the disputation that followed the witnesses' testimony, the discussion concerned whether the exchange of rings had been in jest. One of the witnesses, Ildebrandino Canuti, claimed it had, and Oderisio responded that there had been two exchanges of rings, the joking one witnessed by Ildebrandino, and another one, witnessed by the others. Bishop Giovanni then cut the proceedings short: he expected Riciadonna's production of witnesses

disproving Oderisio's witnesses' testimony, and ruled that there was no marriage, and that Riciadonna was released and given license to marry. Without more context, it is impossible to know whether Bishop Giovanni was rescuing a young woman and her family from being trapped into an unwanted marriage or, more cynically, doing her family a favor by using consent effectively to annul one marriage and make another possible; perhaps both. The testimony certainly suggests joking and flirtation, but that does not mean that Riciadonna did not or actually consent. John T. Noonan has made a powerful and convincing general argument that consensual marriage strengthened the ability of individuals to choose their spouses." And it is of course yet another powerful evidence that this was not only granted to women to but that at the most basic level women were neither chattels nor properties simply due the fact that if they were they would've come to the marital ceremony with one purpose eliminating any doubt as arose to to the proceedings here.

Anyway, the participants can be partially identified: one belonged to a Cathar house, and two others may have as well. Riciadonna is called a freeborn noblewoman, but there are no direct clues to her natal family. The startlingly casual ceremony took place in the house of the late Ranieri Tiniosi, now (in 1212) the house of Gerardino. His status is best evidenced by his relations with the woman present, Algina. She was at times called his servant and at times his *amasia,* concubine, implying that he was living with a housekeeper/concubine rather than a wife. This arrangement suggests that he lacked the wealth and male (not female) independence to marry. Gerardmo was apparently the heir of Ranicri Tiniosi, and may well have belonged to a family of merchants who by the 1260s were using Tignosi as their surname. One of them, called Ingilbert the merchant, was sentenced for Cathansm in I268. There may also be a link to the Tignosi family in Viterbo and the heretical leader "J. Tiniosi" whose political success, despite his excommunication, troubled Innocent III in 1205. *T*he Miscinelli, a family of Orvietan moneylenders who became wellknown for Cathansm, were directly involved. Oderisio, the groom, was an elite, since the witnesses referred to his squire. One of the witnesses called him Odensio de Celle, suggesting his patronymic may have been Miscinello *or* the nickname Celle. One witness who can be clearly identified was Benedicto Miscinelli. His presence strengthens the possibility that Odensio was another Miscinelli, a man mentioned in other records with the nickname of Ricco, the son of Miscmello.' If correct, this fact is significant, since three of the direct descendants of Ricco Miscinelli were sentenced for heresy in 1268. It is certain, then, that Benedicto Miscinelli was present, and possible that he was there because Odensio was his kinsman. It is also possible that the events took place in a Tiniosi house. These were families long associated with Cathansm. It may be, then, that Miscinelli disaffection from the Catholic Church was linked to this episode, which—for many elites—showed the ambitious bishop using spiritual claims to grab power. Another marriage case involved a Lupicino, probably a member of the Lupicini, another house with Cathar sympathies. Thus several members of Cathar houses can be located in the episcopal court in the early decades of the century, at odds with the bishop over the nature and politics of marriage. These circumstantial bits of evidence support the theory that some Orvietans were angered by episcopal and papal claims of authority over their marriages and that perhaps the politics of marriage had some effect on Cathar popular belief.

**References:**

The following thesis is based on a metta-research that includes a review and analysis using the following sources and references:

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