



Montségur and the Mystery of the Cathars

Jean Markale

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The history and philosophy of the mysterious Cathar religion and its lost treasure

- Demonstrates that Catharism is not simply a heretical Christian cult as it is often portrayed
- Examines the evidence for the existence of a lost Cathar treasure and its possible connection to the Holy Grail

On March 16, 1244, over 200 Cathars were captured in their fortress stronghold of Montségur and were burned alive by troops of the Inquisition. While some Cathar enclaves survived into the next century, this was the death blow to a religion that had been a powerful symbol of Occitain sovereignty against the designs of the French monarchy and the papacy. History has recorded that four high-ranking Cathar *perfecti* carried a great treasure out of Montségur the night before its fall, a fact that led rebel Huguenots of the 17th century and members of Hitler's S.S. to believe that an enormous treasure or weapon of awesome spiritual power lay hidden somewhere nearby the ruins of the former Cathar stronghold.

Seeking to untangle the true from the false, Celtic and medieval scholar Jean Markale meticulously searches through the obscure history of the Cathars, tracing their roots back to the ancient Zoroastrian religion of Persia. He examines what earned the Cathars--who practiced vegetarianism, non-violence, and tolerance--the ruthless persecution of both the Church and the state. He explores their doctrine, their place in medieval Occitain culture, and their secret pact with the Knights Templar. Most important, he uses all available documentation to reveal the nature of the treasure the Cathars spirited away from their fortress at Montségur the night before its surrender to French troops.

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