

Jonathan A. Reid. *King's Sister — Queen of Dissent: Marguerite of Navarre (1492–1549) and Her Evangelical Network*.

2 vols. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 139. Leiden: Brill, 2009. xxii + 377 pp. \$286. ISBN: 978-90-04-17497-9.

In this ambitious work, Jonathan Reid addresses a significant gap in the historiographies of both the early Reformation in France and the religious life of Marguerite de Navarre. Arguing that examining one without the other provides an incomplete view of the religious milieu in France during the reign of Francis I (1515–47), Reid claims that the evangelicals in France were a far more coherent group than previously recognized, and that Marguerite was the leader of a religious network that had a specific agenda to foster reform across France. Noting that “scholars deny that the Reformation in France prior to Calvin had an identity, unity, or leadership” (3), Reid posits that an organized group, dubbed the Navarrian Network, acted across France from the early 1520s through the 1540s, headed by Marguerite. His goal is to “explore the extent to which Marguerite and her network strove to promote a reform agenda corresponding to the heterodox views scholars have detected in her literary works, and those of her evangelical brethren . . . [and] to examine in what ways Marguerite and her network sought to shape the religious and political policies of Francis I and to assess their success or failure” (4). A central component of his argument is that because scholars have not recognized the consistency of Marguerite’s beliefs, or that there was a coherent platform shared by the evangelicals during Francis’s reign, they have been unable to appreciate the extent and stability of the evangelical party and Marguerite’s leadership of that group, which had strong ties to other reformers across Europe.

Reid structures the work into sections: chapters 1, 2, and 3 review the early Reformation in France, lay out the structure and extent of the Navarrian Network, and review the religious tension in France in the early years of Francis’s reign, including the impact of the Concordat of Boulogne; chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 focus on the early evangelical movement in France from its emergence around Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples, to the experiments at Meaux led by Guillaume Briçonnet, to the French evangelicals’ connections to an international group of like-minded religious thinkers. Chapters 8 and 9 consider the interconnections of Francis’s foreign policy, and its failures, with the fortunes of religious reform in the realm, while chapter 10 identifies a large group of scholars and poets whose works, Reid claims, were written to further the goal of religious reform. Chapter 11 examines the

institutionalization of evangelical beliefs in France, the evangelical agenda inherent in French foreign policy in the 1540s, and the reasons for the separation of the Navarrian Network from Calvin in the same period.

While nearly all previous scholars of Marguerite's religious beliefs have recognized her connections to and protection of French evangelicals, Reid provides an impressive reading of a vast amount of both primary and secondary sources to demonstrate both the consistency of her religious beliefs and goals, and her leadership of the evangelical movement in France. He offers a masterful synthesis of the existing historiography of early reform movements in France, and while the evidence is often circumstantial, provides a convincing argument that Marguerite's role was far more extensive than has been recognized. He also demonstrates that rather than being a leaderless, unformed group of likeminded scholars who, for the most part, had little effect on religious change, the French evangelicals had a clear set of goals from very early on, and worked for decades to convince the king to implement them. Under Marguerite's leadership, this movement adopted their tactics as the political fortunes of the king changed, and despite nonstop persecution from the Faculty of Theology and the Parlement of Paris, managed to prepare the ground for the reformist advances of the later half of the sixteenth century.

Of course, no work is perfect, and there are some minor editorial issues scattered here and there, and one untranslated quotation in a later chapter. However, given the scope of Reid's argument and the impressive support he brings to it, these are minor quibbles indeed. This work is necessary reading for any scholar of sixteenth-century France, whether interested in Marguerite, in the early Reformation in France, or in the political and religious tides that affected the king's reactions to religious reform.

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