

Research Proposal

This dissertation examines the impact of women on the development of Purgatory in the 12th c. and how their achievements have been neglected by Jacques LeGoff, and highlighted by Dante. By focusing my research on 12th c. Christian society, I will illustrate how important women were to the development of Purgatory, and the implementation of it in daily Christian life. LeGoff writes one of the most celebrated and cited works on Purgatory, titled The Birth of Purgatory but fails to highlight the essential contribution of women to this development in Christian soteriology and cosmology. Contrary to this, another one of the most celebrated and cited descriptions and studies of the afterlife, is Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Unlike LeGoff, Dante highlights the crucial role that women played in the development of Purgatory. My method of study will focus on Dante's *Divine Comedy* as the best representation of how changes in society affect changes in afterlife traditions and evidence and sources detailing what life was like in 12th c. Christian Europe. This paper highlights the parallel developments between 12th c. Christian European society, and afterlife soteriologies and how more often than not, they had a direct influence on one another. By responding to the demands of humanity and society, the afterlife beliefs in Purgatory and Hell came to be representation of the needs and demands of 12th c. Christian Europe.