Where Do We Go From Here? Some Thoughts on Power and Gender in the Middle Ages

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W E KNOW POWER when we see it. We are not always certain what to call it—power, influence, agency—but power is evident in its exercise: compelling others to do things, mustering armies, coercing someone to work in the fields, compelling the payment of taxes, executing traitors, making and spending money, enacting and enforcing regulations and laws. It is also seen in the experience of it—bowing to a superior, begging favor or assistance, rebellion, hostile sentiments recounted in songs, poems, plays, chronicles, letters, and visual representations. But we falter when we talk about women and power because our words carry associations of gender. For generations, we have assigned gender to actions of power from the location and form it takes: who has it, how they exercise it, and what customs and practices influence it. Over time, power and authority became gendered masculine and connote coercive strength and efficacy. Submission, deference, and compliance suggest femininity. The scholarship of feminist medievalists over the past several decades has demonstrated how customary patriarchal practices that favored men congealed into habits of thought that hardened into assumptions about norms that situated men's power in the realm of public politics and women's in the private family. Through meticulous archival research and a conscious shifting of the terms of the discourse, we have revealed the habits of thought that produced incorrect or incomplete histories of the Middle Ages and have begun to write a narrative that more fully represents the lives of men and women in the past.

That short paragraph represents a tremendous amount of work accomplished since the publication in 1988 of Mary Erler and Maryanne

Kowaleski's book *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*. But if feminist scholars have learned anything in those decades, it is that laurels are not for sitting on. The critique continues, and the research never ends because we are always and everywhere made aware of the price women pay for gender disparity. My goal here is to take stock of one part of the field, queenship studies, and consider how rethinking methods and theories of monarchy can propel the discourse further.[1]

One of the early revelations of the work on queenship was that shifting the subject from the king to the queen revealed substantial gaps in political history. Since the nineteenth century, regarding kingship as the gold standard for political history led to smug scholarship stamped with the imprimatur of "empiricism" that elided the actions of women, defined governance as men's work, and misconstrued the operations of monarchy. Scholars of queenship scoured archives in search of the truth behind the abbreviated indexes and calendars created by historians who focused only on what men did. The Royal Studies Network, an international community of scholars (http://www.royalstudiesnetwork.org/), opened up a vibrant scholarly exchange by putting queenship and kingship scholars in open conversation at conferences and in publications. Two recent studies reveal the scholarly power of intersecting kingship and queenship. Fiona Tolhurst's book on Anglo-Norman England is a good example of how to use a feminist analysis to explicitly link queenship to kingship. In a felicitous turn of phrase, she argues that Geoffrey of Monmouth considers "female kingship" in a positive light and sets the tone for a distinctly English queenship.[2] Susan Johns's new book on Nest of Deheubarth considers how monarchy is inflected by questions of ethnicity and gender. She takes seriously the question of Welsh identity in the creation of a "nation" within the context of English colonization

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1. For an overview of this research, see Theresa Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

2. Fiona Tolhurst, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Translation of Female Kingship* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). See also her article, "The Outlandish Lioness: Eleanor of Aquitaine in Literature," *Medieval Feminist Forum* 37 (Spring 2004): 9–13.

and hegemony in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and locates Nest within wider discussions of monarchy in twelfth-century Britain.[3]

Our work has filled in many gaps but we can take this further. Just as we now agree that monarchy is more than just a king, we also know that monarchy is more than just a king and queen. Accepting that the household is the foundation for monarchy, we need to consider not only the king and queen, but also the meta-discourse of monarchy and politics. A meta-discourse takes into account the intersectional relationships of king and queen with their extended families, noble families, familial affinities, household members, bureaucratic staff, and favorites. No matter what you call it—soft power, social influence, economic clout—the power of this meta-discourse cannot be dismissed as merely gossip or chit-chat, incidental to the operations of monarchy. When we imagine power in wide concentric circles of power, agency, and influence, we situate women of all ranks firmly within the imagined community of the realm.[4]

The most intimate circle around kings and queens is, of course, their immediate families. In the Middle Ages, before the advent of the constitutional monarchy, the pregnant queen was the guarantor of the realm's survival and integrity and so of peace and control. Lineage mattered because royal maternity was the matrix of future kings. Medieval or modern, a queen consort's primary duty is to bear legitimate healthy children, preferably but not exclusively boys. Alcuin of York, writing in 793, said, "the king's virtue equals the welfare of the whole people, victory by the army, good weather, fertility, male offspring, and health."[5] In some medieval realms, this was inscribed in the queen's coronation oath. Medieval society allowed considerable political leeway to a royal mother

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3. Susan M. Johns, *Gender, Nation, and Conquest in the High Middle Ages: Nest of Deheubarth* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

4. I am grateful to Nathaniel Hoe for his insights into the notion of a meta-discourse of monarchy.

5. *Alcuini Epistolae*, in E. Dummler, ed., *Monumenta Germanica Historia (MGH) Epistolae*, vol. 4 (Berlin: 1895), no 18; translated in John Carmi Parsons, "The Pregnant Queen as Counsellor and the Construction of Motherhood," in *Medieval Mothering*, ed. John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler (New York, NY: Garland, 1998), 39–61.

because there was a positive value of marriage and motherhood seen in models of motherhood such as St. Elizabeth and Old Testament matriarchs Sarah and Hannah. By the later Middle Ages, maternity was practically fetishized with childbirth as the locus of female solidarity, communion, and omnipotence, with marriage *cassone* in Italy and majolica wares given to pregnant women. The production of a legitimate heir was seen as both a conjugal and a civic responsibility and, as Kathleen Wellman argues in this forum, motherhood conveyed considerable power to women.

But tucked away in the tangled branches of kinship are startling empty spaces where many of the children borne by queens are not recorded or where childless couples reside. John Carmi Parson's works on maternity and how it empowered queens was a compelling thesis, but the thesis does not apply to childless queens. The political, economic, and social power of childless queens and aristocratic women highlight the weakness in relying on family as the primary lens through which to examine power. I prefer "childless" to the more commonly used terms like "sterile" and "barren," or even the less loaded term "infertile," because without solid knowledge of a medieval woman's medical history, it is impossible to know the causes of her childlessness. It may have been choice as much as chance, a desire for a queen to remain a virgin or have a chaste marriage. Some queens considered "barren" suffered a heartbreaking string of miscarriages and stillbirths, for example, Catherine of Aragon who was pregnant six times with Henry VIII's children, but only one lived to adulthood. That daughter, Mary Tudor, (1516–1558) married Philip II of Spain when she was thirty-eight (he was twenty-seven), and she had no children. No one would call Mary Tudor powerless. But Mary's maternal history is controversial. She was nearing menopause at the time of her marriage, so it is not certain if she was really ever pregnant or if a chronic condition, perhaps cancer, caused her menstrual periods to stop and made her appear pregnant. Mary ardently desired children, and her marriage was not a chaste marriage, like that of Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor. Edith was twenty when she married Edward when he was forty-two, and the couple either did not have

sex or did, but used the idea of chastity to explain their childlessness.[6] On the other hand, it is also possible that their "choice" may have been a way to turn childlessness to political advantage.

Some couples, like Richard II of England and Anne of Bohemia, were fruitless love matches. Their childlessness contributed to Richard's difficulties as king, but Anne was a potent force in his reign.[7] For some couples, sexual relations were just not in the cards. Richard II's second wife, Isabelle of Valois, was only six when they married, but he was deposed and died before Isabelle was old enough to have sex. Jaume II of the Crown of Aragon was married four times, and three unions were childless: Isabel of Castile (she later married Jean III de Brittany, but had no children with him, either), Marie of Lusignan, and Elisenda de Montcada. But we cannot blame Jaume entirely: His second wife, Blanche of Anjou, bore ten children.[8] Margaret of Austria, daughter of Emperor Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy, married several times but had no children. Still, she was a very influential figure in all areas of early modern politics. She was regent of the Netherlands for her nephew Charles V and an avid patron of art and music, trusted confidante, prolific correspondent, and skilled diplomat.[9] But what about other childless couples? Blanca de Bourbon, first wife of Pedro I of Castile? Beatriz of Naples, twice married (Matias Corvino of Hungary and Vladislav II of

6. Judith M. Richards, "Mary Tudor as 'Sole Quene'? Gendering Tudor Monarchy," *The Historical Journal* 40, no. 4 (1997): 895-924, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2640128; David M. Loades, *The Reign of Mary Tudor* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979; rev. ed 1992).

7. Kristen L. Geaman, "Anne of Bohemia and Her Struggle to Conceive," *Social History of Medicine* (2014), published online, Oxford open access, doi:10.1093/shm/hku072.

8. Roger Sablonier, "The Aragonese Royal Family Around 1300," in *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship*, ed. H. Medick and D. W. Sabean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 210–39.

9. Jane De Iongh, *Margaret of Austria: Regent of the Netherlands* (New York, NY: Norton, 1953); Deanna MacDonald, "Collecting a New World: The Ethnographic Collections of Margaret of Austria," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 33, no. 3 (2002): 649–63, doi:10.2307/4144018; Dagmar Eichberger and Lisa Beaven, "Family Members and Political Allies: The Portrait Collection of Margaret of Austria," *The Art Bulletin* 77, no. 2 (1995): 225–48, doi: 10.2307/3046099.

Bohemia and Hungary), but had no children. Joan of the Tower and David of Scotland? At present, we can only infer and speculate about the connection between pregnancy and power. Much more work needs to be done on the maternal history of queens and their aristocratic peers, one that includes all the pregnancies, miscarriages, and stillbirths. My frustration with the spotty evidence and genealogies that looked like men begetting men led me to begin to assemble materials from printed genealogies, chronicle sources, and letters in search of a more capacious history.

This wider view of family considers both a single generation in the concentric circles of kin from the marital pair to their extended families and several generations and all children, illegitimate as well as legitimate. There are already excellent works that have given scholars valuable resources. Colette Bowie's work on the daughters of Henry and Eleanor—Matilda, Leonor, and Joanna—places women in monarchy in a dynastic context, looking at alliances with Saxony, Castile, Sicily, and Toulouse. She starts from their childhoods to discern the influences that shaped them, especially their emotional ties to their natal families, and dowry and dower. Bowie's argument that these three women brought Angevin family customs to their marital lands and were important mechanisms for transmission of political culture is an important counterpoint to studies of the Angevin "empire" that look solely at the king.[10]

Changes in contemporary society remind us that we need to consider many forms of motherhood beyond the biological. Influenced and inspired by our own redefinition of the family, scholars now consider motherhood as a spectrum that includes biological motherhood but also a nurturing motherhood of children not born to a queen in the form of guardianship and tutelage. We also need to know much more about the experience of a king's second wife and blended families. Children caught up in the shifting fortunes of royal marriage like those of Emma, queen

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10. Colette Bowie, *The Daughters of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014); Robin Chapman Stacey, "King, Queen, and *Edling* in the Laws of the Court," in *The Welsh King and His Court*, ed. T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen, and Paul Russell (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 29–62; Jonathan Lyon, *Princely Brothers and Sisters: The Sibling Bond in German Politics, 1100–1250* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

to Kings Æthelred and Cnut, are often at the heart of dynastic strife and civil war. But it is possible that the peaceable sons of Edward I and his second wife, Margaret of France, are more common but less noticeable because they do not stir up trouble.

A meta-discourse of monarchy naturally encompasses the aristocratic elites, which in turn allows us to see other relationships that confer power—friends, mentors, guardians, women religious, and powerful distant kin. These people can be very difficult to trace, and are often lumped into an amorphous category of backbenchers and backdoor operators, but once found, they reveal much about queens and queenship. The logical place to begin is the queen's household, which was, of course, not simply a domestic space.[11] It was built and furnished in ways that reflected cultural values and notions of kinship, friendship, and service.[12] I have recently been working on Catherine of Aragon's

11. The study of the royal household differs from this significant body of work in that it is dominated by the prodigious sources available from royal treasury accounts with the attention on the king, the organization of the offices of the court, and courtiers. See David Grummitt, "Household, Politics and Political Morality in the Reign of Henry VII," *Historical Research* 82, no. 217 (2009): 393–411, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2281.2009.00491.x; Richard Heiser, "The Households of the Justiciars of Richard I: An Inquiry into the Second Level of Medieval English Governance," *Haskins Society Journal* 2 (1990): 223–35; Hilda Johnstone, "The Wardrobe and Household of Henry, Son of Edward I," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 7, no. 3 (1923): 384-420; idem, "The Wardrobe and Household Accounts of the Sons of Edward I," *Historical Research* 2, no. 5 (1924): 37–45; L. M. Larson, *The King's Household in England before the Norman Conquest* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1904); A. R. Myers, *Crown, Household and Parliament in Fifteenth Century England* (London: Black, 1985); A. R. Myers, ed., *The Household of Edward IV: The Black Book and the Ordinance of 1478* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959); and Malcolm Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

12. John Carmi Parsons, *The Court and Household of Eleanor of Castile in 1290: An Edition of British Library, Additional Manuscript 35294 with Introduction and Notes* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1977); Margaret Howell, "The Resources of Eleanor of Provence as Queen Consort," *English Historical Review* 102, no. 403 (1987): 372-393, http://www.jstor.org/stable/572275; Hilda Johnstone, "Poor-relief in the Royal Households of Thirteenth-century England," *Speculum* 4, no. 2 (1929): 149–67, doi: 10.2307/2847949; idem, "The Queen's Household," in *The English Government at Work, 1327-1336*, ed. James F. Willard and William

Spanish household staff that moved with her to England—Inés Vanegas and her daughters, Maria de Rojas and María de Salinas. These women, part of a blended Spanish and English household, were both a bridge between two realms and an intersection of social status. The wardrobe and household records reveal Catherine as a source of largesse who cultivated favor and goodwill at court and in the household. The salary these women received, whether in coin or cloth, signified the depth and duration of a relationship and the webs of reciprocity and obligation. Inés Vanegas, a woman of middling rank, used service to the crown as a way to improve her social standing. These women also show the complexity of national identity. For some women, the move to England was not permanent but others fully acculturated as English women.[13]

Both queens and noblewomen were members of a privileged elite, but in many cases, noblewomen had more substantial control over their families, properties, and money than their queenly peers did.[14] The relationships and alliances of noblewomen and queens are akin to the affinities of kings and noblemen at court, but remain very poorly

Alfred Morris, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1940): 250-97; Lars Kjær, "Food, Drink and Ritualised Communication in the Household of Eleanor de Montfort, February to August 1265," *Journal of Medieval History* 37, no. 1 (2011): 75–89, doi:10.1016/j.jmedhist.2010.12.001; A. R. Myers, *The Captivity of a Royal Witch: The Household Accounts of Queen Joan of Navarre, 1419-21* (Manchester: Manchester University Press and the Librarian, the John Rylands Library, 1940); C. Given Wilson, "The Merger of Edward III's and Queen Philippa's Households, 1360–69," *Historical Research* 51, no. 124 (1978): 183–87, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2281.1978.tb01879.x; and Malcolm G. Underwood, "Politics and Piety in the Household of Lady Margaret Beaufort," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 38, no. 1 (1987): 39–52.

13. The household records for Catherine in England until 1503 can be found in Antonio de la Torre and E. A. de la Torre, eds., *Cuentas de Gonzalo Baeza, tesorero de Isabel la Católica*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1955).

14. See, for example, Amy Livingstone, *Out of Love for My Kin: Aristocratic Family Life in the Lands of the Loire, 1000–1200* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010); Linda E. Mitchell, *Joan de Valence: The Life and Influence of a Thirteenth-Century Noblewoman* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Hazel Pierce, *Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury, 1473–1541: Loyalty, Lineage, and Leadership* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003); and Louise J. Wilkinson, *Eleanor de Montfort: A Rebel Countess in Medieval England* (London: A & C Black, 2012).

understood, yet it is clear that women are vital to operations of affinity groups. Janna Bianchini's work on the *infantazgo*, an assemblage of lands in western Iberia that became the dominion of royal women between 1000 and 1300, focuses on the *infantazgo*'s evolution over time and on the careers of its female lords (*dominae*) as members of León-Castile's plural monarchy. The affinities of women at court were just as important to politics as those of men: they bridged natal and marital families, kin and court, and countries. Valerie Garver looks more broadly at royal women and their importance to aristocratic culture in the Carolingian empire.[15]

It is, I think, safe to say that we have moved beyond women in power as exceptional. Once we disposed of the idea that there are hard-and-fast rules governing women and power, we stopped seeing powerful women as "the exception that proved the rule." We redefined "exceptional" to mean exceptionally talented, exceptionally competent, exceptionally skilled at using guile in the game of power. We know that the more we look, the more we see queens—and women in general—doing something someone once thought was exceptional. Many queens worked in a variety of ways—from informal advisor to fully sovereign. Many queens were the king's closest advisors and were instrumental in governance as regents. In that capacity, many queens were not newcomers to the political aspects of life at court. They were educated under the tutelage of mother and tutors, managed their own households, and were well versed in life at court, both the people and the machinations. But one thing is clear: the definition is highly subjective. Exceptions, like beauty, lie in the eyes of the beholder. You do not have to be a woman to see the queen, to recognize what she was doing, to give it credit.

I have lately come to consider feminist standpoint epistemologies as a key to understanding the differences between male and female power, and between kingship and queenship. I take a cue from Louise Fradenburg who argues that we need to take very seriously feminist standpoint

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15. Janna Bianchini, "Daughters, Wives, Widows, Lords: Dynastic Identity and Affective Bonds among Infantas in Twelfth-century León-Castile," in *Reginae Iberiae: El poder regio femenino en los reinos medievales peninsulares*, ed. Miguel García-Fernández and Silvia Cernadas Martínez (Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2015), 11–30; Valerie Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

epistemologies as a way to deepen our understanding of history and historiography.[16] Taking the case of Scottish queens, she argues that it is important to consider the standpoint of Tudor chroniclers and Spanish and Italian ambassadors relative to the Scottish as we consider their very real misogyny. Questions of "nation" inflect these works, and seen from their standpoint, England is the pinnacle of civilization and good governance, Spain is well governed but southern and weirdly exotic, but Scotland is unruly, violent, and savage. Thus, to the English chroniclers, Scottish queens were unimportant except as vehicles for dynasty or part of the emplotment of a narrative of Scottish bellicose unruliness.

The next step is to consider the epistemology of the subject in question. For example, thinking of Catherine of Aragon as a situated knower, with a knowledge that reflects her particular perspective goes far in explaining her queenship. She was fluent in two rather different sets of political theory on the place of the queen in monarchical government. She engaged in some self-fashioning, crafting a public performance as the dutiful wife with a talent at governing, and this served her very well later in her life in her divorce trials. She picked up the art of self-fashioning from her mother, Isabel, a sovereign queen who governed Castile in her own right, waged war, and promoted the Inquisition, yet carefully controlled the discourse in chronicles to mask her exercise of power and authority and not rock the boat. All of this is evident in Catherine's vigorous defense at the divorce trials. Here is a powerful queen challenging a powerful king, and her loss is all the more poignant for the strong intelligence of her fight.[17]

The masculinist standpoint of privileged men who later studied monarchy led them to exclude women from inquiry, to deny them epistemic authority, and to denigrate the feminine cognitive styles and modes of knowledge. They produced narratives that represented women as

16. Louise Olga Fradenburg, "Troubled Times: Margaret Tudor and the Historians," in *The Rose and the Thistle*, ed. Sally Mapstone and Juliette Wood (East Linton, UK: Tuckwell, 1998), 38–53.

17. Theresa Earenfight, "Raising *Infanta* Catalina de Aragón To Be Catherine, Queen of England," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* (in press, forthcoming); idem, "Regarding Catherine of Aragon," in Carole Levin, ed., *Scholars and Poets Talk About Queens* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 137–57.

inferior, deviant, or significant only in the ways that they serve male interests and produce knowledge that reinforces gender hierarchies. The political consciousness of the male readers identified with the male body politic because the writers were often at court, insiders paid to write about a king. This led modern scholars of political history and men who write scholarly biographies of queens to emplot the queen using a variety of familiar tropes—conventionally feminine, outrageously sexualized, over-determined femininity as bride, wife, and mother—without considering how unstable definitions have been over time. Scholars unschooled in feminist theory and methodology turn to old-fashioned political theory on kingship to understand queens. But this is deeply problematic. And, as we who study queens already know, these scholars generalized a norm from an extremely limited body of evidence, from which the idea of the queen as exceptional was born.

The study of medieval political theory is changing a bit, but very slowly. It is taking an extremely long time to break down the sturdy bastion of men writing about men. Most theories of monarchy and power still either ignore women altogether or represent them as inferior, deviant, or significant only in the ways they serve male interests, such as bearing an heir. Much of the new work on monarchy is, in fact, not new at all in terms of theory or methods. Many authors repeat the same ideas, same theorists, and neglect women entirely. They focus on church and state, questions of tyranny, kingship, "civil society," conciliarism, urban corporatism, and republicanism, and the earliest examples of popular politics. As a whole, these works are out of touch with the abundant bibliography that has documented real expressions and exercises of female power, authority, and agency. The idea of the great man as a normative theory reifies a male-centered epistemological standpoint that has shaped the dominant discourse of medieval political theory. But they ignored what was staring them in the face—women exercising power.[18] It is significant that much of this work focuses on Germany,

18. Joseph Canning, *Ideas of Power in the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Roseanne Schot, Conor Newman, and Edel Bhreathnach, eds., *Landscapes of Cult and Kingship* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011). Cary Nederman's *Lineages of European Political Thought: Explorations along the Medieval/Modern Divide from John of Salisbury to Hegel* (Washington, DC: Catholic

England, and France, places where there were no queens regnant in the Middle Ages. Scholars of those regions see those histories as tyranny, papal power, and war. But even work on late-medieval Castile, which has been the subject of excellent feminist scholarship on the indubitably powerful Queen Isabel, sees a man's world.[19] Until recently, to find a political theory that included queens you had to find queens who are so obvious as to be unavoidable—Isabel of Castile, Mary Tudor, Mary Queen of Scots, Elizabeth Tudor.

One of the best new works that blends feminist theory with political theory is by Daisy Delogu, *Allegorical Bodies: Power and Gender in Late Medieval France*. Working with the richly ambivalent political allegories written in response to the unstable reign of Charles VI (r. 1380–1422), her argument is that "metaphors of the body politic privilege the male body as a vehicle for the expression of conceptions about political unity and integrity, and occlude the space that real women occupied within the body politic as well as the power they exercised."[20] Delogu's sophisticated analysis centers on the works of Eustace Deschamps, Jean Gerson, Alain Chartier, Jean Juvénal des Ursins, and Christine de Pizan. They described the realm of France during the 100 Years War in overdetermined feminine roles: the courtly beloved, wounded, ill, damsel in distress, mother—all in need of a man to step in and take charge. Delogu takes up issues that scholars of queenship have struggled with in recent decades: the exclusion of women from royal rule, a masculine political subject, and the structures of authority. She argues that the problem the French had with a ruling queen was less that she was a woman and more that her marriage represented a "penetration of the French body politic by foreign elements."[21]

University Press, 2009) does not include a reference to queens; no mention of Isabel of Castile, not even Elizabeth I of England, no Mary I of England.

19. Thomas Devaney, "Virtue, Virility, and History in Fifteenth-Century Castile," *Speculum* 88, no. 3 (2013): 721–49, doi:10.1017/S003871341300170X. He completely missed the mark by not engaging, for example, with Barbara Weissberger on the monarchy of Fernando and Isabel. Barbara Weissberger, *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

20. Daisy Delogu, *Allegorical Bodies: Power and Gender in Late Medieval France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 7.

21. Ibid., 138.

Delogu has done something important that has been sorely needed for a very long time: she has put queens into political theory. She shifts the discourse in ways that reveal the inadequacies of masculinist approaches that utterly fail to include women, elite or royal, from the discourse. Hers is a political theory regarding monarchy that takes gender theory very carefully into account and crafts a far more complex analysis that puts women front and center in the discourse on "nation" and "state." She deliberately engages with women as fundamental to the political sphere, not exceptional or marginal. This work links feminist theory with questions of masculinity in terms of sexual impotency or military weakness.

With all this progress, what can possibly be left for the next generation to study? I'm happy, sort of, to say that there is still a lot to do. First, it is important to continue comparative work on women and power issues in geographic terms. The idea of centers (England, France, Germany) and peripheries (Wales, Scotland, Ireland, the Mediterranean, the Latin East, Byzantine Empire, Russia, Poland, Hungary, Scandinavia) has been dominated by modern notions of "nation." But is this a useful idea when studying the Middle Ages? What about urban and rural distinctions? How does this affect a woman's authority and power? Penny Nash reminds us that when we speak of medieval Germany, it is more accurate to say Saxons and Swabians. She has argued for a topography of queenship and power that locates Ottonian empresses in space over time. The concept of empire in thought and deed dominated the eleventh century, but when we look at single-language works and bibliographies, we miss the overlap of realms. It is important to break down the barriers of languages and study power across borders. Recent work on Mediterranean studies has, in Braudelian fashion, prompted a regional approach and asks us to consider what queenship meant in places beyond but near Europe.[22] For example, Muslim royal women inhabited a society where they might be one of four wives.

Next, how do women translate or transport political ideas when they move to marry a king or king-to-be? Monarchy in medieval Europe

22. Elena Woodacre, ed.. *Queenship in the Mediterranean: Negotiating the Role of the Queen in the Medieval and Early Modern Eras* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

tended to be patrilocal, with wives moving to a new court when they married. Miriam Shadis's work on Castilian royal women and Lisa Benz St. John's on Plantagenet queens show how queens and aristocratic women crossed borders and brought with them ideas on women and power.[23] This methodology provides scholars with another means to consider the natal familial context and opens up a much-needed conversation on queenship as a "national" or "familial" institution. Family connections are cultural connections and queenship is often international in scope.

Queens were wealthy patrons of art, but we still know little about the material culture of queenship. Household accounts, archaeology, and architecture reveal the spaces of politics and women, both the queen and her court. Whereas kings stay grounded in one realm, queens are moveable bearers of culture, and comparative studies rightly emphasize just how this happens. Queens and aristocratic women were part of an international family and a cross-cultural exchange that extended their famlies' influence across borders. They left behind traces of their natal family in the art, literature, language, and religion of their husband's realm. In this capacious configuration of a royal family, kings stay home. An English king is English, but an English queen could be Spanish or French. Habsburg empresses have been regarded as the bearers of distinctive notions of Habsburg dynastic politics in the early modern era, and I wonder, can the same be said of medieval queens? Cultural exchange of this sort is at the heart of Mariah Proctor-Tiffany's work on Clémence of Hungary, queen of France and Navarre as the second wife of King Louis X. Proctor-Tiffany explores art and the performance of identity by royal women in fourteenth-century courts and argues that women, when separated from their natal families by politically advantageous marriages, maintained family ties through international gifts of

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23. Miriam Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile (1180–1246) and Political Women in the High Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Miriam Shadis and Constance H. Berman, "A Taste of the Feast: Reconsidering Eleanor of Aquitaine's Female Descendants," in Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons, eds., *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 177–211; Lisa Benz St. John, *Three Medieval Queens: Queenship and the Crown in Fourteenth-Century England* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

art—sculptures, reliquaries, textiles, jewels, and manuscripts.[24] This circulation of luxurious objects reveals much about queenship, wealth, and political power.

Finally, we need to rethink chronology, particularly one organized around the deeds of men. Political power is no longer the gold standard of power, but we have followed the lead of old-fashioned historians who set the parameters in their work on great men and great deeds. Provocative questions, like Joan Kelly's "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" and Julia Smith's "Did Women Have a Transformation of the Roman World?" prompted rich and important work. But I am not sure that there is a single timeline of power for women. At Kalamazoo in May 2105, Phyllis Jestice described the course of queenship in Pauline Stafford's *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers* and *The King's Wife in the Middle Ages* as a roller coaster. That vivid metaphor reminded me of Julia Smith's insightful comment at Leeds 2014 on Braudelian time frames as a way to consider women and power. In her comments on the session, "Women as Caretakers of Empires, Realms, and Estates," she noted that the ebb and flow of short-term time intersects with deep ideological structures of gender and power. All three of the Braudelian layers of time need to be considered when we talk about power: the *longue durée* of misogyny and patriarchal structures and institutions, the *conjunctures* of Stafford's roller coaster, and the *evenementielle* of Lothar II's attempts to divorce Theutberga or the regency of Margaret of Anjou. This sort of power changes over the course of a lifetime and is dependent on life span, health, maternity, and family fortunes. As Elena Woodacre notes in her essay in this forum, we need to be attentive to both continuity and change, and to take note of why some things change even amid what Judith Bennett terms the persistence of patriarchy. In other words, we cannot assume a single chronology for women and power.

What I am suggesting is that we consider the "intersectionality of

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24. Maria Proctor-Tiffany, "Transported as a Rare Object of Distinction: Gift Giving in the Inventory and Testament of Clémence of Hungary," *Journal of Medieval History* 41, no. 2 (2015): 208-28, doi:10.1080/03044181.2015.1033644; idem, "Lost and Found: Visualizing a Medieval Queen's Destroyed Objects," in Elena Woodacre, *Queenship in the Mediterranean*, 73–96.

power" to take note of the meta-discourse of monarchical power, feminist epistemologies, and chronologies. Queens work in various ways to create a national identity founded upon the notion of a masculine political subject. But they have learned to function within structures of patriarchal authority. When we consider the ability of women to act in a way we could term "powerful" in a framework that takes into account the ebb and flow of short-term time, we can see more clearly the continuity of the deep ideological structures of gender and patriarchy that are contingent on geography and vitally connected to family. As we do this, we need to do what we've been doing for decades by continuing to make sure that conversations about women and power are fundamental to conference sessions, conversations, curricula, course syllabi, everyday lectures, and classroom discussions.

We will continue to do what we have been doing for decades—opening up the discourse in ways that reveal the inadequacies of masculinist approaches that fail to include women of all ranks from the discourse. Only when all scholars take gender theory very carefully into account can we craft a far more complex analysis that puts women front and center in the discourse on "nation" and "state." Our work has consistently shown that women were fundamental to the political sphere, not marginal, not exceptional, and not powerless.

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