Medieval Work, Worship, and Power

Persuasive and Silenced Voices

Edited by Abigail P. Dowling, Nancy Ann McLoughlin, and Tanya Stabler Miller

First published 2025

ISBN: 978-1-032-51714-8 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-51715-5 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-40361-6 (ebk)
DOI: 10.4324/9781003403616

Introduction

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DOI: 10.4324/97810033403616-1

The funder for this chapter is University of California, Irvine.

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Introduction

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Medieval Work, Worship, and Power: Persuasive and Silenced Voices honors and engages with the work of Sharon Farmer, whose nuanced and ethically engaged approach to the interplay among social position, cultural structures, and power has shaped the fields of social, religious, gender, environmental, labor, and migration history of medieval Europe. This volume, our gift to a beloved teacher and mentor, emerged from two events honoring Sharon Farmer's career and scholarship. The first, a colloquium on Farmer's scholarship and pedagogy, was held at the University of California, Santa Barbara in February 2019 to celebrate Sharon Farmer's retirement. The second was a series of sessions at the Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo in 2020, sponsored by the Society of Medieval Feminist Scholarship, in honor of Farmer's recognition as a Medieval Foremother. The papers presented at both events demonstrated how profoundly Farmer has influenced a fresh generation of scholars to think critically and creatively about material culture, social history, and gender.

Farmer's innovative and incisive approach to textual and material sources allowed her to assemble new narratives about individual and community experiences from a diverse set of document types (monastic legends and rituals, miracle stories, hagiographies, urban fiscal documents, royal account books, canonization inquests, and textiles themselves), demonstrating that it was possible to write histories that were both attuned to the assumptions that shaped these sources while persistently pushing beyond elite discourses to center the experiences of ordinary people and the impact human action has on urban and rural landscapes. The contributors to this volume, mostly former and current graduate students, all note the ways that Farmer's published work—in addition to her teaching and personal encouragement—opened up ways to uncover the lived experiences of ordinary people—especially non-elite women—and to draw meaning from the stories people told themselves and their communities.

This volume explores and builds on Farmer's influence through 20 chapters organized across five intersecting topics that capture, chronologically, topically, and theoretically, the scope and trajectory of Farmer's work. These are (1) Saints, Power, and Piety; (2) Gendered Work; (3) Gender and Resource Management; (4) Women's Agency and Networks; and (5) Interfaith Tensions and Encounters. At the same time, the chapters themselves reflect the ways in

DOI: 10.4324/9781003403616-1
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which these fields of inquiry are intertwined, as so many of the chapters drew inspiration from the multiple themes that Farmer has explored. Beyond paying homage to a dedicated and influential scholar, mentor, and teacher, this volume represents current and future directions in the field of medieval history and how scholars are engaging with unexpected sources and interpreting more familiar sources in new, interdisciplinary ways, specifically in the study of medieval gender, labor, lordship, religious studies, and interfaith encounters.

Part I: Saints, Monks, Power, and Piety

In his formative 1994 state of the field essay on medieval hagiography, "Saints, Scholars, and Society: The Elusive Goal," Patrick Geary lauded Farmer's *Communities of Saint Martin* for its careful attention to "the particular historical contexts in which liturgical and hagiographic practices developed," and how it examined the relationships among the religious and lay communities that organized themselves around devotion to Saint Martin.[1] Farmer's work brings the holy and the everyday together, exploring how they were intertwined in ways that shaped the daily lives of individuals and communities and in ways that often provoked conflict and evolved through conflict. In *Communities of Saint Martin*, for instance, Farmer relates how members of the monastery of Marmoutier used ghost stories to foster community and a sense of responsibility to the dead among the monks. Similarly, they deployed narratives about pious benefactresses to authorize and inspire aristocratic women to encourage their husbands' donations to the monastery. Then, turning to the miracle accounts authored by the Canons of St. Martin, Farmer calls attention to the intense religious experiences these accounts attributed to the visitors of Martin's shrine, who "cried," "prostrated themselves on the floor," "kissed and embraced the tomb," and "left gifts."[2] Farmer reads these miracle accounts in much the same way she reads the miracles of Saint Louis in her second book, *Surviving Poverty in Late Medieval Paris*, namely, as a window into the lives of the people who visited the shrine, which "offer[s] glimpses into the emotional and physical conditions of domestic life and work in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries."[3]

Following Farmer's example, Fiona Harris-Stoertz explores how miracle stories open up our understanding of the relationship between members of various social groups and pious practices in the first chapter of this volume, "Drinking the Saints: Relic Water in High Medieval English Miracles." Harris-Stoertz explains the ubiquity of miracles performed with relic water in high medieval English miracle accounts with reference to a broader increased interest in relics and relic water's wide availability to people of various status. The belief that relic water contained the essence of the saint meant that it could be applied directly to wounds and consumed through drinking by those who sought healing. As Harris-Stoertz notes, women in particular may have relied upon relic water because they were discouraged from going on long pilgrimages. Although relic water brought the healing of the saint to those who had less access to other types of relics because of poverty, lack of status, or the inability to travel, as Harris-Stoertz emphasizes, its immediacy made it attractive even to kings and other high-status individuals, who could access other types of relics. In this sense, relic water united all levels of medieval Christian society in a particular pious practice.

As Harris-Stoertz's chapter invites the reader to reflect upon how relic water, especially when worn on the body in ampullae, allowed medieval individuals to bring the power of the saint's shrine into the home, Anna Katharina Rudolph demonstrates how Venantius Fortunatus registered a former queen's sanctity by reporting her performance of humble domestic duties. In her chapter, "From Runaway Wife to Sainted Queen: Scandal and the Model of Saintly Queenship in the Early Middle Ages," Rudolph reminds us that Fortunatus reported that Radegund carried away the waste from the latrines in addition to performing various acts of extreme asceticism. Challenging the scholarly consensus that these acts represented Fortunatus' compensation for the fact that Radegund had been married and was not a virgin, Rudolph argues that Radegund's *Life* conformed to the model of saintly queenship, which did not require virginity. Instead of compensating for Radegund's lost virginity, Rudolph explains, Fortunatus's *Life* compensated for the fact that Radegund had abandoned her husband, an act that clearly departed from the saintly queen model. Fortunatus emphasized that Radegund's brutish husband had married her without the consent of Radegund or her family members, whom he had murdered. Rudolph shows that Fortunatus used her husband's cruelty as a means of establishing the sanctity of Radegund, his patron, despite her potentially scandalous departure from her marriage.

Rudolph's chapter emphasizes the contentious nature of claims to sanctity or holiness and the ways in which such claims were embedded in cultural expectations and political struggles. The next two chapters similarly elaborate upon Farmer's work by addressing the way putatively holy monks were implicated in competitive and sometimes violent relations among communities. In *Communities of Saint Martin* and in an article co-authored with Barbara Rosenwein and Thomas Head, "Monks and their Enemies," Farmer demonstrated that monastic strategies for disputing property claims and defending monastic exemptions included a wide range of activities from cursing to compromise, which took advantage of political structures and liturgical rituals.

In her chapter, "Monks as Enemies: Monastic Feuds in Greater Anjou," Tracey L. Billado-Lotson argues that monks participated in feuding just like everyone else, noting that their reports of destroying property, fist-fights, corpse theft, and dueling provide the historian with a particularly rich resource for understanding feuds. Indeed, monastic houses kept careful records of their feuds and, on occasion, these records allow the historian to view feuds between opposing monastic houses from both sides, providing greater insight into how feuding activities were understood at the time.

Andrew G. Miller also queries the role of violence in the construction of monastic authority in his chapter, "Monks and Their Frenemies: Chronicling Gender, Masculinity, and Violence in Twelfth-Century Vézelay." Drawing upon Farmer's emphasis on the political power of pious narratives, such as legends and miracle accounts, Miller explores how the Benedictine chronicler, Hugh of Poitiers (d. 1167), employed degrading language for the purpose of advancing the interests of the abbots of Vézelay at the expense of their competitors. Miller focuses on three themes, dehumanization, gender, and sacerdotal clothing, to illustrate how Hugh framed the monastery as the natural rational leader of the irrational, bestial, and sacrilegious townspeople and comital family members who challenged the abbey's authority. Also following Farmer, Miller emphasizes the monastery's interdependent relations with the very enemies it decries for the sake of exerting its own supremacy.

Part II: Women and Work

Farmer's commitment to drawing attention to discourses of power while uncovering the experiences of the less visible members of medieval society is also evident in several influential studies on medieval women's work. Digging into the expectations and assumptions that shaped the documentary record, Farmer moved beyond the (then) traditional approaches to women's work drawing attention to why, when, and how women's labor remained hidden or (in some cases) attracted notice. As Farmer argued, medieval elites viewed men and women through the Genesis paradigm, associating men with the productive realm and women with the reproductive, noting that clerical authors rarely saw women's productive labor, especially married women's labor.[4] Indeed, the labor of married women, then as today, was often obscured by the assumption that married women did not have to work, or that their work was supplemental to that of the (male) household head. Deeply attuned to gendered assumptions and silences, Farmer emphasized the importance of social classification in medieval sources, noting the naming patterns and identification norms that obscured the labor of married women, and the various strategies that scholars might deploy to find married and never-married women in medieval sources. Breathing life into the driest of medieval documents, particularly tax registers, Farmer showed that it was possible to tell the stories of non-elite medieval women, to recover their networks of support, and to provide a clearer picture of the range and significance of their labor. More broadly, Farmer demonstrated that scholars can gain greater insight into medieval labor practices, the economy, and global supply networks by centering women's work. Finally, turning to clerical views on women's labor, Farmer illuminated the discourses and silences that characterized elite depictions of women's labor. Although medieval clerics lauded the labor of wealthy and saintly women and failed to see the productive labor of ordinary women, on the ground they situationally (and sometimes even begrudgingly) acknowledged and made space for certain forms of "women's work."

The invisibility or marginalization of women's labor in medieval sources (and modern frameworks) is taken up by Kate Kelsey Staples in her chapter, "The Medieval English Marketplace through the Experience of Women

Upholders," which examines the dynamic role of female dealers in secondhand goods (called upholders in medieval England) in the late medieval economy. Drawing on the records of the Court of Common Pleas, which in the early fifteenth century began requiring the recording of occupational status, Staples demonstrates that these court cases offer more than just static information about women's work identity—as one finds in tax rolls, for instance—they illustrate the networks that stemmed from this type of work, its competitive nature, and its economic significance. This shift in record-keeping practice, then, is a boon for historians, who, as Staples shows, can examine women's experiences "to ask new questions about the medieval marketplace."

Emily Hutchison and Sara McDougall's co-authored exploration of women's labor in later medieval Paris ("Women's Labor in Later Medieval France: Case Studies from Paris") also sheds light on the range and complexity of women's work, as well as the challenges historians face uncovering women's activities in the sources. Bringing together Hutchison's digital mapping project of late medieval Paris and McDougall's work on the extant trial records from the Grand Châtelet de Paris, the authors show that these sources, like the canonization records used in Farmer's study of poverty in medieval Paris, enable historians to "access a wider world of labor, one in which women's work had a far more dominant role than we can find from other sources, and which does not neatly align with modern classifications." The chapter's contextualization of women's work, spaces, and networks, moreover, highlights the value of the authors' interdisciplinary approach and further challenges narrow, male-centered approaches to labor. As Hutchison and McDougall show, women were important contributors to the economic and social welfare of their neighborhood and city, a fact that normative sources often fail to record.

The complexity of women's work is also addressed in Constance Berman's chapter, "Medieval Sheep, Women's Labor, Boat Shuttles, Broadcloths, Tapestries, and Beguinages," which examines the social and economic effects of the introduction of the boat shuttle, or navette. As Berman shows, the introduction of new weaving technologies transformed the conditions and contexts in which women worked. Suggesting a connection between the boat shuttle and the increasing popularity of beguinages in northern France and the southern Low Countries, Berman, like Farmer, reminds us of the importance of centering women's labor in the study of the environment, textiles, and labor history.

While Berman focused on women's labor in relation to one key weaving invention, Martha G. Newman's chapter, "Ritual Exclusion and Sacramental Transformation: Women's Work at the Edges of the Mass," centers on the materials of the mass—primarily products of women's labor—as a way to excavate experiences of women's labor participation in religious ritual "at the edges of the Mass." As Newman shows, traditional forms of female labor, specifically baking, washing, textile production, and scribal copying, could provide women with access to the ritual of the Mass. By broadening how we think about ritual, Newman highlights telling instances of men proscribing or acknowledging the role women might play in the Mass through their labor.

Drawing on narrative accounts of women's work, especially those related by the Cistercian monk Engelhard of Langheim, Newman shows that medieval clerics, intensely concerned about women's proximity to the altar, sometimes acknowledged that women performed crucial tasks related to the preparation and aftermath of the Mass. Such labor not only illustrated the women's virtue but could even be understood as sacramental, to "bring Christ to earth."

Like Newman, Stabler Miller considers religious women's work. Medieval clerics, as Farmer argued, typically framed religious women's labor as penitential, a theme that drives Tanya Stabler Miller's exploration of beguine labor in medieval France ("Between Martha and Mary: Framing Beguine Labor in Medieval France"). Linking caritative, specifically healthcare, labor with the emergence of the beguine status in the early thirteenth century, Stabler Miller explores the meaning of religious women's labor as well as the contradictory ways medieval clerics grappled with the scope of activity appropriate to religious women and the canonical status of beguines. In doing so, Stabler Miller examines attitudes toward enclosure, which she argues were situational; local authorities made space for caregiving labor, which they ultimately regarded as "women's work." Even though medieval clerics tended not to praise, or even acknowledge women's work, emphasizing instead women's suffering and self-abnegation, it is possible to recover this fundamental aspect of the beguine life by contextualizing clerical discourses about labor and local efforts to make space for the beguines' work and acknowledging the very real need for caregivers in the cities of medieval Europe.

Part III: Hitting the Glass Ceiling: Women's Overlooked Management of Resources

In addition to Farmer's attention to the unacknowledged labor of medieval women, an influential thread of Farmer's work also addresses the ways in which women worked as managers both inside and outside of aristocratic and royal bureaucracy, despite the prescriptive androcentric narratives that condemn such behavior. As Farmer argues in her essay on Parisian merchant women, "there is no question that elite women merchants of the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries experienced an administrative glass ceiling in Paris."[5] However, she emphasizes that "if we look at actual practice rather than at royal prescriptions, we find that a number of women became extremely influential."[6] In this study, Farmer focuses on merchant women who sold luxury goods to aristocratic and royal courts, some of whom ended up attaining official positions in court. By doing so, she demonstrates how entrepreneurial women's commercial interests gave them avenues to influence the highest echelons of royal courts.

Despite the "glass ceiling," many women dominated the supply of aristocratic households and even royal courts, and some even moved into official positions as concierges to aristocratic and royal households—a position that led to favored relationships with elites and retailers of luxury goods. Farmer continued her exploration of entrepreneurial women and their administration of the silk trade and textile production in *The Silk Industries of Medieval Paris*, where she used the textile trade to highlight the varied experiences of women across the social strata in Paris. The authors in this section have drawn inspiration from Farmer's textile studies, not so much in terms of the textile focus, but in terms of how Farmer deftly illustrates how scholars can use historical interaction with land, material, and wealth as a way to explore a variety of women's experiences in the Middle Ages. Each author in this section focuses on the ways that medieval women managed resources to maintain their financial and/or socio-political roles within their unique historical contexts. Some women used it to weather changes in circumstances, such as widowhood (DeSimas, Hanson-Keggereis, and Giamboni), or as an extension of their lordship as elite women (Dowling and Davis). But in all five of the chapters, it is clear that shifting our focus away from the central, institutional bureaucracy allows us to see the overlooked ways in which women used their administrative skills to their individual and family benefit.

In "Martine Cabot: Portrait of a Medieval Female Kennel Master," Julia Crisler DeSimas presents the case of kennel mistress and dog carer, Martine Cabot, arguing that if we shift our attention away from the question of whether *elite* women participated in the formal hunt, we can see women like Martine not only caring for dogs but also managing an important and likely large kennel in Artois, a position which included supervising a number of servants. By focusing on what the regular account books of Mahaut d'Artois record for costs surrounding Martine, the kennel at Avesnes, and the dogs who whelped or convalesced there, DeSimas reconstructs a fuller picture of how women participated in the day-to-day running of a network of elite estates. As DeSimas notes, Martine is one of a very few extant examples of female kennel managers, and Martine's case allows us to more fully see how women might hold influential positions—after all the success of the hunt depended on healthy, well-bred, and well-trained hounds—outside of the aristocratic and royal bureaucracies.

Abigail P. Dowling utilizes the same treasure trove of records, the archive of Mahaut d'Artois, in "Growing Power of Place: Urban Gardens in Late Medieval Saint-Omer, 1302–1310." Instead of focusing on Mahaut's rural estates and their records, Dowling contends that the elite urban gardens within Saint-Omer (France), the beleaguered city in northern Artois, beset by a siege and then revolt, served the same purpose as the gardens in and around Hesdin did for Mahaut's father, Robert II. For both, the gardens, and especially the luxury items within, laid claim to power and elite identity in a time of political instability. Taking Farmer's call to shift our sites, Dowling looks to the violence and targets of the Revolt of Saint-Omer to view the "flipside of the socio-political value of green spaces" and illuminate "how non-elites received and responded to a lord's claim to power through urban gardens."

Expanding on the way that elite women expressed their power, Adam J. Davis ("Three Visionary Women Hospital Founders, c. 1300") traces how three elite women, Jeanne of Navarre, Marguerite of Burgundy, and Jeanne of Joigny, expanded contemporary clerical notions of elite women's charity by carefully directing the organization and day-to-day business of running the hospitals they founded and endowed. As Davis so elegantly argues, charity was not exclusively "an expression of their spirituality" or a way to ensure salvation, even though the vast majority of elite women's charity has been considered from that perspective. As Davis argues, charity was also an opportunity for women to employ their substantial administrative abilities and lordly authority. By shifting focus to look at the statutes that accompanied the hospitals' founding charters, Davis is able to illuminate the women's considerable administrative skills, which they acquired and honed as unseen and unacknowledged administrators in princely courts.

While Davis focuses on the administrative skills of aristocratic women, Sarah Hanson-Keggereis examines the financial activities of the highest-ranking bourgeois women in Douai (France). In her chapter, "Urban Women's Work as Entrepreneurs and Administrators: Cloth Sellers, Abbesses, and Leaders of Hospitals in Fourteenth-Century Douai," she argues that instead of "seeing women's administrative work in abbeys and hospitals as separate from their activities in the commercial sphere," we should acknowledge that "such administrative work reflected the larger expectations held for women in their social circles." While she notes that in some ways Douai is a unique case for women due to the city's laws and focus on literacy, Hanson-Kegerreis demonstrates not only that elite women were crucial administrators in the cloth market but also that their managerial work in abbeys and hospitals in varying capacities was an extension of their overall competency. More importantly, it reflected the social expectation that elite women exercise their considerable administrative skills in "charitable" venues.

Giulia Giamboni ("The Many Lives of Pelegrina de Saladino: Mother, Testamentary Executor, Guardian, and Patroness in Late Medieval Zadar") uses the case of Pelegrina de Saladino, a widow in the late fourteenth-century city of Zadar (Croatia), to illustrate how we can read the traditional activities of elite widows as executrices, guardians, and charitable donors against the grain to illuminate the socio-political value of their labor. The impressive archive of documents relating to Pelegrina's long life allows Giamboni to consider how Pelegrina's demonstrable skill at administering familial resources helped stabilize and, in some cases, reverse her natal and marital families' fortunes during a time of political uncertainty, violence, and plague. While Pelegrina's administration of family finances and minors was not unusual, as Giamboni shows, her frequent mention in the historical documents as testamentary executor and guardian reflects her administrative skill; however, it is in Pelegrina's charitable works that Giamboni deftly illuminates how Pelegrina parlayed her significant wealth and political standing into the foundation of two charitable institutions that honored her family's reputation, especially the memory of her son, and increased her and her family's favor with the city's elite and royal court during a particularly tumultuous period in Zadar's history.

Part IV: Women's Agency and Networks

Unsatisfied by the limitations of traditional approaches to women's agency and voices in the male-dominated church and state bureaucracy, Farmer employed a close reading of a wider set of documents to recover the experiences, perspectives, and voices of women from a multitude of texts. Her approach to teasing out the experiences and agency of women becomes clear in her *Speculum* article, "Persuasive Voices: Clerical Images of Medieval Wives," which pieces together positive clerical accounts of "persuasive" women who use their considerable rhetorical abilities to persuade their husbands to donate to monastic institutions. In this essay, as well as others, Farmer emphasizes that women could and did exploit social norms to influence the political and economic spheres that prescriptive androcentric texts claimed were beyond their purview. Building on earlier ideas about narratives creating community (*Communities of Saint-Martin*), Farmer also shows how documentary minutiae can be used to reconstruct individual identities and experiences (*Surviving Poverty*). The chapters in this section build on Farmer's skill at uncovering voices and interpreting narratives to consider how communities created and maintained their identities, and how communities of women, especially, formed networks for mutual aid and to amplify female agency in androcentric spaces.

Going beyond the field's traditional focus on elite women's religious communities in the Carolingian era, Valerie L. Garver ("Communities of Women in Carolingian Society") expands our focus by considering the "probable points of connection among seemingly disparate communities of women [...] to demonstrate that Carolingian society included important female networks." To do this, Garver draws on "mentions of these ties [which are] scattered across texts mainly authored by men and therefore reflective of male concerns." The challenge that Garver addresses is how to make women's networks visible in the overwhelmingly androcentric Carolingian corpus and, further, to demonstrate that by bringing together these various mentions, we can discern how women made and maintained personal physical and spiritual bonds.

Similarly, in "A Persuasive Voice? Berengaria of Navarre and Female Agency at the Papal Curia, 1200–1230," Richard Barton seeks to uncover the voice of the influential English queen, Berengeria of Navarre. Recent studies have considered Berengeria's economic and political actions in a new light, revealing that she was an experienced diplomat. But Barton asks, if "it is not possible to recover more of Berengeria's political voice" rather than be satisfied "with locating her activities among the generalized 'habitus' of the aristocracy." Applying Farmer's methodology to analyze papal letters and other androcentric legal texts—sources traditionally used to establish the bare facts of Berengaria's political life—Barton shows that it is possible "to push beyond the smokescreens in the sources"[7] to uncover Berengaria's abilities as a "pragmatic politician and legal strategist." Focusing on letters concerning a protracted struggle with the bishop and chapter of Le Mans, Barton draws upon his understanding of the papal curia to read these "classic" sources across the grain and recover Berengaria's political agency.

Like Garver and Barton, Nicole Archambeau demonstrates the historical importance of women's voices in her chapter ("Granting Access: Rescuing the Stories of Missing Witnesses in the Canonization Inquest for Countess Delphine de Puimichel"), which examines Countess Delphine de Pumichel's richly detailed canonization inquest to "rescue lost voices." In this chapter, Archambeau highlights how the testimony given at the inquest, especially that of Delphine's long-time maid, Bertranda Bartolomea, granted the inquest organizers and commissioners access to feminocentric spaces, experiences, and conversations that would otherwise have been excluded from the inquest because the witnesses were dead or unavailable. This was a particularly important part of Delphine's canonization inquest, as Bertranda attested repeatedly to the healing Delphine performed among circles of women that would normally have been closed to the representatives of the inquest. Bertranda's testimony, Archambeau argues, gave those women who were close to Delphine a voice in the inquest, even though their absences from the proceedings otherwise rendered them "silent." By reconstructing Delphine's networks from her maid's testimony, Archambeau's network visualizations also highlight the overlapping and shifting character of elite women's networks in southern France during Delphine's long life.

Part V: Interfaith Tensions and Encounters

Farmer's work to reveal how culture and institutions shape individual perception and to make visible those silenced by the historical record extends to the ways in which medieval people navigated cultural and religious differences. Addressing migration, cultural exchange, and material culture, Farmer's work has sought "those places where apparent opposites turn out to be quite similar, where hidden desires blur the boundaries separating 'us' from 'them.'"[8] In addition to undermining medieval matrices of domination by demonstrating the porosity of the intersectional boundaries that governed individual and communal lives within medieval Europe and its neighboring territories, Farmer has always called attention to the way "matrices of domination function differently in different contexts."[9] She has emphasized that looking at medieval European matrices of domination, especially "the multiply mixed identities that emerge in colonial contexts and on the borderlands between societies," helps us to understand "the implications of colonialism, both premodern and modern."[10] The three chapters in this concluding section explore fluid interactions across interfaith boundaries while also paying attention to the way these interactions took place within and often reinforced those boundaries and the domination they invoked.

Jessica Marin Elliott's chapter, "From Vine to Tavern: Jews, Christians, and Wine in Medieval France and Italy," examines activities and spaces where interreligious interactions were more routine than historians have traditionally assumed. As Elliott argues, wine production and places of consumption, such as taverns, were sites of interfaith connection between Jews, Jewish converts, and Christians in medieval France and Italy. Evidence of converted Jews participating in wine production, distribution, and sale with other Jews post-baptism, moreover, illustrates complicated but illuminating instances of occupational and social continuities across religious boundaries. Just as Farmer's work on silk production and sales revealed quotidian economic interactions between Christians and Jews, Elliott's focus on transactions and activities involving wine production and consumption provides much-needed nuance to narratives highlighting interfaith conflict and prevailing arguments about the social and economic marginalization of Jewish converts. Assembling "snapshots" of Jewish and non-Jewish interactions around wine—scattered in notarial documents, cartularies, and tax registers—Elliott illuminates the range of economic and social interactions across every stage of wine production (grape cultivation to commercial wine sales) and consumption (tavern keeping). In doing so, Elliott demonstrates how resources, in this case wine, served as "an important nexus for social and economic interaction across religious boundaries."

Production and consumption as sites of interaction and meaning-making is also a thread taken up by Anne E. Lester in her chapter, "Finely Made, From Afar: Crusader Bourse and Histories of Reuse – Unwinding Gendered Labors in French Textile Networks," which explores the possible religious, cultural, and social meanings that were quite literally woven into crusader *bourse*, or purses fashioned or reused to contain relics from the Levant or Constantinople. As Lester argues, these *bourse* were assemblages crafted from repurposed fine silk or gold cloth from Byzantium, Syria, or China (fabrics that retained associations with the east) and fabric woven in Europe, which further illuminate the global textile networks and gendered labor dynamics discussed in Farmer's work. In the reuse and reworking of materials "finely made from afar," moreover, these *bourse* signified western Christian colonial ambitions and highlighted the sacrality and wonder, and western possession, of the things contained therein. They also, as Lester observes, "tied women to practices of commemoration and colonial ambition that were at the core of crusade imperial ideology and material practices of relic veneration."

The ardent crusade advocate, Philippe de Mézières, also associated women's work and virtue with crusader ideology and colonial ambition, as Nancy McLoughlin argues in her chapter, "Philippe de Mézières' Visualizations of Gender, Crusade, and Community." According to McLoughlin, Philippe's attempts to shape medieval European understandings of gender include his insistence that the women of the French court accompany their husbands on crusade, his detailed prescriptions for the clothing and comportment of crusader wives, his adaptation of Petrarch's Griselda as a spiritual mirror for married women, and his reliance upon evocative female personifications of the church to inspire crusade fervor. The combined effect of these gender interventions suggests that Philippe de Mézières negotiated his understanding of idealized female behavior in dialogue with an equally idealized understanding of a perfectly ordered hierarchical Christian community oriented toward the effective defense of its frontiers against non-Christians, which Philippe cast as dangerous enemies.

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In this sense, Philippe de Mézières elaborated upon a pattern of placing "the holy, salvific, and often feminized body at the center of medieval Christian theology" that Farmer identified in her exploration of the texts, reliquaries, and church created to celebrate the ascetic holy woman Marie d'Oingies. Emphasizing the nearly global imperializing gaze with which Jacques de Vitry set the example of Marie d'Oignies within crusade ideology, Farmer notes how Jacques compared Marie with the ascetic pagans of India, whose "innate, prelapsarian, goodness, stood in stark contrast to most Western Christians – whose avarice, adultery, and deceit helped to explain, in Jacques' opinion, why God had allowed them to lose Jerusalem."[11]

Tracing medieval understandings of the theological and medical meanings of the precious stones through their ancient and Arabic sources, Farmer encapsulates many of the modes of inquiry represented in this book: competitive constructions of holiness, medieval clerics' interest in and fear of female piety, the need for women to depend upon each other to persist in their spiritual and economic professions, and medieval Christian Europe's fascination with the mythical East, which consisted of the borderlands of Byzantium, the eastern Mediterranean, and fantasies about India. One of the most inspiring aspects of Farmer's work—both within her work on interfaith tensions and her work more broadly—has been her ability to bring the material, the social, and the theological or ideological, together in a manner that highlights how these different threads intersect and reveals not only who is left out in the process but also how those who are left out persist and make their own networks and meanings.

Notes

1 Patrick J. Geary, *Living with the Dead*, 28.
2 Farmer, *Communities of Saint Martin*, 273.
3 Farmer, *Communities of Saint Martin*, 272.
4 Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, 117.
5 Farmer, "Merchant Women," 100.
6 Farmer, "Merchant Women," 90–91.
7 Farmer, "Down and Out," 372.
8 Farmer, "Low Country Ascetics," 205.
9 Farmer, *Gender and Difference*, ix.
10 Farmer, *Gender and Difference*, ix.
11 Farmer, "Low Country Ascetics," 221.

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