



Noble Daughters: Unheralded Women in Western Christianity, 13th to 18th Centuries (Contributions to the Study of Religion)

Marie A. Conn

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The history of Western Christianity, written predominantly from a male perspective, has often ignored women's stories and their unique contributions to both Church and society. Unlike the virgins and martyrs who are named in the official list of the Church's saints, the beguines, Anabaptists, so-called witches, and nuns of Port-Royal have gone largely unrecognized. Their stories, as presented in this one volume, explore the underside of history and challenge support of a strictly hierarchical Church. These four groups of women represent disparate approaches to a Christian commitment, but they share an intense devotion to their understanding of the gospel message. Their willingness to adhere to their beliefs brought them into conflict with ecclesiastical and civil authority. Often, these women sacrificed their lives; all of them refuted the stereotype of a passive female Church member. These women's stories unfold within the complex picture of medieval Europe, but their beliefs and struggles offer models of Christian living relevant to today.

This work will appeal to scholars of gender and women's studies, theology, and European history. The research and documentation provides information about these women previously available only in scattered and often obscure sources. Although these women represent a unique ecumenical mix of backgrounds, they share a common strength, commitment, and feminine approach to religion.

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