The New York Open Center Presents

An Esoteric Quest in the South of France

Troubadours, Cathars, Templars and the Grail in Medieval Languedoc

Carcassonne, France
June 4 to 9, 2015

Post Conference Journeys

Provence, the Camargue and the Rhone Valley

June 9 - 15, 2015

Journey through Catalonia, Spain

June 9 - 14 or 16, 2015

www.EsotericQuest.org

Join us for the eleventh in the Open Center's series of international conferences on the Western Tradition as we journey to Carcassonne, Languedoc, in an exquisitely beautiful region of the South of France.

Long known as a focal point for numerous spiritual streams, this area was at the heart of the high medieval culture of both the Troubadours and the Gnostic Christian Cathars. The *Bons Hommes*, as the Cathars called themselves, created one of the most remarkable and enigmatic spiritual movements of the Middle Ages, the destruction of which was a great tragedy in European religious life. The Troubadours were the first to bring romantic love to the Western world in poetry and song of great elegance and charm that expressed a new merging of the erotic and the mystical.

Languedoc, along with the neighboring domains of Catalonia and Provence, is filled with fascinating culture and spiritual history. It is a region that carries significance for the medieval Grail stories and is imbued with the mythology of Mary Magdalene. It was also a region where the Knights Templar had a significant presence.

This Quest will explore the aura of mystery that still clings to many castles and villages in the region, and we will drink deeply of its wisdom and legacy. The music, song and poetry of Languedoc, its celebration of love and life, will be as integral to our experience as the knowledge we will gain of its profound and tragic history. We invite you to join us and meet others who share an attunement to this beautiful, brief but unforgettable time when love and esoteric spirituality reigned supreme.

The Esoteric Quest starts with an optional pre-conference day visiting Montségur, the last stronghold of the Cathars, and Puivert, an important center of Troubadour culture in the 12th century.

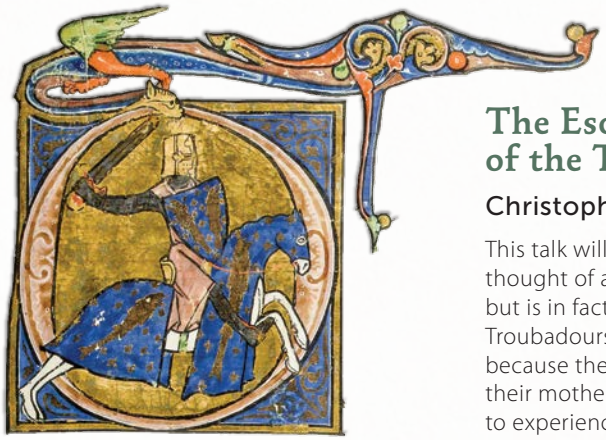
We also will offer two post-conference journeys: one heading south into the wild beauty and hilltop villages of Catalonia, Spain; the other traveling east into the azure skies and brilliant sunlight of Provence.

The New York Open Center is the city's leading venue for holistic learning and world culture. www.opencenter.org

NEW YORK OPEN CENTER

For more information, please contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527, ext. 101, or write quest@opencenter.org. Please see our website at www.esotericquest.org for additional conference details and program updates.

Co - Sponsors The Lumen Foundation and the Divination Foundation



Plenaries

In Cave and Castle:

The Esoteric Quest in Languedoc, Provence and Catalonia

Leonard George, Ph.D.

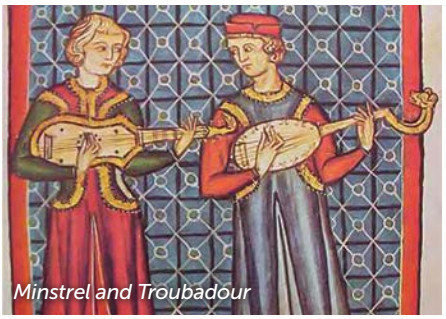
Nowhere has an esoteric heritage as old or as rich as Languedoc, Provence and Catalonia. The first people in the region plumbed the mysterious caverns and painted visions on the walls — their earliest works are nine times older than Egypt's pyramids. The divine feminine called seekers here through the ages — as Celtic Epona, Greek Aphrodite, Roman Venus, Mary the bearer of the Holy Grail, Shekhinah the presence of God for the Jewish Kabbalists. Medieval Troubadours mapped the esoteric range of lust and love. Cathars preached sanctity through non-violence and simplicity, and were met with slaughter by a threatened church. The roots of the quest, and of its suppression, lie in Languedoc.

Franciscan Friars witness a Cathar Consolamentum (Bible illumination, Bibliothèque nationale de France)

The Esotericism of the Troubadours

Christopher Bamford

This talk will explore what is too often thought of as simply a poetic movement, but is in fact a profoundly esoteric one. The Troubadours — called the first Romantics, because they wrote in the vernacular, their mother tongue, and stuck close to experience — represent a profound mutation in consciousness and culture. Drawing upon and transforming through practice ancient pagan folk wisdom, mystery traditions from Eleusis through Sappho to Neoplatonism, as well Sufi love poetry and practices, the Troubadours created the first truly "feminine" culture. Secular, though spiritual, their insights fitted precisely with the Marian spirit of the age and its profound bridal mysticism.



Minstrel and Troubadour

The Survival of Hidden Gnostic and Hermetic Wisdom in the Dark Ages

Yuri Stoyanov, Ph.D.

Following the establishment of the orthodoxies of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, schools and individuals professing Gnostic and Hermetic teachings were progressively driven underground. Based on the speaker's latest discoveries and field work in regions ranging from Mediterranean Europe and the Middle East to Central Asia, this talk charts the principal underground lines of survival and transmission of the teachings through which ancient Gnostic and Hermetic wisdom were able to endure frequent waves of repression. The rise of Bogomilism and Catharism in medieval Europe, and the subsequent grand resurrection of Hermeticism during the Renaissance, brought these traditions back to prominence.

Page from Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*

Resurgences of Manichaeism:

Cathars, the Grail, and Esoteric Christianity

Christopher Bamford

The mission of the third century prophet Mani, founder of Manichaeism, is little known and even less understood, but within esoteric Christianity and world spirituality, his teachings constitute a "secret stream" of the utmost importance for the continuing evolution of humanity and the Earth. This talk will explore the nature of Mani's mission, the inner meaning of his teachings, and their resurgence in the Cathars, Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, early Guild Masonry, the Templars, and the Rosicrucians.

The Cathars:

Their Beliefs and Origins

James McDonald

We will briefly discuss Cathar beliefs, covering aspects that are less well known as well as those more widely understood. According to Catholic sources, Medieval Cathars claimed that their beliefs and practices dated from the earliest days of Christianity. Drawing on primary sources, insights will be offered into these claims, discussing Gnostic ideas in Early Christianity and assessing the possibility that the Cathars preserved not only Gnostic and Dualist ideas from the early days of Christianity but also many mainstream beliefs and practices. There will be opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the Cathars of the Languedoc, including theology, origins, modern vestiges, and the Crusade against them in the 13th century.

Plenaries

The Language of Love and Longing:
Troubadour Poetry & Song in Medieval Languedoc

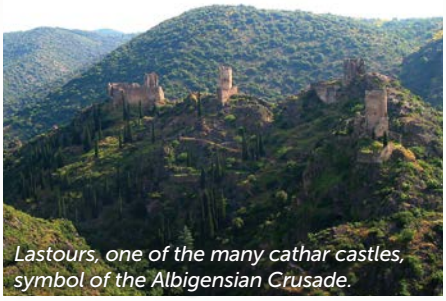
Marjorie Roth, Ph.D.

A repertoire of songs in Old Occitan written by the poet/composer/performers known as Troubadours flourished in southern France, northern Spain, and parts of northern Italy during the 12th and early 13th centuries at the courts of illustrious patrons like Eleanor of Aquitaine and Marie de Champagne. We will contemplate the mystical practice of *Fin amour*, or "courtly love", which defined the social context of the Troubadours and provided the main topic of their songs. We will consider the influence of Celts, Cathars, and Arabic culture on Troubadour poetry and listen to their songs "*so that before long we shall be able, ladies and lovers, to recover the joy which we have lost*" —Raimon de Miraval

Life in the Languedoc in the 12th and 13th Centuries

Gauthier Langlois

The people of the Languedoc protected themselves in the 11th century in fortified villages called *castra*, built around a church or castle. These were places where peasants, artisans, merchants and knights met and socialized. Lords dispensed justice, Troubadours developed their art, and from the 12th century Cathars found a ready audience for their teachings. Lords, often in conflict with the Catholic Church for land, favored the Cathar Church. It was this society that was disrupted by the Albigensian Crusade in the 13th century.



Lastours, one of the many cathar castles, symbol of the Albigensian Crusade.

The History and Language of Occitania

Bertran de La Farge

Occitania is the country whose vernacular language is *Lenga d'Óc*. Its history begins around 200 BC with the Celtic, Greek, Iberian, and Latin peoples of the area, out of which a Gallo-Roman civilization developed, centered in Narbonensis. In 418, the Visigoths established there both a kingdom, with Toulouse as its capital, and their own Arian Christian religion. A new language, a synthesis of Latin and Celtic tongues, gradually appeared. With the emergence of the Cathars and the Troubadours, *Lenga d'Óc* became a mature culture, and Occitanian civilization developed its own ethic of *Paratge* and *Convivencia*, and its warm ideal of Chivalry. Despite sixty years of war and Inquisition in the Middle Ages, its spirit has never died, and remains alive today.

Mary Magdalene, date uknown, by Quentin Massys

The Myths and Mysteries of Mary Magdalene

Kayleen Asbo, Ph.D.

Drawing on the medieval *Legenda Aurea* and a decade of contemporary research, this multi-media lecture will trace the story of Mary Magdalene from the saint's legendary arrival upon the shores of Saintes Maries de la Mer to the caves of La Baume, where she is believed to have lived as a contemplative hermit for the last thirty years of her life. Art, poetry and music will bring to life the lasting legacy of the divergent myths of Mary Magdalene, each revealing a different archetypal element of prophet, priestess, penitent, mother, bride and embodiment of Sophianic wisdom.

Knights Templar, from the walls of the Templar commandery at Cressac, France

The Knights Templar

Karen Ralls, Ph.D.

The great variety of heresy-related trials and alleged "heretics" and "heresies" in the late medieval period remains of interest to many today — especially those that clustered in southwestern France in the cultured, civilized area known as the Languedoc. Although groups such as the Cathars, Knights Templars, or the gifted Troubadours of the Languedoc may be more familiar to many today, there was far more going on in the High Middle Ages at the time as well, with networks extending into Sicily, Spain, Britain, and beyond. Why was this area in particular — one of the most artistic in all of Western Europe — persistently labelled a 'hotbed of heresy'?

Platonic Master Builders of Medieval Europe

Scott Olsen, Ph.D.

Following in the footsteps of their Pythagorean predecessors, the Medieval and Gothic Master Builders implemented the great geometric ratios of Nature and the Golden Ratio as taught by Plato in their designs, plans and architecture. Guided by the insights of writers such as Keith Critchlow and John James on Chartres Cathedral, we will consider Nigel Hiscock's analysis of Platonic geometry in the plans of medieval abbeys and cathedrals and the stunningly suggestive *Portfolio of Villard de Honnecourt*.

Workshops

Esoteric Traditions and Practices in Bogomilism and Catharism

Yuri Stoyanov, Ph,D.

This workshop will present the evidence and discuss the latest debates regarding the provenance and evolution of esoteric traditions in Bogomilism and Catharism, ranging from the existence and use of secret mythic narratives (as a preserve of the Bogomil/Cathar elite of the *perfecti*) to the records of mystical and visionary practices cultivated by these elites. We will address the historical and religious mysteries related to the origins and transmission of these traditions, and consider their parallels to and interrelations with currents in early Kabbalah, medieval mysticism, heavenly ascent and secret apocalypticism, and other forbidden apocryphal literature and lore.

Bogomil cemetary

Chartres cathedral

A Geometry of Mystery

Steve Bass, M.A.

The 'Gothic', or pointed arch, style of architecture arose relatively rapidly in the 12th century in the context of the Neo-Platonic school of Chartres and the triumphant return of the Knight Templars. Within this process of transition swirled the mysteries of the prehistoric Celts, the initiatic secrets of the Templars, and extra-orthodox contact between Muslims, Jews and Christians. This presentation examines early and late medieval architecture in relation to these visible and non-visible, social and spiritual forces, and to aspects of sacred geometry that guided the vision of the Gothic builders.

Crimes of Vision:

The Cathars, Their Teachings and Their Fate

Leonard George, Ph.D.

Languedoc in the 12th century was the most literate and cultured region in Europe, with a distinctive language, vibrant court life and high degree of autonomy. The Occitans tolerated, and even embraced, a form of Christianity that came to be known as Catharism, a term invented by their enemies. They called themselves *les Bons Hommes* — "the good guys". Their radical critique of the material world led them to reject the Catholic Church as evil, and to promote a range of heretical beliefs, including reincarnation, gender equality and rejection of marriage. They are usually described as "dualists". But surviving hints about their secret teachings point to other visions.

The Inner Contemplative Magdalene Tradition

Kayleen Asbo, Ph.D.

When John Cassian arrived in La Baume in 415 AD, he brought the wisdom of the Egyptian Desert Fathers and Mothers with him in order to establish a double monastery in honor of Mary Magdalene. In this experiential workshop, we will explore the roots of the contemplative Christian tradition as they stretch from Alexandria through the Benedictine, Gnostic and French Orthodox lineages of Europe. To conclude our session, we will use the *Gospel of Mary* (as translated by the French Orthodox priest Jean Yves Leloup) to engage in the contemplative practice of *lectio divina*.

Lyons Ritual Manuscript page

Cathar Manuscripts, History and Religion

Bertran de La Farge

This workshop focuses on the remaining medieval manuscripts from the Cathar tradition with a focus on their spiritual and mystical aims and practices. A special emphasis will be placed on the legacy of the celebrated researcher, the late Deodat Roche, without whom our knowledge of the Cathars would be greatly diminished.

Workshops

Catharism in Italy

Malcolm Kennard, Ph.D.

It is not commonly known that Catharism was long the largest unorthodox spiritual movement in Northern Italy and flourished there almost until the late 14th century. Here, Cathars were able to move freely and offer sanctuary and support to their persecuted French co-religionists. This was primarily due to the ongoing conflict between the Papacy and Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor. Wherever the pro-imperial Ghibellines ruled, the Cathars were tolerated. Frederick enjoyed Provencal poetry and was a patron of Troubadours. This workshop will explore the factors that allowed Catharism to survive in Northern Italy after its almost complete eradication in France.

Sir Galahad occupies the "dangerous seat," from *Quête du Saint Graal*

The Spiritual Dimension of Music

Karen Ralls, Ph.D.

Why did the ancients believe in a spiritual dimension to music, often featuring it in many worldwide tales, legends and traditions? What do medieval sources reveal about certain musicians, instruments, times, places and effects? Why did many early civilizations and temple rituals highly value certain musical intervals, rhythms, and acoustic properties? The spiritual dimension of music is still a universal subject today. In the words of Plato, "Music gives…wings to the mind."

The Quest for the Holy Grail and The Mystery of Thoth's Library

Leigh McCloskey

Hearkening back to the chivalry and romance of the Troubadours, the legends of the knights of the Grail and the mystery of the grand cathedrals, Leigh will guide us through art, iconography, esoteric tradition and alchemy on a visual journey that explores the purpose and meaning of the Great Quest. He also will trace how the seeds of this Quest have blossomed in the archetypal imagery of his work, Tarot ReVisioned, and within his painted 3D library-studio and wonder study, The Hieroglyph of the Human Soul.

Sculpture of a Musician, Chartres Cathedral.

Archaic, Sacred and Polyphonic songs from Occitania

Terra Maïre

Beatriz and Marie-Ange evoke the spiritual heritage of the Troubadours and Cathars with their repertoire of polyphonic songs, prayers, and spontaneous inspirations. In this workshop they will teach participants how to make their voices resonate within the human body. They will also use movement, breath and touch to help us journey back to the mood and soul quality of the Middle Ages.

Afternoon Activities

The Cité of Carcassonne

Historian and author James McDonald will lead a visit to the medieval *Cité* of Carcassonne. We will walk around the ancient walls and learn about its history from classical times to the present, concentrating on its role during the Albigensian Crusade in the 13th century. We will also visit the original tomb of Simon de Montfort in the basilica and learn what the original "lists" were.

The Museums of the Ville Basse of Carcassonne

The Beaux Arts Museum of Carcassonne houses impressive examples of European art from the 17th century to the present day and includes works portraying local life and legends. Nearby, the *Maison des Mémoires* pays tribute to Joë Bousquet, a poet and surrealist known for his friendship with contemporaries such as André Gide and Louis Aragon.

Canal Trip though the Languedoc Countryside

We will enjoy a leisurely cruise along the Canal du Midi through the charming countryside around Carcassonne with its trees, vineyards, and gentle beauty.

Evening Activities

The Cathar Story

Son et Lumiére Spectacle

The gripping and tragic tale of the Cathars will be projected in a *son et lumiére* spectacle. The medieval music, narrative and striking imagery convey a powerful sense of this poignant and soulful history.

Sacred and Archaic Occitane Music, Chant and Dance

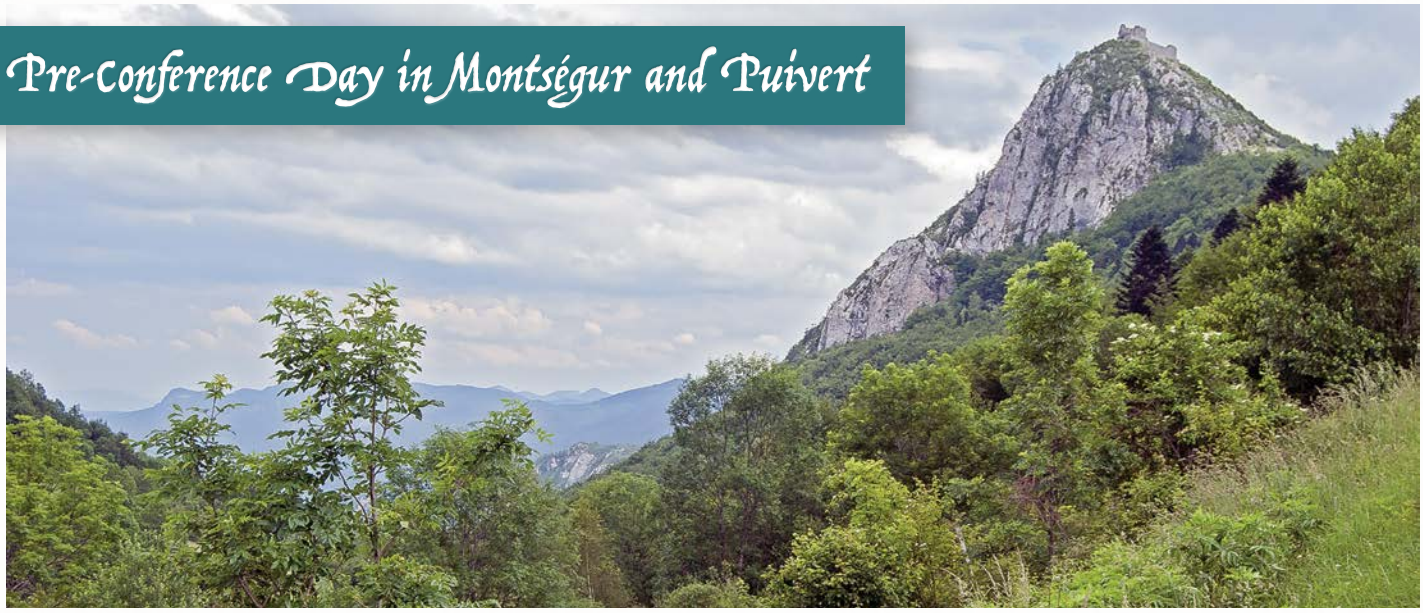
Terra Maïre

Drawing on the rich tradition of Occitane culture, this evening features the intertwined, mystical voices of mother and daughter combination Marie-Ange and Beatriz. Terra Maïre means Mother Earth in the Occitane language, and the effect of these medieval and sacred melodies is a sense of the deep memories of earth and sky felt by the ancestors of this region.

A Musical Performance in the Tradition of the Troubadours

This evening features music performed on string, wind and rhythm instruments fashioned from medieval models found in sculpture, texts and manuscripts to reproduce genuine Troubadour sounds. The repertoire includes original songs from the chansonniers as well as music with a contemporary twist drawing on Troubadour vocal styles and compositional forms.

Pre-conference Day in Montségur and Puivert



Post-conference Journeys

Provence, the Camargue and the Rhone Valley

June 9 - 15, 2015

The South of France is legendary for its beauty and charm, its azure skies and brilliant sunlight, and its many layers of history from Roman times to the Middle Ages. Its towns and cities evoke a strong sense of epochs past, and its landscape is filled with vineyards and with the color and scent of lavender fields. We begin this journey into the soul of the region by first traveling to Minerve, a lovely village and significant site in the history of the Cathars. From there we continue to Uzès, one of the most delightful towns on the borders of Languedoc and the Rhone Valley, where the food, wine and elegance have evolved to a high level of artistry.

We then visit Avignon, the papal seat during the suppression of the Knights Templar, and travel on to Arles, a powerful center of classical civilization. We then spend two nights amidst the wild beauty of the Camargue with its meandering waterways, flamingos and white horses, and visit the town of Saintes Maries de la Mer, the point of departure for the Holy Land for French crusaders and today a center of major significance for Gypsy culture. We also will visit Aix en Provence, much beloved of the painter Paul Cézanne, and one of the most historically rich cities in the area. Finally, we conclude with a last day in the dramatically mountainous region to the east of the Rhone Valley, amongst lavender fields and the turquoise-green waters and wondrous canyons of the Gorges du Verdon, an opportunity to experience the silence and spirit of this unique place.

Price: $2375 per person in double accommodations; $2850 in single accommodations

Includes all accommodations and most meals through breakfast on the 15th, all entrance fees, fully-guided tour, and air-conditioned coach transport.

Among Cathars and Troubadours:

A Pre-Conference Day at the Castles of Montségur and Puivert

June 3, 2015

With James McDonald

The dramatic site of Montségur lies an hour from Carcassonne and is the iconic Cathar castle, 'the head and the seat' of the Cathar Church and a place deeply imbued with historical significance. In the morning, we will climb to the castle and contemplate both its beauty and its tragic fall in 1244 which signaled the end of all Cathar resistance. This is a highly evocative location from which to reflect on the Albigensian Crusade, its profound disruption of the refined culture of Medieval Languedoc, and the courage of those who resisted the attacks. After lunch in a secluded restaurant specializing in traditional food, we will visit Puivert, a castle owned by a Cathar family known to have been patrons to many Troubadours and the site of a museum focused on the Troubadours and their music. Here we will conclude our day by attuning to the joyful birth of romantic love and erotic mysticism, and their gifts to the future.

Cost: $225 per person

Includes all entrance fees, ground transport, fully-guided tour, and lunch and dinner on the 3rd.
Two nights' accommodations in Carcassonne are priced separately (see www.esotericquest.org for details).

Journey through Catalonia, Spain

June 9 - 14 or 16, 2015

Catalonia has one of the most vibrant and fascinating cultures in Europe, with a rich history stretching back millennia. For many centuries, it was deeply connected culturally, linguistically and spiritually to both Languedoc and Provence. We begin our journey by heading up the Aude valley toward the Pyrenees to the awe-inspiring, mountain top castles of Peyrepertuse and Queribus, one of the longest strongholds of the Cathars. After a night in the mountains, we travel to Cadaquès, a beautiful village located on a crystal clear bay on the Mediterranean, and a place much beloved by such artists as Salvador Dali for its light and color. Then we turn to Girona, one of the great medieval centers of Kabbalah, with its emblematic Jewish Quarter. We will spend the evening in the heart of the wildly beautiful Catalan countryside near the villages of Besalú and Rupit, known for their Romanesque churches and bridges. The following day we travel to the legendary sacred mountain, Monserrate, with its Black Madonna, spectacular views, and powerful sense of being high above the mundane world. We then drive to the southern region of Catalonia to the charming village of Miravet on the Ebro River, and the poignant site of the last Templar castle in Spain. On the journey north to Barcelona, we will visit Corbera D'Ebre, a village that has been preserved as a moving monument to the Spanish Civil War. Our trip concludes in Barcelona where there are two optional nights exploring the many historical, artistic, esoteric and architectural features of one of Europe's most engaging, colorful and multi-dimensional cities.

Price: $1850 per person in double accommodations; $2150 in single accommodations

Includes all accommodations and all meals through breakfast on the 14th, air-conditioned coach, entrance fees, and fully-guided tour

Price: $2450 per person in double accommodations; $2950 in single accommodations

Includes all of the above plus all entrance fees, accommodations, air-conditioned coach, fully-guided tour, and most meals

Biographies

Kayleen Asbo, Ph.D., holds four advanced degrees in mythological studies, psychology and music. She is the Artistic Director for the Mythica Foundation and is a faculty member of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes at UC Berkeley, Dominican University and Sonoma State University. She has led workshops, retreats and pilgrimages throughout the world on the mythology of Mary Magdalene for the past ten years.

Steve Bass, M.A., has practiced as an architect in New York City since 1974. He holds a Master of Arts degree from the Royal College of Art, London, where he studied under the direction of Keith Critchlow, and has been visiting assistant professor of architecture at Notre Dame University. He is a fellow of the Institute of Classical Architecture and is author of the forthcoming *Proportion in Architecture*.

Bertran de La Farge is the author of four books on the Cathar tradition: *La Voie Cathare, Lumières Cathares, Raimon VI, Le Comte Excommunié*, and *La Croix Occitane*. He is the founder of Convergencia Occitana, a gathering of 85 organizations engaged with Occitane culture, and is currently researching Cathar manuscripts written in Occitanian on their rituals and interpretation of the New Testament.

Leonard George, Ph.D., is a Canadian psychologist, educator, author and broadcaster. His academic affiliations include Capilano University, Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia. Author of two books, *Crimes of Perception* and *Alternative Realities*, he has been focused for many years on the spirituality of antiquity and as an advisor to the Esoteric Quest conferences.

Malcolm Kennard, Ph.D., has had a diverse career as an academic with many peer-reviewed publications both in science and the arts.

Gauthier Langlois studied Archaeology and History at the Universities of Paris and Toulouse, is a member of the Society of Catharism Studies and a specialist in the Middle Ages in Southern France. He is well known for his biography of the Cathar knight and crusader Oliver de Termes, and is a contributor to the journal *Archéothéma* on the subject of Cathar Castles.

Leigh J McCloskey is an artist, actor, author and visual philosopher. His Grimoire toured with the Rolling Stones and his Codex Tor is the art for Flying Lotus' album "Cosmogramma". His book and art for Tarot ReVisioned is a masterwork of Hermetic wisdom and beauty. His home Olandar hosts weekly philosophical discussions, screenings and public gatherings. Leigh has lived his public life as an actor starring in many films and television shows, and as a storyteller and lecturer presenting around the world. www.leighmccloskey.com

James McDonald is a historian and writer. He holds a number of professional qualifications as well as an MA from Oxford University, and an MSc from Sussex University. For the last 18 years he has lived in the Languedoc. He is the author of a number of books and has recently published an annotated English translation of Voltaire's writings on the Cathars.

Scott Olsen, Ph.D., is a Professor of Philosophy and Comparative Religion at the College of Central Florida and the author of *The Golden Section: Nature's Greatest Secret* which was awarded first place for design by the Bookbinders' Guild of New York. Scott lectures widely on the Perennial Philosophy with special emphasis on the Divine Proportion and Transformative States of Consciousness.

Karen Ralls, Ph.D., medieval historian and religions scholar, was Curator of the Rosslyn Chapel Museum of Art exhibition prior to relocating to Oxford, where she continues her specialist 12th to 14th century research. Her books include *The Templars and the Grail, The Knights Templar Encyclopedia*, and the forthcoming *Sacred Doorways: History, Lore, Places and Symbolism of Twelve Medieval Mysteries*.

Marjorie Roth, DMA, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Music at Nazareth College in Rochester, NY, where she teaches Music History, Studio Flute, and Women's Studies, and directs the Honors program. She recently published in a collection of essays on Music & Esotericism and has presented at several *Esoteric Quest* conferences, including on "Divine Women: Cleopatra and Hypatia" in Alexandria, Egypt and on "Music, Magic and Medicine in Magna Graecia" in Sicily.

Terra Maïre is a unique *a cappella* duo whose repertoire is rooted in the sacred and ancient music of the south of France. Taking their name from the Occitan words for Mother Earth, Terra Maïre is comprised of mother and daughter singers Marie-Ange and Beatriz. Their immersion into the chants, prayers and laments of their heritage has led them to also explore the neighboring vocal traditions of the Basque Country and Catalonia.

Yuri Stoyanov, Ph.D., is based at the Department of the Near and Middle East, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and is currently a Senior Fellow at the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Jerusalem. He has published widely on the interaction between mystical and esoteric currents in Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam and their survival into the modern era. His publications include *The Hidden Tradition in Europe* and *The Other God*.

Ralph White is co-founder and senior fellow of the New York Open Center, one of America's leading institutions of holistic learning. He has directed and organized a series of eleven international conferences on Western Esotericism, of which this is the latest. He is the author of the forthcoming memoir, *The Jeweled Highway: On the Quest for a Life of Meaning*.

Conference Staff:

Director: Ralph White,
New York Open Center

Coordinator: Carrie Wykoff,
Events That Matter

Registrar: Andrea Lomanto,
New York Open Center

Director of Finance: Nancy Rotger,
New York Open Center

On-Site Curator: Sophie Duncan McDonald

Registration

Conference Fee

Course Code: 15SQUEST

Registration through February 27, 2015: $2395

Through March 20, 2015: $2545

Through April 17, 2015: $2695

The conference fee includes the full conference program, afternoon activities, evening events, and all meals.

Accommodations Fee

Accommodations are provided in Carcassonne, for the five nights of Thursday, June 4 through Tuesday, June 9.

June 4 - 9 (five nights) in Carcassonne

Basic double rooms: $275 per person
Basic single rooms: $375

Midrange double rooms: $350 per person
Midrange single rooms: $525

Upgraded double rooms: $450 per person
Upgraded single rooms: $600

For booking double rooms, please specify whether you will be attending as a couple, sharing a room with a friend, or wish to have a roommate arranged for you by the Open Center (pending availability).

Registration

The Open Center invites you to register on our website at www.EsotericQuest.org, where you will find our complete registration information and payment form. Payment is required to secure your registration.

Payment

All payment is in US dollars. Please pay by credit card, international money order or personal check (US bank accounts only). Prices do not include travel to and from Carcassonne, France. An affordable payment plan for the conference is available. Please contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527 ext. 101, or at quest@opencenter.org for details.

Travel Arrangements

Participants must make their own travel arrangements to and from Carcassonne, France (or home from either Marseilles or Barcelona if you are joining us for any parts of our post-conference trips).

Arrival in Carcassonne

Most participants will arrive at the Toulouse-Blagnac Airport (TLS) on June 4, and take a train from Toulouse's Matabiau railway station into Carcassonne. More information, plus other travel options, may be found on our website at www.esotericquest.org. Those of us attending the Pre-Conference tour of Montségur will want to arrive, and check into their Carcassonne hotel, on June 2.

About the Conference

The conference begins with our opening night reception and dinner in Carcassonne on the evening of June 4. Each day, we will have morning plenary sessions followed by lunch, afternoon activities exploring the town and its surroundings, a choice of workshops to attend, and dinner. In the evenings, we will gather for cultural events. The conference ends after lunch on Tuesday, June 9.

Refunds

A full refund, less a $200 processing fee, is offered for cancellations made by Friday, March 20, 2015. Travel insurance is strongly recommended in the event of unexpectedly having to cancel or change your travel plans either before or during the conference, losing your luggage, needing medical assistance, or if the program is affected by circumstances beyond our control.

Scholarships / Work Study

A limited number of partial scholarships are available. A scholarship application can be found on our website at www.esotericquest.org.

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