

**“In the world but not of the world”?
Doucelina, Felipa, and the Beguines of Marseilles**

Isabel Genecin
Undergraduate Senior Thesis
Department of History
Columbia University
April 3, 2015

Advisor: Professor Charles Armstrong
Second Reader: Professor Adam Kosto

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	3
A Note on Names	4
Introduction	5
Chapter I: Popular Piety in the Thirteenth Century	10
Chapter II: <i>Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina</i>	16
Marseilles and the Beguinage	17
<i>The vita, the “Sainte”, and St. Francis</i>	18
Chapter III: The commercial contracts of the beguines of Roubaud	27
Thirteenth-century Contracts	28
Legal Culture and the Beguine Contracts	29
Contract 5: Identities, Risk, Usury	33
<i>Societas</i> and <i>Mutuum</i> : Contracts 7 and 8	35
Work: A Brief Discussion of the Beguines of Paris	38
The Contracts and the <i>vita</i> : Who Were These Women?	40
Chapter IV: Felipa Porcelet: Widow, Beguine, Entrepreneur?	43
Felipa’s Contracts	44
Beguine wills: Further Insights	51
Chapter V: Outlier or Insider? The Political Connections of the Beguinage	54
“He was greatly devoted to her”: Charles and Doucelina in the <i>vita</i>	56
The Porcelet Family and the Counts of Provence	59
Conclusions	64
Bibliography	69

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank Professor Adam Kosto, my second reader, for his guidance, both on the thesis and in seminars. I am grateful to Professor Kosto and all of my other history professors for teaching me how to think and write like a historian. In particular, I would like to thank Professors Joel Kaye and Neslihan Şenocak; if I had not taken their courses during my first two years of college, I likely would not have majored in European history and written this thesis. Thank you for inspiring me.

It was a privilege to work with Professors Susan Pedersen and Charly Coleman and doctoral students Ana Keilson and Luca Provenzano last summer during the European archival research conference. Their constructive criticism and support was instrumental in the conception of this thesis, and without a summer research grant, I could not have completed this project. I also must thank the group of thesis students with whom I worked over the summer. It was a pleasure to begin my thesis research with you.

To Professor Charles Armstrong and my thesis seminar classmates: I have enjoyed every minute of our time together. I look forward to learning more about your projects in the final weeks of our seminar.

This project would have never gotten off of the ground without the wise counsel of Sylvain Piron. Thank you for helping me write my proposal and find my thesis topic. Finally, I must thank my family and friends for putting up with me during this whirlwind of research and writing.

A Note on Names

The subjects of my thesis research spoke Occitan, a vernacular Provençal language, and had Occitan names. A large part of my secondary source material is in French, and the French convention is to convert these names into their French counterparts. In the English-language literature on this subject, the names of the two central female characters, Doucelina and Felipa, are always converted into French names: Douceline and Philippine. I have made a point in this thesis to use Occitan names. In some cases, it has been difficult to determine the Occitan name from Latin sources and French sources. One name mentioned in a contract, Jacobus Garssinus, is translated to Jacques Garsin in a French secondary source. In this case, the Occitan name is difficult to discern, and I have chosen to use the Latin name. These people made contracts in Latin and spoke Occitan, but likely did not speak French at all.

Introduction

In the middle of the thirteenth century, Marseilles was approaching the height of its greatness: the city was almost an autonomous commune, in the midst of liberating itself from the yoke of noble rule, and the sixth crusade was about to commence as Saint Louis assembled his armies along the southern French coast. The use of Marseilles as a port of departure for the crusades placed the city in an important position to trade with the Levant, and the city became a crucial crossroads for trade between the Mediterranean and Northern Europe.¹

The transformations of the city did not come without their conflicts. In 1249, Raymond VII, the Count of Toulouse, died, and the city became totally self-governing for three years, ruled by the burgeoning merchant class. In 1252, Charles of Anjou, the younger brother of Saint Louis, began to reclaim the city from this oligarchy of merchants. This political unrest continued until 1256, when Charles forced the city to submit to his authority.² The violent four-year political struggle had an impact on the religious climate of the city. After the conflict had run its course, the strong middle class was ready to support a new religious community. This new brand of city, with prosperous commercial activity, a growing urban poor, and political instability was primed for a new religious order.³

¹ John Pryor, *Business Contracts of Medieval Provence: selected notulae from the cartulary of Giraud Amalric of Marseilles, 1248* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1981), 52-60.

² Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 55.

³ Kathleen Garay and Madeleine Jeay, introduction to *The Life of Saint Douceline, Beguine of Provence*, trans. Kathleen Garay and Madeleine Jeay (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 5-12.

The beguinage of Marseilles, an independent women's religious community, was founded in this period of turmoil and uncertainty. Beguines are generally defined as semi-religious women who lived uncloistered, urban religious lives. Caroline Bynum has called the beguines the first "women's movement" in western history.⁴ Beguinages developed organically in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when women who wished to live a religious life but could not join an order (or did not want to) formed their own communities in an attempt to live an independent apostolic life, guided by the virtues of chastity, poverty, and simplicity.⁵ They did not take strict religious vows and could enter and leave the community as they chose.⁶ By the mid-thirteenth century, several beguinages had been established in Western Europe, with the majority concentrated in the diocese of Liège in modern-day Belgium, and with other communities around Paris, in southern Germany, and in the south of France. The beguines established their houses in cities, which allowed them to lead an active and contemplative religious life. These communities differed from convents in that they were not cloistered and beguines played an active role in city life, as nurses, teachers, and figures of religious inspiration.⁷

The beguinage of Marseilles is notable because the beguines produced a hagiography of its founder, Doucelina of Digne. *Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina*, written in Occitan, the local Provençal language, is a unique piece of early vernacular

⁴ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 14.

⁵ Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages: the historical links between heresy, the Mendicant Orders, and the women's religious movement in the twelfth and thirteenth century, with the historical foundations of German mysticism*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 78.

⁶ Walter Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), xi.

⁷ Tanya Stabler-Miller, "What's in a name? Clerical Representations of Parisian Beguines (1200-1328)", *Journal of Medieval History*, 33 (2007) 60-86: 65.

literature. Doucelina lived from 1215 to 1274, and the *vita* was completed in 1297. It was most likely written by Felipa Porcelet (c.1250-1316), one of the beguines in the community and the prioress after Doucelina's death.⁸ The document, like all *vitae*, presents an idealized image of its subject and her community. The *vita* was clearly intended for the Marseilles community, to provide a model for the community, to encourage devotion of the cult of Doucelina after her death, to advance the process of her canonization, and to protect the future of the beguinage. It is necessary to analyze this religious history, a document that is in some way self-promoting, in conjunction with other texts to gain a more full picture of the quotidian life of the beguines. In *Les documents inédits sur le commerce de Marseille au moyen âge*, Louis Blancard, a nineteenth century historian, compiled a collection of commercial documents from thirteenth century Marseilles, which includes eight contracts made by the beguines of Marseilles between 1280 and 1289.⁹ These eight contracts have been remarkably unstudied, and reveal an aspect of the daily lives of these women that is absent in the *vita* of Saint Doucelina: their commercial enterprises.

In this thesis, I will compare the portrayal of the beguines in *Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina* with the impression of beguine lifestyle that is conveyed by their commercial contracts, wills, and other legal documents. The contracts demonstrate that the beguines were highly involved in local commercial activity and had large amounts of liquid capital to invest in risky business ventures. These women were rich, powerful commercial actors in the city, a role that differs sharply from the way that they are portrayed in the *vita*, as humble, poor women leading religious lives.

⁸ Garay and Jeay, introduction, 16.

⁹ *Les documents inédits sur le commerce de Marseille au moyen âge*, ed. Louis Blancard, volume 2 (Marseille: Barlatier-Feissat, 1885), 371-383.

The beguines of Marseilles were unlike any other beguine community, and therefore do not have a proper place in the current “beguine” narrative. In the historical literature, the beguine “movement” has been divided into distinct geographical sections, treated in isolation: the beguines in the North were celebrated and followed by Parisian theologians as examples of perfect humility and spirituality, while the beguines in the south of France were associated with the heresy of the “Free Spirit” and were purged by the inquisition in the early fourteenth century.¹⁰ The study of beguines has almost exclusively been limited to the study of the Northern beguines, and the southern French beguines have been studied tangentially, as a part of a powerful Franciscan fringe movement that rapidly gained support in cities like Narbonne and Beziers before the inquisition arrived there in 1314. The two regions have been approached as completely separate religious movements that developed on distinct local tracks.

The beguinage of Marseilles was an outlier. It does not fit into the Northern or Southern molds of beguine life. These women were able to occupy a special place within the larger Marseilles economy, and a unique place for a women’s religious organization, because of the distinct and exceptional circumstances that existed within the new, rapidly expanding city. This community has not been individually studied; there are a handful of articles about the *vita* in conjunction with female mysticism, but little discussion of the role they played in the community or how they were received by Marseilles. The aim of this paper is to look closer at a distinctive community that has been either lumped together with other beguinages or ignored completely.

¹⁰ Louisa Burnham, *So Great a Light, So Great a Smoke: The Beguine Heretics of Languedoc* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 2-3.

This paper will investigate the religious, economic, and social roles that the beguines played within the larger urban environment of Marseille, a city that was becoming one of the most important in Western Europe, in order to understand which specific factors contributed to the development of this unusual community. The first chapter of this paper will contextualize this movement and community within the thirteenth century religious atmosphere. The second chapter will analyze the *vita*, its language, and the model of religious life that is presented in it. The third chapter will look closely at the beguine commercial contracts, examining the legal language that is used and situating these contracts within the late medieval Mediterranean contractual context. This section will then discuss the contracts in conjunction with the *vita*, to discern the impression of the beguines that each gives. Chapter IV will delve deeply into life and affairs of Felipa Porcelet, the woman who wrote the *vita* and who ran the beguinage while its women were becoming more deeply involved with Marseilles commerce. The final chapter will explore the unique political position of the Marseilles beguines and the special conditions that contributed to the evolution of this special community.

Chapter I

Popular Piety in the Thirteenth Century

The thirteenth century was a period marked by robust economic growth, intense popular religiosity, and rapid ecclesiastical change. As cities and towns flourished, long-distance trade developed, and a middle class was born, novel religious groups developed within the burgeoning urban environment.

Following the Gregorian reforms of the eleventh century – which established the primacy of the Pope, delineated stricter moral practice for the clergy, and confirmed Rome as the seat of power in Europe – Church policies emphasized the vital sacerdotal role in salvation. This increasing clericalization and hierarchization of the Church augmented the divide between the laity and the clergy.¹¹ With these reforms, the Church withdrew further from the world and imposed its hierarchy upon a laity that was increasingly alienated. As urban centers grew, both lay and religious figures felt a strong need to do something about the tension “between withdrawal from and service of the world”.¹² New monastic orders such as the Franciscans arose to counter this period of greater wealth and regional religious disaffection by preaching and living the *vita apostolica*. The concept of the *vita apostolica* – or the life of apostolic poverty – was at the heart of most popular religious movements in the thirteenth century. The *vita apostolica* was accessible and appealing to both genders and across social strata.¹³

¹¹ Simons, *Cities of Ladies*, xi.

¹² Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 12.

¹³ Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 17-21.

The *vita apostolica* soon transformed male monasticism, as the great young minds of Europe became itinerant preachers.¹⁴ The old monastic approach to salvation, through cloistered contemplation, was less popular in a period of increasing trade and urbanization. Innocent III, a brilliant political and ecclesiastical mind, accepted certain lay movements into the fold of the Church. Notably, Innocent III accepted the Franciscans as an official new religious order.¹⁵ The Church needed to evolve in order to fight heresy and adapt to the fervor that was spreading across Europe. This bold step introduced a less rigid concept of the religious life into the ecclesiastical structure.¹⁶ The Franciscans were itinerant preachers, who taught by the example of their own destitution and begged “as a spiritual exercise”.¹⁷ They created a new kind of religious life, one that was “in the world but not of the world”.¹⁸

Urban life was an integral part of thirteenth-century popular religious movements. With the development of towns and cities, centers of commerce and wealth, there was also a strong religious reaction against money. This rejection of material wealth was a common thread among the various movements of the period; poverty and asceticism are seen in the religious groups that were accepted by the Church, like the Franciscans, and in also in the movements that were denounced as heretical, like the Spiritual Franciscan movement, a wing of the order that adhered strictly to the original rule of St. Francis, and the

¹⁴ Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 17-21.

¹⁵ Neslihan Şenocak, *The Poor and the Perfect: The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order, 1209-1310* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 26.

¹⁶ Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 7-9.

¹⁷ Şenocak, *The Poor and the Perfect*, 37.

¹⁸ Johannes Jorgensen, *Saint Francis of Assisi, a biography* (New York: Longmans, 1942), 242.

Waldensians, itinerant preachers who followed the *vita apostolica*.¹⁹ The desire for the *vita apostolica* was a direct response to the “ill-gotten gains of the urban markets”.²⁰ The Franciscan movement was completely attached to city life: the Friars Minor traveled from city to city, preaching the apostolic life. Throughout Europe, itinerant preachers traveled from city to city, whipping up religious fervor in their wake.²¹

The economic expansion, coupled with pervasive religious zeal and a Church that was slightly more tolerant of popular religious movements, opened new avenues of opportunity for women who wanted to lead religious lives. In 1215, the Council of Lateran IV forbid the establishment of new religious orders, but the acceptance of new mendicant orders by Innocent III paved the way for popular religious movements to work with the Church.²² Many women in this period wanted to lead the *vita apostolica*, and there were more religious hopefuls than orders that could hold them. Jacques de Vitry, a priest and hagiographer in the thirteenth century who wrote the *vita* of Marie d’Oignies, a Liègeois beguine, remarked that there were three times as many pious women as Cistercian houses able to receive them.²³ It is important to note that there was also a demographical imbalance between the sexes in this period: the crusades, the attraction of the clerical life, and the comparative longevity of women meant that there were more women than men

¹⁹ Kathleen Garay and Madeleine Jeay, “Douceline de Digne: The ‘Douce et Digne’ Mother of Roubaud,” in *The Life of Saint Douceline, Beguine of Provence*, trans. Kathleen Garay and Madeleine Jeay (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 155-156; Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 11.

²⁰ Stabler-Miller, “What’s in a name?”, 61-62.

²¹ Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 12.

²² Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 75.

²³ E.W. McDonnell, *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture with Special Emphasis on the Belgian Scene* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 119.

searching for a livelihood.²⁴ During this period, even noble women had trouble finding a position in a convent, and it was almost impossible for women in lower social strata to take the veil. Established monasteries required a *dos*, or entrance gift, from women who wanted to enter, and women without rich families could not aspire to a religious life in an established institution.²⁵

Beguinages developed in this religious, social, and economic climate.²⁶ Bynum recalls the previous historical theories regarding the emergence of the beguine “movement”, which hypothesize that this was an expression of protest by the urban poor, that there were far more women than men and single women needed to find a station, and that there was a surplus of women who could not find positions within established orders and monasteries.²⁷ Bynum argues instead that the emergence of these communities was the result of a web of the social, religious, demographic, and economic conditions of the thirteenth century urban environment.

While evolving conditions opened up opportunities for women’s religious movements, these movements occurred during a period of constant clerical backlash. One of the principal tasks of the Church in the thirteenth century was to determine which religious groups were heretical, and informal female religious communities that followed the *vita apostolica* were targeted.²⁸ The fate of the beguines throughout the thirteenth century illustrates the fragility of their position. By the end of the thirteenth century, the

²⁴ Brenda Bolton, “Mulieres Sanctae,” in *Women in Medieval Society*, ed. Susan Mosher Stuard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 147.

²⁵ Simons, *Cities of Ladies*, xi.

²⁶ Garay and Jeay, introduction, x-xii.

²⁷ Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 14-15.

²⁸ McDonnell, *The Beguines and Beghards*, 5.

beguines and their type of religious life came under strong attack from the Church.²⁹ Quasi-religious women did not have formal ecclesiastical status, and therefore “lacked safeguards against arbitrary action” and were subject to the fickleness of ecclesiastical and popular opinion.³⁰ In 1273, the Council of Lyon called the northern French beguines into question.³¹ The Council of Vienne in 1311 – during which Marguerite Porete, a Parisian beguine, and her book *The Mirror of Simple Souls* were judged and condemned as heretical – issued the decrees *Ad nostrum*, which accused beguines and beghards (male beguines) of antinomianism³², and *Cum de quibusdam*, which prohibited women from adopting the beguine life.³³ ³⁴ These clerics viewed beguines as “a threat to clerical powers and a promulgator of erroneous belief”.³⁵ During the inquisition against the Spiritual Franciscans, which lasted from 1314-1328 in Languedoc, many beguines were burned at the stake.³⁶

By the early fourteenth century in the south of France, the name “beguine” became associated with the Spiritual Franciscan movement. It is important to note, however, that these communities of “beguines” in Languedoc were of very different character than those

²⁹ Simons, *Cities of Ladies*, 118-119.

³⁰ Elizabeth Makowski, *A Pernicious Sort of Woman: Quasi-Religious Women and Canon Lawyers in the Later Middle Ages* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), xxii.

³¹ Martin Aurell, *Une famille de la noblesse Provençale au moyen âge: les Porcelet* (Avignon: Aubanel-Distic, 1986), 166-167.

³² Antinomianism: The belief that salvation is attained through divine grace and faith, and not my moral law (Makowski, *A Pernicious Sort of Woman*, 22-24).

³³ Florian Mazel, “Une sainteté féminine. Douceline de Digne”, in *Marseille au Moyen Âge, entre Provence et Méditerranée. Les horizons d’une ville portuaire*, edited by Thierry Pécourt (Méolans-Revel: Désiris, 2009), 305; Stabler-Miller, “What’s in a name?”, 61-62.

³⁴ From *Cum de quibusdam*: “Since certain women commonly known as beguines neither promise obedience to anyone, nor renounce personal property, nor profess any approved rule, they are by no means considered religious, although they wear a so-called beguine habit and attach themselves to certain religious to whom they are drawn by special affection” (translated by Elizabeth Makowski in *A Pernicious Sort of Woman*, 23).

³⁵ Stabler-Miller, “What’s in a name?”, 62.

³⁶ Burnham, *So Great a Light*, 2; Garay and Jeay, “Introduction,” 10.

in the Low Countries. The “beguine” communities in Narbonne and Béziers, for example, were made up of the followers of Peter John Olivi, a theologian and Spiritual Franciscan.³⁷ The distinction between these two groups, the beguines of the North – humble, ascetic religious women who formed their own communities in the Diocese of Liège and around Paris – and the beguines and beguins of Languedoc – lay communities of mixed gender in cities along the southwestern coast of the Mediterranean following a movement that preached extreme rejection of material wealth and called the Church the antichrist – demonstrates the complexity of the phenomenon and the imprecision inherent in any general discussion of the “beguine movement”.

The study of beguines has largely been limited to the study of the Northern beguines (with the exception of Louisa Burnham’s writings on the beguines and beguins of Languedoc), and the phenomenon has been interpreted as a distinctly feminine form of lay spirituality that was embraced in a time of religious flux.³⁸ This paper will analyze all of the available primary sources that relate to the beguines of Marseilles and discuss how these women fit into the current narrative of “beguine” contrariety, starting with *Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina*.

³⁷ Burnham, *So Great a Light*, 2.

³⁸ See: Walter Simons’ *Cities of Ladies*, Brenda Bolton’s *Mulieres Sanctae*, the writings of Anneke Mulder-Bakker.

Chapter II

Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina

Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina was written in 1297, approximately 46 years after the beguinage was founded in Marseilles.³⁹ This *vita* describes the events of the life of Doucelina, and every chapter emphasizes her sanctity. J.H. Albanés, a French abbot, first translated the *vita* into French in 1879, was also the first historian to put forth the theory that Felipa Porcelet, an early convert to the beguinage and the prioress after Doucelina's death, wrote the *vita*.

Felipa was a member of one of the most influential Provençal noble families, the Porcelet family of Arles.⁴⁰ Albanés' theory of authorship is well supported by the historical events and the text. The first person feminine plural is used several times in Chapter XIV, indicating that the text was written by a beguine (in the other chapters, the beguines are described in third person). The author must have lived long enough after Doucelina's death, which took place in 1274, to finish the work in 1297, which fits Felipa's life span: she was born around 1250 and died in 1316. Albanés asserts that the author must have lived with the saint in order to bear witness to her miracles; the text is full of details about Doucelina's daily life and the everyday workings of the beguinage, and the first-person is used several times when the author describes the saint's miracles.⁴¹ Felipa's entrance into the community is the only one described in detail in the *vita*, also indicating authorship.⁴² As

³⁹ Mazel, "Une sainteté féminine," 307.

⁴⁰ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 16.

⁴¹ J.H. Albanés, introduction, in *La vie de Sainte Douceline fondatrice des beguines de Marseille*, ed. and trans. by J.H. Albanés (Marseilles: Camoin, 1879), xxix-xxxiv.

⁴² *The Life of Saint Douceline, Beguine of Provence*, trans. Kathleen Garay and Madeleine Jeay (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 38-39.

the prioress, Felipa would have been in charge of the production of a document that represented the beguinage.⁴³ This theory is very convincing and has been widely accepted by scholars of the *vita* and of the Porcelet family.⁴⁴

In the *vita*, Felipa casts the beguinage in divine light. The *Life of Saint Doucelina* celebrates the sanctity of its namesake. Felipa describes Doucelina's miracles in detail and connects the saint to St. Francis in her text in order to demonstrate her holiness to the world.

Marseilles and the Beguinage

According to the *vita*, Doucelina was born in Digne in 1215 to Bérenguier, a wealthy merchant, and Hugue de Barjols, a virtuous woman.⁴⁵ Her family was very pious, and both Doucelina and her brother Hugo chose to lead religious lives. Hugo became a famous Franciscan preacher, and Doucelina established her own community. It is important to note that this family was very wealthy, and that both children chose to pursue the *vita apostolica*, likely as a reaction against the wealth that they witnessed at home. Doucelina exhibited profound piety from a young age, and mortified her flesh under her secular clothes.⁴⁶ She loved to help the poor and the sick, and many women began to follow her. When she asked God to direct her toward a religious order, she had a vision in which three

⁴³ "Introduction," in *La vie de Sainte Douceline*, Albanés, xxix-xxxiv.

⁴⁴ See: Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 165-168; Kelly Lynn Morris, "The Vita of Douceline de Digne (1214-1274): Beguine Sprituality and Orthodoxy in Thirteenth Century Marseilles" (PhD Diss., University of Calgary, 2001), 31.

Garay and Jeay, "Introduction," 16;

⁴⁵ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 25.

⁴⁶ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 26-28.

women told her to take the veil. Instead of entering a Franciscan convent, she decided to lead her own religious life, made her own vows to God, and 211 women followed her.⁴⁷

Doucelina established her first beguinage in 1241 in Hyères, a city in the same county as Marseilles, and she founded the beguinage in Marseilles in 1250.⁴⁸ Both houses were called “Roubaud”. The name comes from the situation of the first beguinage: it was built adjacent to a river called Roubaud.⁴⁹ When the beguines moved to Marseilles, they retained the name. For the rest of this paper, the terms “beguines of Roubaud” and “beguines of Marseilles” will be used interchangeably to refer to the beguinage of Roubaud located in Marseilles. Doucelina lived in the beguinage of Roubaud until her death in 1274. This house was built next to the Franciscan monastery, outside of the walls of the city.⁵⁰ While most informal communities did not establish strict rules, Doucelina established a written rule for her community.⁵¹ The rule is not reproduced in the hagiography, but Doucelina’s commitment to poverty and chastity are underscored, following in the example of the Franciscan rule.⁵²

The vita, the “Sainte”, and St. Francis

The chapters of the *life* detail, in order, the humility of Doucelina, her obedience, holy poverty, good works, goodness and innocence, care for the sick, diligence in prayer, raptures, contemplation and revelations, prophecies, miracles, death, and the miracles that

⁴⁷ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 29-31.

⁴⁸ Garay and Jeay, introduction, 8; Mazel, “Une sainteté féminine”, 305.

⁴⁹ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 166.

⁵⁰ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 166; Mazel, “Une sainteté féminine”, 306. See Section Chapter IV, the section entitled “Philippine’s Contracts” for the discussion of this land purchase.

⁵¹ Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 78; *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 32.

⁵² *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 32.

she performed after her death to illustrate her holiness.⁵³ The longest chapter relates her raptures, which the author uses as proof of her sanctity. She often remained in ecstasy for days with only one toe on the ground, and crowds from around the world came to bear witness to her miraculous levitations.⁵⁴ She died in 1274 during one of these episodes. According to the author, all who witnessed her raptures and her numerous other miracles were convinced of her holiness. This section was evidently written to convince the reader, as well, of her saintliness.

The author of *Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina* likely undertook the task in order to teach the beguines about the founder of their community, to revive the cult of Doucelina through them. Even though she was never canonized as an official saint of the Church, Doucelina remained a popular saint in Marseille through the fourteenth century, demonstrating that the hagiography was successful in propagating her cult locally.⁵⁵ This readership knew the Life of Saint Francis well, and the hagiographer seeks to demonstrate the parallels between Doucelina and St. Francis, one of the most popular saints of the thirteenth century.

The *vita* draws a clear correlation between Francis and Doucelina in the discussion of Doucelina's commitment to holy poverty and pursuit of the apostolic life: "just as Saint Francis had adopted the clothing of the Lord, she took those of the mother", and "her poverty was in great abundance, as is said of Saint Francis".⁵⁶ Like Francis, Doucelina was so poor at the time of her death that she did not even have a robe with which to cover

⁵³ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 33-111.

⁵⁴ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 46-69.

⁵⁵ Introduction to *La vie de Sainte Douceline*, Albanès, lviii.

⁵⁶ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 39.

herself.⁵⁷ They were also tied together in their commitment to chastity. Francis barely knew a woman by sight; Doucelina “hardly knew any man by his face”.⁵⁸ This *vita* shows profound love and respect for Francis: “she had an indescribable love for the blessed father Saint Francis. His name was always on her lips, showing that she was constantly remembering him.”⁵⁹

The Friars Minor are also expressly respected in this hagiography. Doucelina played a role in the establishment of the Franciscan order in the south of France. Her brother, Hugo, was an early leader of the Spiritual Franciscan movement, and became a famous theologian and preacher.⁶⁰ His charisma is mentioned in Salimbene and in Joinville’s *Vie de Saint Louis* (Hugo preached before the king in 1248, before the crusades departed from Marseilles).⁶¹ In the first chapter of the *vita*, Hugo is described as a “most ardent preacher of the truth of Jesus Christ, in the order of Saint Francis”.⁶² Doucelina took her confession with Brother Jaucelin, the Provincial Minister of the Franciscans from 1262 to 1272.⁶³ She connected her community to the Franciscans, swearing obedience to the Friars Minor and using their church.⁶⁴ In her will, Doucelina conferred the beguinage to God and to Saint Francis.⁶⁵ The *vita* stresses the connections between the beguinage and the Franciscans,

⁵⁷ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 38.

⁵⁸ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 41.

⁵⁹ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 58.

⁶⁰ Garay and Jeay, “Douceline de Digne”, 155-156.

⁶¹ Garay and Jeay, “Introduction,” 13.

⁶² *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 25.

⁶³ Sean Field, “Agnes of Harcourt, Felipa of Porcelet, and Margueirte of Oingt: Women Writing About Women at the End of the Thirteenth Century”, *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, 76, pp. 298-329, 308.

⁶⁴ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 36; Field, “Agnes of Harcourt”, 308.

⁶⁵ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 91.

demonstrating that Doucelina and the beguines shared the same commitment to a humble religious life as the Franciscans.

More subtle connections between Doucelina's Life and St. Francis' are dispersed throughout the text, subliminally leading one to associate Doucelina with Francis. Doucelina's apparition of three women on the road who entreated her to follow them is the same as Francis's famous vision: in Thomas of Celano's *vita*, Francis was visited by three women on the road to Sienna who counseled him to seek the religious life.⁶⁶ Francis' love of animals was famous, and Doucelina's attachment to animals was reminiscent of Francis.⁶⁷ Doucelina's did not allow animals or birds to be killed because she was "moved by a feeling of great compassion, especially for those creatures that symbolically represent Christ, according to the Scriptures".⁶⁸ Hearing a sparrow's song induced her into a state of ecstasy. Doucelina, like Francis, perceived celestial grace in the natural world.⁶⁹ This special relationship with animals was often used in saint's lives to display the subject's sweetness, gentleness, and devotion to the weak and sickly.⁷⁰

The Church strengthened its control over religious expression over the course of the thirteenth century, and by the time that *Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina* was

⁶⁶ Garay and Jeay, "Introduction," 21-22; *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 29.

⁶⁷ "Since he had now been made simple by grace and not by nature, he began to accuse himself of negligence for not having preached to the birds before, since they listened to the word of God with such reverence. And thus it came about that, from that day on, he exhorted all birds, all animals, all reptiles, and even nonexistent creatures to praise and love the creator, for every day, when the name of the savior was announced, he himself saw their obedience." *The First Life of Saint Francis*, Thomas de Celano, trans. by David Burr (<http://www.history.vt.edu/Burr/Francis/Celano.html>).

⁶⁸ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 44.

⁶⁹ Christine Cooper-Rompato, "The Voice of the Redbreast in the Book of Margery Kempe," in *Magistra*, 16.2 (2010), pp. 77-92, 82.

⁷⁰ Cooper-Rompato, "The Voice of the Redbreast", 83.

written, the Church viewed the Spiritual Franciscans and the beguines with suspicion.⁷¹ The tensions between the Church and the religious orders form the backdrop of this hagiography, which exalts the orthodoxy and religiosity of a popular saint from a lay religious community. Doucelina was as a very holy woman, who establishes a house that is beloved by God. She improved the entire region with her faith: “the rays of her goodness spread throughout Provence, and even beyond Provence, lighting the way for many who were drawn to her institution by her love and her example.”⁷² The *vita* explains that Charles I, the Count of Provence, held Doucelina in high esteem because he witnessed her humility and miraculous powers, and he reestablished the Franciscans in Marseille because she asked him to.⁷³ The language of this section is intriguing, emphasizing the female saint’s gentleness and humility, common themes in late medieval saint’s lives. Felipa wrote that the count’s anger, “which neither the power nor the wisdom of men nor of the Friars had been able to temper, the simplicity of the humble Doucelina was able to assuage”.⁷⁴

Doucelina was not only the holy subject of this history, but she was also a champion of the Franciscans and a representative of the beguinage. Her interactions with Charles I are only described in the most positive terms, and the political struggle that he waged against Marseilles is not mentioned. This special relationship with the Count suggests that Doucelina (or Felipa) had a strong allegiance to the crown. Doucelina’s attachment to the regional royalty and her often-mentioned orthodoxy linked the beguinage to conventional

⁷¹ Garay and Jeay, “Douceline de Digne,” 149.

⁷² *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 113. Also: “Joy, salvation and peace to the county of Provence, for you have been illuminated by her goodness” (114).

⁷³ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 37. More on this in Chapter V.

⁷⁴ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 37.

power structures. As beguines across Europe were condemned by clerics, Felipa made a concerted effort in the *vita* to present the beguinage as orthodox and not threatening.

Doucelina uncompromisingly adopted the name “beguine”, which was associated during this time with heresy, and is used in the *vita* to convey her humility. According to the *vita*, Doucelina “would say that the name of beguine pleased her greatly and that she held it in great esteem because it was humble and scorned by the world’s pride”⁷⁵. The meaning of the term “beguine” changed over the course of the thirteenth century. It was first used to describe the *mulieres religiosae*, or exceptionally holy women of the Low Countries, in the early thirteenth century (women like Marie d’Oignies, Marguerite of Ypres, Christina Mirabilis, and others). The term was and always has been poorly defined, and its etymology is still open for debate.⁷⁶ In the thirteenth century, the term came to stand for a wide range of images, positive and negative, associated with beguines: “mystic, ascetic, social critic, and outcast”, and even heretic.⁷⁷ These women, however, “lived the life of angels among the people, to the point that their great purity in words and actions seemed not to be that of women”.⁷⁸ Doucelina adopted this name knowing full well of its negative associations, and attempted to change these negative associations into positive ones.

According to *Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina*, the holiness of the beguinage of Roubaud improved the city of Marseilles. The beguines helped the poor and healed the

⁷⁵ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 34.

⁷⁶ “Beguine” may have originated from an old Flemish word (*beghen*) that means “to pray” or from a name used to describe Cathar heretics (Garay and Jeay, “Introduction”, 9).

⁷⁷ Stabler-Miller, “What’s in a name?”, 34.

⁷⁸ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 33.

sick and lost with their gentle care and God's grace.⁷⁹ Doucelina asked her beguines to find sick people in the city and bring them back to the house, where she healed them with her divine touch. The *vita* recounts these stories of the sick, wounded, and deformed in gory detail; many of her patients suffered from serious deformities before she performed her miraculous healings.⁸⁰ The important political and aristocratic figures in the region, like Charles I, lord Jacques Vivaud de Cuges, and Raymond de Puy visited the beguinage to observe Doucelina's raptures.⁸¹ The *vita* presents the beguinage as a hub of activity in Marseilles and indicates that the beguines are respected throughout the region because of the multitude of miracles that Doucelina performs. The community attracted important followers, who testified to the holiness of these women. The beguinage also served an important purpose in the city as a site of religious inspiration and healing.

The established narrative of the beguine movement describes beguines in general as "semi-religious" figures who occupied the space in between the religious life of cloistered nuns and the secular world of the laity. The beguines described in this *vita*, however, seem more like nuns than lay people, and appear more similar to the holy ladies of the Low Countries than the heretics of southern France. The beguines of Roubaud followed a written rule. They could not look at men, and Doucelina, who represented the ideal beguine within the community, lived in total destitution.⁸² Albanés' collection of "Pièces Justificatifs" at the end of his translation of the *vita* includes a formal "Profession of Faith" in Occitan that was created after Doucelina's death. This document is difficult to date because it mentions "papa Johan" or Pope John, who could either be Pope John XXI (1276-1277) or

⁷⁹ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 42.

⁸⁰ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 46, 86-87.

⁸¹ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 49-53.

⁸² *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 32-41.

Pope John XXII (1316-1334). This vow asserts the beguines' devotion and obedience to God, the Virgin Mary, Doucelina, and all of the other saints, their obedience to any future prioresses, and their dedication to protecting their virginity. The vow refers to the beguinage as the order of Roubaud of Marseilles (*l'estament de Roubaut de Massella*), which adds an unmistakably monastic flair to this lay religious document.⁸³

The hagiography paints an idealized image of the beguinage of Roubaud. The beguines chose a poor, religious life. Their good works contributed to the improvement of their city, and they maintained strong relationships with people from every social stratum in the city, from the Count to the poor, sick, and dispossessed. They were pious ladies who presented no threat to the Church or to the city of Marseilles: they were held in high esteem by the Count, and they followed the *vita apostolica* like Francis, who was accepted into the fold of the Church and canonized. Their way of life was not a revolt against the Church, but was rather a celebration of Christian faith and an example for others. *Li Vida* also shows that the beguinage was an integral part of the city of Marseilles, because the beguines helped other citizens attain salvation and also withdraw from the vices of urban life.

Though many of the rules within the house were very strict, the beguines of Roubaud were not obligated to take a vow of poverty. Most of the women held their fortunes while living in the community.⁸⁴ When Felipa, described here as a very rich noble woman, first joined the beguinage, she tried to help Doucelina by providing her with "the necessities for life for as long as she lived".⁸⁵ Doucelina refused this help because of her vow of poverty. This is the only place in the text where the wealth of one of the beguines is

⁸³ "Pièces Justicatifs", I, *La vie de Sainte Douceline*, J.H. Albanés (Marseilles: Camoin, 1879), 257.

⁸⁴ Garay and Jeay, introduction, 13.

⁸⁵ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 39.

mentioned. Notably, however, all of the beguines mentioned by name in the *vita* were from important regional noble families: Felipa Porcelet, her nieces Maragda and Felipa Porcelet, Huga de Fos (the lords of Fos were also members of the Porcelet family), Madame Ricssens del Pujet (of the noble family of Puget), lady Laura d'Ieras (Laure of Hyères), and other beguines introduced as "ladies".⁸⁶ Doucelina, though not noble, also came from a wealthy background, but abandoned her life of comfort for a harsh, ascetic religious life. The text constantly refers to the humility, poverty, and sanctity of these women, but almost never touches upon the fortunes that they brought into the beguinage and their standards of living.⁸⁷ The economic power of these women, described in the next two chapters, distinguishes the beguines of Marseilles from any other group of medieval beguines and fixes them as a unique lay religious community.

⁸⁶ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 66-106.

⁸⁷ *The Life of Saint Douceline, Beguine of Provence*, 38-39.

Chapter III

The Commercial Contracts of the Beguines of Roubaud

Marseilles, as we have noted, was in the process of becoming one of the most important Mediterranean port cities in the mid-thirteenth century. By the late thirteenth century, Marseilles had a population estimated at 25,000, and a port that was of equal stature to that of Genoa.⁸⁸ The city faced the sea, the object of its prosperity. Marseilles was fortuitously located on trade routes from Northern France to the Mediterranean.⁸⁹ Giraud Amalric's cartulary (1248) demonstrates that there were at least 115 ships in the port of Marseilles during the spring and summer.⁹⁰ These ships carried products from the Orient to the Occident; spices, dyes, and medicines filled the ships that docked in Marseilles. Marseillaise merchants also traded with North Africa and Spain, returning with essential products like hides and wax.⁹¹ With ships full of traders and crusaders constantly entering the port, Marseilles became a city unparalleled in economic opportunity.

The legal culture in the thirteenth century was highly developed, and the combination of commercial opportunity and careful notarial practices has yielded a wealth of information concerning Marseillaise commerce. The collection of beguine commercial contracts included in Blancard's *Les documents inédits sur le commerce de Marseille au moyen âge* is comprised of eight different contracts, written between 1280 and 1288, that

⁸⁸ Daniel Lord Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies : Possession and Identity in Late Medieval Marseille* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2000), 43.

⁸⁹ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 63.

⁹⁰ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 69.

⁹¹ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 77.

reveal the community's involvement in trade around Marseilles.⁹² Blancard's collection was compiled in the nineteenth century and represents only a fraction of the contracts from Marseilles during this period. The eight contracts are just a small sample of the contracts that were made by the beguines of Roubaud. Nonetheless, as will be seen, these eight contracts are representative of the range of investment contracts of the time and place. These women clearly entered the community with fortunes that they were able to expand through shrewd economic activity. They invested their inheritances and used the returns to support the beguinage. The contracts paint a markedly different picture of beguine life than the one presented in the *vita*.

Thirteenth-century contracts

The twelfth century renaissance reestablished the principles of Roman law in the drafting of contracts.⁹³ Local laws like Frankish law, other Germanic law, feudal law, and canon law influenced the *lex mercatoria* (the laws and customs of merchants), which emphasized the importance of equity and accord between the two contractual parties.⁹⁴ Roman law added a moral element to the legal traditions of canon law and the *lex mercatoria*, in which a man's word is his bond and the motivations of the two parties must be honest.⁹⁵

Five out of the eight contracts made by the beguines of Roubaud and collected by Blanchard in *Les Documents inédites sur le commerce de Marseille au moyen âge* are a

⁹² *Les Documents commerciales inédites sur le commerce de Marseille au moyen âge*, ed. Louis Blancard, Volume II (Marseille: Barlatier-Feissat, 1884-1884), 371-380.

⁹³ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 1.

⁹⁴ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 13.

⁹⁵ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 12.

specific type of commercial contract called *commenda*. The *commenda* was conceived during the late medieval period, and has its roots in the Roman *societas* (also seen in this collection). The *commenda* is a late medieval blend of elements from Roman law and the *lex mercatoria*: these contracts stress the honesty and accord of the two parties. The *commenda*, along with a variety of other partnerships, was born in the late medieval period because contracts with loan characteristics had come under suspicion, and new methods of investment were necessary.⁹⁶ Unlike the Roman *societas*, however, which is made binding by the consent of the two parties, the *commenda* is made binding by the transfer of goods from the *commendator* to the *tractator*. The decisions of the tribunal of Marseilles demonstrate the nature of this type of contract: once the *commendator* effectuates the agreement by delivering the money, the *tractator* must act according to the terms of the document.⁹⁷ When drawing up the contract, the notary must record that the *tractator* has received capital from the *commendator*, which marks that the contract is binding.⁹⁸

Legal Culture and the Beguine Contracts

The *commenda* was one of the most important types of contracts in thirteenth century Mediterranean trade.⁹⁹ Its common use can be seen in Almalric's cartulary: at least 466 of the total 1031 *notulae* were *commendae*, or forty-five percent.¹⁰⁰ This explains why the majority of the extant beguine contracts are *commendae*. The basic features of the

⁹⁶ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 216.

⁹⁷ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 19.

⁹⁸ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 18.

⁹⁹ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 114.

¹⁰⁰ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 115.

commenda are simple. The contract must mark that the *commendator* has given the capital to the *tractator*.

Contract	Date	Type	Party 1	Party 2	Sum
1	7 July 1280	<i>Commenda</i>	<i>Commendator</i> : Dulcie de Cadarache, beguine	<i>Tractator</i> : Nicholaus Fuillos (<i>curaterius</i>) and wife	100 <i>sols</i>
2	7 July 1280	<i>Commenda</i>	<i>Commendator</i> : Dulcie de Cadarache and Blacacia, beguines	<i>Tractator</i> : Nicholaus Fuillos (<i>curaterius</i>) and wife	Doulce: 11 <i>livres</i> Blacace: 6 <i>livres</i>
3	15 July 1280	<i>Commenda</i> (mid-gain)	<i>Commendator</i> : Blacacia, beguine	<i>Tractator</i> : Jacobus Garssinus and Rostagna	6 <i>livres</i>
4	15 July 1280	Quittance	<i>Commendator</i> : Bartholomea d'Albe, beguine	<i>Tractator</i> : Jacobus Garssinus and Rostagna	4 <i>livres</i>
5	30 July 1280	<i>Commenda</i> (mid-gain)	<i>Commendator</i> : Nicholave de Tarascon, beguine	<i>Tractator</i> : Chadbert Aydini, merchant	144 <i>livres</i> 10 <i>sols</i>
6	18 Sept. 1280	<i>Commenda</i> (mid-gain)	<i>Commendator</i> : Raimunde de Rocacio, beguine	<i>Tractator</i> : Mencia, widow	11 <i>livres</i>
7	12 January 1288	<i>Societas</i>	Hugue Albine, beguine	Piere and Huga Regordi	25 <i>livres</i>
8	12 October 1287	<i>Mutuum</i>	Nicholave de Tarascon, beguine	Mabilia de Fossis, beguine	9 <i>livres</i> 9 <i>sols</i> , 6 <i>denaris</i>

Table 1: The eight contracts in “*Commandites Commerciales des Béguines de Roubaud*”.

The first beguine contract marks that Nicholaus Fuillos (*curaterius*) and wife have received 100 *sols*¹⁰¹ from Dulcie de Cadarache (*commendator*).¹⁰² This language, *nos a te*

¹⁰¹ This is the smallest sum that is seen in any of the beguine contracts. 100 *sol* is 4 *livres* (Daniel Lord Smail, *The Consumption of Justice: Emotions, Publicity, and Legal Culture in Marseille, 1264-1243*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2003, p. xii.)

¹⁰² *Les Documents inédites*, p. 371: “*Notum sit cunctis presentibus et futuris quod nos Nicholaus Fuillos, curaterius, et Sybilia [conjuges], ambo per se et simul et quilibet nostrum in solidum bona fide et sine omni dolo confitemur et in veritate recognoscimus vobis domine*

habuisse et recepisse in comanda et ex causa, is repeated in all of the beguine *commendae*, and is characteristic of the type of contract; the *commendae* in the Amalric's cartulary contain the same phrasing.¹⁰³

All of the beguine *commendae* are what Pryor describes as “unilateral *commenda*” because the capital is only supplied by the *commendator* (the *tractator* does not add his own capital). Often, *commendae* include “certain directions concerning the management of the enterprise to be undertaken by the *tractator*”.¹⁰⁴ The beguine contracts include detailed information concerning the duration of the enterprise. Dulcie de Cadarache's investment in Nicholaus Fuillos is for one year (*hinc ad unum annum proxime venturum*).¹⁰⁵ In Contract 6, Raimunde gives Mencia 11 *livres* to use in the wheat trade for the seven months following September 18th, 1280.¹⁰⁶

In unilateral *commendae*, the *commendator* sustains all liability for the loss of capital and receives three quarters of any profit. The *tractator* receives one quarter of any profit.¹⁰⁷ The *tractator* is not liable for losses because he “lost the value of his labor... and received no compensation for that”.¹⁰⁸ The first two beguine contracts seem to follow this

Dulcie de Cadaracha, beguine de Robaudo, nos a te habuisse et recepisse in comanda et ex causa comande 100 s. regalium seu massiliensium minorum...”

¹⁰³ For examples of this, see Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 116-119 (Notulae 14-18). Notula 14, for example, a *commenda* of 50 *livres* invested in cloth and toile from Rheims for a trip to Acre, includes the phrase: “*me habuisse et recepisse in comanda a te XL libras.*”

¹⁰⁴ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 115.

¹⁰⁵ *Les Documents inedits*, p. 371. Douce annuls the contract three years later, in 1283, but the conditions of the annulment are not specified (mentioned in a brief addendum to the contract).

¹⁰⁶ *Les Documents inedits*, p. 377-378: “...cum quibus XI L. dicte monete convenio et promicto vobis per stipulationem solempnem bene et fideliter mercari et negociari in officio meo bladarie, ad utilitatem tuam et meam, hinc ad festum proximum Pasche resurrectionis Domini, ad mediam partem lucri.”

¹⁰⁷ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 115.

¹⁰⁸ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 115.

mold; there is no ratio of profits agreed upon within the contracts, and it is therefore safe to draw the conclusion that these contracts followed the conventions of unilateral *commendae*. The other three *commendae* – contracts 3, 5, and 6 – are mid-gain contracts, in which the *commendator* and the *tractator* divide the profits equally. The fourth contract, a quittance, releases Jacobus and his wife from a mid-gain *commenda* contract. Contract 3 illustrates the concept of mid-gain: Jacobus and Rostagna carry out their economic activity in and around Marseilles for one year, and afterwards they share the profits with Blacace (*ad mediam partem lucri*).¹⁰⁹ A mid-gain *commenda* was more profitable and attractive for the *tractator*. Contract 6 states that the agreement is *ad utilitatem tuam et meam*, for the good of both women.¹¹⁰

Contract 5: Identities, Risk, and Usury

The fifth contract stands out because it involved a significantly larger sum of money than the other beguine contracts. This *commenda*, made on 30 July 1280, between Nicholave de Tarascon, a beguine, and Chadbert Aydini, a Lombard merchant, was for a surprising amount of money: Nicholave gave Chadbert 144 *livres* and 10 *sols* in cash (*in pecunia numerata*), who was required to use it to purchase goods to sell around Marseilles.¹¹¹ Nicholave and Chadbert will share the profits. The details of this contract are very precise, especially when identifying the numerous risks of this venture. For example,

¹⁰⁹ *Les Documents inédits*, 373-374. Addendum to contract: the contract is annulled five years later, in 1285.

¹¹⁰ *Les Documents inédits*, 378.

¹¹¹ *Les Documents inédits*, 375.

Chadbert could not undertake any maritime enterprises and expose the goods to the dangers of the sea.¹¹²

Why did Nicholave entrust such a large sum to a merchant when there were so many risks? If the capital was lost, Nicholave alone would bear liability for it. The word *risigo*, or risk, was an invention in maritime commercial law in the twelfth century.¹¹³ It came from the Arab word *rizq*, which was brought to Europe by Italian merchants. The word became common in the Latin commercial lexicon, and is often found in *commenda* or *societas* contracts. The clause of “safe arrival” became an important part of these contracts because of the use of the word and concept of risk.¹¹⁴ The word *resicum* differs from the word *periculum*, a much older Latin word that signifies danger and comes from property law. The dangers of the sea made a new legal concept necessary, in which risks could be taken into account financially. The emergence of the new word demonstrates that great risks were an inevitable part of maritime enterprises, and Nicholave wanted her trade to steer clear of these dangers when she explicitly instructed that the goods are not exposed to the sea.

These risks of maritime trade and the resulting financial safeguards against risk brought the merchant’s business into the moral limelight. The uncertainty of the future of maritime ventures necessitated frequent borrowing, and financially accounting for risk made the transaction more complicated (money is exchanged here for something

¹¹² « ...*tenendo eas salvas in terra et non exponendo periculo seu risigo maris* » (*Les Documents inédits*, 376).

¹¹³ Sylvain Piron, “L’apparition du *resicum* en Méditerranée Occidentale, XIIe-XIIIe Siècles”, in *Pour une histoire culturelle du risque. Genèse, évolution, actualité du concept dans les sociétés occidentales*, under the direction of E. Collas-Heddeland, M. Coudry, O. Kammerer, A. J. Lemaître, B. Martin, Editions Histoire et Anthropologie, Strasbourg, 2004, 59-76.

¹¹⁴ Piron, “L’apparition du *resicum*,” 13.

intangible).¹¹⁵ Late medieval merchants had a “double identity”: they were necessary but were also a “worrying presence”.¹¹⁶ Contract 5 includes a short clause, *quod cum Deus facere permitet*, a sort of cautionary statement that is not in the other beguine contracts. The necessity to include that the merchant must only do what God allows signifies that the two parties were conscious of the moral issues connected to this sort of enterprise.¹¹⁷ The question of whether or not the merchant’s actions or the *commenda* itself constitute usury seems to lurk behind this contract.

Pierre de Jean Olivi, a Spiritual Franciscan theologian who was followed by the beguins and beguines of Languedoc, wrote a *Traité des contrats* (Treaty on Contracts) in 1295, in which he discussed risk and usury. He argued that the ventures of merchants are not necessarily forms of usury. The merchant is responsible for guiding the expedition, and is like a proxy that can obtain part of the profits.¹¹⁸ The necessity to discuss whether merchants are usurers demonstrates that their trade and profitability with suspicion.

In this period, activity undertaken for the purpose of increasing one’s personal wealth was discouraged.¹¹⁹ This *commenda*, however, describes an enterprise that was frankly acquisitive. Nicholave invested a lot of money, and even though she avoided the risks of the sea, her property was not protected from the other perils of commerce. The chance of a positive outcome must have trumped the obvious risks. After a year, Chadbert

¹¹⁵ Piron, “L’apparition du resicum,” 17.

¹¹⁶ Giacomo Todeschini, *Franciscan Wealth: From Voluntary Poverty to Market Society*, (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2009), 16.

¹¹⁷ *Les Documents inédits*, 375.

¹¹⁸ Piron, “L’apparition du resicum,” 20.

¹¹⁹ Sylvain Piron, « Vœu et contrat chez Pierre de Jean Olivi », *Les Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques* [En ligne], 16 | 1996, mis en ligne le 27 février 2009, consulté le 13 mai 2014. URL : <http://ccrh.revues.org/2645> ; DOI : 10.4000/ccrh.2645.

was required to pay Nicholave in cash, specified very clearly in the contract, which suggests that Nicholave made this investment to increase her fortune.¹²⁰

In all of the contracts, the beguine was addressed as “*domine*”, a title of respect that means master, lord, or lady. This title likely conveyed her position as a religious woman. It is also possible that the title indicates her noble parentage. Nicholave de Tarascon’s status is not known; she is only mentioned in these contracts as “beguine”. Like many of the other names found in these contracts, her name might indicate a noble background. She could have been related to the lords of Tarascon, an important seignory in Provence, or the name could simply signify the town in which she was born.¹²¹ Either way, she had enough money to make serious investments, which means that she did not come from a poor family.

Societas and Mutuum: Contracts 7 and 8

The seventh contract describes a partnership (*societas*) between Hugue Aubin, a beguine, and Pierre and Hugue Ricod, husband and wife. A *societas* was a consensual contract that the parties could only dissolve by “mutual agreement or by the death, impoverishment, or loss of civil rights of any of the partners”, and was very popular during this period.¹²² The *societas* could be applied to one enterprise or to all economic affairs of the partner. In this case, the contract only created a partnership for one enterprise: Hugue gave the couple 25 *livres* to use in their industry in Marseilles.¹²³ Unlike the *commenda*, in

¹²⁰ *Les Documents commerciales*, 376.

¹²¹ Martin Aurell, *Une famille de la noblesse Provençale au moyen âge: les Porcelet*, (Avignon : Éd. Aubanel, 1986), 63, 67.

¹²² Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 217.

¹²³ *Les Documents inedits*, 378: “...nos a te habuisse et recepisse in societate et ex causa societatis XXV L. massiliensium minorum, in quibus scienter renunciamus, etc; cum quibus XXV L. promittimus nos dicti conjuges bene et fideliter mercari et negociari infro Massiliam,

which only the *commendator* bore the loss and the profit distribution is usually unequal, the *societas* generally entailed an equal sharing of profit and loss by the two parties.¹²⁴

The eighth contract was a *mutuum*, or loan, from Nicholave de Tarascon to Mabilia de Fossis, two beguines of Roubaud, made on 12 October 1287. The contract signified a transfer of ownership over the lent item. The *mutuum* was necessarily a gratuitous loan; in order to gain interest on the loan, the lender had to secure a *stipulatio usurarum* from the borrower.¹²⁵ The contract stated that Mabilia was from a noble family: her father, Bertran, the Lord of Fos, was a member of the Porcelet family.¹²⁶ Nicholave lent 9 *livres*, 9 *sols*, and 6 *denaris* to Mabile, who must return this sum to Nicholave, *pacifice et quiete*, when she asked for it.¹²⁷ The contract was made *ex causa mutui gratis et amoris*, the convention for a *mutuum* : the money is lent without interest and with love, not *in comanda et ex causa*.¹²⁸ A due date for the money is not specified, and the money must be returned at Nicholave's word.

In this period, "a complex amalgam of Biblical, patristic, conciliar, and then later, canon law traditions combined to throw the full weight of Christian morality against interest on loans".¹²⁹ Loans, however, were an economic necessity, and still existed despite all of the recent partnership inventions. In this sense, the fact that one out of the eight available beguine contracts is a loan is representative of the legal climate. In mid-thirteenth

hinc ad instans carniprivium, et a dicto carniprivio usque ad unum annum proxime futurum continue complendum..."

¹²⁴ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 217.

¹²⁵ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 204.

¹²⁶ *Les Documents inedits*, 380.

¹²⁷ *Les Documents inedits*, 380.

¹²⁸ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 206-7. See Notula 77, on pg. 207, a loan for 25 *livres* for one year: "...me habuisse et recepisse ex causa mutui gratis et amoris a te XXV L. monete miscue modo curribilis in Massilia..."

¹²⁹ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 204.

century Marseilles, *commendae* formed a large bulk of the documents in Amalric's cartulary. *Societas* and other partnerships were often found, too. Loans certainly existed, but were not the most common ways to move money, because writing loans came with a series of moral challenges.¹³⁰

Nicholave was the same beguine who financed Chadbert Aydini 144 *livres* and 10 *sols* for his enterprises around Marseilles. She had a lot of cash, which she used to make large-scale investments and to lend to her friends. This commercial connection between two beguines indicates that their commercial relations did not only exist outside of the beguinage, but were rather a part of quotidian life for these women.

Six of the eight contracts in this collection were made in the beguinage of Roubaud, revealing that commercial activity was a part of beguine daily life. The beguine contracts appear to be quite representative of the types and distributions of contractual documentation in Marseilles in the second half of the thirteenth century. Reading these contracts leaves a particular impression of the beguines, and one wholly distinct from the impression given by the *vita*, that the beguine were wealthy, independent women who were in a position to handle their own estates and made profitable investments. How can the *Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina* and these commercial contracts, written in the same place and around the same time, present such different images of the lives of these women?

¹³⁰ Pryor, *Business Contracts*, 205.

Work: a brief discussion of the beguines of Paris

Beguines across Europe led religious lives “in the world” that were distinct from earlier female monastic religious lifestyles and were characterized by apostolic activities.¹³¹ The historiography on the beguines of the Low Countries presents a similar portrait of this “active and contemplative” religious life: beguines supported their communities primarily through social work – running hospitals and infirmaries, teaching children – and textile production.¹³²

Labor was a significant part of beguine life, for the religious ladies in the Low Countries and those in Paris. Beguinages, unlike monasteries, neither possessed land holdings nor claimed the property of community members.¹³³ In Paris, beguines came from various socioeconomic backgrounds; women who entered these houses with money and chose to not take a vow of poverty used their fortunes to support the community.¹³⁴ The beguines of Paris possessed certain notable similarities to the ladies of Roubaud. Both communities were founded at approximately the same time (c. 1250) and survived due to royal support. St. Louis established the beguinage in Paris, and his brother, Charles I, supported our beguines.¹³⁵ The two communities also included important wealthy women, who engaged economically with the local community and achieved remarkable success.

The Marseillaise and Parisian beguines were deeply integrated into the urban fabric. In

¹³¹ Stabler-Miller, “What’s in a name?”, 65.

¹³² Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Marie-Elisabeth Henneau, “Introduction: Liège, The Medieval ‘Woman Question’, and the Question of Medieval Women”, in *New Trends in Feminine Spirituality: The Holy Women of Liège and Their Impact*, ed. Juliette Dor et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 5.

¹³³ Tanya Stabler-Miller, *The Beguines of Medieval Paris: Gender, Patronage, and Spiritual Authority* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 36.

¹³⁴ Stabler-Miller, *The Beguines of Medieval Paris*, 61.

¹³⁵ Stabler-Miller, *The Beguines of Medieval Paris*, 1. See Chapter V for more detail on this political connection.

Paris, many women who called themselves “beguine” did not even live within the confines of the beguinage, but rather established their own workshops all over Paris, and engaging with local trade and living an independent lay religious life guided by the virtues of chastity and humility.¹³⁶

Although the Parisian beguines were as integrated in the world as the beguines of Roubaud, the Parisian ladies were engaged in a particular trade that was manual and well respected. The beguines of Paris supported themselves through silk work, a highly regarded craft that was also very profitable. In *The Beguines of Medieval Paris*, Stabler-Miller refers to silk work as “high status labor”, which “afforded a degree of social capital”, and stresses the strong work identity that this trade fostered.¹³⁷ Silk workshops brought laywomen from diverse backgrounds together, and these workshops formed small offshoot religious communities all over the city. Tax registers contain information about the occupations and social statuses of some beguines; of the forty-two beguines mentioned in the registers from 1292-1313, thirty-seven (or 88%) were involved with the silk industry.¹³⁸

Silk work provided an opportunity for legitimate labor. Women living outside of the beguinage were vulnerable to attacks by the clergy, and these single women did not possess many work opportunities. Working with silk was manual labor, which was acceptable for lay religious women. The beguines in the Low Countries also engaged in textile work. Working with one’s hands followed “an established apostolic ideal”.¹³⁹ Manual labor was seen as work that had both a social and spiritual role; textile work “brought

¹³⁶ Stabler-Miller, *The Beguines of Medieval Paris*, 59-62.

¹³⁷ Stabler-Miller, *The Beguines of Medieval Paris*, 61.

¹³⁸ Stabler-Miller, *The Beguines of Medieval Paris*, 65.

¹³⁹ Simons, *Cities of Ladies*, 85.

beguines together in collective work sessions, during which the psalter and other religious texts and prayers were recited or discussed”.¹⁴⁰ Many clerics considered voluntary work performed by women “ as a particularly meritorious form of penance”.¹⁴¹

The purpose of this brief section is to demonstrate the distinction between accepted forms of religious work and worldly commercial activity. The Parisian beguines, though unconventional in some ways – notably in that many of the so-called “beguines” lived outside of the beguinage – still operated within the confines of acceptable religious work. They labored with their hands and used the profits to support their religious communities. Though many of the Parisian beguines became very wealthy from this silk work¹⁴², their craft was still, ultimately, holy labor in some sense. The beguines of Marseilles, while ostensibly also supporting their religious community and ensuring its survival, did not engage in “apostolic” work. Their economic activities cannot be classified as religious in any way.

The contracts and the hagiography: who were these women?

None of the beguines mentioned in the *vita* were parties to the contracts. All of the women found in the hagiography are women from influential regional noble families, like the Porcelet (Felipa, Maragda, and Felipa), and the lords of Puget (Madame Ricssend), and the lords of Fos (Huga). The parentage of beguines who made the contracts, with the exception of Mabilia de Fos, is unknown. Yet the beguines named in the *vita* and those making the contracts have one thing in common: like Doucelina, who comes from a “great

¹⁴⁰ Simons, *Cities of Ladies*, 85.

¹⁴¹ Stabler-Miller, “What’s in a name?”, 66.

¹⁴² Stabler-Miller often mentions Jeanne de Faut and Marie Osanne, two women who became very successful mercers.

and wealthy” family, these women all come from wealthy enough backgrounds to own property.¹⁴³ The beguinage of Roubuad, despite the emphasis on poverty in the hagiography, was tied to the nobility: many beguines were middle class, but the number of noble women in the community continued to grow.¹⁴⁴

This image of rich, worldly women stands in stark contrast to the descriptions in the *vita* of a holy house tied to the Franciscan movement in its piety and commitment to asceticism. The connection between Doucelina and St. Francis is emphasized throughout *Li Vida*. Hugo of Digne, Doucelina’s brother, is seen as one of the early leaders of the Spiritual Franciscan movement in southern France. Doucelina chose John of Parma, the Minister General of the Franciscans, as her confessor, a man who incarnated Francis’ ideal of strict poverty.¹⁴⁵ When John spoke with Doucelline, he told her that she was doing God’s work. Like Hugo, he counseled her to stay away from established orders and to found her own community.¹⁴⁶

After Doucelina’s death, the new prioress, Felipa Porcelet, made changes to the beguinage that contributed to the increase in the number of noble beguines.¹⁴⁷ Felipa, the widow of Fouque II de Pontèves, Lord of Artignols, was able to subsidize the beguinage with her personal resources.¹⁴⁸ Felipa was one of the first women to join Doucelina’s new community in Marseilles.¹⁴⁹ She did not take a vow of poverty, and as a widow, she was

¹⁴³ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 25.

¹⁴⁴ Florian Mazel, *La Noblesse et L’Eglise en Provence, fin Xe – debut XIVE siècle: L’exemple des familles d’Agoult-Simiane, de Baux et de Marseille*, (Paris: CTHS, 2002), 585.

¹⁴⁵ Burnham, *So Great A Light*, 11-12; *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 71-72.

¹⁴⁶ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 72.

¹⁴⁷ Mazel, *La Noblesse et L’Eglise*, 585

¹⁴⁸ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 167; Mazel, *La Noblesse et L’Eglise*, 585.

¹⁴⁹ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 166.

entitled under the law of Marseille to own property and do business in her own name.¹⁵⁰

The beguinage recruited from the Provençal nobility and wealthy Marseillaise middle class.

The very ordinary nature of the contracts and the fact that they were made within the beguinage suggests that vows of poverty were not a part of the culture of the community.

By the 1280s, the twenty women who lived in the beguinage were protected by Felipa's personal wealth.¹⁵¹ Documentation of the Porcelet family affairs described in the

next chapter shed significant light on her wealth. Felipa did not live an ascetic life within the beguinage. Like St. Francis, Doucelina vehemently rejected all things material.¹⁵²

Considering that Felipa, who made investments and was deeply involved in the commerce of Marseilles, represented the wealthy element of the beguinage, her characterization of the house in the *vita* appears to contrast with her actual daily experiences. She clearly wanted to encourage the cult of Doucelina and legitimize the beguinage, but her motivations in creating a tie between Doucelina and the Spiritual Franciscans in the region is curious in light of her financial activities. Doucelina, with her extreme vow of poverty, her love for St. Francis, her familial connection to the Spiritual movement, and her religious resolve to form her own community, seems much closer to the spiritual fringe than her beguines.

¹⁵⁰ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 167.

¹⁵¹ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 167.

¹⁵² *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 37-38.

Chapter IV Felipa Porcelet: Widow, Beguine, Entrepreneur?

Though the text of the *vita* focused on Doucelina, the central figure in the history and mystery of the beguines of Roubaud was Felipa. She seemed to defy the normal categories of description of medieval women. Beguine and businesswoman, prioress and sumptuous decorator, leader and hagiographer – she was a force to be reckoned with in Marseilles. Felipa lost her family to her in-laws after her husband died, and found a new family that she fostered and protected from waves of ecclesiastical condemnation and financial difficulty.¹⁵³ Though Felipa is not mentioned in the Marseilles notarial records, she appears frequently in Martin Aurell’s comprehensive collection of the Porcelet family’s legal documents, which paints a fuller picture of this powerful, intelligent woman.¹⁵⁴

The *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d’Arles* contains a hodgepodge of various types of documents, including wills, commercial contracts, descriptions of court cases, and scribbled notes of important family events. None of these documents are *commendae*, which is helpful for the purposes of this paper, because the study of various types of legal documents can widen our scope of understanding. The hagiography and the eight commercial contracts discussed in Chapters II and III each present one side of the story, the religious and commercial, respectively, diametrically opposite sides of beguine life. A study that attempts to understand the way that these women lived requires more primary source evidence, and the Porcelet family acts and several beguine wills offer a wealth of essential information.

¹⁵³ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 166.

¹⁵⁴ *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d’Arles (972-1320)*, ed. Martin Aurell (Paris: C.T.H.S., 2001).

Felipa's Contracts

Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles contains nineteen documents in which Felipa is a major player. The majority of these are contracts made with other citizens of Marseilles, for goods or services or to settle disputes. This section, in the interest of brevity, will detail several of the most interesting extant documents from Felipa's time in the beguinage, specifically those that shed light on her personal life and commercial activity.

Felipa entered the beguinage after she was widowed and her mother-in-law took her daughters away from her. Felipa's husband, Fouques de Pontèves, died when she was quite young. The chronology of Felipa's early life is not known with any certainty; Aurell estimates her birth at around 1250, and she must have entered the beguinage a few years before Doucelina's death in 1274, because their interactions are mentioned several times in the *vita* and Felipa writes with authority on Doucelina's life.¹⁵⁵ It is likely, then, that Fouques died before she was twenty-one. Though the marriage was brief, they produced two daughters: Doucelina and Mabilia, who both lived into adulthood. Doucelina was likely named after the saint, whom Felipa met early in her life in Barjols, the town in which she lived with her husband.¹⁵⁶ After Fouques died, his mother, Margarita de Pontèves, took custody of the children. Felipa, left without a family and a considerable inheritance, joined the beguinage and formed a new family.

Some of her family conflicts can be discerned in a document from 1292, which details the circumstances of litigation between Felipa and Bertran Porcelet, her nephew and agent, on one side, and Margarita de Pontèves and Barrala de Pontèves, Felipa's sister-in-law, on the other. The dispute concerned a donation of Fouques' land that Doucelina and

¹⁵⁵ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 166.

¹⁵⁶ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 166.

Mabilia had granted to their mother.¹⁵⁷ The tension in this situation is evident: the two daughters, who are both now adults, want to grant their dispossessed mother some land. Their grandmother, their legal guardian and the woman who separated them from their mother, is contesting this grant. The outcome of this dispute is not mentioned in this document or in the others, but the existence of this case demonstrates the amount of animosity present within this family, and gives the historian a small window into Felipa's personal life. As a widow, Felipa was able to enter the community with her inheritance intact. Cut off from her family, she devoted all of her energy and resources to the beguinage.¹⁵⁸

Felipa took steps to build her capital, sometimes in person in Marseilles and other times through her trusted agents, Piere Bartomieu Roux, Ponç Marin, and Raimon de Bourg.¹⁵⁹ In 1280, for example, she named Piere Bartomieu Roux her representative in all legal matters, secular and ecclesiastic.¹⁶⁰ There are two possible explanations for her frequent use of proxies: either she was too busy to personally settle all of her financial matters, or she needed to use a man as her proxy because of her gender. In the case of act 464, in which she made Piere Roux responsible for all of her legal matters, it seems likely

¹⁵⁷ "Pièces Justicatifs", VII, 262-263: "*Occasione donationis facte predictae domine Philippe per dominam Ducelinam et domainam Mabilia, filias suas, sue legitime portionis eis competentis in terra domini Fulconis de Ponteves, patris earum.*"

¹⁵⁸ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 166.

¹⁵⁹ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 167; *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n^{os} 464, 558, 567; "Pièces Justicatifs", X, 265-268.

¹⁶⁰ *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n^o 464, 398: "... *specialem ac generalem procuratorem Petrum Bartholomeum Ruffum, civem Massiliensem, presentem et hanc procuracionem in sponte suscipientem ad agendum et defendendum in omnibus causis, litibus et questionibus quas ipsa domina Philipa movit, movet et movere intendit contra omnes et singulas quascumque personas et que alie persone contra ipsam moverunt, moverent, et movere intendunt coram quocumque iudice delegato seu subdelegato, ecclesiastico seu seculari, quibuscumque occasionibus sive causis*"

that she needed to have a man represent her in court. In later documents, her proxies appeared to deal with more mundane affairs when was is otherwise engaged. In 1305, for example, Felipa bought land from Jaume Garin and Joana Sauneri, and signed the document in the beguinage.¹⁶¹ Later in the day, Joana's mother approved the sale in front of Raimon de Bourg.¹⁶² This addendum to the contract was mere paperwork; in this situation, it is likely that Felipa was simply too busy to have two meetings in one day over one land purchase. It is also of note that Felipa had the funds to employ several men to deal with her affairs over a period of twenty-five years.¹⁶³

The majority of Felipa's investments were in real estate, like the purchase of Jaume and Joana's land mentioned above, which was a more conventional type of investment.¹⁶⁴ In these real estate documents, Felipa purchases a "*cens*" or property right to a piece of land somewhere in the environs of Marseilles. These long-term real-estate investments returned steady sums each year, and were therefore safe, profitable ventures.

In 1300, Felipa purchased a "*cens annuel*" for 50 *sols* on a vineyard in Montcan, in the countryside outside of Marseilles, from Tiburge de Lauris, a local widowed noblewoman.¹⁶⁵ Felipa would earn gain 2 *sols*, eight *deniers*, and one *obole* each year on the festival of the Blessed Virgin from Piere Jordan, a hemp farmer, for his use of the

¹⁶¹ *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n° 567.

¹⁶² *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n° 567, 509: "...*hic presentium, promito et convenio tibi Raimundo de Burgo, domicello, procuratori dicte domine Philipe Porcellete... quondam, presenti et procuratorio nomine pro ea recipienti et per te dicte domine Philippe, licet absenti, et suis juris et rei successoribus, defendere et salvare....*"

¹⁶³ Acts 464 to 567 cover the period from 1280 to 1305.

¹⁶⁴ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 167-168.

¹⁶⁵ *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n° 548.

vineyard.¹⁶⁶ Another document, made 20 days later, demonstrates Piere Jordan's acknowledgment of the transfer of the duty to Felipa. This was a simple transfer of property rights; Pierre Jordan had always paid Tiburge the 2 *sols*, eight *deniers*, and an *obole*, and from then he would pay it to Felipa.¹⁶⁷ For Felipa, the *cens* was very lucrative. Each year, she gained back 5% of her initial investment from Piere Jordan. In twenty years, she would fully earn back her initial investment and would still own the vineyard. She made this contract in 1300, when she was about fifty years old, and she died sixteen years later. Though she never saw this particular investment pay for itself, she did see it bring in a steady profit every year. Reliable real-estate investments like this one ensured that the community did not reach a financial crisis after Felipa's death.

Felipa's aforementioned purchase of land from Jaume Garin and Joana Sauneri was less straightforward than the purchase of the *cens* from Tiburge. In 1305, Felipa bought a vineyard and some land in Saint-Bauzelin – in the countryside around Marseilles, within the viscounty of Marseilles – from Jaume Garin and Joana Sauneri for 120 *livres*.¹⁶⁸ Jaume Garin was addressed as "*domine*", which indicates respect, and "*jurisperitus*", which meant that he was skilled in the law. He was likely a lesser noble in the region with holdings around Marseilles. On the same day that she bought the land, she gave the property rights back to Jaume Garin and Joana in a separate contract. She would now receive 95 *sols* up

¹⁶⁶ *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n° 548, 480: "*pro vobis et vestris juris ac rei successoribus, illos duos solidos et octo denarius et obolum regalium seu massiliensium minutorum censuales et jus et dominium et sechoria eos anautim in perpetuum in festo Beate Marie mensis medii augusti percipiendi, laudimia interponendi et trezena percipiendi et quelibet alia ad directum dominium pertinentia, quos mihi prestat et prestare consuevit annautim, in dicto festo, Petrus Jordanus, cannabasserius, civis Massilie, pro quadam vinea sua et juribus et pertinentiss suis, sita in territorio Massilie, in loco vulgariter Montcan.*"

¹⁶⁷ *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n° 548.

¹⁶⁸ *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n° 567.

front and 35 *sols* every year from the landlords.¹⁶⁹ Felipa bought the land for 120 *livres*, a large sum, and she sold the rights back to for 95 *sols*. This investment will take 65 years to pay for itself; she would earn less than 5 *livres* up front and less than 2 *livres* each year. Aurell believes that this document was created to hide a loan made at interest.¹⁷⁰ This clever cloaking of usury demonstrates Felipa's business acumen. She could not lend at interest, but she could conceal the loan under fabricated land purchases and sales.

The contract clearly stated that this sum will be sent every year during the feast of All Saints (*Omnium Sanctorum*), to Felipa or to her heirs (*dicte domine Philippe et suis heredibus*).¹⁷¹ A contract like this provided a fixed annual income for the beguinage after Felipa's death. Felipa was clearly working to ensure the perpetuation of the beguinage. Both contracts dealing with Jaume and Joana were actually drawn up inside of the beguinage of Roubaud. The fact that money was lent at interest within the walls of the beguinage is striking, and really demonstrates the commercial nature of this community. This contract was not annulled in any of the later documents and its language was airtight, so it is safe to assume that these payments continued after Felipa's death. They may have even continued through the fourteenth century, ultimately returning significant profits by 1370.

In 1298, Felipa purchased property on the "*transversia Corderiorum*", a street in a suburb of Marseilles, in order to build the new beguinage there.¹⁷² The contract identifies the current members of the beguinage, and some familiar names appear: Mabilia de Fos,

¹⁶⁹ *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n° 567.

¹⁷⁰ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 168.

¹⁷¹ *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n° 568, 512.

¹⁷² Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 168.

Felipa Porcelet the younger, Hugue Albine, and Raimunde de Rocas.¹⁷³ This new location for the beguinage was outside of the walls of the city, right next to the Franciscan monastery. Felipa alone purchased the rights to this new plot of land, but the whole community gathered to witness the contract drawing. This contract was made in a building called the “oratorium” that is not mentioned in any of the other documents.¹⁷⁴ It is possibly a part of the old beguinage or the Franciscan monastery. Once the house was built, the beguines were required to pay rent to Felipa to live within the community.¹⁷⁵ Felipa spent more than 300 *livres* on multiple *cens* in this suburb of Marseilles that earned her more 20 *livres* each year.¹⁷⁶

A series of documents concerning the dissolution of a *societas* that Felipa had formed with Guilhem Lafont demonstrates her business acumen. The first document was made in the beguinage of Roubaud in 1300, and states that the Guilhem has died and the *societas* is dissolved.¹⁷⁷ Felipa had invested 150 *livres* in this partnership with Guihelm Lafont. The only details provided about the prior investment were the amount and type of money used. Felipa invested 150 *livres* of *provincialium coronatorum* (Provençal crowns). When Guihelm died, his widow, Secilia, and his heir, Nicholave, were required to repay Felipa. The document states that Felipa had been reimbursed 150 *livres* of the new black money.¹⁷⁸ She refused the money and insisted on repayment from the coins that she originally invested, or at least in an amount of black coins of equivalent value to money that

¹⁷³ Here, they are called *Mabilia de Fossis, domina Hugua de Albania, domina Raymunda de Rocassio*, and *Phelippa Porcelleta* [Pièces Justicatifs”, XI, 268].

¹⁷⁴ “*Actum Massilie, in loco dicte domus appellato Oratorium*” [“Pièces Justicatifs”, VII, 269].

¹⁷⁵ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 168.

¹⁷⁶ Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 168.

¹⁷⁷ “Pièces Justicatifs”, XII, 269: “*predicta societas per mortem dicti Guilhem sit finita...*”

¹⁷⁸ “Pièces Justicatifs”, XII, 270: “*Dicens, protenstans, et offerens se paratum solvere eidem domine, nominibus quibus supra, eictas CL libras dicte monete nigre domini nostri regis.*”

she initially invested.¹⁷⁹ Apparently, the new black money was less valuable than the old Provençal crowns, and Felipa would not accept it.

Felipa eventually sued Joan Boire, one of Guilhem Lafont's heirs, for the 150 Provençal *livres* in 1304 and won the case. As a result, Joan paid Felipa the full reimbursement in Provençal crowns and had to compensate Felipa fifteen *livres* for expenses.¹⁸⁰ Felipa was highly protective of her investments, and would not allow death of a partner to jeopardize her financial position. The court case demonstrates her dedication to her economic activity and the level of respect that she had attained. She was introduced in the case with the epithets *nobilem, religiosam, honestam et prudentam*, and called *dominam Philippam Porcelletam*, while her opponent was simply introduced as *Johannem Boysseriam, draperium, civem Massilie*.¹⁸¹

This collection of documents indicates the depth and breadth of her economic activity. By the time she died, Felipa owned several lucrative *cens*, had rebuilt the beguinage on new lands, had invested in artisans, like Guihelm Lafont, and in commerce.¹⁸² She was investing considerable sums, in many cases over 100 *livres*, in a wide array of commercial ventures around the city. When she died, she left most of her significant holdings to other beguines and the beguinage, demonstrating her constant commitment to the survival of the community.

¹⁷⁹ "Pièces Justicatifs", XII, 270: "*Et dicta domina Philipa dixit et respondit se fore paratam recipere dictas CL libras, monete tamen veteris, scilicet provincialium coronatorum anticorum, seu toronensium veterum; quam monetam turonensium antiquorum dicit se dicto Guihelm tradidisse, ut contineri dixit in suo instrumento societatis; vel saltim eorum valorem de predicta moneta nigri nunc currenti, quam dictus Poncius, nomine quo supra, offert se soluturum.*"

¹⁸⁰ *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, 559; Aurell, *Les Porcelet*, 167.

¹⁸¹ ¹⁸¹ *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n° 559, 493.

¹⁸² She invested over 500 *livres* in a society, mentioned in the next section (Philippine's Will).

Beguine Wills

The collection of beguine wills is found in Albanés' "Pièces Justicatifs", a compilation of assorted documents from the beguinage of Roubaud that is appended to the end of the first French translation of the *vita*. Francine Michaud has used these wills to "gain an understanding of the spiritual behavior" of the beguines and the changes that the community undertook in order to survive after the Council of Vienne.¹⁸³ They also provide illuminating information on the daily lives of these women. Felipa completed her testament in 1312, four years before her death, in the context of the Council of Vienne and concerns over the future of the beguinage.¹⁸⁴ Her will, and the several other beguine wills in the collection, demonstrate both the extent of her personal wealth and her attempts to ensure the survival of the community.

Felipa's will reveals that she lived a life of comfort, possibly even luxury, within the walls of the beguinage. She possessed a servant, named in the will as Hüge de Caprerio, to whom she bequeathed fifteen *livres* and a collection of sumptuous sheets and fabrics.¹⁸⁵ She named her nieces, Felipa and Maragde – the daughters of her brother Bertran Porcelet, the Lord of Fos – her universal heirs (*heredes universales*). Felipa passed all of her property (the many *cens*) to Maragda and Felipa. These property deeds were likely very lucrative. The *cens* that she bought from Jaume and Joana Garin, for example, likely returned very well during Maragde and Felipa's lives. Felipa also had a set of silver dishes, which she

¹⁸³ Francine Michaud, "The pilgrim, the priest, and the beguine. Ascetic tradition vs. Christian humanism in late medieval religious practices," *Pecia: ressources en médiévistique* 1 (2002), 157.

¹⁸⁴ Michaud, "The pilgrim," 175.

¹⁸⁵ "Pièces Justicatifs", XIII, 272: "*Hüge de Caprerio, servitrici mee, si in meo servitio steterit et perseveraverit usque diem obitus mei, et non aliter, XV lib. Reg., et unum lectum pannorum, scilicet bassachiam, culciatram, coyssinum de lana, duo linteamina et duas flaciatas.*"

bequeathed to her nieces.¹⁸⁶ Her numerous apartments within the beguinage were also handed down to her nieces.¹⁸⁷ One of the conditions of her will was that her nieces stay within the beguinage of Roubaud to gain their full inheritances.¹⁸⁸ This sort of safeguard is seen in later Marseilles beguine wills. In a codicil of Cecile de Voute's will from 1341, it was clearly stated that if Amelia Gassola – one of the beguines and a beneficiary of the will – left the community, she would lose her inheritance.¹⁸⁹

Pieces of noteworthy information about beguine daily life can be extracted from wills. For example, Douce Vivaud, a prioress who died in 1359, referred to the infirmary (*infirmarie*) of the beguinage in her testament, an institution not mentioned elsewhere.¹⁹⁰ Alasacia Johanne, one of the last beguines, requested to be buried in her habit in her 1397 will.¹⁹¹ The conventional dress code of the beguines included a white veil and black coat, which covered their heads.¹⁹²

Felipa bequeathed money to several churches, convents, and other religious institutions in her testament. Among her beneficiaries were the Hospital of Arles, where her father was interred (*domui hospitalis Sancti Johannis de Aralate, ubi jacet dominus pater*

¹⁸⁶ "Pièces Justicatifs", XIII, 274: "*Fructus tamen et gausidas dicte hereditatis mee, vaycellam argenteam et totum froyre meum, possint equaliter, si voluerint, dividere ut placebit.*"

¹⁸⁷ "Pièces Justicatifs", XIII, 273: "*precipio quod post mortem Philippe, neptis et heredis mee infrascripte, Maracda, soror sua et coheres, si supervixerit, succedere debeat in stagia camere et aliarum domorum sive locorum domus Robaudi de Massilia, quam et quas et que tenui et habitavi hinc retro usque nunc prout et sicut eam et eas et ea tenui et habitavi.*"

¹⁸⁸ Michaud, "The Pilgrim," 175.

¹⁸⁹ Michaud, "The Pilgrim," 175; "Pièces Justicatifs", XVII, 285: "*Item volo, jubeo, ordino atque mando quod si dicta Amelia Gassola exiret de dicta congregatione de Roubaud et nollet perseverare in eadem et prediligeret intrare alium monasterium, vel aliam quamvis viam eligeret, illo casu adymo sibi omnia et singula legate per me sibi facta de bonis meis.*"

¹⁹⁰ Michaud, "The Pilgrim," 176.

¹⁹¹ "Pièces Justicatifs", XXII, 292: "*Item volo et ordino quod corpus meum cepeliatur in habitu consueto cepelieri alias dominas nostre congregationis.*"

¹⁹² Michaud, "The Pilgrim," 173.

meus) and the parish Church in Barjols, where her husband and her daughter Maragda were buried (*ecclesia parrocchiali de Barjolis, ubi jacet dominus Fulco, vir meus quondam, pro ipsius et Maracde, filie mee, ibidem quiescentis animabus*).¹⁹³ She gave several Franciscan monasteries considerable sums.¹⁹⁴ In general, the beguines of Roubaud mostly left their possessions to each other and to the Franciscan community in Marseilles. All of Felipa's property was eventually inherited by the Franciscans in 1390.¹⁹⁵ Felipa chose to be buried in the Franciscan cemetery in Marseilles.¹⁹⁶ When Margarita d'Alon, the last prioress, died in 1407, she donated the beguinage and its estate to the Franciscans.

The end of Felipa's testament states that her beneficiaries can only be paid with the money that she had invested in the society of the Campalmadors and the Borrins.¹⁹⁷ Considering the amount of money that she bequeathed in her will, Felipa therefore must have had more than 500 *livres* in this society, which Aurell asserts was without a doubt a merchant society.¹⁹⁸ This investment is impressive, as is the wide scope of her beneficiaries. Felipa clearly died a very rich woman, and used her money to support the beguinage after her death and to help other like-minded religious institutions.

¹⁹³ "Pièces Justicatifs", XIII, 273.

¹⁹⁴ "Pièces Justicatifs", XIII, 273: "*Item, lego conventui fratrum minorum Regensium, pro missis ibidem celebrandis, .C. sol. Reg. Item, lego conventui fratrum minorum de Brinonia, pro missis in eodem celebrandis, .XL. sol. Reg. Item, lego conventui fratrum minorum de Draguiniano, pro missis ib. cel., .C. sol. Reg. Item, lego conventui fratrum minorum de Aquis, pro m.i.c., alios .C. sol. Reg. Item, lego conventui fratrum minorum Sallonis, pro m.i.c., .L. sol. Reg. Item, lego conventui fratrum minorum Aralatis, pro m.i.c., .L. sol. Reg.*"

¹⁹⁵ Aurell, *Les Porcelets*, 168.

¹⁹⁶ *Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n° 600.

¹⁹⁷ "Pièces Justicatifs", XIII, 275: "*Item, volo, ordino et precipio quod omnia legata pecuniaria supra per me ordinata persolvantur et habeantur de pecunia quam habeo in societate Campimoldorum, sive Borrinorum, tantum, et non de alia...*"

¹⁹⁸ Aurell, *Les Porcelets*, 167.

Chapter V

Outlier or Insider? Political connections of the beguinage

A major historical question clearly looms in the background of this religious and economic story: what exactly is the relationship between the beguinage and the local political powers? Felipa referred to Charles I, the Count of Anjou, Maine, Provence, and Forcalquier, the King of Sicily, Naples, and Jerusalem, and the brother of St. Louis, several times in the *vita*, asserting that he loved the beguinage because he bore witness to Doucelina's miracles. The nature of this political relationship, however, is not informed by any of the beguine contracts, which dealt only with local merchants and petty nobility. Charles I died in 1285, before the *vita* was completed, and the beguinage enjoyed official local support long after his death. Following the Council of Vienne in 1311, when beguinages were closed across Europe, the Marseilles beguines were protected by a series of Papal Bulls issued by Pope John XXII in 1320, 1323, and 1325. *Cum de quibusdam*, the famous decree that condemned and abolished beguinages, also contained what Makowski refers to as an "escape clause", which allowed faithful women (*fideles aliquae mulieres*) to continue to live an informal religious life.¹⁹⁹ Pope John XXII used this loophole to repeatedly protect the beguinage of Marseilles, stating in all three bulls that these women live honestly (*honeste vivunt*) and therefore their community should be allowed to exist.²⁰⁰

The three bulls were fairly formulaic. They all began with a brief mention of Clement V (the Pope during the Council of Vienne) and his attitude toward the beguines. Clement

¹⁹⁹ Makowski, *A Pernicious Sort of Woman*, 25.

²⁰⁰ "Pièces Justicatifs", XIIIbis, XIV, XV, *La vie de Sainte Douceline*, J.H. Albanès (Marseilles: Camoin, 1879), 276-280, 299.

had condemned the beguines, and specifically those from Germany, due to disputes over the nature of the Holy Trinity. Pope John XXII then established that the beguines of Marseilles, through living a virtuous, honest religious life, were not like the beguines condemned by Clement, and the community should therefore not be touched.²⁰¹ The three bulls briefly mentioned central Provençal figures, which sheds some light on the mystery of the protected position of the beguinage. In the first bull, from 1320, John XXII explained how he had come to support the beguines of Marseilles: the Queen of Sicily spoke to him on behalf of the beguines and convinced him of their sanctity.²⁰² In 1320, the Queen of Sicily was Eleanor of Anjou, the daughter of Charles II of Naples (who was also the Count of Provence). The second bull, from 1323, stated that the Bishop of Marseilles had ordered that no one beset the beguinage of Marseilles.²⁰³ The final bull was much longer than the first two, and included the names of several beguines, suggesting a closer connection between Pope John XXII and the beguinage than had existed in 1320, when he only knew of the beguinage through the Queen of Sicily. This bull named *Rixendi, Johanne, Alasatie, Sebilie, et Beatrici de Rosseto*, stating that they live in common (*communiter habitabant*) out of piety.²⁰⁴ With the support of a queen, a bishop, and a pope, the beguinage continued to exist through the fourteenth century. The beguinage was ultimately quietly closed in 1407

²⁰¹ "Pièces Justicatifs", XIIIbis, XIV, XV, 299.

²⁰² "Pièces Justicatifs", XIIIbis, 299: "*Cum autem carissima in Christo filia nostra Santia, regina Sicilie illustris, nuper ad auditum apostolatus nostri deduxerit esse plurimas in castro de Areis, tue diocesis, hujusmodi mulieres, beguinas de Robaudo nuncupatas, que per virtutum odoramenta currentes honeste vivunt...*

²⁰³ "Pièces Justicatifs", XIV, 276.

²⁰⁴ "Pièces Justicatifs", XV, 278.

upon the death of Margarita of Alon, the last prioress and last beguine in the community, and the property was donated to the nearby Franciscan monastery.²⁰⁵

The community was evidently defended and supported after Doucelina, and even Felipa, died. What sort of political favor did the community garner during the lives of our key characters? This chapter will first examine the political connections mentioned in the *vita* and then discuss the relations between the Porcelet family and the Counts of Provence.

“He was greatly devoted to her”: Charles and Doucelina in the *vita*

Charles I is mentioned in four chapters of the *Life of Saint Doucelina*, and is represented as yet another important local figure who respects Doucelina and recognizes her holiness. Most of the references to Charles I are in conjunction with some miraculous event. Doucelina performed a miracle on Charles’ wife during a difficult pregnancy, and the Count and Countess named her godmother of their daughter. This event is mentioned twice in the *vita*, and stressed as one of the major sources of Charles’ devotion to Doucelina. The Countess had a dream about a beguine three nights in a row when she is having complications with her pregnancy. The Count asked everyone he knew for the name of a holy beguine, and sent for Doucelina as soon as he learned of her. When Doucelina prayed with the Countess, the child, a daughter, was delivered safely.²⁰⁶

After this birth, the Count became one of Doucelina’s greatest advocates, and listened to her on religious and political matters. He had previously banished the Franciscans from Marseilles because “many evil things were told to him about the Friars

²⁰⁵ “Pièces Justicatifs”, XXIV, 296: “*Attento etiam quod ipsa domina Margarita unica, sola et singularis remansit usque nunc in dicto collegio, et nulla est alia beguina que succedere valeat in bonis dicti collegii.*”

²⁰⁶ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 36-37.

Minor”.²⁰⁷ According to the *vita*, he became convinced of Doucelina’s sanctity after the safe delivery of his child that he restored the Franciscan order in Marseilles “for love of her”.²⁰⁸ Doucelina’s integral role in the restoration of the order is underscored in this section; Felipa clearly writes that the Count’s anger could not be mitigated by the power or wisdom of men, but only by the “simplicity of the humble Doucelina”.²⁰⁹ Doucelina enjoyed a unique position to influence the political choices of the Count of Provence.²¹⁰

In the *vita*, when the Pope offered Charles I the crown of Sicily in 1263, he was uncertain and asked Doucelina for guidance. Doucelina strongly encouraged him to take the position, which had been offered by “the will of God”.²¹¹ She also urged him to be modest when he attained success in order to maintain God’s favor. The *vita* claims that the Count decided to invade Sicily after he received guidance from Doucelina, and was successful in the endeavor. The *vita* suggested that she held a special position the spiritual counselor after Charles’ success in Sicily; she “informed him about many secret and confidential matters” and “told him in advance of things that would happen to him”.²¹² Her letters to Charles are mentioned twice in this short passage, and Felipa indicates that they corresponded often.²¹³ Charles’ actions late in life are brought into question in this section, which states he “forgot about fearing God” after Doucelina died, which caused his political

²⁰⁷ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 36-37.

²⁰⁸ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 37.

²⁰⁹ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 37.

²¹⁰ Garay and Jeay, “Douceline de Digne”, 143.

²¹¹ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 78.

²¹² *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 78.

²¹³ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 78: “On a number of occasions the Saint informed him, and let him know in her letters, that God was not pleased with him...”

The Life of Saint Douceline, 78: “She would often tell him in her letters that she greatly admired the wonderful things that God was doing through him...”

troubles.²¹⁴ The king of Aragon attacked, the War of the Sicilian Vespers began, his son was taken prisoner, and he died ruined – all because he did not heed Doucelina’s warnings. The passage on Charles of Anjou not only confirms Doucelina’s importance to Provence and her connection to God, but it also demonstrates the power that she held over the Count, who required her advice to succeed. Here, Felipa strongly situates Doucelina and, by relation, the beguinage within the central political events of mid-century Provence.

The *vita* describes count’s family as indebted in some way to Doucelina. When the Countess met Doucelina again, after the childbirth miracle, she saw her in a state of rapture. The countess then “summoned all her children, and made them kneel reverently before the Saint, with their hoods removed, and she made them kiss her hands”.²¹⁵ The mention of the count’s children here is significant to the legacy of the beguinage. The Count and Countess inculcated in their children a high level of respect for the beguinage, which evidently lasted generations, considering that Charles’ granddaughter, Eleanor, Queen of Sicily, was still advocating for the beguinage in 1320, more than sixty years after these events supposedly took place.

The miracle stories in the *vita* offer an explanation for local political support of the beguinage. As we have seen earlier in this paper, however, the *vita* does not tell the entire story. The *vita* and the bulls demonstrate that the community was protected, but do not offer enough information concerning the reasons for this protection. St. Louis, Charles’ brother, was a strong supporter of apostolic religious movements, and established the beguine community in Paris.²¹⁶ Charles, however, was not Louis. By all accounts, Charles I

²¹⁴ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 78.

²¹⁵ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 56.

²¹⁶ Stabler-Miller, *The Beguines of Medieval Paris*, 1.

was not a particularly religious man. He was “the odd man out in his family,” which was comprised of avidly religious men who with propensities for following the Spiritual Franciscans.²¹⁷ Runciman wrote that Charles’ piety “chiefly took the form of a belief that he was the chosen instrument of God”.²¹⁸ Biographies of Charles of Anjou focus primarily on his military conquests, and not on his relationships with local religious movements, and there is no clear explanation for his devotion to the beguinage. Regardless, it would seem that the miraculous conversion of Charles to Doucelina’s spiritual counsel does not tell the entire political story.

The Porcelet family and the Counts of Provence

Several of the Porcelet family *Actes* appear to hold the key to this political puzzle. The Porcelet family had a close relationship with Charles I, Charles II, and Robert I, the three counts of Provence from 1241 to 1343, with many members of the Porcelet family holding positions in the high ranks of court administration.

Charles I claimed his control over Provence in 1245, and he needed to defeat the city communes to fully assert his dominion over the region. When he conquered Arles in 1251, the Porcelet family, the reigning nobles in Arles, came under his control. The Porcelets had long been important aristocrats in Provence, but with the communes quashed and a strong count in power, the family adjusted to the new political conditions. Members of the

²¹⁷ Jean Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou: Power, Kingship and State-Making in Thirteenth-Century Europe* (Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1998), 225.

²¹⁸ Steven Runciman, *The Sicilian Vespers: A History of the Mediterranean World in the Later Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 88.

Porcelet family filled the ranks of Charles' administration and armies, finding power where it existed in this new structure: at court.²¹⁹

In Aurell's collection of *Actes*, Charles I is mentioned in 53 documents, Charles II appears in 47, and Robert I in 19. Many of these documents only mention the Count as a formality at the outset, but a number of them detail important interactions between the Porcelet family and the rulers. Guilhem Porcelet (1217-1288), Felipa's father, was an important member of Charles of Anjou's court. He was chosen as a witness to the treaty of peace between the Count and the city of Marseilles in 1262, marking his position at Charles' side.²²⁰ Guilhem participated in Charles' Italian campaigns in 1266 and was one of the few survivors of the Sicilian Vespers in 1282.²²¹ Between 1268 and 1271, Charles named him the chatelain of Licata and Pozzuli and the lord of Calatafimi and Calatamauro, all in Sicily.²²² The count also gave Guilhem six men in 1271 to protect his new lands in Sicily.²²³ Rainaud Porcelet (1244-1309), Felipa's cousin, also supported French and papal power in the Mediterranean. He fought in Charles I's army and was an ambassador of Charles II to the King of Aragon during his maturity.²²⁴ After Charles I fell on the hard times that Doucelina had forewarned and died, his son Charles II was still embroiled in conflict with Alfonso III, the king of Aragon. In 1289, Charles II secured his freedom from the Aragonese king by leaving his son, Raimon Bérenger, sixty Provençal hostages, twenty hostages from Marseilles, and 7000 marks with the king of Aragon. Charles II put Rainaud Porcelet and his

²¹⁹ Aurell, Introduction to *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, li.

²²⁰ *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n° 410.

²²¹ Aurell, Introduction to *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, li.

²²² *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n°s 429, 432, 441.

²²³ *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n° 446.

²²⁴ Aurell, Introduction to *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, lii; *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n°s 430, 431, 434, 486.

brother Bernard in charge of this important arrangement.²²⁵ Guilhem and Rainaud are notable because they rose very high in the ranks of Charles' administration, becoming trusted advisors and ambassadors.

The interconnection between the Porcelet family and the royal family extended beyond these two figures, with large numbers of documents connecting the two families. Examples of these connections are too numerous to mention in detail, but several cases provide good examples. Rainaud Porcelet de Cabries (1253-1299) – mentioned in the *vita* because Doucelina performed a postmortem miracle on his wife, allowing them to conceive²²⁶ – accumulated considerable debt during his lifetime, and after his death, Charles II granted a moratorium on his debts to protect his widow and children from facing aggressive creditors.²²⁷ Bertran Porcelet (1306-1320) held several captaincies in Naples, important positions in the Angevin Italian administration.²²⁸ When Robert I succeeded his father in 1309, the Porcelet family still stood behind the Angevin ruler. A different Guilhem and Bertran Porcelet, the lords of Fos, appear in a list of the barons of Provence who swore allegiance to the new count.²²⁹

Several members of the Porcelet family also became involved in Franciscan affairs. Guilhelm, Felipa's father, was interested in the Spiritual Franciscans, and particularly in Joachimite eschatology.²³⁰ Another Guilhelm Porcelet (1288-1294) was a Franciscan and the bishop of Digne, Doucelina's birthplace.²³¹ Isarn Porcelet entered the Franciscan

²²⁵ *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n^{os} 486-489.

²²⁶ *The Life of Saint Douceline*, 102.

²²⁷ Aurell, *Les Actes*, liii.

²²⁸ *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n^{os} 595-596.

²²⁹ *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n^o 588.

²³⁰ Aurell, *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, liii.

²³¹ *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, n^o 485.

monastery in Marseilles in 1312. At least five members of the Porcelet family lived in the beguinage: Felipa, her neices, Felipa the Younger and Maragda Porcellet, Mabilia de Fos, and Huga de Fos (Porcelets had been the lords of Fos since about 1200).²³² The family was very attached to the Franciscan order: all of the religious Porcelets, including the beguines, chose to be buried in the Franciscan cemetery in Marseilles.²³³

The deep political bond between the Porcelet family and the Angevins began in 1251, after Charles I conquered Arles, just after Felipa was born. By the time that Felipa entered the beguinage in about 1270, her father had already established himself firmly within Charles of Anjou's central circle. Albanés placed the countess childbirth miracle in around 1255, just after the count had conquered Provence, and while he was consolidating his rule.²³⁴ Doucelina advised Charles I from around 1263 until her death in 1274. The connection between Charles I and the beguinage both legitimized the community and the Count: Doucelina, the symbol of the house of Roubaud, appeared wise, devout, and miraculous, and Charles seemed pious, until he lost sight of his path at the end of his life. The miracle stories both confirmed the support of the local royal family and reassured the public of the orthodoxy of the beguinage. When the *vita* was written, the community was led by a Porcelet and included at least a handful of family members. Doucelina was likely a figure of great inspiration who touched the people that she met. This paper does not set out to cast doubt on the miracles laid out in the *vita*, but rather attempts to gain a fuller picture by analyzing the major players in the history of the beguinage. The answer to the initial question posed in this chapter – concerning the nature of the beguines' political

²³² Try to find mentions of these women in the contracts and *vita*; other citation is Aurell *Actes* intro, around lii or liii

²³³ Aurell, *Les Actes de la Famille Porcelet d'Arles*, liii.

²³⁴ Albanés, "Introduction", xlvi.

connections – appears to lie in the Porcelet family. Felipa ensured the survival of the community after her death through careful investment and familial political ties. Her work clearly paid off: after her death, Eleanor of Sicily advocated for the beguines of Marseilles. The connection between the beguinage and the local royal family ensured the community's survival. Unlike many French beguinages, it lived a long life and died a natural death.

Conclusions

Synthesis: Doucelina, Felipa, and Marseilles

This paper was initially conceived as a study of the spirituality of Doucelina and the daily life of the beguines of Marseilles. My discovery of the commercial contracts sent me in an entirely different direction. After reading the *vita* and the various contracts studied in this paper, one is given a curious impression of the two women who led the community. They appear to exist in dichotomy, with Doucelina as the symbol of the spiritual side of the community, and Felipa as the representative of the economic realities of communal life. Phillipine held and acquired great wealth, but almost everything that she did was to benefit the community. When she became the prioress, she used her personal resources and business acumen to support the other women and the beguinage. After her death, the beguinage was primed to survive for decades on what she left behind. Though her motives certainly appear to have been noble and religious, her affinity for making money still appears in stark contrast to Doucelina's Franciscan poverty.

I have several hypotheses for the apparent contrast between these two figures, and the extent of the community's commercial relations after Doucelina's death. The first theory deals with change over time: it is very possible that the community evolved from a more ascetic one to a wealthier, more established more one under the tutelage of Felipa. The contracts included in this paper all date from after 1280. Though the full body of contracts that these women made is not available, the fact that all of the extant contracts date from after Doucelina's death suggests that the bulk of the commercial activities may have begun when Felipa succeeded as prioress. A second theory, approaches the *vita* as a piece of propaganda designed to emphasize the holiness of the community, and deflect

attention away from the beguines' commercial activities. This is unsatisfying as a general explanation, however, because Phillipine herself was clearly religious, had a spiritual affinity for the Franciscans, and was devoted to the beguinage: she bestowed her wealth upon it and brought in her female relatives. While Felipa's emphasis on the asceticism and poverty of Doucelina may have had some defensive purpose, it is not the whole story.

The final theory, which could work in tandem with the first, is that their commercial activity was not frowned upon in Marseilles, and did not actually represent a contradiction to their religious life within the economic context of the city. Europe was in the midst of rapid economic growth; the circulation of great quantities of coins was rapid and trading, exchanging, and lending were common.²³⁵ The evolving religious, political, and economic climates of mid-thirteenth century Marseilles offered great opportunity. The beguines of Marseilles were in the right place and time. Just as the existence of new towns and cities gave birth to the Franciscan movement, the city of Marseilles was a necessary condition for the survival of this particular community. Marseilles is located on a superb natural harbor surrounded by a rocky mountain chain, and became a center for trade with the Levant and with the rest of Western Europe. The city was booming, and there were boundless opportunities for profit. The developed legal culture made the making and breaking of contracts run-of-the-mill. Any man or woman with money to invest could find a place within this growing economy. While the community lent these women respectability, the city lent them immense economic potential and the local royal family lent them protection. When beguines in nearby Languedoc were being burned at the stake, these women were

²³⁵ Todeschini, "Franciscan Wealth," 14-15.

sitting comfortably in their religious house, buying up local property and investing in trade around Marseilles.

The beguines of Marseilles were self-sustaining, self-organizing, and highly respected. This paper demonstrates that this particular female religious community was involved in a web of activity, with social, religious, economic, and political influence. These women likely had a profound impact on their community.

Limitations and Potential of Beguine Historiography

The trend in medieval historiography over the past few decades has been the study of marginalized communities: women, Jews, “heretics”, homosexuals, pagans, the poor, and others. Though historiography of women’s religious movements has developed significantly in the last few decades, the discussion of the “beguine” movement is in need of a historical analysis on a deeper level. As Jennifer Deane astutely observes, “beguines tend still to be categorized in terms of the singularity of what they were not, rather than the spectrum of what they were”.²³⁶ Even in the complex and diverse context of the the late medieval popular religious movements, laywomen’s religious movements have been characterized rather simplistically, as outsiders.

The discourse on beguine religious life has been centered on the relationship of these women to monastic orders and the Church, while the consideration of their relationships with local spiritual, social, economic, and political systems has been largely left out of the discussion. Both medieval clerics and modern historians have characterized beguines as existing in between the religious and secular worlds, which has led to a corpus

²³⁶ Jennifer Deane, “‘Beguines’ Reconsidered: Historiographical Problems and New Directions,” *Monastic Matrix*, Commentaria 3461 (August 2008) 1-18: 1.

of literature characterizing beguines as women teetering on the edge of holy and heretical. The use of binary frameworks to categorize beguines – orthodox and heretical, clerical and lay, Northern and Southern – does little to actually describe beguine communities and how these women lived. Deane raises an important question: “What evidence do we have for how such women understood their own identities, interests, and opportunities?”²³⁷

At the end of this study, the beguinage of Marseilles appears exceptional. The women were independent, wealthy, and well respected in their community. They did not suffer from the same kind of clerical censure that other beguine communities were subject to. The community was not closed after the Council of Vienne or visited by the inquisition, but was rather quietly absorbed into the Franciscan monastery after the last beguine died. The apparently anomalous nature of this community, however, has more to do with the ways that beguines are classified in current historiography than with the trends in women’s lay movements. Should more studies arise on the economic, social, and political networks that other beguine communities accessed, one would be able to determine whether the beguines of Marseilles were truly exceptional.

This paper has attempted to do several things: to investigate a particular religious community within a local religious, social, economic, and political context; to address contractual developments and the changing economic landscape of the thirteenth century; to explore the role that commerce can play in loosening social restrictions; and perhaps, most importantly, to question a too-generalized narrative on female religious life in the medieval period. Beguines, like all human beings, were complicated, multi-faceted people, with a diverse array of desires, objectives, and roles within their distinctive communities.

²³⁷ Deane, “Beguines’ Reconsidered”, 2.

The discussion of the women should not be buried within the treatment of the “movement”: it’s time to resurrect the beguines.

Bibliography

J.H. Albanés. "Introduction." *La Vie de Sainte Doucelina, fondatrice des Beguines de Marseille*.

Éd. et trad. par J.H. Albanés. Marseille : Éd. Camoin, 1879.

Aurell, Martin. *Une famille de la noblesse Provençale au moyen âge: les Porcelet*. Avignon :

Éd. Aubanel, 1986.

Bolton, Brenda. "Mulieres Sanctae". *Women in Medieval Society*. Ed. by Susan Mosher

Stuard. Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976.

Burnham, Louisa. *So Great a Light, So Great a Smoke: The Beguine Heretics of Languedoc*.

Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2008.

Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*.

Berkley: University of California Press, 1984.

Cooper-Rompato, Christine. "The Voice of the Redbreast in the Book of Margery Kempe, in

Magistra, 16.2 (2010), pp. 77-92.

Deane, Jennifer. "'Beguines' Reconsidered: Historiographical Problems and New

Directions." *Monastic Matrix*. Commentaria 3461 (August 2008) 1-18: 1.

de Celano, Thomas. *The First life of Saint Francis*. Trad. par David Burr. En ligne.

<http://www.history.vt.edu/Burr/Francis/Celano.html>.

Documents inédits sur le commerce de Marseille au moyen âge. Éd. par Louis Blancard. Tome

2. Marseille : Barlatier-Feissat père et fils, 1884-1885.

Dunbabin, Jean. *Charles I of Anjou: Power, Kingship and State-Making in Thirteenth-Century*

Europe. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1998.

Field, Sean. "Agnes of Harcourt, Felipa of Porcelet, and Margueirte of Oingt: Women Writing

- About Women at the End of the Thirteenth Century.” *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, 76 (2007) pp. 298-329.
- Garay, Kathleen, et Madeleine Jeay. “Doucelina de Digne: The ‘Douce et Digne’ Mother of Roubaud”. *The Life of Saint Doucelina, Beguine of Provence*. Trad. par Kathleen Garay et Madeleine Jeay. Cambridge : D.S. Brewer, 2001.
- _____. “Introduction”. *The Life of Saint Doucelina, Beguine of Provence*. Trad. par Kathleen Garay et Madeleine Jeay. Cambridge : D.S. Brewer, 2001.
- Grundmann, Herbert. *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*. Notre Dame (Indiana) : University of Notre Dame Press, 1995.
- Jorgensen, Johannes. *Saint Francis of Assisi, a biography*. New York: Longmans, 1942.
- Makowski, Elizabeth. *A Pernicious Sort of Woman: Quasi-Religious Women and Canon Lawyers in the Later Middle Ages*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005.
- Mazel, Florian. *La Noblesse et L’Eglise en Provence, fin Xe – debut XIVe siècle: L’exemple des familles d’Agoult-Simiane, de Baux et de Marseille*. Paris : Éd. du CTHS, 2002.
- _____. « Une sainteté féminine. Doucelina de Digne ». *Marseille au Moyen Âge, entre Provence et Méditerranée. Les horizons d’une ville portuaire*. Editée par Thierry Pécout. Désiris, 2009.
- McDonnell, E.W. *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture with Special Emphasis on the Belgian Scene*. New Jersey : Rutgers University Press, 1969.
- Michaud, Francine. “The pilgrim, the priest, and the beguine. Ascetic tradition vs. Christian humanism in late medieval religious practices.” *Pecia: resources en médiévistique* 1 (2002) 157-180.

- Morris, Kelly Lynn. "The Vita of Doucelina de Digne (1214-1274): Beguine Sprituality and Orthodoxy in Thirteenth Century Marseilles." PhD Diss., University of Calgary, 2001.
- Piron, Sylvain. "L'apparition du resicum en Méditerranée Occidentale, XIIe-XIIIe Siècles".
Pour une histoire culturelle du risque. Genèse, évolution, actualité du concept dans les sociétés occidentales. Sous la dir. de E. Collas-Heddeland, M. Coudry, O. Kammerer, A. J. Lemaître et B. Martin. Strasbourg : Éd. Histoire et Anthropologie, 2004.
- _____. "Vœu et contrat chez Pierre de Jean Olivi". *Les Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques*. Vol. 16 (1996). [En ligne]. Mis en ligne le 27 février 2009, consulté le 13 mai 2014. URL : <<http://ccrh.revues.org/2645>>.
- Provincia (Marseille. 1938): Revue Trimestrielle d'Histoire et d'Arceologie Provençales.* Marseille. Publiée par la Société de statistique, d'histoire de d'archeologie de Marseille et de Provence, 1921-1949. Tome XVIII. 1938.
- Pryor, John. *Business Contracts of Medieval Provence : Selected Notulae from the Cartulary of Giraud Almaric of Marseilles, 1248.* Toronto : Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981.
- Runciman, Steven. *The Sicilian Vespers: A History of the Mediterranean World in the Later Thirteenth Century.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958.
- Şenocak, Neslihan. *The Poor and the Perfect: The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order, 1209-1310.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012.
- Simons, Walter. *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565.* Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Smail, Daniel Lord. *Imaginary Cartographies : Possession and Identity in Late Medieval Marseille.* Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2000.

_____. *The Consumption of Justice: Emotions, Publicity, and Legal Culture in Marseille, 1264-1243*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.

Stabler-Miller, Tanya. *The Beguines of Medieval Paris: Gender, Patronage, and Spiritual Authority*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

_____. "What's in a name? Clerical Representations of Parisian Beguines (1200-1328)." *Journal of Medieval History*, 33 (2007) 60-86.

The Life of Saint Doucelina, Beguine of Provence. Trad. par Kathleen Garay et Madeleine Jeay. Cambridge : D.S. Brewer, 2001.

Todeschini, Giacomo. *Franciscan Wealth: From Voluntary Poverty to Market Society*. St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2009.

Transactions of the American Philological Association. Vol. 24 (1893). Boston : Harvard University, 1893. [En ligne]. URL :

<<https://archive.org/stream/transactionsame50assogoog#page/n6/mode/2up>>

La Vie de Sainte Doucelina, fondatrice des Beguines de Marseille. Éd. et trad. par J.H. Albanés, Marseille : Éd. Camoin, 1879.

Wogan-Browne, Jocelyn and Henneau, Marie-Elisabeth. "Introduction: Liège, The Medieval 'Woman Question', and the Question of Medieval Women" in *New Trends in Feminine Spirituality: The Holy Women of Liège and Their Impact*. Edited by Juliette Dor et al. 1-32. Turnhout: Brepols, 1999.