

Wilson (Jr) were sent home from their segregated South Seas Academy after engaging in 'native circumcision' rites, while similar scandal abounded when a local man was 'discovered under the bed' of the Rev. David Darling's daughter (167). More than a mere colourful anecdote, this is an important contribution to our understanding of a group often silent in official sources, and deserves close attention.

In short, *Missionary Families* is a convincing reorientation of mission and imperial studies to consider missionary families as key agents in evolving metropolitan theory and practice. Manktelow is right, then, that 'the family can no longer be legitimately ignored in mission history' (6) and her work should be read as a call to arms for historians. There is ample room for scholars to apply this approach in other geographic and institutional contexts, and it is hoped that they will be inspired to demonstrate more widely what Manktelow has shown convincingly in one instance: that 'the family was completely formative in the practice and evolution of mission' (16).

Tanya Stabler Miller, *The Beguines of Medieval Paris: Gender, Patronage, and Spiritual Authority* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 304 pages.
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The medieval beguines were religious communities of women who occupied a space somewhere between the lay and the monastic. As women who chose to pursue religious lives in the world, whilst also often being targets of male scorn, the beguines have become a testing ground in recent years for historians seeking to explore issues of medieval women's agency.¹ Yet the beguines of Paris have gone almost unexamined.² Tanya Stabler Miller therefore makes a

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¹ Juliette Dor et al (eds.), *New Trends in Feminine Spirituality: The Holy Women of Liège and their Impact* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999); Walter Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Letha Böhringer et al (eds.), *Labels and Libels: Naming Beguines in Northern Medieval Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).

² Previous work on Parisian beguines explored the royal beguinage solely as a royal institution, and revealed little about the women. Léon Le Grand, "Les béguines de Paris," *Mémoires de la société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île de France* 20 (1893), pp. 295-357.

welcome contribution with her book, *The Beguines of Medieval Paris*, thanks to its focus on how the social, political and economic contexts of that city shaped the characters of its beguine communities. Miller demonstrates that Parisian beguines simultaneously pursued a flexible religious lifestyle while also functioning as emblems of French royal sanctity.

Although there were a number of beguine communities in Paris, not to mention dozens of beguines living independently, the community on which Miller focuses was the royal beguinage founded by Louis IX in 1254. The first chapter explores the king's foundation of this beguinage in the context of popular contemporary perceptions of lay religiosity, while the second chapter takes a closer look at the beguinage's operation. Louis supported the beguines both financially and by placing them under the special protection of the Dominican friars. Miller argues that doing so allowed the king to legitimise lay religious expression—something vital for an overtly pious king—in a manner possibly influenced by the example of his sister, the equally devout Isabelle.³ This royal approval likely helped to bolster the number of beguines, by making it an attractive option for wealthy women who could contribute to the support of poorer beguines.

In the third chapter, Miller looks at beguines' occupations. Tax assessments compiled during Philip IV's reign (1285-1314) allow the identification of the many beguine households throughout Paris whose incomes were largely derived from silk working and embroidery. As has been shown in the work of numerous scholars such as Barbara Hanawalt and Judith Bennett, women were integral to the medieval economy, and the beguines were no different.⁴ As Miller points out, while a beguinage may have been surrounded by walls, those walls were always porous. Involvement in manufacture necessitated contact with merchants, and broadened the beguines' social network.

The fourth and fifth chapters form a pair—the former analyzing the collaborative links between the beguines and the university clerics of the Sorbonne, and the latter exploring the women's spiritual and intellectual cultures. Miller teases out the previously unconsidered ways in which, rather than disdaining association with these women, the clerics thought interactions with the beguines were essential for their training—Robert of Sorbon, the university's founder, argued for a connection between beguine life, humility,

³ Sean L. Field, *Isabelle of France: Capetian Sanctity and Franciscan Identity in the Thirteenth Century* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

⁴ Judith Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300 to 1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Barbara Hanawalt, *The Wealth of Wives: Women, Law, and Economy in Late Medieval London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); David Herlihy, *Opera Muliebria: Women and Work in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

and moral exhortation (89), and championed the beguine as the model for the pastoral theologian (94). Sermon collections produced at the Sorbonne contain many pieces preached by male clerics at the beguinage, as well as fascinating fragments of sermons preached by the *magistra* (mistress) of the beguinage herself. There may once have been many more copies of these female-authored sermons; whilst there was a book-owning culture among Parisian beguines, the lack of a common library made their texts more vulnerable to dispersal and destruction (109).

If some clerics saw the beguines as a model for pastoral interaction, others viewed them as a threat to the clergy's control over preaching and, indeed, masculinity. The sixth chapter explores these negative reactions to the beguines, ranging from the satirist Rutebeuf's ridicule of them to the mystic beguine Marguerite Porete being burnt at the stake for heresy in 1310. The concluding chapter assesses royal patronage of the Parisian beguines in the wake of the council of Vienne (1311), which had condemned all beguines. Philip IV actively supported the women because they were a tangible, institutional reminder of Capetian dynastic sanctity. It was not ecclesiastical condemnation, Miller argues, but the collapse of royal finances in the fifteenth century, which led to the eventual closure of the royal beguinage in the 1470s and the transfer of its property to the Franciscans.

The conclusions which Miller presents bolster the arguments of those scholars, such as Walter Simons, who have worked on the better-known beguines of the Low Countries and Germany.⁵ Yet in her emphasis on 'intersection and collaboration over marginality and persecution' (13), Miller helps to break new ground in beguine studies. A comparison of the Parisian beguinages with their Francophone counterparts in towns such as Douai and Lille might have helped to further highlight the specificities of life for the beguines of the city. Still, Miller should be commended for providing a careful, accessible case study which demonstrates how women's religious communities were shaped by their local socio-economic contexts, and for producing a work of gender history which foregrounds women's experiences. This work should encourage other scholars to follow Miller's example and explore how beguines in other cities truly could be 'all things to all people' (171).

⁵ Simons, *Cities of Ladies* (2001).