The Chronicle of William of Puylaurens

The Albigensian Crusade and its Aftermath

W. A. Sibly and M. D. Sibly

THE CHRONICLE OF WILLIAM OF PUYLAURENS

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THE ALBIGENSIAN CRUSADE AND ITS AFTERMATH

Translated
with an introduction, notes and appendices
by
W. A. SIBLY and M. D. SIBLY

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PREFACE

No complete translation of the Chronicle of William of Puylaurens has hitherto appeared in English, and the main purpose of this volume is hence to provide an accurate and readable English version. It is also intended in part to complement our earlier translation of Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay's *Historia Albigensis*, published by Boydell & Brewer in 1998, and reprinted in paperback in 2000 and 2002 with some minor corrections to the notes and appendices.

Publication of this translation of William of Puylaurens means that, taken together with Janet Shirley's translation of the *Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise*,[1] the three main narrative sources for the Albigensian Crusade are now available in full in English versions. However, to regard the Chronicle merely as a source for reference is to do it less than justice. Indeed after living with it for some years we have come to appreciate its value as the work of a highly intelligent man, composed with great care and thought, and very interesting in its own right.

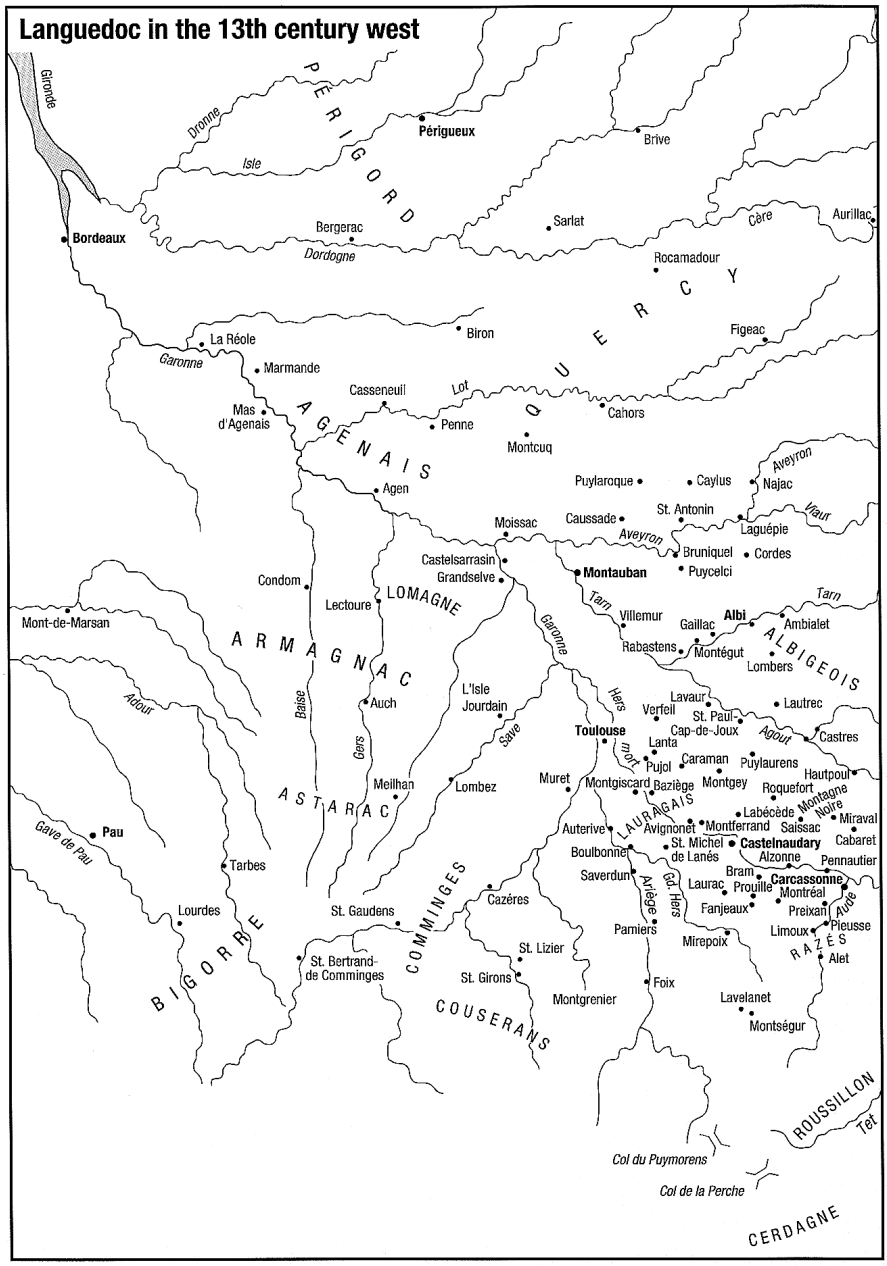
It will be clear both from our annotations and from the points we make in the Introduction that in preparing the translation we have been greatly indebted to Jean Duvernoy's 1976 edition of the Chronicle (reprinted with minor corrections in 1996). This has provided us with the Latin text, a parallel translation into French, and full notes, on many of which we have drawn in compiling our own. We are also indebted to many other works, as will be clear from our Introduction and footnotes.

We are very grateful to Malcolm Barber, of the University of Reading, for answering various queries, and for his general interest in this work and his support in getting it published. Malcolm Lambert answered queries, and Patrick Zutshi, of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, kindly looked at a draft of Appendix B. Hayley Greer prepared the family trees. The Bodleian Library in Oxford provided us with access to many of the items we have consulted.

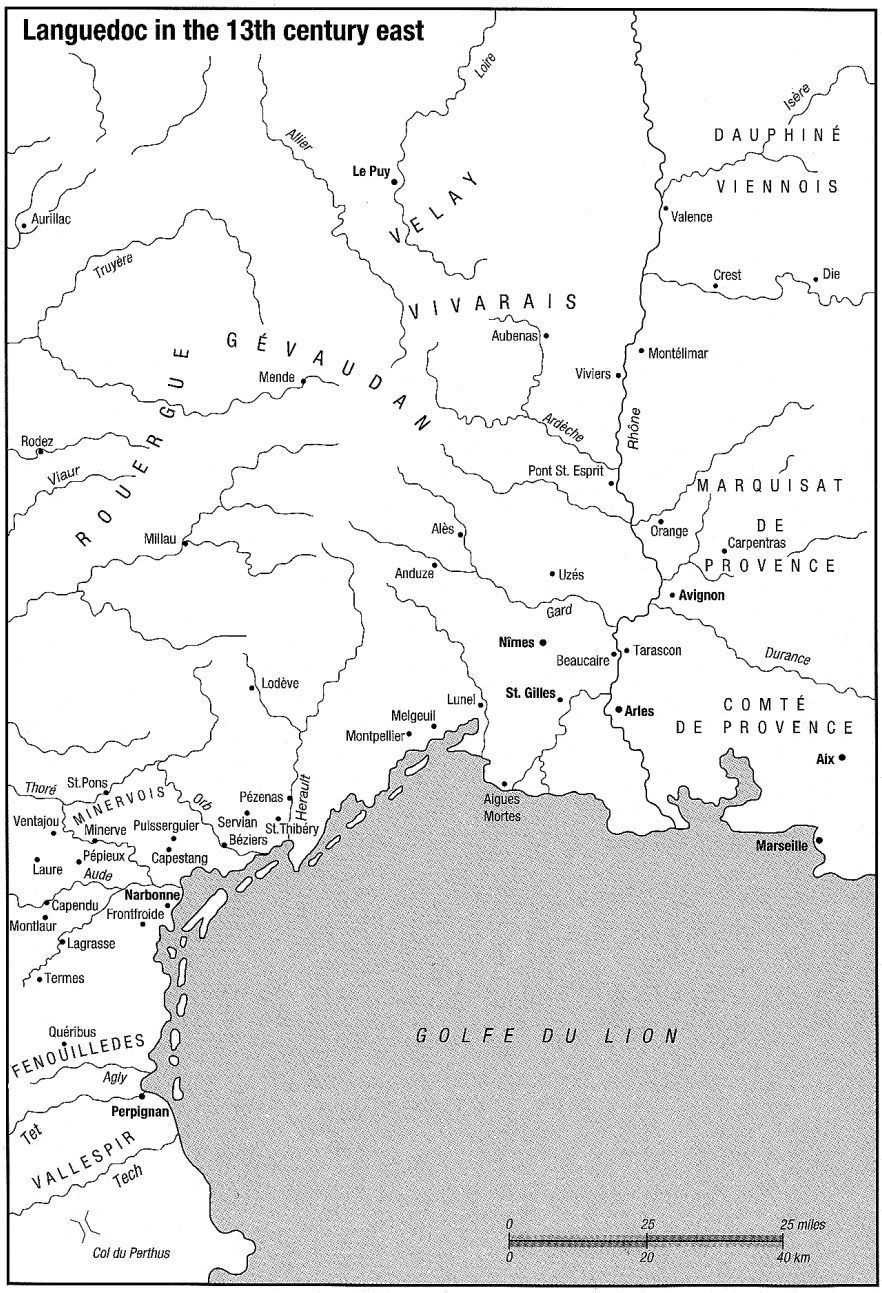
Last, but by rights first, we must also thank the rest of the family for putting up with yet another four years of work on 13th century Languedoc, much of it undertaken when there were many other pressures on us; and Anne Sibly in particular for reading through the whole of the book in proof.

For the errors and misconceptions which remain, we are wholly to blame.

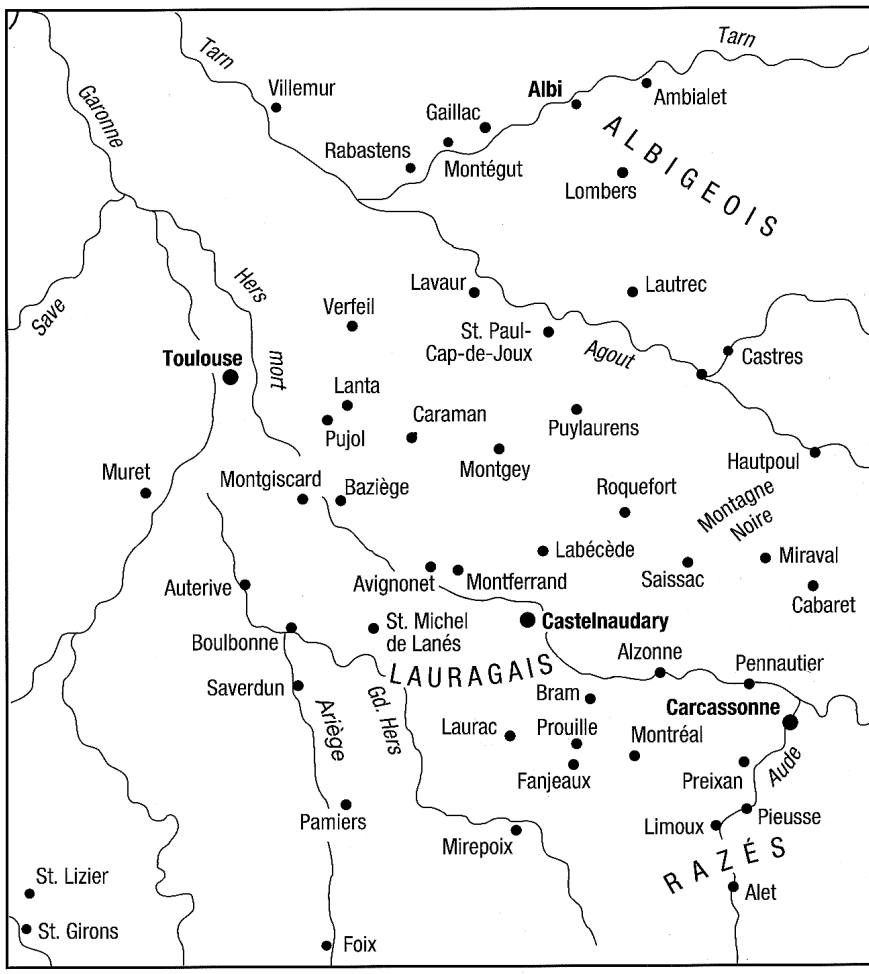
[1] Shirley, *The Song of the Cathar Wars: A History of the Albigensian Crusade* (Aldershot, 1996).



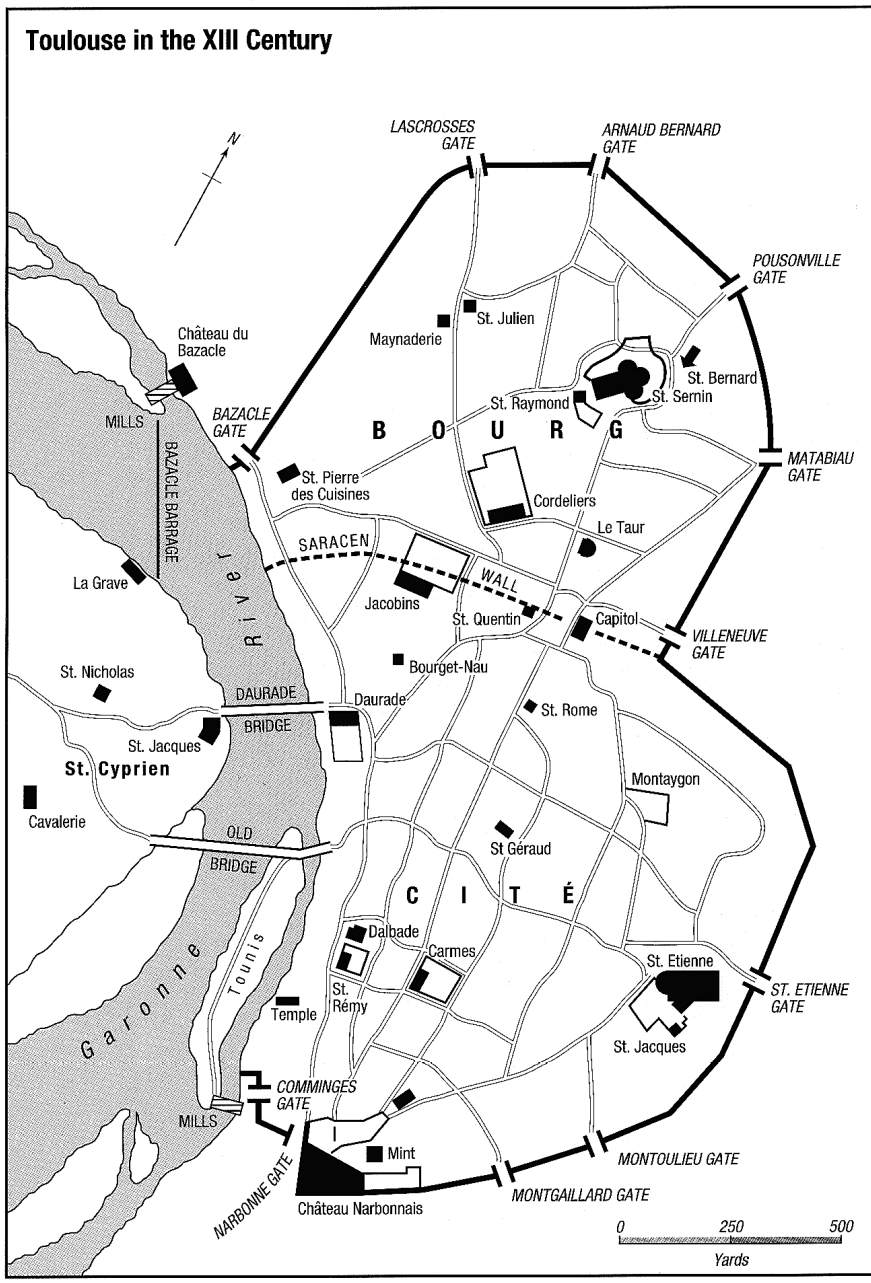
Map 1(a). Languedoc in the thirteenth century (west) (see p. x for enlargement of the area around Albi, Toulouse, Castelnaudary and Carcassonne)



Map 1(b). Languedoc in the thirteenth century (east)

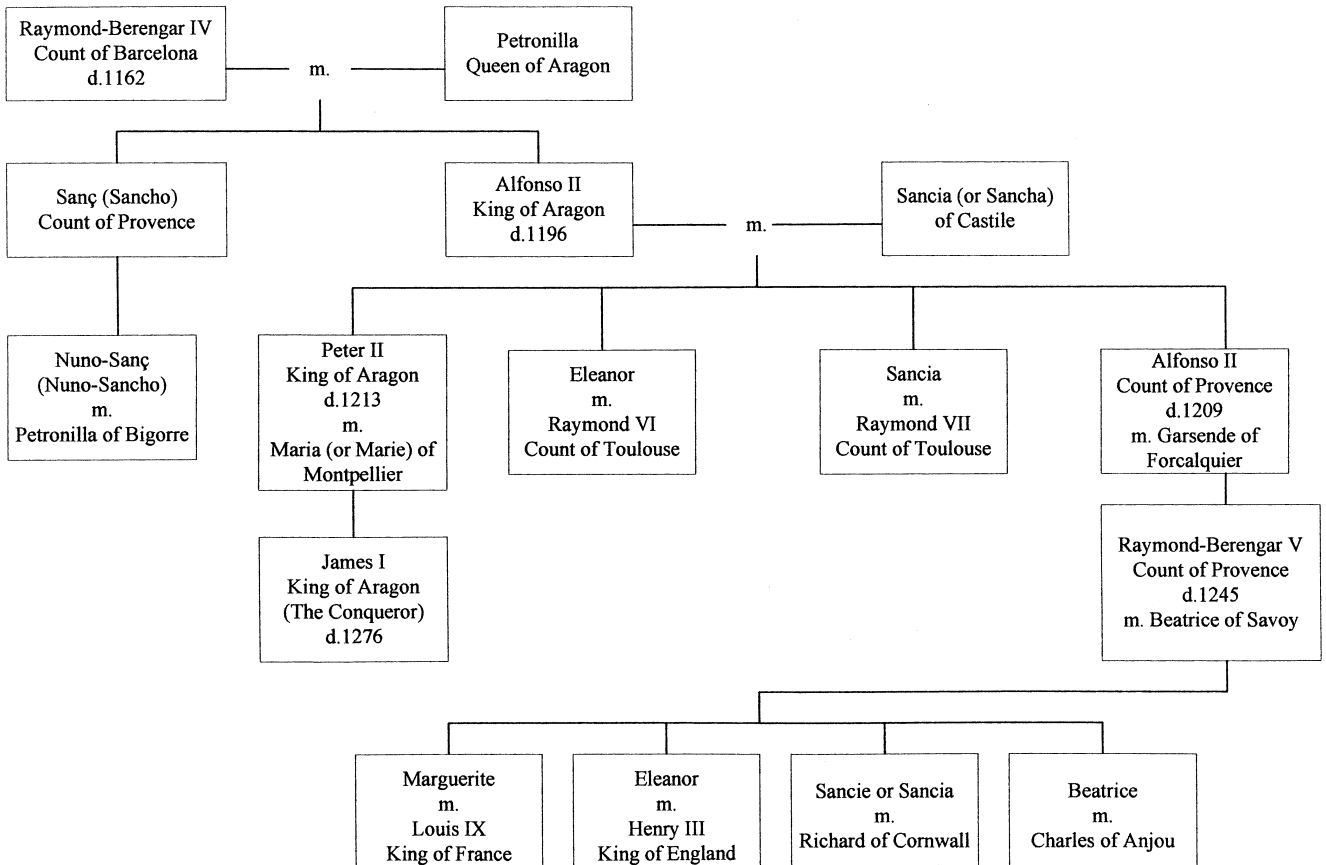


Map 1 detail. The area around Albi, Toulouse, Castelnaudary and Carcassonne

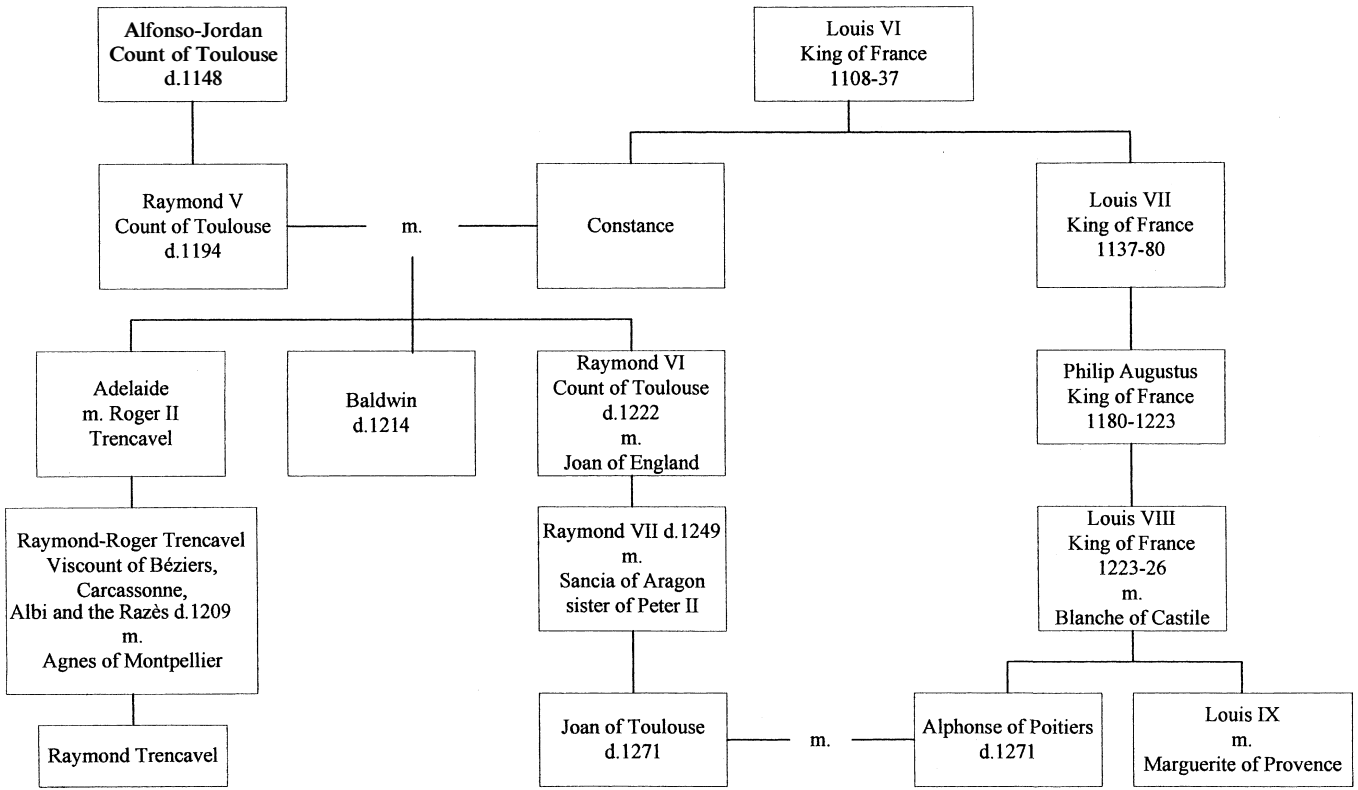


Map 2. Toulouse in the thirteenth century

The Counts of Toulouse and the House of Barcelona/Aragon



The Counts of Toulouse and the French Crown



INTRODUCTION

The general background

The Chronicle (*Chronica*) of William of Puylaurens covers events relating to the history of Languedoc from the twelfth century to the mid-1270s. Its principal subject is the origins, course and aftermath of the Albigensian Crusade, which was launched by Pope Innocent III in 1208–9 against Count Raymond VI of Toulouse and other southern lords who were said to be failing to support the Church in combating heresy. Its particular focus is Toulouse, its bishops, and the Counts of Toulouse, reflecting the fact that William of Puylaurens was a native of the city, who served two successive bishops, and later Count Raymond VII. Much of the Chronicle is based on a close knowledge of the people and events being described, which adds greatly to its importance.

The Chronicle (whose content is outlined in more detail below) begins by describing the strength of heresy and the weakness of the Catholic Church in southern France at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and touches on some of the measures taken to combat heresy at that time, including the preaching campaign in 1206–7. It goes on to give an account of the course of the Albigensian Crusade, which began in 1209 and finally ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1229. It then describes the early development of the Inquisition in Languedoc in the 1230s, with particular reference to Toulouse and the role of its Bishop, Fulk, and also covers other events in Languedoc after the Crusade, and especially those relating to Count Raymond VII of Toulouse in the 1230s and 1240s. The Chronicle draws to a close with some chapters which deal mainly with the affairs of the French Crown and related matters (including Louis IX's crusades) from the late 1240s onwards. It ends with a brief account of the military intervention of Louis IX's successor, Philip III, in Languedoc in the years 1272–5.

The degree of detail provided for different periods varies considerably. Some (such as parts of the 1230s, and the period after the death of Raymond VII), receive relatively little coverage, even though what is said is important.

The Chronicle is one of the three main contemporary narrative sources for the Albigensian Crusade. The other two such sources, the *Historia Albigensis* of Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay and the *Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise*, are both much more detailed than the Chronicle but their accounts come to an end shortly after the death of Simon de Montfort in 1218. William's account of these earlier years is of considerable value, for example in giving details of the condition of the church of Toulouse at the start of the thirteenth century (especially chs. VI and VII), of Fulk's work after he became Bishop in 1205, and of the preaching campaign of 1207. But the Chronicle is also of great importance because it continues to record the later years of the Crusade up to the Treaty of Paris in 1229, and it is a vital source for many events in the 1230s and 1240s, including Raymond VII's marital projects and his relations with the papacy, the French Crown, the Emperor Frederick II, and the Kings of Aragon (James I) and

England (Henry III). William of Puylaurens is also important because of the information he gives on the early development of the work of the Inquisition in Languedoc. Even though his account of this contains significant gaps (see e.g. ch. XLI, n. 55), it gives vital information about the 'episcopal' inquisition conducted by Bishop Fulk in 1229–30, immediately after the Treaty of Paris. It also complements the Chronicle of William Pelhisson (which is concerned mainly with the activities of the Dominican inquisitors in Toulouse in the 1230s), as well as diplomatic correspondence and the records of the work of the inquisitors themselves.

William lived from about 1200, or a little before, to about 1275. He was thus a contemporary of most of the events covered in his work, and he also had the benefit of a long perspective. He served in the household of Bishop Fulk of Toulouse (d. 1231), who clearly had a major influence on him, and is much eulogised in his Chronicle. William served Fulk's successor, Raymond de Falgar, for a time, and was also for some time rector or prior of the church at Puylaurens, about 50 kilometres east of Toulouse. In the 1240s he was chaplain to Count Raymond VII himself.

William was unquestioningly opposed to heresy, and he was unswervingly loyal to the Catholic Church and especially to the bishops of Toulouse. He supported the Crusade and the efforts of the crusaders and later of the French Crown to extirpate heresy from the Midi, just as he supported the work of the early inquisitors. In his Prologue he blames the people, prelates and princes of the Midi for their neglect, which allowed heresy to become implanted in the South, and he regarded the Crusade, and all the destruction it brought, as the inevitable consequence.

Nevertheless, as will appear from our discussion later in this Introduction, he was no blind partisan. He can see the faults of the crusaders, including even Simon de Montfort, the great hero of the Crusade. He was clearly an intelligent man, able to appreciate the complexities of the events he describes without losing sight of his overall loyalties. He takes no pleasure in the warfare and disruption of these years, which he regrets; and the tone of his narrative is in marked contrast both to the simplistic and naive support for the crusaders which characterises Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay's *Historia*, and to the pro-southern stance of the anonymous writer of the second part of the *Chanson*. Sometimes his partiality, and perhaps his devotion to Bishop Fulk of Toulouse in particular, lead him to take what we might see as a one-sided view, but in general he gives much more of a sense of critical detachment than the other contemporary narratives. He himself undoubtedly witnessed many of the events he describes and was closely connected with Bishop Fulk and Count Raymond VII of Toulouse. Taken together, this all means that he is greatly to be valued as a source. Moreover William is no 'Dryasdust': the Chronicle, as the product of an intelligent and knowledgeable man, is also very readable in its own right.

The remainder of this introduction sets out our approach to preparing the translation; discusses the author's life and the composition of the Chronicle; considers in more detail its value as a source; and concludes with a short note on other sources and on some of the secondary works which will help to set it in its historical context.

The text and translation

The Latin text we have used is the version freshly collated from the manuscripts by Jean Duvernoy, printed with an introduction, *apparatus criticus*, extensive notes, and a parallel French translation. This was published as *Guillaume de Puylaurens: Chronique (Chronica magistri Guillelmi de Podio Laurentii)* (Paris, 1976) (hereafter Duvernoy); and was reprinted in 1996 by Le Pérégrinateur éditeur, Toulouse, but with different pagination and note numbering, and some minor amendments. We have referred to the first edition of 1976 throughout, especially because this is the one usually cited, but cross referencing with the reprint is not difficult.

It will be clear that we are heavily indebted to Duvernoy's work in producing our version. He discusses the manuscripts and also previous editions (see his Introduction, pp. 9–18, the basis for the following brief summary). As regards manuscripts, the earliest which survives dates to perhaps the second or third decade of the fourteenth century, and is described by Duvernoy as the sole near-contemporary source of the complete text of the Chronicle. It is MS Latin 5212 in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, and is hence known as 'P'; it may well originate from Toulouse. Duvernoy also discusses four other surviving manuscripts, two of which appear to derive from a common source independent of 'P', but now lost (labelled 'C*'). He also suggests that Guillaume Catel's text of the Chronicle, printed in his *Histoire des comtes de Toulouse* in 1623, may draw on a source independent of any surviving manuscript, and which was also probably 'C*'.

Other printed editions include in particular that of J. Beyssier, published in 1904.[1] Those referring to the Chronicle in work which appeared before Duvernoy's edition of 1976 usually quote from Beyssier, by reference to page numbers, and it should be noted that his edition uses chapter heading XVII twice. A version of Catel's text appears in the *RHGF*,[2] and extracts from William of Puylaurens were also printed in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Scriptores)* in 1882.[3]

In preparing the translation our objective has been to produce a version in readable modern English which will at the same time closely reflect the sense of the Latin. Some comments on William's style appear below. Our interpretation of the Latin has occasionally differed from Duvernoy's, but only on minor points, and we have felt it necessary to record only a very few of these in our notes.

In rendering personal names we have somewhat arbitrarily used French, Latin or English forms, as seemed to us most suitable. There is no standard practice in respect of personal names amongst English writers. Although French writers nearly always use French forms, these can also vary, especially when the names cited are being transcribed from manuscript sources. We ourselves have used

[1] J. Beyssier, 'Guillaume de Puylaurens et sa chronique', in *Mélanges d'histoire du moyen-âge*, ed. A. Luchaire, Bibliothèque de la Faculté des Lettres de Paris vol. 18 (Paris, 1904), pp. 119–75.

[2] *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France* XIX (1833), pp. 193–225 (ed. M. J. J. Brial), and XX (1840), pp. 764–76 (ed. P. C. F. Daunou and J. Naudet).

[3] Ed. O. Holder-Egger, in *MGH (Scriptores)* 26 (1882), pp. 597–602.

English forms where this seemed natural (e.g. John of Beaumont, Raymond-Berengar of Provence, Blanche of Castile), French ones in most other cases, including where the French form is well established in English usage (e.g. Simon de Montfort), and Latin ones in a few others (e.g. the legate Romanus). In cases where the differences between forms of names may be significant, we have given the main variants in our notes.

For place names we have used modern French forms (and are indebted to Duvernoy's translation for many of these), except in a few cases where places outside modern France are mentioned and where we have used whatever form of the name is current amongst English speakers.

The Chronicle is divided into fifty chapters of varying length. Each is headed by a summary or rubric, which we have translated. These summaries are apparently to be found in all the manuscripts, with only minor variations. They appear in the earliest surviving manuscript ('P' in Duvernoy's edition) and thus seem to be of early date, but it also seems clear that they were not William's own work. They are indeed inadequate as summaries: to take just one extreme example, the summary of the long chapter XLIII covers only the first short paragraph. We are confident also that the summary to chapter XI represents a misreading of the text – see n. 122 to that chapter.

For these reasons we have also provided our own summaries, which appear in square brackets below the originals. These are in addition printed separately on pp. 3–6 to serve as a synopsis of the whole work. (Duvernoy also provides his own summaries, printed separately in the 'table des matières' at the end of his edition, on pp. 223–30.)

The division of the translation into five sections has been introduced by us, simply for convenience.

Like very many writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries William had a good knowledge of Latin, and a wide vocabulary. However his prose does not flow freely. His style is frequently condensed and very tortuous, less straightforward than that of many of his contemporaries and often incapable of being rendered literally into English.[4] William enjoys indulging in rhetoric – especially when he is commenting on events rather than merely relating them. A few examples of notably rhetorical flourishes are to be found in our notes.

William frequently uses the historic present, usually it seems for no particular purpose, but then often switches arbitrarily between historic presents and ordinary past tenses in a single passage.[5] We have felt that to follow William

[4] Duvernoy (p. 6) takes a similar view, referring to 'une construction affectée au point d'être souvent ambiguë qui tranche avec le latin de la pratique contemporaine'. In contrast the style of Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay is usually quite straightforward, the Latin of William Pelhisson extremely simple and lucid. The Latin of many of the leading prelates, as in the letter translated in Appendix A or those translated in *HA*, pp. 174–84, is again usually quite straightforward. Letters from the Papal Curia usually employ complex syntactical structures and much rhetoric; they are not always easy to translate although the meaning is generally clear.

[5] To take two examples. The first comes in the two short sentences describing Simon de Montfort's mishap with his horse before the battle of Muret towards the end of ch. XX. In the first sentence we have 'rumpitur' and 'reparatur'; in the next we have 'percussit' and 'mansit'. Second, in the passage in ch. XLI which in translation runs from 'However that very night . . .' to 'dangers they would face by deserting . . .', in the first sentence we have 'inducuntur et recipiuntur . . . coniuratur'; in the next two 'confugerunt, occurrerunt, occiderunt'; then in the next William reverts to the present tense with 'conantur . . . compelluntur'.

closely in this respect would tend to irritate rather than enlighten the reader, especially since in modern English use of the historic present seems contrived and unnatural, and we have therefore translated these occurrences in a past tense.

There are frequent biblical quotations or allusions and for these we have usually followed the King James version of the Bible. We have drawn attention to many but not all of these cases in footnotes. William quotes from classical authors on only four occasions and rarely makes classical allusions or references. Duvernoy provides a consolidated list of both biblical and other references in the 'table des citations' on p. 221 of his edition.

The notes and appendices

The notes aim to supplement the translation, and are intended chiefly to help readers in understanding the text; to add points of especial interest; to point to other main sources of information; and (particularly with the non-specialist reader in mind) to set William's narrative in context and give a summary of events where his account is incomplete or his chronology is uncertain or confused. Since the Chronicle, although a relatively short work, covers such a long period we have of necessity had to be selective in what we have included in our notes.

References to printed sources are almost all based on our own examination of them, although from time to time we have relied on citations by modern writers. In the later parts of the Chronicle (chs. XLVII onwards) William recounts events which fall largely outside the main scope of his work (e.g. the conflict between Frederick II's successors and the Papacy, Louis IX's crusades, and events in England). We have here tended to limit our notes and have sought to draw attention to secondary works which discuss these events, and which also give references to sources and further secondary literature.

While many of the printed sources cited in our notes are also cited in Duvernoy's, his notes are in places especially valuable because of his use (and selective quotation from) records of the work of inquisitors which are preserved in the manuscript collection in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (the Doat collection), and in the Toulouse Municipal Library manuscript 609 (known as Toulouse MS 609).[6] These have been used extensively by Duvernoy (both in his edition of the Chronicle and in others of his publications), and also by other writers, such as Roquebert, Griffe and Mundy, as well as by Barber, Brenon, Lambert and Wakefield. Drawing on their citations, we have referred to this

[6] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Fonds Doat, being copies of thirteenth century inquisitors' records made in 1669 under the supervision of Jean de Doat, President of the Chambre de Comptes of Navarre in 1665–70; and Toulouse Bibliothèque municipale MS 609, now housed in Paris, being a register copied between 1258 and 1263, containing depositions mostly dating to 1245–6 taken as part of a large-scale enquiry in the Lauragais conducted by Bernard de Caux and Jean de Saint-Pierre. We have not consulted any of these MSS; the information given here is drawn in particular from the discussions of these sources in Barber, *Cathars*, p. 228; Griffe, *Languedoc cathare, 1190 à 1210*, pp. 16–18; and in Mundy, *Society and Government*, pp. 476–9, which largely repeats what may also be found in Mundy, *Men and Women*, pp. 213–18, and Mundy, *Repression of Heresy*, pp. 305–10.