This book would not exist if not for Sylvain Piron’s invitation to present a series of seminars in Paris at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in the spring of 2016. Given my interest in Isabelle of France and Marguerite Porete, Sylvain suggested the topic of Les femmes saintes et la cour capétienne, challenging me to think about whether a usable history could link a saintly princess to a condemned heretic. Jacques Dalarun, Xavier Hélary, Elizabeth A. R. Brown, and Sylvain himself graciously agreed to act as respondents for these seminars; each helped me see weaknesses in my initial arguments and perceive avenues for development. The discussions following these presentations were likewise of enormous value. Among the participants, I particularly thank Nicole Bériou, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Damien Boquet, Alain Boureau, Béatrice Delaurenti, Camille de Villeneuve, Fabien Guilloux, Anne-Françoise Leurquin-Labie, Constant Mews, Alain Provost, André Vauchez, and Xenia Von Tippelskirch.

As I worked on the book over the following year while on sabbatical from the University of Vermont, an invitation from Jennifer Edwards to give the 2016 Costello Lecture at Manhattan College allowed me to develop parallels between Isabelle and Marguerite. Ian Wei’s invitation to come to Bristol in March 2017 as a Benjamin Meaker Visiting Professor at the University of Bristol’s Institute for Advanced Studies gave me the opportunity to present work in progress at seminars with faculty and graduate students, and at a colloquium on Capetian sanctity organized with Cecilia Gaposchkin, Emily Guerry, and Lindy Grant. This trip to Europe also included research time in Paris and Lille funded by a UVM College of Arts and Sciences Small Grant Research Award.

Along the way Michael Bailey, Damien Boquet, Elizabeth A. R. Brown, Cecilia Gaposchkin, Madeleine Jeay, Robert E. Lerner, Alain Provost, and Walter Simons all read one or more chapter drafts, and Elizabeth Brown, Danielle Dubois, Cecilia Gaposchkin, Xavier Hélary, William Chester Jordan, Alain Provost, and Walter Simons graciously allowed me to consult not-yet-published work. Elizabeth Brown and Alain Provost provided invaluable transcriptions
of unpublished documents. Once I had a complete draft of the book, Cecilia Gaposchkin, the most generous of scholars, organized a seminar at Dartmouth College to review it. Charles Briggs, George Dameron, Christopher MacEvitt, Monika Otter, and Walter Simons went well beyond the call of scholarly duty with their critiques of the manuscript, for which their only recompense was the delicious dinner prepared afterward by Dr. Gaposchkin. After the manuscript had passed through peer review, in the spring of 2018 Miri Rubin gave the penultimate draft a meticulous reading (and then rereading), which not only improved the book but produced its title. Her enthusiasm truly infused the last phase of this project.

My perspective on Isabelle of France has been greatly enriched in the course of collaborating with Jacques Dalarun. Work with Robert E. Lerner and Sylvain Piron on Marguerite Porete has shaped my understanding of that endlessly fascinating woman. Walter Simons generously lent his time and talents to an annotated translation of the sources for Elizabeth of Spalbeek’s interaction with the French court; my understanding of this episode was immeasurably enriched as a result of his unmatched expertise. Like everyone who works on Capetian history, I owe an enormous debt to Peggy Brown’s unfailing willingness to share photographs and transcriptions, offer bibliographic tips, wrangle invitations, and make introductions in the service of scholarship. Like all of his students, I think of every project I undertake in terms of the intellectual ideals and scholarly standards upheld by Robert Lerner. Any merits this book may have are due to the help of this long list of stellar scholars. Only its weaknesses belong uniquely to me.

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