

Saint Dominique en Languedoc. Les commencements de l'Ordre des Prêcheurs. Edited by Gilles Danroc and Daniel Le Blévec. (Collection d'histoire religieuse du Languedoc au moyen âge, 4.) Pp. 396 incl. 10 ills. Fanjeaux: Centre d'Études Historiques, 2021. €28 (paper). 978 2 9568972 2 4
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This is a collection of twenty-three papers in French by twelve scholars concerning the background to, and preaching missions of St Dominic in the Languedoc during the early thirteenth century. Prefaced with a short introduction by Gilles Danroc, and followed by an equally brief summary from Nicole Bériou, the majority of the papers are divided into three roughly chronological sections: i: the background to Dominic's work both in Spain and the Languedoc; ii: Dominic's mission in the Midi; and iii: the origins of the Order of Preachers. These essays are supplemented by a major appreciation of the contribution to scholarship in this field of Marie-Humbert Vicaire and much shorter appreciations of more recently deceased authors.

Four of the more substantial papers are by Jean-Louis Biget, and this points to a distinctive feature of the collection: its interpretative frame is essentially that of those historians (Monique Zerner, Mark Pegg, R. I. Moore, Biget and others) who reject the notion of a widespread Cathar heresy or counter-Church in the period before the Albigensian crusade. 'Catharism' is seen as the creation of papal preachers, crusaders and inquisitors, and as something which was imposed upon sometimes diverse people better termed 'dissidents' who opposed the dominant political and religious powers. Historians who have challenged or qualified this narrative (Jörg Feuchter, John Arnold, David d'Avray and others) are conspicuous by their absence. However, another three papers are by the English Dominican scholar Simon Tugwell, and Tugwell's revised chronology of St Dominic's life, together with his critical reading of the early *Lives* of the saint, underpins many of the analyses by other contributors.

Biget's interpretative frame partly explains the volume's laudable concern with the very particular circumstances of given times and places. Three papers (by Patrick Henriët, Adeline Rucquoi and Jean-Hervé Foulon) deal with the Spanish background to Bishop Diego and Dominic's missions: the university of Palencia when Dominic arrived there as a student; the developing ideals and practice of the canons regular in Spain; and the reforms of the cathedral chapter at Osma, with the role played by the future bishop Diego, in the years leading up to Dominic's becoming a canon there. When the focus switches to the Languedoc, one paper, by Biget, examines the religious tensions across the Languedoc in 1206, while another, by Françoise Durand-Dol, looks especially at Montpellier in 1206, and a third, by Jacques Paul, focuses even more closely on the meeting there that year between Diego, Dominic and the papal legates Peter of Castelnau and Raoul of Fontfroide. Later in the volume Danroc offers a similarly detailed contextual analysis of the 'preaching' mission or institute established by Dominic in Toulouse between 1214 and 1217. Overall, the benefit of this approach is to clarify the ways in which the societal changes in the region had favoured religious dissidence (or heresy), to map more fully its socio-economic profile in the rural *castra* and urban centres, and to emphasise how aptly the missions led by Diego and Dominic responded to these facts on the ground. The

downside to the approach is a significant degree of overlap between numerous papers in the volume. Not a few papers have very narrowly circumscribed topics: a papal letter to Raoul (Simon Tugwell); the legend of St Dominic's appearance on the battlefield at Muret (Bernard Montagnes); the influence of Prouille on early accounts of St Dominic (Anne Reltgen-Tallon); Diego's links to Cîteaux (also by Reltgen-Tallon); Dominic's relations with Pope Innocent III (Reltgen-Tallon); and Vicaire's mistaken reading of a seal used by Dominic (Bernard Hodel). The best of these tightly-focussed essays have wide import for the bigger picture.

This volume will be of interest primarily to specialist historians. No fewer than thirteen papers have previously appeared in different academic journals, many dating back to the early 2000s, and one to 1999. Seven have appeared at different times in *Mémoire dominicaine*, of which three featured in some form in its 2007 issue, *Dominique avant les Dominicains*. For this reason, the volume does not greatly advance nor in any way revolutionise our understanding of early Dominican history, but may be thought to consolidate an existing analysis within a given school. None the less, the papers' assembly here is no doubt convenient and welcome.

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A companion to medieval miracle collections. Edited by Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, Jenni Kuuliala and Iona McCleery. (Reading Medieval Sources, 5.) Pp. x + 378. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2021. €228. 978 90 04 46540 4; 2589 2509
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This is the fifth volume to be published as part of Brill's *Reading Medieval Sources* series which aims to introduce and analyse a range of sources, and to provide evaluation of a genre's value and the scholarship surrounding it. *A companion to medieval miracle collections* champions the work of fifteen medieval scholars whose research engages with miracle collections, and reveals the ways in which these primary materials can be used to illuminate the often hidden experiences of lay 'lived religion'. The term lived religion reflects the more day-to-day experiences of, and engagements with, religion that would have dominated much of life in the Middle Ages. This volume's attention to it is therefore a welcome addition to the field of medieval religious studies.

The aim of the editors was 'to offer practical tools for the methodological understanding of miracle narrations' (p. 2). The need to be methodologically aware while reading and analysing these materials is of utmost importance. Miracle accounts and collections can be multifaceted, offering an understanding of religious practice and lived religion but also shedding light on daily life, concerns about health, contemporary political challenges and other socially-focused issues. The motivations behind the creation of these miracle collections, however, cannot be overlooked. The need to take a nuanced approach has long been recognised by those who work with hagiographical materials, yet, thus far, there has been little scholarship dedicated to the methodological approaches to reading miracle collections: a point which this volume sets out to correct.