

College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University

DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU

---

Honors Theses, 1963-2015

Honors Program

---

2014

## Beyond the Walls: Walled Cities of Medieval France: The Preservation of Heritage and Cultural Memory at Carcassonne, Aigues-Mortes, and La Rochelle

Emily Huber

*College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors_theses)



Part of the [Other Languages, Societies, and Cultures Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Huber, Emily, "Beyond the Walls: Walled Cities of Medieval France: The Preservation of Heritage and Cultural Memory at Carcassonne, Aigues-Mortes, and La Rochelle" (2014). *Honors Theses, 1963-2015*. 42.

[https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors\\_theses/42](https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors_theses/42)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses, 1963-2015 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@csbsju.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@csbsju.edu).

# Beyond the Walls

*Walled Cities of Medieval France:*

*The Preservation of Heritage and Cultural Memory at  
Carcassonne, Aigues-Mortes, and La Rochelle*

An Honors Thesis

College of Saint Benedict  
Saint John's University

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for Distinction  
In The Department of Languages and Cultures

By  
Emily Huber

As advised by:  
Professor T. Vann

December 2013

# Beyond the Walls

## Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	3
I. Preface	4
II. Introduction to Walled Cities and Their Histories	5
III. Preservation of Heritage and the Marketing of History	10
IV. Exemplary Walled Cities: Carcassonne, Aigues-Mortes, and La Rochelle	17
V. Carcassonne	19
• French Catholic Authority: The Albigensian Crusade and Carcassonne	21
• Restoring and Reimagining: Viollet-le-Duc's Contributions to Carcassonne	25
• Marketing a Medieval Tale: Tourism at Carcassonne	29
VI. Aigues-Mortes	31
• Establishing a French, Catholic Identity at a New Frontier	32
• The Gem City That Still Stands	35
• Conflicting Identities: The Massacre of Italian Immigrants at Aigues-Mortes	37
• Marketing a Medieval Tales: Tourism at Aigues-Mortes	38
VII. La Rochelle	40
• Establishing Authority at La Rochelle	41
• The Harboring of Huguenots	44
• Siege and Conquest: The Expulsion of Dissenters And the Definitive Establishment of French Monarchical Authority	47
• Where Walls Once Stood	49
• Commemoration and Marketing of History	51
VIII. Conclusion	53
<i>Appendix - Images</i>	56
<i>Bibliography</i>	59

## **Acknowledgements**

An Honors Thesis is arduous work and near impossible without a network of support. To the groups and individuals who have helped me accomplish this undertaking, I express deep gratitude. First, I would like to acknowledge my advisors and readers. Professor Theresa Vann is both my Humanities Medieval/ Renaissance Studies Advisor and Honors Thesis Advisor. Her passion for Medieval Studies and her expertise in the field have inspired me academically. Professor Vann has always believed in my capabilities, even after countless revisions to my thesis. Without her guidance, this project would not have been possible. Of my two readers, Professor Karen Erickson has been a professor, advisor, mentor, and friend throughout my undergraduate career. Her positive and uplifting outlook strengthened my own perseverance through the duration of this project. Professor Erickson has always been very invested in her students. I thank her for the many opportunities she has provided me with at CSB/SJU. My other reader, Professor Chuck Villette, has encouraged my French Studies. Professor Villette has great expectations and always helps students in achieving them. Upon his suggestion and guidance, I spent a semester abroad in Cannes, France during my sophomore year. It was an experience abroad that inspired my thesis.

I would also like to express my appreciation to my family and friends. I wish to thank my loving parents for supporting my liberal arts education and for investing in my future. Thanks to Joe Bibeault for listening patiently to my rants about walls and for proofreading without complaint. Finally, I thank the Saint Ben's Rugby Club and President Christa Troup for always reminding me not to get too caught up in the stresses of college, but rather to enjoy my time that remains at CSB/SJU. Thank you all.

## **I. Preface**

When I first visited the walled city of Aigues-Mortes during a tour of major sites in southern France, I was thrilled by the condition of the city. As we stepped off of the tour bus, we entered the city through a large stone entrance. It was like stepping back in time, but not in the sense of a Renaissance festival or medieval-themed amusement park with an elaborate castle or staged quaint village. To me, the walls seemed like an honest representation of the medieval world. They were not ostentatious; rather, the walls seemed to emit an incredibly authoritative energy as a result of their bold simplicity. I enjoyed walking the perimeter of the walls along the boulevard and was delighted that I could reach out and touch the stone that have stood for hundreds of years. I paid attention to the history lessons provided by my professor and was fascinated by the thought of crusaders perusing the small streets alongside me. However, I seemed to be the only one in my group of tourists that felt this way. I wanted to stay and explore all day long, but others wanted to return to the hotel and rest. I regret not taking the opportunity to learn more about Aigues-Mortes while I was there as my curiosity has lead to the writing of this thesis.

I had so many unanswerable questions at the time. I wanted to know why the walls felt so historically significant when I stood beneath them. I also wondered if the French people experienced the walls in the same way as a foreign tourist. I wondered the other American visitors in my tour group were so much less impressed with the town. These thoughts led me to ask why the French kept the walls. Through the course of my

research, I intend to prove that walled cities were significant to the development of French cultural memory because of their historic significance as frontier cities.

## **II. Introduction to Walled Cities and Their Histories**

The term “walled city” describes any city with a surrounding wall that serves as defense. All over the world, walls have been built around territories as a form of defense. The walls and the styles vary in architecture from culture to culture. Within the modern country of France, many different architectural styles exist which represent different moments of French history. The Roman Empire, for example, used a distinct form of town planning of “rectangular proportions, with their straight, narrow streets.”<sup>1</sup> The Empire existed around the perimeter of the Mediterranean, and so modern archaeological research demonstrates that Roman town planning influenced construction in southern, modern-day France.<sup>2</sup> The bastide is a northern style of architecture that was used at cities like Aigues-Mortes. The *bastide*, meaning fortress, provided a military defense to new territories. Typically, cities were built inside of *bastides* as the fortifications provided defense and a new economic power. Because *bastides* were common to the north of modern France and Belgium, they did not make an appearance in the southern France until the monarchy expanded its influence southward. For the purpose of my research and writing, I am defining the walled city in a general sense; a settlement surrounded by fortifications, which are used to defend and to promote a centralized economy.

---

<sup>1</sup> T.F. Tout, "Medieval Town Planning," *The Town Planning Review* 8 (1919): 10. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40100822>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

The French nation, as its borders are defined today, began its development and expansion under the French monarchy. The monarchy established its authority by conquering or establishing walled cities. Serving as case studies, three walled cities, Aigues-Mortes, Carcassonne, and La Rochelle demonstrate the establishment of royal, French authority and the expansion of French borders to new reaches. These cities also demonstrate how the walls that still stand today are significant to modern France because they are monuments representing the nation's cultural memory. Each city had a different fate; Aigues-Mortes was preserved, Carcassonne was re-envisioned, and La Rochelle was built around. Each city's government and community have created a new economy through the tourist industry. By doing so, the people of the city economically exploit their existing heritage site through the profits of tourism, but also share the site with others and preserve it through maintenance of the cities as heritage sites.

The French monarchy protected and defended the Church. It was the responsibility of the papacy to save the souls of the world in the name of Christ. The papacy, in theory, holds all spiritual authority on earth and acts on behalf of the will of God. Salvation was achieved by adhering to the teachings of Christ as laid forth by the Pope and the Catholic Church. As the French monarchy held temporal power and authority, it was politically beneficial to support and defend the papacy. Any heretics, those who dissented against Catholic teachings and authority, became enemies of the French monarchy. Many conquests were made against dissenters, especially those living on the frontiers of the kingdom. These conquests included the seizing of walled cities and the expulsion and extermination of its opposing inhabitants. Authorities ruling in representation of the French monarchy are often referred to as vassals. At Carcassonne,

Aigues-Mortes, and La Rochelle vassals acting for the monarchy used the cities' walls to exclude the dissenters and heretics. The French monarchy not only expanded its authority to new frontiers, but it defined who was a part of the French community and who existed outside of it through the exclusionary effects of the walls.

The construction of walls inherently creates a barrier between two populations. In the case of the walled cities of medieval France, the barrier existed between those who complied with the authority of the French monarchy and those who did not. In the instance of Carcassonne, the walled city was conquered during the Albigensian Crusade, which persecuted the Cathar heretics in southern France in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. At Aigues-Mortes, Louis IX established the city in the 13<sup>th</sup> century as a launching point for crusade to reclaim Jerusalem from Muslim heretics. At La Rochelle, the city was conquered when the French crown persecuted the Huguenots in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as they were harbored within the walls of the city. Religious conflict such as the Albigensian Crusade, the Hundred Years' War, and the Reformation aided in the expansion of the French monarchy's authority across what is now modern France.

The effect of this marginalization created a distinct identity between those who accepted the authority of the French monarchy and those who did not. In general, this divide was physically manifested through the construction of walls. This divide also evolved into a defining feature of who was and was not French as the monarchy continued to expand its authority. The evolution of French national identity began with the institution and expansion of the authoritarian French monarchy and its centralization of government during the Middle Ages. Issues surrounding religion, equality, and human rights are general themes that reoccur throughout the history of the French. French



national identity, as it exists today, began with the coronation of the first French King and had defining moments during the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the French Revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the reinstatement of the Republic during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the French monarchy caused many of the issues surrounding religion, equality, and human rights that gave rise to the French Revolution, thus redefining French national identity as secular and equal. “*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*” or “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,” is the epithet describing the concept of French identity.

The walls that stand today are a tangible representation of the expansion and implementation of French monarchical authority. By stamping out heresy, dissenters against Catholicism, and other nonconforming communities throughout Europe and the Middle East, the monarchy expanded its reach to new territories and established its presence within the walls of Aigues-Mortes, Carcassonne, and La Rochelle. The walls symbolically created a barrier between insiders and outsiders, the insiders being those whose ancestors formed the nation of France that exists today.

Many cities tore down their walls for economic reasons; walls that still stand have a new use. Some stand amidst new, modern buildings as the city expanded beyond the walls while others have been untouched as monuments. When preserved as monuments, they capture the history of France as it developed into its current state. The walls were used, originally, to form a barrier between those who identified with the French monarchy and those who did not. They were seized and constructed as the French monarchy expanded its reach to new territories. Today, citizens take advantage of this fact in order to benefit economically by marketing their history. The modern significance of walled cities now extends beyond their history. Because walled cities were centers

where a French identity of “*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*” was established and developed, they are preserved as heritage sites and arguably exploited through tourism.

France is now a secular nation with a history of religious conflict and persecution. Values such as assimilation continue to exist today. The walls of Carcassonne, Aigues-Mortes, and La Rochelle stand today as a representation of this tumultuous history; each site serves as an example of French Medieval and Renaissance values, such as Catholicism, that continued to the point of the Revolution. The exclusionary effects of walled cities resulted in the definition of what it meant to be French. The preservation and restoration of these sites signifies what it means to be French today as the sites become monuments to a turbulent, yet defining, past.

Walls as a means of protection and promotion of a strong economy through trade have become obsolete. While many walls were torn down for various reasons, the walls of Aigues-Mortes, Carcassonne, and La Rochelle have been preserved. Historical and cultural tourism allows one to “experience, and in some cases, participate in a vanishing lifestyle that lies within human memory.<sup>3</sup>” While walled cities once prospered as centers of human life, they now stand as monuments to the past. Walled cities offer an opportune location for tourism as many were involved in major events in French history that led to the development or advancement of the country. Historical tourism, which occurs at each walled city, “stresses the glories of the past.<sup>4</sup>” These glories are defining moments in French history. These moments of glory are preserved within the walls and presented to

---

<sup>3</sup> Charles R. Goeldner and J. R. Brent Ritchie, *Tourism Principles, Practices, Philosophies* (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2003), p. 270.  
<<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=82032>>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

tourists who wish to learn more about French history and culture. Tourism displays, in a literal manner, which moments a community is proud of and which they wish to leave out. Through the presentation of its heritage, the community summarizes its own sense of cultural memory and national identity.

### **III. Preservation of Heritage and the Marketing of History**

The purpose of this project is to demonstrate the modern significance of walled cities. Touring Aigues-Mortes in 2011 was a wonderful experience due to my understanding of the history of the site. These types of places are significant in the world today. Aigues-Mortes, Carcassonne, and La Rochelle provide examples of heritage sites that have been put to various uses in France. The events that took place at each site have molded their identity; the history is preserved in the collective memory of communities that use them today on a regional and national scale. As France expanded, the monarchy reached new frontiers and established its authority and with authority came an identity and characteristics that were unique to the French. Through this newly established identity, France continued to expand and unify itself, forming what it is today.

While there remain strong regional differences to this day, the French maintain their motto “*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*,” meaning “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.” In this instance, the term equality is the most significant point. While the United States’ understanding of equality is equal treatment to all regardless of differences, to the French the term has a different meaning. Equality, as defined by the French, is a result of assimilation. Everyone is equal in that no one is different. This understanding of equality is evident in the history of expanding France. Persecution of those who differed and

dissented from the monarchy or Church was a major theme. It is also physically present in the walls that stood to defend and define who was and was not French. As this tradition continued onward, sites where walled cities stood and continue to stand are now considered heritage sites.

A heritage site is a location with cultural and historical significance to a community of varying size and may be protected or preserved by the government of that community. The walled cities of Aigues-Mortes, La Rochelle, and Carcassonne are most definitely heritage sites. A group dedicated to the preservation of walled cities as heritage sites, European Walled Towns (EWT), describes this viewpoint in their constitution under the Piran Declaration of 1998. "Walled towns are unique inheritances from times long past and should be treasured, maintained, and safeguarded from neglect, damage, and destruction, and passed on into perpetuity as irreplaceable 'Timestones of History.'<sup>5</sup>" While there are only two walled cities in France belonging to this group, Montreuil-Bellay and Sainte Suzanne, the goal of the group demonstrates the historic significance of walled cities as heritage sights throughout Europe.

"Town walls represent not only physical monuments but also ideas- evocative mental constructs integral to the multi-layered self-images of communities.<sup>6</sup>" The preservation of a heritage site involves capturing the identity that the community wishes to present to outsiders. Collective memory is not inherent, but rather a socially

---

<sup>5</sup> Peter Van Roosmalen, "Constitution," *European Walled Towns*.  
<http://walledtowns.com/over-ons/development-plan/> (accessed April 14, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> David Bruce and Oliver Creighton, "Contested Identities: The Dissonant Heritage of European Town Walls and Walled Towns," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 12 (2006): 6.

constructed concept of the past.<sup>7</sup> Collective memory relies on the accordance of a community about their past. When studying the history of a community, it becomes a defining factor in the creation of a nation. Ernest Renan explains this statement in an excerpt from his article “Que’est-ce qu’une nation?” or “What is a Nation?”:

*“L’oubli, et, je dirai même l’erreur historique, sont un facteur essentiel de la création d’une nation et c’est ainsi que le progrès des études historiques est souvent pour la nationalité un danger.”<sup>8</sup>*

« Forgetfulness, and, I would even say historic error, are essential factors involved in the creation of a nation, and it is thus that the progress of historical study, is often a danger for nationality.<sup>9</sup> »

By studying the history of a nation, a community preserves it in its collective memory. The history becomes an identifying factor within a population that, when communally agreed upon, plays a role in defining a nation. Through selective preservation of heritage sites, one preserves certain images of the past in order to present and maintain a desired communal identity.<sup>10</sup> While some walls, such as Aigues-Mortes, are preserved, others are reconstructed as is in the case of Carcassonne. In some instances, the walls have fallen into disrepair and are no longer standing. While in others expansion beyond the walls left parts of walls intact between new buildings. In instances where walled cities remain in some form, their preservation was done purposefully, as a means to maintain them as ‘Timestones of History.’

---

<sup>7</sup> Maurice Halbwachs and Lewis Coser, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of London Press, 1992), p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Ernest Renan, “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?” lecture at Sorbonne, 1882.

<sup>9</sup> Translation by author.

<sup>10</sup> Halbwachs and Coser, *On Collective Memory*, p. 23.

One way to preserve the memory of a heritage site is to share it with others through tourism. By promoting the heritage of a site through tourism, the local government or community presents its own history to the tourists. Statistics on tourism at each site demonstrate that the people who most often visit heritage sites are those who are impacted by their heritage; in this case French tourists on holiday. Tourism displays, in a literal manner, which moments a community is proud of and which they wish to leave out. By doing so, the community summarizes its own sense of cultural memory and national identity. Walled cities are ideal locations for historical tourism as many were involved in major events in French history. Sites including Carcassonne and Aigues-Mortes are examples of places that promote historical tourism; they have been preserved and presented as monuments of a time past. Historical tourism “stresses the glories of the past.<sup>11</sup>” Defining moments in French history include those that occurred during the crusades, the Hundred Years’ War, and the Reformation. The history is conserved within the walls and presented to tourists who wish to learn more about French history and culture.

While the tourism industry promotes and preserves the heritage of a city, it also promotes the modern economy. Walled cities no longer serve their purpose as forms of defense. Walled cities were once an economic hub, but they now provide a source of income as heritage sites to eager tourists. Carcassonne and Aigues-Mortes are testament to this. By taking advantage of the heritage site as a tourist attraction, the city and government is able to make a profit. Studying the tourism of these cities demonstrates how walled cities have modern significance. Governments and communities maintain

---

<sup>11</sup> Goeldner and Ritchie, p. 270.

these sites for reasons beyond their historic significance. Many walls were torn down, however, some were maintained due to a vision that these heritage sites could be profitable.

The tourism of each individual site differs in purpose and can demonstrate which elements of the French past, such as its fervent religious faith, or its history of warfare, or even architectural style might be preserved and promoted at each site. According to The World Bank, France is the most-visited country in the world.<sup>12</sup> World Bank collected the data for the number of entries into the country by tourists, defined as any non-resident of the country visiting for non-work related purposes. The total came to 81, 411, 000.<sup>13</sup> While Paris is an obvious tourist destination in France, the nation also promotes tourism in many other major cities and regions. Due to the historic significance of many walled cities, these heritage sites are promoted through historical and religious tourism.

An examination of the tourism at Carassonne, Aigues-Mortes, and La Rochelle will demonstrate how an image of the French past is presented and preserved and how the communities and the French government exploit its rich history for profit. Exploitation has a very negative connotation. However, exploitation of the walled cities can be seen positively as a means of giving these heritage sites a new role in the modern world. Maintenance of walled cities is costly; in order to keep the walls, they must remain in good condition. By exploiting the heritage of these sites through tourism, the community is able to not only maintain the walls, but also make a profit for itself.

---

<sup>12</sup> "International tourism, number of arrivals." The World Bank.  
[http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL/countries/1W?order=wbapi\\_data\\_value\\_2011\\_wbapi\\_data\\_value\\_wbapi\\_data\\_value-last&sort=desc&display=default](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL/countries/1W?order=wbapi_data_value_2011_wbapi_data_value_wbapi_data_value-last&sort=desc&display=default) (accessed August 27, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Statistics on the visitation of tourists at Aigues-Mortes and La Rochelle for recent years demonstrate that a large portion of tourists are French, ranging between seventy and eighty percent at Aigues-Mortes and ninety-three percent at La Rochelle (see Figure 1).<sup>14</sup> Additionally, data collected on monthly visitation at both sites demonstrate that August is the most popular time of the year to tour (see Figure 2).<sup>16</sup> The French are known for their labor laws, including short work hours per week and long vacations. During the summer, the French take up to an entire month off. July and August are the most popular vacation months. As is evident from the statistics, the French seem to visit heritage sites on their time off. While a vacation to the beaches of Cannes may be tempting, it is interesting that the French choose to visit heritage sites as a vacation. They choose to celebrate their past and learn more about it through tourism.

Evidence also demonstrates that, apart from French citizens, the majority of other visitors come from other parts of Europe (see Figure 3).<sup>17</sup> A large number are from Great Britain, followed by Germany and Spain. Visitors from the United States do not make the list and are categorized under “autres,” or “others.” Visitors from non-European countries vary significantly from site to site. Visitation most likely depends on the tourist’s purpose and interest in the site. La Rochelle, for example, provides more activities than strictly heritage tourism because it is a developed and modernized city. As a result, it has a higher number of tourists from non-European countries. Aigues-Mortes, on the other

---

<sup>14</sup> “Frequentation Touristique d’Aigues-Mortes.” Office de Tourisme d’Aigues-Mortes. 2012.

<sup>15</sup> “Bilan de Frequentation 2011.” Office de Tourisme de La Rochelle. May 25, 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



hand, is limited to what it can provide to tourists. A tourist's interest must be strictly to explore the patrimony that is presented and preserved at Aigues-Mortes.

The effect that tourism has on the economy and up-keep of walled cities is not obvious at first. When I visited Aigues-Mortes with my tour group, I did not consider the impact that my presence may have had on the city. I was there as a tourist, absorbing and appreciating the fascinating tangible 'Timestones of History' that were the walls of Aigues-Mortes. Within the walls, I was also purchasing souvenirs and dining at local restaurants. I had the opportunity to take tours on foot through the city, on boat, or even horseback, through the marshes. It did not occur to me that I was continuing on the tradition of the walled city through my act of tourism, through my act of supporting a local economy.

To study the industry of tourism at each of these sites is to study a continuing act of preservation and commemoration. Governments and communities market their past as a means to maintain the walls that stand in the present. Cultural memory is preserved not through the individual, but through the joint-efforts of a community. By retelling their own histories as a result of historical tourism, communities omit that which they wish not to share and promote that which glorifies their identity. In the examples of walled cities of France, the history of a developing nation is retold, the cultural memory maintained, as the French often tour sites their own heritage.

#### **IV. Exemplary Walled Cities: Carcassonne, Aigues-Mortes, and La Rochelle**

What follows is a study of Carcassonne, Aigues-Mortes, and La Rochelle as examples of medieval walled cities that have been maintained throughout the centuries. They will be presented in chronological order to demonstrate the expansion over time of France through the use of walled cities. These cities are monuments that represent a rich French history and were each involved in the expansion of the nation and the unification of a French identity. By studying the histories of each site, general themes begin to present themselves. For example, religion is a common factor in the expansion of French borders. Also, frontier cities were an area of conflict as the concept of “us versus them” is repeated throughout their histories. This concept is physically manifested through the construction of walls. While rivers, mountains, train tracks, and other barriers may physically divide a population, the act of constructing walls is an intentional creation of such divide.

The expansion of French authority to new frontiers and the presence of walled cities as representatives of authority resulted in a unified identification with the French monarchy. This identity has shifted and evolved as the nation of France has continued to develop into its modern self. Religious turmoil and a sense of equality through assimilation are two important elements of French history that aided in forming the modern concept of French identity, which is summarized in the national motto, “*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité.*” Walled cities stood, and still stand, as representatives of this history, physical barriers that created an exclusionary effect against anyone who did not identify

with the French. They are tangible monuments to a complicated history filled with religious turmoil and persecution.

It is necessary to explore the history, preservation efforts, and marketing of the history of these heritage sites as they serve to explain the continued existence and use of walled cities in modern France. In this next section, I also intend to explore the different preservation techniques implemented at each site. Carcassonne's restoration project is well known and controversial, while Aigues-Mortes stands as a "gem city" with little done to preserve the walls other than general maintenance. I intend to explain why certain acts of preservation were used above others in an effort to better understand how the French government wishes to preserve its walled cities and present their history to tourists.

Tourism is the final aspect of research that will ultimately define the role of walled cities in a modern context. By studying the differences in the tourism of each site, I intend to demonstrate that walled cities serve a purpose in our modern context that extends beyond the preservation of heritage and cultural memory. The tourism industry provides walled cities with a new economy that showcases, and perhaps exploits, their history. Tourism makes a profit off of the heritage, but also preserves and propagates it to the world traveler. Each walled city uses tourism to make a profit. By examining the tourist industry, the role of each walled city will be revealed.

## V. Carcassonne

Carcassonne is located in Languedoc, southern France. This extraordinary walled city is one of the largest in Europe with its walls still intact. A myth explaining the name depicts the very nature of this medieval fortress-city. When an enemy attacked the city, a man named Don Carcas saved them all. A horn was sounded upon his victory to announce it to the village. When the soldiers heard the victory horn, they announced “Don Carcas le sonne!” meaning, “Don Carcas sounds the horn!”<sup>18</sup> At that moment, the town was named in his honor, Carcassonne. This story describes the militant nature of Carcassonne. The city is most known for its role during the Albigensian crusade against the Cathar heretics that occupied the region of Languedoc and other parts of southern France and northern Italy. Although it experienced a number of battles, especially being on the border of France and Spain, it still stands today. A frontier city, Carcassonne and its citizens played a pivotal role in the expansion of France under the monarchy.

Carcassonne’s continued existence, however, would not be without the great restoration efforts of Viollet-le-Duc in the nineteenth century. While Aigues-Mortes may be considered a “gem city,” having undergone little to no restoration, Carcassonne stands in contrast. In fact, certain additions during the restoration sight are considered unauthentic, giving rise to the debate over Carcassonne’s acceptance as a World Heritage Site by The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that promotes international collaboration for the preservation and

---

<sup>18</sup> Janine Pefley, *Une journée à Carcassonne* (San Antonio, TX: Babbitt Instructional Resources, 2003).

continuation of education. Considering that the walled city was eventually accepted as such, it is evident that Carcassonne holds great historical and cultural significance extending beyond that of France. The city remains today as a large tourist attraction for the region. As a result, it is arguable that Carcassonne represents elements of France's cultural and collective memory by preserving its heritage and sharing it with the tourists of France, Europe, and other parts of the world.

The city of Carcassonne is set at a strategic point. En route from Spain to Italy, it was once a major destination of travelers and was often at risk of invasion. Carcassonne has seen the likes of “Romans, Franks, Visigoths, Spanish Muslims, papal Crusaders,” and many more classic medieval antagonists. Three kilometers of ramparts surround the city in two concentric rings and 52 towers and turrets protected the city from these invaders.<sup>19</sup> Today, the population has spread past the walls. Two titles now distinguish its different sections. La Cité is the official term for what lies within the walls. La Ville Basse sits across the river and is the “commercial and cultural centre with its banks, boulangeries, bookshops, museums, galleries and bustling food markets.”<sup>20</sup> It is necessary to distinguish between the two because the La Ville Basse is the result of modern expansion, while La Cité is the section of Carcassonne that preserves the history and culture of its medieval past (see Figure 4).

---

<sup>19</sup> Linda Hart, "Carcassonne: From Medieval City to Modern Town" *The Contemporary Review*. 291 (2009), no. 1695: 478.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

## **French Catholic Authority: The Albigensian Crusade and Carcassonne**

A rich past indeed, Carcassonne was a center for conflict during the Albigensian crusade. Carcassonne played a major role in the Albigensian Crusade, which began in 1208. While most crusades were directed against the heretics in the Byzantine Empire, the Albigensian Crusade was directed against heretics on European soil as a reaction to the Cathar, or Albigensian, heresy. Unique in their beliefs, Catharism was a variation of Christianity that contradicted many traditional teachings of the Catholic Church. Dualism is a major element in Cathar belief and is also considered heretical by the Catholic faith. Dualist religions vary in their interpretations of the term. For the Cathars it is the belief that there are two gods, one good and one evil. Another example is the Cathar's rejection of the resurrection of Christ. According to the Cathars, "He [Jesus Christ] could not have been physically crucified for our sins nor eaten the Last Supper. Lacking a genuine body he could never have been resurrected."<sup>21</sup> This belief restructures the entire argument surrounding the passion of Christ, sacred doctrine for the Catholic Church. Because Cathars believe that Christ did not have a body, they also reject the teaching of transubstantiation during the Eucharist. The Catholics would have automatically persecuted any group that would blatantly promote such a heretical belief. These contradictions against Catholic teachings were seen as a rebellion against the faith and, according to Pope Innocent III, deemed the Cathars worthy of persecution.

Pope Innocent III (1161-1216) initiated the crusade against the Albigensians in Languedoc with the help of French king, Phillip Augustus (1165-1223), and his military. Pope Innocent III was known for his zealous attitude towards reuniting and preserving

---

<sup>21</sup>Aubrey Burl, *God's Heretics: The Albigensian Crusade* (Stroud: Sutton, 2002), p. 8.

Christendom and reclaiming the Holy Land through crusade. With the pope as the chief authority, it was his responsibility to get secular rulers involved in spiritual affairs so as to unite Christendom. “To the king, who is the preeminent authority, we do not deny that the emperor is certainly preeminent in temporal matters. But the pontiff has precedence in spiritual affairs, which are as superior to the temporal concerns as the soul is to the body.”<sup>22</sup> It was up to the rulers to follow the demands of Pope Innocent III and his successors. Such involvement was absolutely necessary in crusades because rulers controlled vast armies and supplied the papacy with military support. Crusaders were required to commit forty days to their quest and, in return, were given indulgences that relieved them of all of their sins committed previous to the crusade. The situation in Languedoc was difficult because the King of France did not yet rule it. However, the French king still held a great deal of power and influence as a major figure of authority around Ile-de-France. Pope Innocent III hoped that Phillip Augustus would involve himself with the south in order to gain territory and extend his temporal authority. The relationship between the two authority figures is an example of how the French monarchy acts as defenders of the faith.

As the king’s armies made their way to Carcassonne and surrounding areas, heretic blood was shed and new, French authority was instituted. Carcassonne was conquered in 1209.<sup>23</sup> A classic maneuver when attacking walled cities was to put the city under siege by cutting off the water supply. The inhabitants fled the city and it was

---

<sup>22</sup> James Powell, *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), p. 90.

<sup>23</sup> Hart, 480.

handed over to Simon de Montfort along with its surrounding territories.<sup>24</sup> Simon de Montfort was a knight and Earl of Leicester in England under King John, but held some estates in Normandy.<sup>25</sup> Remaining in France, he was made captain-general by the French to fight in the Albigensian Crusade in 1208.<sup>26</sup> He was known for his ruthlessness and skill, sometimes to an inhumane extent. “His severity became cruelty, and he delivered over many towns to fire and pillage, thus involving many innocent people in the common ruin.<sup>27</sup>” As a result, the Cathar heresy was quickly put to an end in southern France. De Montfort remained at Carcassonne after expelling all its inhabitants, even non-Cathars as they may present a threat to authority. He permitted them to settle across the river.<sup>28</sup> By 1250, the settlement had grown large and would eventually be annexed as a part of Carcassonne, La Ville Basse.<sup>29</sup> The crusade continued for decades after the conquest of Carcassonne under the reign of King Louis VIII and Louis IX.

In this instance, Simon de Montfort acted as a representative of the authority of the French monarchy, although originally English. Additionally, his violent attack against the Cathar heretics was also a concern of the Church under Pope Innocent III. The combination of these authorities under one agenda is significant as it ties an identity to the French monarchy as defenders and firm followers of Catholicism. At Carcassonne, this identity is manifested through the expulsion of all non-Catholics. Simon de Montfort took over Carcassonne under the name of the French king, establishing the monarchy’s

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Edwin Burton, "Simon de Montfort," *Catholic Encyclopedia*.  
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10540a.htm> (accessed September 7, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Hart, 480.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.



authority at a new frontier. The walls of Carcassonne are a very physical representation of French identity as they sheltered French citizens within and excluded the outsiders. The crusade continued for decades after the conquest of Carcassonne under the reign of King Louis VIII (1187-1226) and Louis IX (1214-1270), under regent Blanche of Castile (1188-1252). With the influence of the Catholic Church and the power of the French monarchy, the nation-state of France expanded its borders to a new reach, the region of Languedoc. The Albigensian crusade unified France by defining an element of French citizenship. The French monarchy has had strong ties with the papacy since the coronation of Charlemagne. The crusade on what would be French territory only strengthened the tie. The French were now heavily Catholic, exterminating all those who dissented.

Carcassonne stands as a monument that represents a significant moment in French history: a crusade against heretics on European soil. The walls are “tangible properties<sup>30</sup>” representing moments that defined the status of southern France in the Late Middle Ages as a powerful, yet still developing and expanding nation-state. The walls also represent French authority in the south and the continued presence of such authority throughout time, a significant feat. This history is commemorated as Carcassonne’s walls remain intact and the city is a major tourist destination in southern France.

---

<sup>30</sup> Bruce and Creighton, 234.

## **Restoring and Reimagining: Viollet-le-Duc's Contributions to Carcassonne**

The walls of Carcassonne are unique and distinct from the other sites that still stand today. Compared to the situation of walled cities like Aigues-Mortes in which the walls are preserved in their original construction, Carcassonne has a slightly different appearance. Architect Viollet-le-Duc restored La Cité of Carcassonne in the nineteenth century. Seemingly a wise step to commemorate the past and to recognize the architectural history of France, the restoration project faced a great deal of resistance and criticism.

A fortified walled settlement has existed at the site of Carcassonne since the pre-Roman period.<sup>31</sup> Originally named Latin Colonia Iulia Carcaso, Carcassonne was constructed following the style of Roman defenses.<sup>32</sup> The original walls were constructed of large blocks of stone fit without mortar.<sup>33</sup> The outer walls, as there are two rings of walls circling La Cité, are from the 13<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of Saint Louis.<sup>34</sup> The walls have stood the test of time considering that Carcassonne was situated along a frontier and was thus frequently attacked. Overtime, the city lost its strategic point as the boarder between France and Spain was clearly defined by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. At this point, the city was abandoned and was becoming a ruin because it no longer served a purpose as a point of defense or for trade.

At this point, it was necessary for the French government and citizens to determine the historical significance of Carcassonne as a monument representing their

---

<sup>31</sup> "Historic Fortified City of Carcassonne." United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization: World Heritage Centre. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/345>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> David A. Hanser, *Architecture of France* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), p. 40.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

cultural memory and national identity. “There were protracted debates on whether to demolish it or rescue it.<sup>35</sup>” The fate of the walls was decided; the government was swayed by ideas of rescuing and preserving the tangible history of France. The restoration project began. “In 1844 France’s famous architect and great restorer, Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814-79), was brought in to plan and supervise what became a fifty-year program of rebuilding, renovation, and restoration.<sup>36</sup>”

The restoration technique of Viollet-le-Duc went against what was commonly done in other parts of Europe. English conservation techniques set the precedent for restoration of heritage sites, the key word being conservation. While Viollet-le-Duc intended to restore Carcassonne, other architects saw the opportunity for conservation. Inspired by John Ruskin and William Morris, two English conservation architects, the common practice was to use natural and original materials whenever possible while using a non-intrusive approach.<sup>37</sup> This unique and careful technique set the foundation for modern European conservation. However, other architects contested it in the nineteenth century, including Eugène Viollet-le-Duc.

Contrary to the English technique, Viollet-le-Duc’s practice “quite radically altered the overall composition of the external fortifications.<sup>38</sup>” The major alteration made by the architect was the addition of cone-shaped slate roofs to the walls’ towers (see Figures 5 and 6). The new roofs are an obvious visual enhancement to the site and were not original to the town’s architecture, or to the architecture of the region for that

---

<sup>35</sup> Hart, 480.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Hannah Lewi, "Spectacular Heritage: ‘Total Restoration’ at the Site of Carcassonne." *Architectural Theory Review*. 2008. v.13, no. 2: p. 146.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 147.

matter. This is an example of how Viollet-le-Duc was influenced by northern architecture in the restoration of historical monuments in the south. The cone roofs were said to have been “interpreted by Viollet-le-Duc, in profile and material, as in the manner of the King’s Engineers ‘might have intended to complete them.’<sup>39</sup>” In this instance, Viollet-le-Duc seemingly used his imagination to interpret the intent of King Louis IX. Critics did not appreciate his invocation of artistic liberty. However, “it was estimated that only about 15% of the actual materials were new.”<sup>40</sup>

Viollet-le-Duc’s technique was a French adaptation on restoration and conservation practices. In nineteenth-century France, there was a growing interest in preserving the nation’s *patrimoine*, or heritage. Prosper Mérimée wrote about and assisted in many archeological conservation and restoration projects, including one project with Viollet-le-Duc. Growing interest in the preservation of French heritage and an interest in the study of historic architecture culminated to create “a modern architectural expression of French nationalism.”<sup>41</sup> The walls of Carcassonne are a perfect example of such an effort. In the nineteenth century, Carcassonne was a French heritage site offering an opportunity for architectural exploration in a manner that would express a uniquely French technique. Viollet-le-Duc, as Inspector for the *Commission des Monuments Historiques*, took advantage of this opportunity by performing a notable restoration project.

In the words of Viollet-le-Duc, “to restore an edifice means neither to maintain it, nor to repair it, nor to rebuild it; it means to re-establish it in a finished state, which may

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

in fact never have existed at any given moment.<sup>42</sup>” This statement explains the addition of the conical roofs to the rampart towers at Carcassonne. However, it extends beyond such a simple visual difference between what was and what is Carcassonne. The practice is backed up by the belief in total restoration, “that a monument should be considered as a whole.<sup>43</sup>” This theory was established by Prosper Mérimée as a necessary element of criteria for the restoration of French sites.<sup>44</sup>

UNESCO never fully accepted Viollet-le-Duc’s restorations until 1997 when the site was analyzed using a different approach.<sup>45</sup> “Rather than compromising the site’s historic integrity, the massive restorations were viewed as another distinctive layer to its cultural stratigraphy - a case of the heritage industry itself becoming heritage.<sup>46</sup>”

Carcassonne now stands with two separate instances of cultural heritage. The first being its expansive and rich history, especially as a site during the Albigensian Crusade. The second is the restoration effort by Viollet-le-Duc that was done in a manner that set it apart from other restoration practices of the time, resulting in a restoration project that was uniquely French. This demonstrates the cultural significance of Carcassonne in a modern context. It preserves not only France’s medieval history, but also nineteenth century architectural philosophy. Both are elements of modern French identity and memory.

---

<sup>42</sup> Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, “Restauration,” *Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle*, vol. 8. (Paris: B. Bance and A. Morel, 1866). 14.

<sup>43</sup> Lewi, 148.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> "Historic Fortified City of Carcassonne."

<sup>46</sup> Oliver Creighton. "Contested Townscapes: The Walled City as World Heritage." *World Archaeology* 39 (2007): 343.

## **Marketing a Medieval Tale: Tourism at Carcassonne**

One final approach to the study of Carcassonne's significance in a modern context is the tourism of the city. Tourism at Carcassonne is especially interesting because of the city's dual significance; a medieval walled city controversially restored by a significant architect. It is the ideal image of a walled city. The cone-shaped roofs atop the towers resemble a Disneyworld castle. Tourists are drawn to this site because it offers a total experience unlike any other in Europe. It is a wonderland with real history; the walls are a tangible 'Timestone of History.'

Tourism at Carcassonne is most popular during summer months as the weather in Languedoc is temperate. A popular vacation destination, Carcassonne is visited frequently by the French. Yet, visitors from Europe and the rest of the world also frequent the walled city. As a World Heritage Site, this comes as no surprise. Carcassonne is amusement park-like in appearance, but unlike the castle at Disneyworld, it is filled with real history of crusades and knights. An article published on the La Dépêche website about attendance at Carcassonne during the most popular vacation months reported that approximately 1,300 visitors per weekend toured the historic monuments of La Cité of Carcassonne.<sup>47</sup> The article explains that while tourism at Carcassonne is less popular during winter months, the walled city continues to prosper the most during the vacation months of July and August. During this time, the French people and foreign tourists visit the World Heritage Site to learn about and commemorate

---

<sup>47</sup> O.M. "Carcassonne. Vacances : une fréquentation mitigée à la Cité." La Dépêche. <http://www.ladepeche.fr/article/2012/02/21/1288899-vacances-une-frequentation-mitigee-a-la-cite.html> (accessed October 1, 2013).

their past. By touring Carcassonne, the heritage of France is preserved in the memory of the people. The walled city is also preserved as tourism provides economic support.

Attractions at Carcassonne are not limited to the walls of La Cité. Carcassonne strongly promotes, and even exploits, its heritage by offering to tourists a number of activities. The tourist office of Carcassonne offers a weekend package for its visitors that include a hotel, meals, and access to a number of sites. Most interesting and unique to the heritage site are the museums and tourist centers like the Cultural Center in Memorial of Former Soldiers which serves as an archive of Carcassonne's military history or "The Cathar Castle and Its Instruments of Torture" which houses a number of torture devices used until the Revolution. All of these activities and the many alternatives demonstrate that Carcassonne primarily caters to the tourist.

The identity of medieval France is captured and presented through tourism as the modern walled city acts as an interactive, real world history museum. Modern day Carcassonne is a tourist destination that markets the history of France in order to preserve the cultural memory of its people and to maintain the heritage of the site. The story of the Albigensian crusade exemplifies France's strong tie with the Catholic Church and a strong sense of royal authoritarianism. The Albigensian crusade led to the expansion of French frontiers, the establishment of the French monarchy's authority in the south, and the establishment of Catholicism as the dominant religion. As the Albigensian crusade occurred at Carcassonne, the city's walls represent the divide between the conflicting identities of the Cathars and the French knights; Simon de Montfort expelled the inhabitants of the city and established royal authority over a newly conquered frontier.

As the walled city lost its use and fell to ruin, the French government made the decision to restore the city. Employing Viollet-le-Duc, the walled city was restored in a uniquely French fashion with attention being paid to the overall appearance of the site. The addition of conical roofs did not restore the original appearance of Carcassonne, but re-imagined it under the direction of Viollet-le-Duc. Carcassonne is preserved and promoted to national and global tourists as a heritage site. The modern significance of Carcassonne is that it preserves the cultural memory of the nation of France as it expanded to new frontiers. It shares the memory of this history with its own people and with those from all corners of the world.

## **VI. Aigues-Mortes**

Aigues-Mortes is considered a “gem city” because it has not significantly changed in structure, or been heavily restored, since its construction in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> Originally founded by King Louis IX to establish a presence of French royalty in southern France, the walls of Aigues-Mortes provide an example of the historical significance of walled cities as a representation of French national identity and cultural memory. Aigues-Mortes has not undergone great restoration as compared to other French medieval walled cities and thus stands as a representation of French medieval history and heritage. Due to its continued use throughout history as a fortification and its use today as a tourist attraction, Aigues-Mortes has stood the test of time and transitioned into the modern world as a significant French heritage site. Events such as the crusades led by Louis IX and the city’s general use as an economic port gives it historic significance. Its

---

<sup>48</sup> Hanser, p. 5.



unchanged architecture provides us with a glimpse into elements of the late-medieval world in southern France. The purpose of the walls surrounding this city was to protect those who were French from those who were not French.

### **Establishing a French, Catholic Identity at a New Frontier**

In 791, the first tower, Matafère, was constructed in the midst of the salt marshes to protect local fishermen and salt marsh workers.<sup>49</sup> In 812, The Holy Roman Emperor granted the tower to the Benedictine Abbey who established the “Psalmody Abbey there.<sup>50</sup>” When King Louis made an appearance at Aigues-Mortes at this time, the walled city became much more nationally significant. Construction done under the rule of Louis IX is what remains today as an exemplary bastide city.

Louis IX was strongly influenced by the French monarchy’s strong Catholic identity. Indicative of his unwavering faith and loyalty to the Catholic Church, Louis IX of France was canonized posthumously in 1297. This strong faith was the driving force behind many of Louis, IX actions involving crusade and expansion of the French nation. Born in 1214, Louis IX was made heir at the age of four after the death of his older brother and was made king at the age of twelve in 1226.<sup>51</sup> Too young to legitimately rule the country, his father assigned Blanche of Castile, mother of Louis IX, to act as regent until he was of age. Blanche of Castile would continue to act as a counselor to her son, even after he had reached majority, until her death. During Louis IX’s youth, the Albigensian crusade was coming to a close and was managed by Blanche of Castile and

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Jacques Le Goff and Gareth Evan Gollrad, *Saint Louis* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), p. 3.

the pontifical legate Romain Frangipani, Romain de Saint-Ange.<sup>52</sup> When the heir and viscount of the Midi, the adjacent region to Languedoc in southern France, ceded all his right and lands to the King of France in 1229, the kingdom was extended for the first time to the Mediterranean.<sup>53</sup> Louis IX would use this territory to launch his two crusades to the Holy Land. He was the first French king to launch a crusade from his own territory and constructed a walled city at that point. “The dream of crusade now had a material launching point: Aigues-Mortes.<sup>54</sup>”

The crusades demonstrate the significance of religion, specifically Catholicism, to the development of France as a nation. As his predecessors had conquered other territories in southern France, including Languedoc where Carcassonne is located, Louis IX’s goal was to establish a strong royal presence in southeastern France. Conquests during the Albigensian crusade by Phillip Augustus and Louis VIII provided the monarchy with new territories. Louis IX was able to establish many of his own towns, including Aigues-Mortes. King Louis purchased the land in 1248 from the Psalmodi abbey and the walled city became the first territory of the French monarchy to touch the Mediterranean.

By founding a site that represented the presence of the French monarchy in the south, King Louis created a boundary that defined the identity of the inhabitants of the walled city. “City walls, while outwardly embracing populations, also inevitably serve to

---

<sup>52</sup> Le Goff and Gollrad, p. 62.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

exclude or marginalize other social groups.<sup>55</sup> Those inside were French as they were subject to the French monarchy.

With the recent conquest of the south, not all of the population would identify with the French monarchy, regardless of the obvious benefits of economic support and protection offered by the walls built by the king. “Urban walls divided as well as united communities (and in many cases continue to do so), serving to create or exacerbate fractured identities.<sup>56</sup>” Whether the citizens of Aigues-Mortes identified with the French monarchy or not, the territory remained under royal control and the citizens were subject to it.

Such a divide continues to exist between the north and the south of France as a result of inherent cultural differences. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the physical barriers of the walls of Aigues-Mortes, and similar walled cities, exacerbated this divide. The walls clarified which populations in southern France could actually be defined as French, although language differences and regional laws were still in place. While there is an obvious difference between northern and southern customs, especially during the 13<sup>th</sup> century when the nation was just forming, King Louis IX managed to bring a northern architectural style to the south that would forever remain as a representation of a united France; the bastide.

---

<sup>55</sup> Creighton. "Contested Townscapes," 339.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 343.

## The “Gem City” That Still Stands

The bastide originated in northern France, but was also successful in the south. Derived from the word “bastille,” it simply means a fortress.<sup>57</sup> The primary purpose of a bastide was to provide military support. Some were erected around towns so as to make them safer for trade. It is no wonder that Louis IX, a northern monarch, brought this architectural style to the south, as it provided a successful defense as well as other benefits. The economic benefit of a bastide was profitable as it “paid a lord to attract settlers and traders to his own town, and to divert commerce from the towns which were self-governing or subject to his rivals.<sup>58</sup>” Aigues-Mortes needed a bastide because of its location as a port city. It was also strategically beneficial. Provence, part of the Holy Roman Empire, lay to the east; to the west was Aquitaine under English rule, and Languedoc, which was recently conquered by Phillip Augustus and Louis VIII. Aigues-Mortes was an outpost of the French monarchy on the Mediterranean and was surrounded by rivals.

Bastides are distinct in their layout compared to other walled cities, as they are a rectangular or square shape and the streets are organized at right angles but in an irregular grid. “Five streets in both directions cross at right angles but are laid out in an irregular grid.<sup>59</sup>” In addition, the *Hôtel de Ville*, or city hall, was not centered within the walls, but placed to the west of the center. This is because the eastern third of Aigues-Mortes was originally uninhabited and was used as a space for gardening and possibly the cemetery.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Tout, 15.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Hanser, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

Louis IX had already left on crusade in 1270 when construction of the walls began.<sup>61</sup> Construction took a long time to complete because of work on roads and canals to connect Aigues-Mortes with other cities. The walls of Aigues-Mortes, upon final construction, encompassed 40 acres in the shape of an obtuse rectangle, “with its corners oriented to the cardinal points, as was characteristic of medieval French fortresses.”<sup>62</sup> There are fifteen gateway towers that frame the fifteen entrances to the city (see Figure 7). Two protecting towers guard the entrances on the northeast side, which faces landward and is thus more vulnerable to attack.<sup>63</sup> The Tower of Constance sits outside the walls and is surrounded by a moat. The walls framing the interior city range from 25 feet to 36 feet in height and are more than 8 feet thick.<sup>64</sup>

Of the many bastides that still stand in Southern France, Aigues-Mortes is perhaps the most actively inhabited and visited. However, it never succeeded as the prominent Mediterranean port as it was originally planned. The city’s close proximity to the mouth of the Rhone caused a number of problems that impeded its success. The mouth of the river would rapidly silt up and incessant dredging of the river was too costly.<sup>65</sup> Also, in 1481 Louis XI annexed Marseille, which provided a larger and more effective port than that of Aigues-Mortes. The southern bastide was not destined to continue as a major port city in southern France. It became an economic backwater and thus preserved its walls.

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

“Therefore its massive walls and magnificent castle have suffered to remain to this day, the finest specimen of a medieval walled town in the world.<sup>66</sup>”

### **Conflicting Identities: The Massacre of Italian Immigrants at Aigues-Mortes**

In 1893 Aigues-Mortes was involved in a tragic event; the persecution and massacre of Italian immigrants. During this time period, a number of Italian immigrant workers came to Aigues-Mortes to work the salt marshes. For every 3,000 workers at the salt marshes, 1,000 were Italian.<sup>67</sup> They worked in harsh conditions and were not treated well by their French employers. Tension rose and quarrels amongst workers grew more prevalent; this culminated in a fight in which four French workers were beaten after having accused one Italian worker of washing his pants in the drinking water.<sup>68</sup> The Frenchmen returned to the city and spread rumors that the Italians had actually killed the slightly injured Frenchmen. Mobs of Frenchmen formed and went after the Italian salt marsh workers who took refuge in buildings within the walls of the city. Crowds of French workers formed for a “*veritable chasse*,” a real hunt, of the Italians.<sup>69</sup>

Many Italians attempted to flee by train, but were arrested by the French. Those attempting to flee were beaten and many beatings resulted in death. Some Italians took refuge in the Tower of Constance, outside the walls of Aigues-Mortes. After the massacre, the mayor of Aigues-Mortes made a public statement that excused the French workers from their acts of violence against the Italians. However, he retracted the

---

<sup>66</sup> Tout, 19.

<sup>67</sup> "Les conflits." Aigues-mortes; Le sel de la vie. <http://www.ot-aiguesmortes.fr/FR/histoire/viii-siecle.html> (accessed April 15, 2013).

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

statement when it was met with a great deal of negative international press.<sup>70</sup> The death toll reported by the city came to a total of 7 Italians, but the actual numbers show 17 Italian immigrants dead and 150 injured.<sup>71</sup>

This tragic event demonstrates once again how walled cities create an exclusionary barrier between those who identified as French and those who did not. The walls created a very physical divide between the French and the Italians, and this divide was manifested through the attack against the Italians as they were expelled from Aigues-Mortes. As a result, the story of the Italian massacre is another example of the importance of French identity and assimilation and how French walled cities promote this concept.

### **Marketing a Medieval Tale: Tourism at Aigues-Mortes**

Today, Aigues-Mortes has expanded beyond the limitations of the walls and remains a city with a population of 7,613 as estimated in 2007.<sup>72</sup> Mainly a tourist destination, the city of Aigues-Mortes attempts to demonstrate its modern significance as a site that preserves French heritage. Although it was not an economic success after the annexing of Marseille, Aigues-Mortes has provided its country with a different service by capturing within its walls the cultural memory of an expanding nation, as it was the first French territory to touch the Mediterranean. Catholic heritage and histories of crusade are marketed at the site to eager tourists. Tourism provides the town with the economic means to maintaining itself when its port declined. By drawing in crowds, other businesses flourish. Tourism also extends beyond the maintenance of the city. Being a

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> "Population Aigues-Mortes." *Le Parisien*. [http://www.cartesfrance.fr/carte-france-ville/population\\_30003\\_Aigues-Mortes.html](http://www.cartesfrance.fr/carte-france-ville/population_30003_Aigues-Mortes.html) (accessed September 12, 2013).

heritage site, Aigues-Mortes can continue to commemorate and celebrate its history by presenting it to the tourists of France, Europe, and the rest of the world.

The document *Frequentation Touristique d'Aigues-Mortes* is a collection of data demonstrating global tourist frequentation at Aigues-Mortes as calculated by the Aigues-Mortes Office of Tourism. It shows a steady number of visitors from year to year. The table begins in 1997 and ends in 2012. Averaging the number of visitors over the last 16 years comes to a total of 1,109,562.5 annually. In 2001, the city saw a spike in attendance with a total of 1,504,000 visitors.<sup>73</sup> According to the data, the majority of visitors were French in nationality, a number that ranges year to year from 71% to 86%.<sup>74</sup> As the number of French visitors is so high, it is understandable that the most popular month of the year to visit is August, the most popular month for the French to take their month-long vacation from work.

Unlike the statistics at La Rochelle, Aigues-Mortes is significantly less popular with non-European visitors. 1.51% to 2.99% of visitors are from countries other than France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Spain. The percent of “others” visiting Aigues-Mortes has declined in recent years to an average of 1.52%.<sup>75</sup> What this data demonstrates is that Aigues-Mortes is a heritage site that caters to the French. Aigues-Mortes, the “gem city,” is a monument best appreciated by those whose heritage it represents.

Compared to other walled cities, Aigues-Mortes is unique because it is not strictly a tourist hotspot due to the community living within the walls. Additionally, the city did

---

<sup>73</sup> “Frequentation Touristique d'Aigues-Mortes.” Office de Tourisme d'Aigues-Mortes.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.



not expand directly outside of its walls so it is still relatively secluded. Hotels are all within walking distance of the walls. Once there, tourists are invited to visit the Church of Notre-Dame des Sablons established in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which was used by Louis IX before his departure on crusade. A number of tours of the ramparts are offered, as well as boat tours of the surrounding salt marshes. Due to its seclusion, tourists usually only stay for a weekend during the summer vacation months. Aigues-Mortes is not as devoted to the tourist industry as Carcassonne and is not as integrated with the modern world as La Rochelle, so activities are limited to cultural and heritage tourism.

## **VII. La Rochelle**

La Rochelle is a unique city because of its location. It sits on the ocean on one of the only spots of high ground in the area. It is the only ancient site to be situated directly along the French Atlantic coastline.<sup>76</sup> As a result, La Rochelle developed into a major trade city, with tradesmen distributing mostly salt and wine. Because of its prosperity, both the French and English heavily sought after the city of La Rochelle.

The city had a very detailed form of municipal government, run by elected officials, independent from the French monarchy and the two were occasionally in conflict with one another. However, due to its useful location, the monarchy generally remained on good terms with the city until the French Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. While the medieval city is an example of how the walls distinguish between one government and another, the true test and struggle for authority occurred during the Reformation. Calvinism was introduced to La Rochelle in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the

---

<sup>76</sup> Kevin C. Robbins, *City on the Ocean Sea, La Rochelle, 1530-1650: Urban Society, Religion, and Politics on the French Atlantic Frontier* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), p. 18.

governing elite members of the *corps de ville* in La Rochelle converted to Calvinism; however, the religion was not imposed on lower orders of society.<sup>77</sup> At this point, the city came into conflict with the Catholic French King, Louis XIII and his minister Cardinal Richelieu. The persecution of the Huguenots at La Rochelle is yet another example of how a walled city with a concentrated population transformed the national identity of France.

### **Establishing Authority at La Rochelle**

The people of La Rochelle established the *corps de ville*, or town council, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century to govern the small trade port. Endowed with special privileges in 1137 by Guillaume X, the Duke of Aquitaine, who freed the city from any feudal supervision. The Rochelais, the people of La Rochelle, pursued an ingenious strategy that allowed them to maintain their independence, “under the sovereignty of English or French kings<sup>78</sup>.” The Rochelais did not want complete emancipation from the monarchical authority, “but rather a mutually advantageous symbiosis with the monarchy.<sup>79</sup>” This relationship with the royal authority continued for centuries.

While the city was able to maintain its relationship with the kings of England or France, it was not immune to conflict. Political and religious turmoil has plagued La Rochelle throughout its history. During the Hundred Years’ War, the crowns of England and France disputed over ownership of the city as marriages and deaths led to confusion over lordship. The Hundred Years’ War was fought during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. It

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

was a struggle between two dynasties, the Valois family of France, a branch of the Capetians, and the Plantagenet family of England. While conflict between families culminated in the Hundred Years' War, the debate over territories arguably began with the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine to King Henry II of England. At this time, La Rochelle was placed under English rule in 1154.<sup>80</sup>

La Rochelle was involved directly in the fighting between crowns. In 1224, Louis VIII, who was briefly involved in the Albigensian crusade, seized La Rochelle from the British in an attempt to expand French royal authority.<sup>81</sup> However, the contested territory once again went under British control when King John II of France signed the Treaty of Brétigny in 1360.<sup>82</sup> The king was captured by the British at the battle of Poitiers and was forced to surrender. The agreement granted territories to Edward III of England (see Figure 8). These territories included Poitou-Charentes, where La Rochelle is located. The Treaty of Brétigny would supposedly end the Hundred Years' War. King John II's successor, Charles V of France, reclaimed many of these territories. In 1372, La Rochelle opened its doors to the troops of Charles V after defeating the British and taking the city under his own control. La Rochelle remained under French control.<sup>83</sup>

La Rochelle was a major city in one of the contested territories during the Hundred Years' War. Being a prosperous port, it is understandable that the competing authorities wished to gain control over the city. The inhabitants maintained an

---

<sup>80</sup> "Fortifications de La Rochelle, XIVE, XVe siècle." Editions des Riches Heures. <http://www.richesheures.net/epoque-6-15/chateau/17rochelle-historique.htm> (accessed April 13, 2013).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

independent identity from the dueling monarchies until France finally succeeded in finally reclaiming La Rochelle and the territory of Poitou-Charentes in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the city of La Rochelle was struck by famine and plague. They could not meet royal demands for cash subsidies and as a result, the French King Francois I, scrutinized the town finances. He dissolved the independent *corps de ville* and formed a new council and constitution that favored royal authority. “The example of La Rochelle suggests that the king’s propensity toward authoritarianism was tempered by an abiding respect for intermediate organizations of government vital to the ancient political arrangement of his realm.<sup>84</sup>” While the city was under a new authority, the people were able to maintain Rochelais identity as tenacious, seafaring tradesmen. The change did not sit well with the Rochelais and the struggle continued between the Rochelais and the crown for many years, into the reign of Francois I’s successor, Henry II in 1547. Eventually, the *corps de ville* and ancient constitution were reinstated to continue the mutually advantageous partnership that had worked so well in the past, a rare feat for an independent municipality in the history of the French monarchy.

The Rochelais tenacity demonstrates that civic pride took precedence over loyalty to a changeable overlord. The Rochelais take pride in their rich history of independence during a time when major authority figures such as the French and English monarchies and the Catholic Church dominated Western Europe. The people of La Rochelle did not identify strongly with any of these authority figures. In fact, “no bishopric or cathedral

---

<sup>84</sup> Robbins, p. 81.

chapter existed in La Rochelle before 1648.”<sup>85</sup> Prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, nearby dioceses were fractured and poorly run, never exerting any real influence on La Rochelle.<sup>86</sup>

### **The Harboring of Huguenots**

In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, widespread disbelief and restructuring of Catholic tradition resulted in new forms of Christianity such as Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism, and Anabaptism. Eventually, the Reformation made its way to France. With the availability of challenging beliefs and arguments to all social strata, the Catholic Church developed a new enemy in Protestantism.

Jean Calvin established Calvinism in the mid-sixteenth century. Calvin criticized the Catholic Church, on its greed, dishonesty, and immorality. Calvinism was founded on the concept of predestination, “God’s eternal decree...for all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others.”<sup>87</sup> This belief is in direct conflict with the Catholic Church, which argues that one may achieve salvation through good works. According to Calvin, God, elected one before birth, to be saved and no amount of good deeds would change one’s fate. However, good deeds were a sign of having been chosen.<sup>88</sup> A community of do-gooders would exclude any person who was not blatantly “good.”

Eventually, Calvinism was condemned by the French monarchy. King Henry II denounced the “common malady of this contagious pestilence which has infected many

---

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>87</sup> John Merriman. *A History of Modern Europe*. V. I. W. W. Norton and Company, Inc. New York: 2010. 109.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 109.

noble towns.<sup>89</sup> Based on Calvinist teachings and beliefs, followers congregated to form the Huguenot, or the Protestant Reformed Church of France established in the mid-sixteenth century in Paris. The Huguenots continued to practice their faith until they faced persecution by the French government and were forced to desist, flee, or die.

The Reformation made its way across France through centers of commerce with access to printing. La Rochelle, being an economically successful city, was not immune to the influx of new ideas and criticisms from other parts of Europe. The printing press appeared at La Rochelle in 1563.<sup>90</sup> Barthélémy Berton, a devout Calvinist set up a printing press and shop in La Rochelle and produced 1,5000 copies of Calvinist works. With access to such works, the Rochelais quickly converted. The Calvinist population in La Rochelle mostly included the merchant and governing classes. Approximately 44% of all merchants in La Rochelle identified with Calvinism.<sup>91</sup>

Unlike Carcassonne and Aigues-Mortes, La Rochelle did not have as strong a tie to Catholicism. The lack of any nearby bishop meant that La Rochelle was not strongly influenced by Catholicism. Due to the lack of a formally established and popular religion, Calvinism grew quickly in popularity and the walled city became a center for religious dissent. “Over the century, from 1550 to 1650, La Rochelle was an important venue of the institutional and confessional conflicts shaping early modern France.<sup>92</sup>” La Rochelle permitted the introduction of new religious beliefs and societal mores to the nation of France. Once again, as France continued to develop and expand, religion was at the center of conflict.

---

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>90</sup> Robbins, p. 173.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 61

The Rochelais remained separate from Catholic identity, and were thus disconnected from an element of French national identity. The walled city filled with independent citizens suddenly transformed into a major site of religious turmoil between Catholics and Calvinists. “The Huguenots in general and the Rochelais in particular were conducting a desperate struggle to preserve their faith and independence in the face of the evident determination of the King that his authority should prevail everywhere.<sup>93</sup>” The French monarchy took many approaches to subjugating the Huguenots, including the proposal of peace terms. However, the heavily contested identities were relentless in their efforts for control over La Rochelle and the maintenance of their own identities.

The Huguenots were granted limited ‘toleration’ by the Edict of Nantes in 1598, toleration that was later revoked in 1658.<sup>94</sup> As the Huguenot Church dissented against the Catholic Church, Huguenots were targeted by the French royal forces, which were under the command of Richelieu, Cardinal of the Catholic Church. Richelieu, was the First Minister under Louis XIII, a member and representative of the clergy, and wished to “forge a single national culture,” which would include a single religion.<sup>95</sup> The result was a persecution of the Huguenots in order to further the unification of the nation of France. La Rochelle, being a center of Huguenot practice and discourse, was a target. As has been demonstrated by the previous case studies of walled cities and the explanation of French history, it is clear that the French kings of the past considered themselves defenders of the

---

<sup>93</sup> David Parker. *La Rochelle and the French Monarchy: Conflict and Order in Seventeenth-Century France* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1980), p. 17.

<sup>94</sup> Anthony Levi. *Cardinal Richelieu and the Making of France*. New York: Carroll & Graf, 2000. 3.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

faith for political reasons, persecuting all dissenters within French borders and beyond as they presented a threat to royal authority.

### **Siege and Conquest: The Expulsion of Dissenters and the Definitive Establishment of French Monarchical Authority**

The catastrophic siege of La Rochelle from 1627 to 1628 by Cardinal Richelieu denotes yet another moment when French monarchical authority persecuted dissenting voices.<sup>96</sup> This specific event is arguably one of the most direct examples of how walled cities allow the French to establish a center and expand its own authority and identity. The siege intended to submit the Huguenots to French authority but resulted in a much more tragic end. The siege had lasted fourteen months.<sup>97</sup> Although they planned and prepared well, the citizens of La Rochelle were eventually forced into starvation. According to one source, 15,000 citizens trapped within the walls died from famine.<sup>98</sup> On the 30<sup>th</sup> of April in 1628, the mayor of La Rochelle surrendered to the royal army.<sup>99</sup> “At about two or three o’clock on All Saints day 1628 Louis XIII armed and mounted, preceded only by Cardinal Richelieu, entered La Rochelle at the head of his troops.”<sup>100</sup> Royal presence officially stood within the walls of La Rochelle. A distinction between the inhabitants of a walled city and the French government and monarchy was physically defined by the presence of walls as the king established his own presence within them. As

---

<sup>96</sup> Robbins, p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> Parker, p. 6.

<sup>98</sup> Robbins, p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> "Histoire de La Rochelle." La Rochelle Tourisme. <http://www.larochelle-tourisme.com/a-voir-a-faire/visiter-la-rochelle/histoire> (accessed October 24, 2013).

<sup>100</sup> Parker, p. 6.



the French succeeded in eliminating Huguenot presence in La Rochelle, Catholicism was once again reaffirmed as a strong characteristic of French national identity.

The aftermath of the siege was significant to the fate of La Rochelle. The city was taken over by French authority; when the *corps de ville* was abolished the independent Calvinist identity of La Rochelle was abolished with it. “Royal agents with the aid of local Catholics took over rochelais civic institutions and forcibly converted them into agencies of the Counter-Reformation.<sup>101</sup>” Louis XIII placed representatives of his authority into the local government to keep with his own agenda. The French ties to Catholicism restructured the entire operation of La Rochelle. French authority, after centuries of struggle, was finally permanently established in La Rochelle. Catholicism remained present in La Rochelle until the French Revolution, just over a century later, when the French Republic embraced secularism.

La Rochelle, like many other walled cities, was a victim of siege and forced assimilation by the French monarchy. Siege forced the inhabitants of wall cities to either negotiate or surrender. When considering the location of La Rochelle, the siege by Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu seems even more impressive. La Rochelle’s unusual location made siege especially difficult as the city was surrounded by marshes and sea. The architecture was expansive, as the defense was a major element in the construction and development of the city over time.

---

<sup>101</sup> Robbins, p. 2.

## Where Walls Once Stood

The walls of the city by 1612 were 10,170 feet in perimeter, or 3,100 meters and twelve feet in breadth.<sup>102</sup> The Duke of Aquitaine built the first wall in 1130, but many additions and reconstructions of the walls took place throughout La Rochelle's extensive history of religious and political turmoil.<sup>103</sup> "Successive English and French kings had liberally endowed the city with special privileges empowering the *corps de ville* to erect, maintain, and upgrade the most sophisticated and thickest walls of any town in western France."<sup>104</sup> La Rochelle was built up to defend the city from all possible points of attack, both land and sea.

Five ports were created to permit access to trade ships. To the west was Porte Neuve, to the south-west was Porte Deux-Moulins, the south east was Porte Saint-Nicolas, to the north was Porte Dauphine, and the principal port of the walled city to the north-east was Porte Royale.<sup>105</sup> Having a set number of ports allowed the people of La Rochelle to more carefully control who entered and exited the town. The two best-preserved ports include the Porte Royale and Porte Dauphine, which can be seen today [FIG].<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> Robbins, p. 49.

<sup>103</sup> "Enceintes et portes de La Rochelle." Benezel17. [http://beneze17.free.fr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=84](http://beneze17.free.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=84) (accessed April 13, 2013).

<sup>104</sup> Robbins, p. 49.

<sup>105</sup> "Enceintes et portes de La Rochelle." Benezel17.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

Many towers still stand at each port. The tower of Saint-Nicolas was constructed from 1372 to 1376 during the reign of Charles V with reused materials.<sup>107</sup> According to the Atlas of French Monuments, *Editions des Riches Heures*, the walls symbolize the privileges given to the city, in which they were allowed to maintain the *corps de ville*, at the end of the Hundred Years' War<sup>108</sup>. Every night a chain was drawn between the tower of Saint-Nicolas and the tower across the port, *Tour de la Chaîne* or Tower of the Chain, as to prevent passage of ships during the night.<sup>109</sup>

As for the walls, some stand entirely and some remain as ruins. The Ferry wall was the fourth and last wall built around the city in the seventeenth century by the engineer François Ferry.<sup>110</sup> Walls were still a necessary form of protection as they protected the citizens of La Rochelle against continued threats from the English. This wall is the only one that stands in its entirety today. Medieval town planning allowed a large population within the walls of La Rochelle. "It's principal streets, running north-south, were long, narrow, and gently curved...magnifying the height of the tall, closely packed, white stone houses fronting along each side."<sup>111</sup> It is no wonder that with such closed quarters that the townspeople maintained a strong communal identity.

Today, the walls of La Rochelle have been integrated with a modern city. It is still a significant maritime city. There remain three major ports for commercial, marina, and fishing businesses. The city prides itself in its mix of accessibility, modernity, and history. The city celebrates solidarity, as it has learned from a troublesome past to

---

<sup>107</sup> Fortifications de La Rochelle, XIVE, XVe siècle."

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> "Enceintes et portes de La Rochelle." Benezet17.

<sup>111</sup> Robbins, p. 50.

embrace these qualities. “La Rochelle nurtures solidarity to ensure that living well together becomes a fact of life.<sup>112</sup>” While the walls may no longer stand intact, the city of La Rochelle has integrated its very independent identity as a maritime city with the nation of France.

### **Commemoration and Marketing of Heritage**

La Rochelle is a tourist destination that, because of its larger size and more modern amenities, offers activities beyond heritage tourism. According to the *Bilan de fréquentation 2011*, La Rochelle is most frequently visited by French citizens, 307,293 out of 413,307 tourists or an astounding 71% (see Figure 1).<sup>113</sup> The second most popular visitors of La Rochelle are of British origin at 31% (See Figure 3).<sup>114</sup> These statistics are significant as they demonstrate that while La Rochelle does not cater solely to heritage tourism, the most popular visitors are citizens of the two countries most significantly involved in La Rochelle’s history. Visitors most often visited in the months of July and August, French vacation months, as was also seen in the tourism statistics for Aigues-Mortes.

The most relevant section of the *Bilan des fréquentations 2011* is titled “*Thèmes de la demande*,” or “Themes of Inquiries”. It describes the information that is most commonly requested from the La Rochelle tourist office. These statistics were gathered from requests via telephone, email, website hit, and at the Office of Tourism in person. As would be assumed, the most popular information includes maps and itineraries, but a

---

<sup>112</sup> "Site officiel de La Rochelle." <http://www.ville-larochelle.fr/nc/accueil.html> (accessed September 19, 2013).

<sup>113</sup> “Bilan de Fréquentation 2011.” Office de Tourisme de La Rochelle.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

startling number also relates to sites at La Rochelle and its patrimony. For example, 14% of all inquiries were made in regards to activities at La Rochelle.<sup>115</sup> 45% of activities at La Rochelle involve the sites of La Rochelle.<sup>116</sup>

Additionally, an entire thematic category is designated to the patrimony of La Rochelle. According to the *bilan*, elements of heritage tourism include but are not exclusive to monuments, museums, and guided tours. This category makes up 13% of all inquiries. Heritage tourism at La Rochelle is different than at sites like Carcassonne and Aigues-Mortes. Because the heritage of the city has been integrated with industrial, modern society, the walls of the city are not as well preserved.

When a tourist visits Aigues-Mortes and Carcassonne he enters through the gates of a walled city. At La Rochelle, this is not possible. This city offers a different experience. A tourist may take a guided tour of the city and witness how the city has evolved. The modern world grew around and on top of the medieval walls. Yet, fragments of these walls are still visible and tangible. They allow the visitor to experience and explore how La Rochelle has developed over time. This city, unlike Carcassonne and Aigues-Mortes continued to grow and evolve after its best-known episode in French history.

Arguably, the city best represents French identity as its past is still mixed in with the present. La Rochelle is an example of how complicated moments in French history have led to the development of modern France. The French absorbed the once independent Rochelais identity. The identification with religion fluctuated within the concentrated population of the city. Once the French Revolution gave rise to secularism

---

<sup>115</sup> “Bilan de Frequentation 2011.” Office de Tourisme de La Rochelle.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

in France the city of La Rochelle was once again able to maintain its tenacious, independent, and secular identity. In fact, it assimilated even more to the concept of French national identity, as it was secularized and neither Catholicism nor Calvinism was a forced faith.

## **Conclusion**

It would be easy to argue that walls divide people and thus influence how each community develops its unique identity. However, this risks arguing for technological determinism, which postulates that technology causes the development of social structures or cultural values. In this instance, one would argue that walls caused the development of a national identity. Yet, walls are just objects and can do nothing other than stand. It is people who use walls to accomplish a goal. For example, a city defends itself by building walls or a king establishes authority by creating a center of government within a walled city. The walls around the city were built for different reasons, but today all serve as examples to educate modern French citizens about their national identity.

It is difficult for a historian to attribute certain characteristics to national identity, especially when dealing with a history dating back prior to the concept of a nation. 13<sup>th</sup> - century France and modern France are two very different entities with different geographic and political landscapes. Yet the recurring themes throughout French history can demonstrate how France has developed into the nation that it is today. The three walled cities of Carcassonne, Aigues-Mortes, and La Rochelle provide excellent examples of these themes: religious persecution, inequality and assimilation, and recognition of authority, which are all components of modern French identity.

In the instance of Carcassonne, religious persecution of the Cathars led to the establishment of French authority at a new frontier in Languedoc. The subsequent establishment of Aigues-Mortes in the same region as an embarkation point for crusade under Louis IX demonstrates further the influence that religion had on the expansion of France as a nation. The massacre of Italians at Aigues-Mortes is an unfortunate example of conflict between two national identities. Finally, La Rochelle's rich history of wavering independence and the persecution of the Huguenots contribute examples of the formation of a French identity and the establishment of authority. These cities are also fascinating because they faced very different fates as France progressed into the modern age. Their new uses are vital to understanding French heritage and its preservation.

French communities can use walled cities as a didactic tool. By preserving walled cities, the French are able to teach one another about their history and cultural identity. The French government strives to preserve French cultural memory and heritage; in order to achieve this goal, the French government works to educate its citizens about their past. The French government values walled cities as heritage sites because they present moments of French history, which contribute to an understanding of modern French identity and cultural values.

French heritage is often described as "*un passé qui ne passe pas*," a past that does not pass. Preservation of heritage extends beyond the restored edifices. It is a preservation of the past that contributes to an understanding of the present. This past is preserved through cultural memory, a communal agreement on the understanding of one's heritage. It is easy to say that the past must be preserved; however, this effort does not come freely. The preservation of the walls of Carcassonne, Aigues-Mortes, and La

Rochelle must be supported economically. This support is found through the industry of tourism as the history of knights and crusade is marketed for profit. In turn, tourism allows the heritage of each site to be presented publically. Statistics show that an impressive percentage of these tourists are the French people. By touring their heritage sites, French tourists learn about their past. Education is a necessary component of tourism and cultural memory. By educating a community, the heritage of a nation is preserved within cultural memory. The past does not pass.



## Appendix - Images

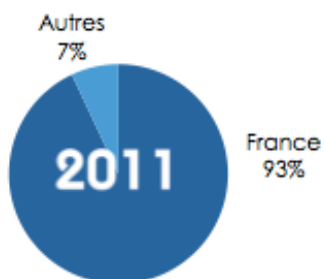


Figure 1.  
Source: *Bilan de fréquentation*, Office de Tourisme à La Rochelle.  
The proportion of French tourists at La Rochelle.

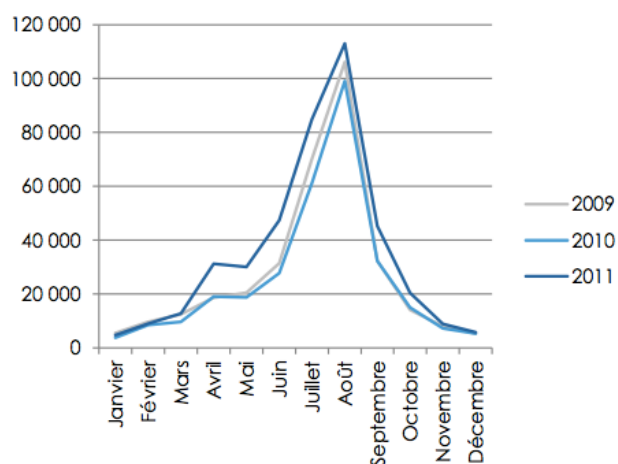
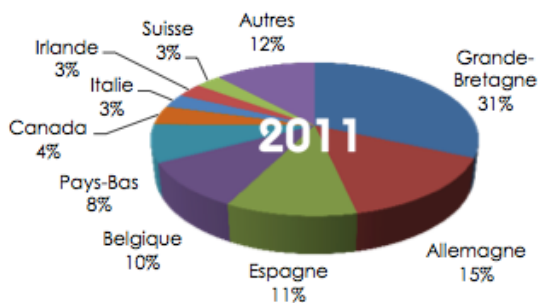


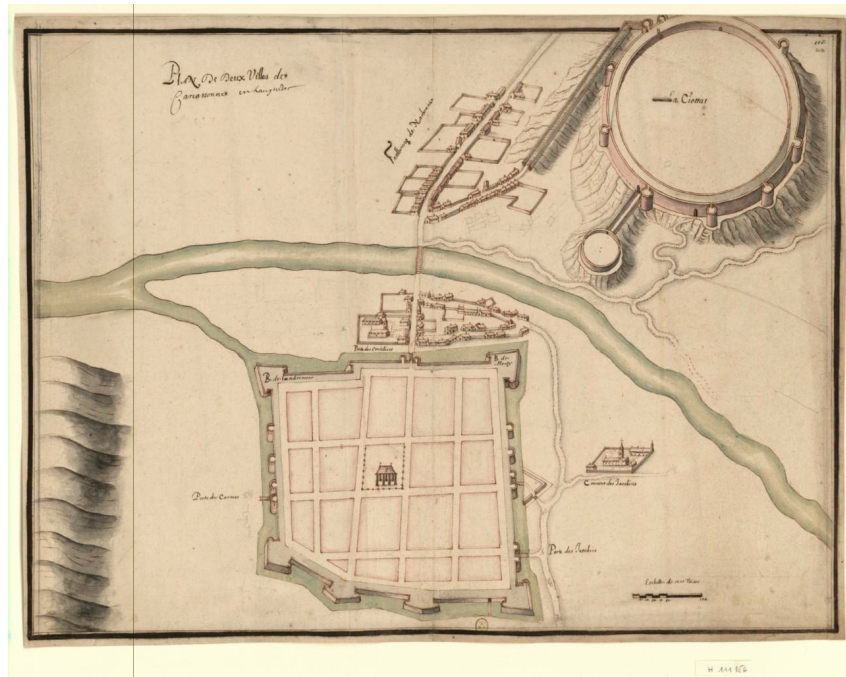
Figure 2.  
Source: *Bilan de fréquentation*, Office de Tourisme à La Rochelle.  
The greatest number of tourists visit during French vacation months.

Source: Bilan de fréquentation OTLR



Origines de la clientèle étrangère au guichet 2010-2011

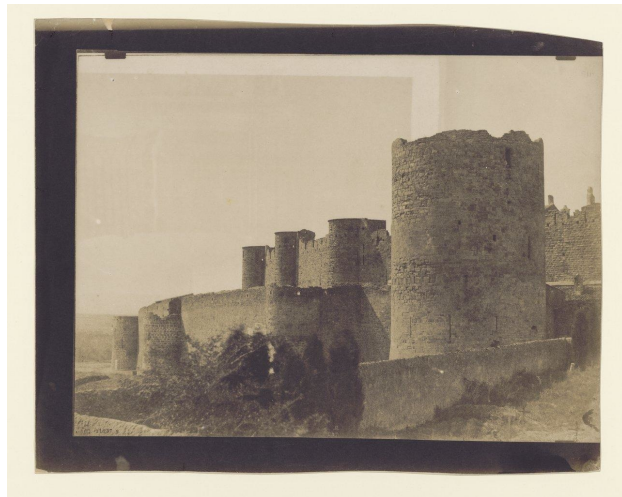
Figure 3.  
Source: *Bilan de fréquentation*, Office de Tourisme à La Rochelle.  
Percentages demonstrating the origins of foreign tourists that visited La Rochelle from 2010 to 2011.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 4.

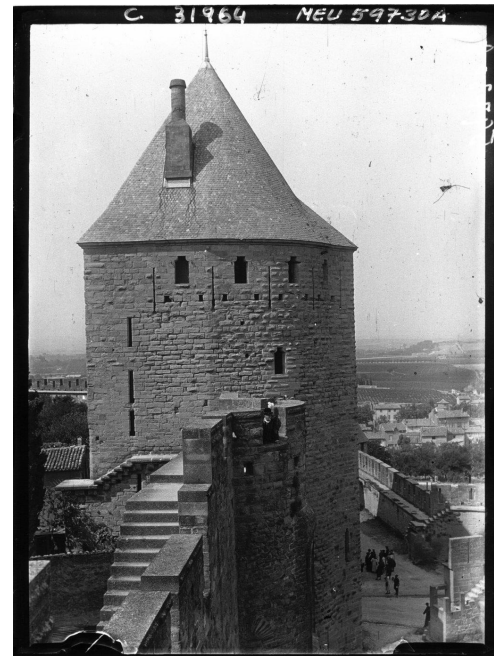
Source: *Plan de deux villes de Carcassonne en Languedoc*. Nicolas Desjardins. 1650. Bibliothèque nationale de France.  
A map designating *La ville basse* and *La Cité* of Carcassonne.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 5.

Source: *Les ramparts de Carcassonne*. Gustave La Gray. 1851. Bibliothèque nationale de France.  
Towers and fortifications prior to Viollet-le-Duc's restorations.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 6.

Source: *Carcassonne: la cité*. Agence Meurisse. 1928. Bibliothèque nationale de France.  
Tower after the restorations by Viollet-le-Duc. The conical roof is not original to the architecture of Carcassonne.

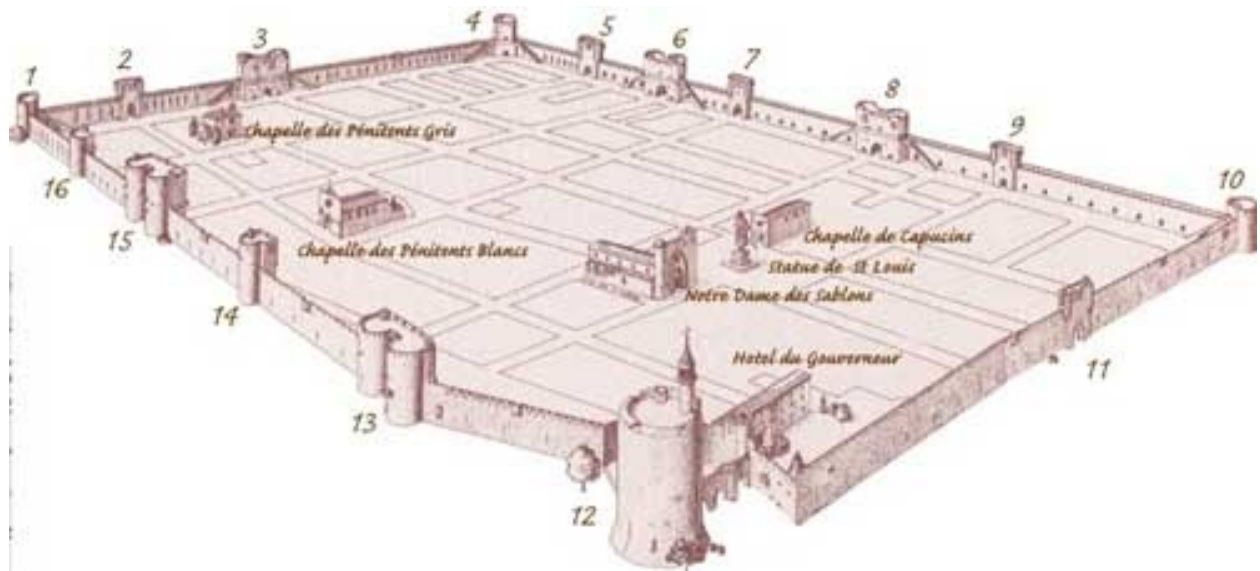
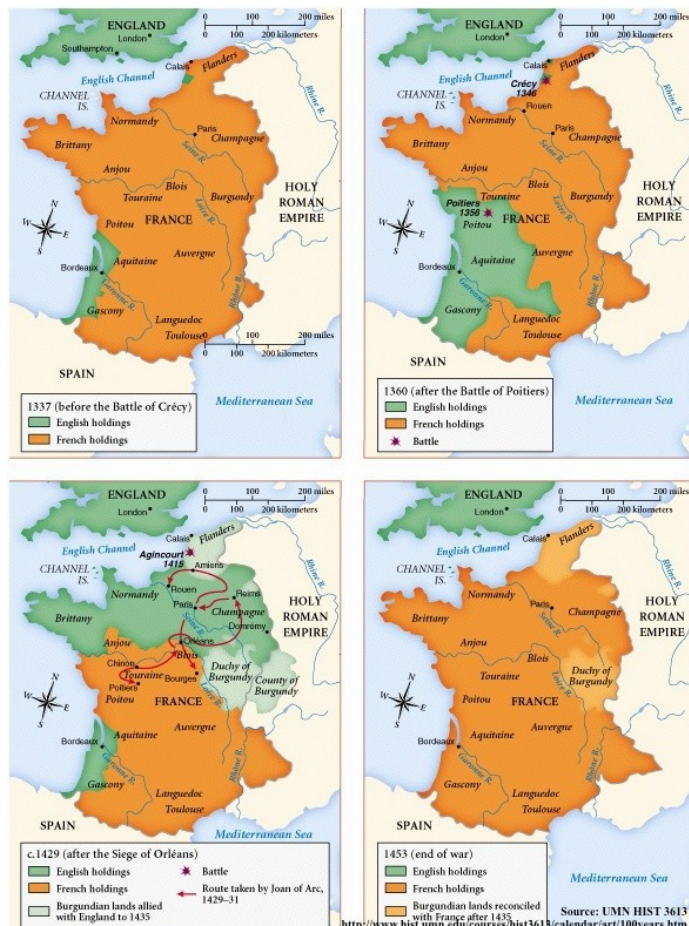


Figure 7.

Source: *Plan de ville. Aigues-Mortes*. [http://jean-francois.mangin.pagesperso-orange.fr/capetiens/capetiens\\_aigues\\_mortes.htm](http://jean-francois.mangin.pagesperso-orange.fr/capetiens/capetiens_aigues_mortes.htm).

The many towers and gates of Aigues-Mortes. Major monuments and the overall layout are also depicted in this image.

Figure 8.  
Source: *Hundred Years' War*. University of Minnesota. Department of History. 2008.  
This series of maps shows the changing territories of France under Plantagenet rule and England under Valois rule during the Hundred Years' War.



## Citations

- “Bilan de Frequentation 2011.” Office de Tourisme de La Rochelle. May 25, 2012.
- Bruce, David and Oliver Creighton. "Contested Identities: The Dissonant Heritage of European Town Walls and Walled Towns." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 12 (2006).
- Burl, Aubrey. *God's Heretics: The Albigensian Crusade*. Stroud: Sutton, 2002.
- Burton, Edwin. "Simon de Montfort." Catholic Encyclopedia.  
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10540a.htm> (accessed September 7, 2013).
- Carcassonne la cité*. Agence Meurisse. Photograph. Bibliothèque nationale de France. 1928.
- Creighton, Oliver. "Contested Townscapes: The Walled City as World Heritage." *World Archaeology* 39 (2007): 339-354.
- Desjardins, Nicolas. *Plan de deux villes de Caracassonne en Languedoc*. Map. Bibliothèque nationale de France. 1650.
- "Enceintes et portes de La Rochelle." Beneze17.  
[http://beneze17.free.fr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=84](http://beneze17.free.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=84)  
(accessed April 13, 2013).
- "Fortifications de La Rochelle, XIVE, XVe siècle." Editions des Riches Heures.  
<http://www.richesheures.net/epoque-6-15/chateau/17rochelle-historique.htm>  
(accessed April 13, 2013).
- “Frequentation Touristique d’Aigues-Mortes.” Office de Tourisme d’Aigues-Mortes. 2012.
- Goeldner, Charles R., and J. R. Brent Ritchie. *Tourism Principles, Practices, Philosophies*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2003.  
<<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=82032>>.
- Halbwachs, Maurice, and Lewis Coser. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: The University of London Press, 1992.
- Hanser, David A. *Architecture of France*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006.

- Hart, Linda. "Carcassonne: From Medieval City to Modern Town." *The Contemporary Review*. 291 (2009), no. 1695: 478.
- "Histoire." Aigues-mortes; Le sel de la vie. <http://www.ot-aiguesmortes.fr/FR/histoire/viii-siecle.html>.
- "Histoire de La Rochelle." La Rochelle Tourisme. <http://www.larochelle-tourisme.com/avoir-a-faire/visiter-la-rochelle/histoire> (accessed October 24, 2013).
- "Historic Fortified City of Carcassonne." United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization: World Heritage Centre. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/345>.
- Hundred Years' War*. University of Minnesota. Department of History. Map. 2008.
- "International tourism, number of arrivals." The World Bank. [http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL/countries/1W?order=wbapi\\_data\\_value\\_2011\\_wbapi\\_data\\_value\\_wbapi\\_data\\_value-last&sort=desc&display=default](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL/countries/1W?order=wbapi_data_value_2011_wbapi_data_value_wbapi_data_value-last&sort=desc&display=default) (accessed August 27, 2013).
- La Gray, Gustave. *Les Ramparts de Carcassonne*. Photograph. Bibliothèque national de France. 1851.
- Le Goff, Jacques, and Gareth Evan Gollrad. Saint Louis. Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009.
- "Les conflits." Aigues-mortes; Le sel de la vie. <http://www.ot-aiguesmortes.fr/FR/histoire/viii-siecle.html> (accessed April 15, 2013).
- Lewi, Hannah. "Spectacular Heritage: 'Total Restoration' at the Site of Carcassonne". *Architectural Theory Review*. 2008. V.13, no. 2: 145-163.
- Levi, Anthony. *Cardinal Richelieu and the Making of France*. New York: Carroll & Graf, 2000.
- Merriman, John. *A History of Modern Europe*. V. I. W. W. Norton and Company, Inc. New York: 2010.
- O.M. "Carcassonne. Vacances : une fréquentation mitigée à la Cité." La Dépêche. <http://www.ladepeche.fr/article/2012/02/21/1288899-vacances-une-frequentation-mitigee-a-la-cite.html> (accessed October 1, 2013).

- Parker, David. *La Rochelle and the French Monarchy: Conflict and Order in Seventeenth-Century France*. London: Royal Historical Society, 1980.
- Pefley, Janine. *Une journée à Carcassonne*. San Antonio, TX: Babbitt Instructional Resources, 2003.
- Plan de ville*. Aigues-Mortes. [http://jean-francois.mangin.pagesperso-orange.fr/capetiens/capetiens\\_aigues\\_mortes.htm](http://jean-francois.mangin.pagesperso-orange.fr/capetiens/capetiens_aigues_mortes.htm). Illustration.
- Powell, James. *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III*. Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2004.
- "Population Aigues-Mortes." *Le Parisien*. [http://www.cartesfrance.fr/carte-france-ville/population\\_30003\\_Aigues-Mortes.html](http://www.cartesfrance.fr/carte-france-ville/population_30003_Aigues-Mortes.html) (accessed September 12, 2013).
- Renan, Ernest. "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" Lecture at Sorbonne, 1882.
- Robbins, Kevin C. *City on the Ocean Sea, La Rochelle, 1530-1650: Urban Society, Religion, and Politics on the French Atlantic Frontier*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997.
- "Site officiel de La Rochelle." <http://www.ville-larochelle.fr/nc/accueil.html> (accessed September 19, 2013).
- Tout, T.F. "Medieval Town Planning." *The Town Planning Review* 8 (1919), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40100822>.
- Van Roosmalen, Peter. "Constitution." *European Walled Towns*. <http://walledtowns.com/over-ons/development-plan/> (accessed April 14, 2013).

### **Further Reading**

- Althoff, Gerd, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary. *Medieval Concepts of the Past*. Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 2002.
- Gard. *Aigues-Mortes: Inventaire general des monuments et des richesses artistiques de la France*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1973.
- Gillis, John R. *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Halbwachs, Maurice, and Lewis Coser. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: The University of London Press, 1992.

MacClintock, Lucy. "Monumentality Versus Suitability: Viollet-Le-Duc's Saint Gimer at Carcassonne". *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. 40 (1981), no. 3: 218-235.

Moirenc, Sandrine. "Aigues-mortes en Camargue." Avignon et Provence. <http://www.avignon-et-provence.com/aigues-mortes/carte-camargue.htm#.UWy2AmTwLyx>. (accessed April 15, 2013).

Morel, Pierre, and Pierre Embry. *Carcassonne, la cité*. Grenoble: B. Arthaud, 1939.

Murphy, Kevin D., and Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc. *Memory and Modernity: Viollet-Le-Duc at Vézelay*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000.

Nora, Pierre, and Lawrence D. Kritzman. Vol. III. *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Nora, Pierre. *Rethinking France = Les lieux de mémoire*. Vol. 1: The State. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Perkins, James Breck. *Richelieu and the Growth of French Power*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900.

Smith, Laurajane. *Cultural Heritage*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Varzy, Felix. *Carcassonne et ses environs*. Paris: Editions Alpina, 1939.

Viollet-le-Duc, Eugène. "Restauration," *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle*, vol. 8. Paris: B. Bance and A. Morel, 1866.

Wolfe, Michael. *Walled Towns and the Shaping of France*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.