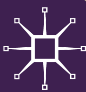

QUEENSHIP AND POWER

Later Plantagenet and the Wars of the Roses Consorts

Power, Influence, and Dynasty

Edited by
Aidan Norrie · Carolyn Harris
J.L. Laynesmith · Danna R. Messer
Elena Woodacre

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Queenship and Power

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Aidan Norrie • Carolyn Harris
J.L. Laynesmith
Danna R. Messer • Elena Woodacre
Editors

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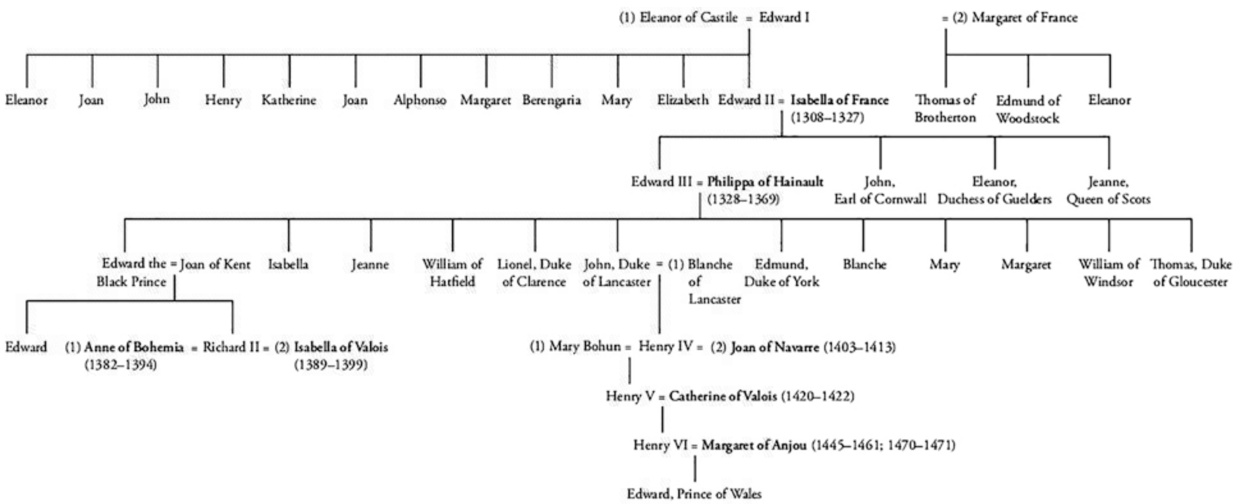
(1) Eleanor of Castile = Edward I
= (2) Margaret of France
Eleanor
Joan
John
Henry
Katherine
Joan
Alphonso
Margaret
Berengaria
Mary
Elizabeth
Edward II = Isabella of France
(1308–1327)
Thomas of Brotherton
Edmund of Woodstock
Eleanor
Edward III = Philippa of Hainault
(1328–1369)
John, Earl of Cornwall
Eleanor, Duchess of Guelders
Jeanne, Queen of Scots
Edward the Black Prince = Joan of Kent
Isabella
Jeanne
William of Hatfield
Lionel, Duke of Clarence
John, Duke of Lancaster = (1) Blanche of Lancaster
Edmund, Duke of York
Blanche
Mary
Margaret
William of Windsor
Thomas, Duke of Gloucester
Edward
(1) Anne of Bohemia = Richard II = (2) Isabella of Valois
(1382–1394)
(1389–1399)
(1) Mary Bohun = Henry IV = (2) Joan of Navarre (1403–1413)
Henry V = Catherine of Valois (1420–1422)
Henry VI = Margaret of Anjou (1445–1461; 1470–1471)
Edward, Prince of Wales

Edward III = Philippa of Hainault

Edward the Black Prince = Joan of Kent

Lionel, Duke of Clarence = Elizabeth de Burgh

(3) Katherine Swynford =

(1) Blanche of Lancaster = John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster = (2) Constance of Castile

Edmund, Duke of York = Isabel of Castile

Thomas, Duke of Gloucester

Richard II = (1) Anne of Bohemia
(2) Isabella of Valois

Philippa = Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March

(1) Mary Bohun = Henry IV = (2) Joan of Navarre

Katherine, Queen of Castile

John

Edward, Duke of York

Roger Mortimer, Earl of March = Eleanor Holland

Henry V = Catherine of Valois

Thomas, Duke of Clarence

John, Duke of Bedford

Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester

Blanche

Philippa

John, Marquess of Somerset = Margaret Holland

Cardinal Henry Beaufort

Thomas, Duke of Exeter

Joan = Ralph, Earl of Westmorland

Henry VI = Margaret of Anjou

John, Duke of Somerset = Margaret Beauchamp

Edmund, Duke of Somerset

Richard, Earl of Salisbury = Alice Montagu

(1) John de la Pole = Margaret Beaufort = (2) Edmund Tudor
(3) Henry Stafford =
(4) Thomas Stanley =

Anne = Richard, Earl of Cambridge

Richard, Earl of Warwick = Anne Beauchamp

Cecily Neville = Richard, Duke of York

Edward IV = **Elizabeth Woodville** (1464–1470; 1471–1483)

(1) Edward, Prince of Wales = **Anne Neville** (1483–1485) = (2) Richard III

Henry VII = Elizabeth of York

Mary

Cecily

Edward V

Margaret

Richard, Duke of York

Anne

George

Katherine

Bridget

Edward, Prince of Wales

In memory of W. Mark Ormrod

Acknowledgements

We dedicate this book to Professor Mark Ormrod, who sadly passed away during the volume's production. We are very grateful not only for the fascinating contribution that he made to the present collection through his chapter on Philippa of Hainault, but also for his outstanding influence on the field of medieval history. This included groundbreaking work on women and politics in later medieval England, some of which is referenced in other chapters. Mark not only published prolifically, but also mentored and encouraged countless students and scholars—including many of the authors in this volume. While he is very much missed, the copious publications that he has left behind will continue to positively impact and influence the field in years to come.

We would also like to thank all of our contributors for sharing their scholarship with us in the excellent studies that they have provided on the later medieval consorts. We appreciate their time, patience, and efforts to help us bring this volume together. We hope it will form a key resource for those researching both queenship and later medieval English history.

J.L. Laynesmith and Elena Woodacre

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incomparable editorial assistant, Luke Holloway, and we are grateful for this support.

I also thank my valiant and indefatigable co-editors, who enthusiastically agreed to work with me on this project (a project that ended up consuming their lives for a significant amount of time), and whose insight, patience, and camaraderie have made this project much stronger than it might otherwise have been.

Aidan Norrie

Praise for *Later Plantagenet and the Wars of the Roses Consorts: Power, Influence, and Dynasty*

"This impressive volume brings together the best new work on queens consort of late medieval England. A model for how to present a coherent overview of a subject as complex as these queens, a dozen scholars craft vivid and rich yet concise portraits of queens from Isabella of France to Anne Neville. The authors, attentive to the gendered nature of power and authority, are judicious in their discussion of controversial queens and 'quasi-queens'—women whose influence at court and beyond is often underestimated. Each chapter can stand alone, making it a valuable resource for teaching. Taken as a whole, the essays highlight the complex interlocking ties that strained family loyalties amid the extreme pressures of dynastic wars."

—Theresa M. Earenfight, *Seattle University, USA*

"This thought-provoking, accessible, and multifaceted volume is essential reading for anyone interested in the structures and practices of late medieval queenship, or in the queens themselves who stood at the heart of the dynastic conflicts that shaped fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England. Ranging from the 'she-wolves' Isabella of France and Margaret of Anjou to the child-bride Isabella of Valois to the English consorts Elizabeth Woodville and Anne Neville, these are fascinating lives."

—Helen Castor, *University of Cambridge, UK*

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Katia Wright completed her PhD at the University of Winchester on the lands and dowers of five English queens across the fourteenth century. She has worked on several joint projects including co-authoring a chapter on the sources of medieval English queens' lands and co-editing a special issue of the *Royal Studies Journal*. Katia is the Assistant Curator (Archives) of The AGC Museum, Winchester.

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Preface

Royal consorts have played an important role throughout English (and British) history. Yet, their lives and tenures have been treated unevenly by successive generations of scholars and popular historians. This volume, along with its three companions, aims to redress this uneven treatment.

As the success of the *Penguin Monarchs* series has shown, there is much interest in more analytical biographies of royals—for academics and interested readers alike. While the last two decades have seen the publication of a plethora of both scholarly and popular biographies on England's consorts, there is no single, scholarly compendium wherein all the consorts since the Norman Conquest can be consulted: it is this curious lacuna that these volumes seek to fill. In bringing together an international team of experts, we have endeavoured to create a vital reference work for scholars, students, and the wider public.

While all consorts held an equal position—that is, they were all spouses of a reigning monarch—their treatment by both history and historians has varied considerably. Some, like Eleanor of Aquitaine, Margaret of Anjou, Anne Boleyn, and Prince Albert, have been the subject of countless biographies, articles, and cultural works and adaptations. On the other hand, non-experts could be forgiven for not being aware of Berengaria of Navarre, Isabella of Valois, Catherine of Braganza, or Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen. Certainly, the surviving evidence for the tenures of each consort differs greatly, and other factors must be examined—it is no coincidence that each of these four unfamiliar consorts was not the mother of their husband's successor. Nevertheless, these volumes treat the consorts as equitably as possible, offering biographies that provide an insight

into how each consort perceived, and shaped, their role and how their spouse and subjects responded to their reign. While all occupying the same office, each consort brought their own interpretation to the role, and by contextualising a consort's tenure against both their predecessors and successors, these volumes illuminate some fascinating continuities, as well as some unexpected idiosyncrasies.

In putting these volumes together, numerous—and sometimes competing—factors were carefully considered. On the one hand, we erred on the side of inclusivity throughout, hence the inclusion of Margaret of France, Elizabeth Cromwell, and Dorothy Cromwell—the wives of Henry the Young King and Lords Protector Oliver Cromwell and Richard Cromwell, respectively. There can be no doubt that these women all functioned as a consort in the "traditional" sense of the term during their husband's period in power. Conversely, we have not included Geoffrey V, Count of Anjou, or Guilford Dudley—husbands of Empress Matilda and Lady Jane Grey, respectively. There is much more to be said on the issue of monarchical succession in England: scholars especially still have yet to really come to terms with how to conceptualise the succession when it deviates from the "ideal"—that is, when the deceased king (yes, king) was succeeded by his eldest son. The absence of Geoffrey and Dudley here should not be taken as an endorsement of the view that their wives did not rule England: rather, we acknowledge that regardless of the political power their wives wielded, they themselves did not function as consorts to their wives. It is for this reason, and this reason alone, that they do not appear within these pages. These men certainly supported their wives—indeed, much more could be said about the "soft power" they exercised—but like Sophia Dorothea of Celle and Wallis Simpson, they themselves did not serve as the consort of a reigning monarch.

In addition to the biographies of the consorts, the volumes contain several thematic essays, which present cutting-edge research on specific groups of consorts, showing the value in considering them both individually and collectively. Such essays are an important corrective to older, and in some places still engrained, notions that because most consorts were women, they were only concerned with producing heirs, gossiping, embroidery, and courtly entertainments. Such views, thankfully, are no longer in the mainstream, due particularly to the burgeoning work in the field of queenship studies. As these thematic essays, and the biographies themselves, show, a successful consort had to juggle multiple roles, including shrewd financial management, effectively overseeing diplomacy and

court intrigue, dealing with political upheaval, balancing the needs of their natal family against those of the English monarchy, and of course navigating pregnancy and childbearing—all the while ensuring that they retained good relationships with their spouse and their subjects. These chapters all demonstrate—to varying degrees—that a "successful" reign as monarch often correlated with a consort who was able to successfully juggle the diverse roles expected of them.

The women and men whose lives are detailed in the following pages occupied a unique position at the side of their spouse. While the roles, rights, and privileges of a monarch have been understood and largely defined (although of course these have been fiercely debated and contested), the position of their consort has, and continues to be, far less regularised and much more nebulous. These biographies show that a monarch's consort could have a profound effect on the nation—for both good or ill—and that the role was ultimately shaped by its incumbent in ways far more significant than have been previously recognised.

Aidan Norrie

CHAPTER 1

The Later Medieval English Consorts: Power, Influence, Dynasty

J.L. Laynesmith and Elena Woodacre

The Plantagenet dynasty ruled England for over three centuries. They left an indelible mark on the kingdom and profoundly impacted many of its neighbours. Yet most of the queens consort in this volume would have been surprised to find themselves called Plantagenets. Until the later fifteenth century, that name was primarily associated with Geoffrey le Bel (1113–1151), husband of the Empress Matilda. The family of their son, Henry II, had, understandably, chosen to shape their identity principally as descendants of Matilda's father, Henry I.[1] The name only resurfaced in

[1] Jim Bradbury, "Fulk le Réchin and the Origin of the Plantagenets," in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, Christopher Holdsworth, and Janet Nelson (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989), 27–41, 40. The earliest record of the later tradition that Geoffrey wore a broom stalk in his hat appears to be from 1605: William Camden, *Remains Concerning Britain* (London, 1870), 111–112.

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1460, when Richard, Duke of York, wished to remind the political community that the royal family had earlier traced their inheritance through a woman.[2] He adopted Geoffrey's Plantagenet sobriquet as a surname and so created an identity for the entire dynasty, an identity sown in dynastic conflict.

While the consorts of the early Plantagenet period, the Angevin queens Eleanor of Aquitaine and her daughters-in-law, and the wives of Henry III and Edward I are represented in the first volume of this series, the current volume is entirely composed of Plantagenet queens, ending with Anne Neville, wife of Richard III. Richard's niece, a Plantagenet princess, became the first Tudor consort and thus begins the third volume in our series. Here we have nine women whose tenures as consort were universally marked by conflict and warfare—both within the realm and between England and her neighbours—chiefly in the Hundred Years' War and the Wars of the Roses.

Dynastic Dispute

A key theme that brings those wars together is dynastic dispute and within that the question of women's eligibility to transmit sovereignty. The Hundred Years' War was a prolonged and multi-faceted conflict that had its origins in long-standing tension between the early Plantagenets and the Capetian dynasty of France—a desire to heal this rift was a motivating force that drove the marriage of Isabella of France, our first consort, to Edward II in 1308.[3] Yet the repercussions of that very marriage led England and France into a prolonged period of war, due in part to a dynastic dispute in Isabella's own family. The death of her brother, Louis X (and Luis I of Navarre), in the summer of 1316 triggered the beginning of a Capetian succession crisis when his only living child was a young princess, Jeanne—while France did not yet have a law that barred female succession, Jeanne was the daughter of Marguerite of Burgundy, Louis' first

[2] Anne Curry and Rosemary Horrox, eds., *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, 1275–1504, XII: Henry VI, 1447–1460* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/october-1460.

[3] Elizabeth A.R. Brown, "The Political Repercussions of Family Ties in the Early Fourteenth Century: The Marriage of Edward II of England and Isabelle of France," *Speculum* 63, no. 3 (1988): 573–595.

wife who had died while imprisoned on a charge of adultery.[4] Louis' second wife, Clémence of Hungary bore a son, Jean I "the Posthumous," but he died shortly after his birth in late 1316. Louis' two brothers took the throne in turn—first Philip in 1316 and then Charles in 1322 after Philip died without surviving male issue. However, when Charles too died in 1328 without a living son, the direct male Capetian line was extinct, leaving several daughters of kings who could be potential heirs including Isabella herself as the only surviving child of Philip IV and Juana I of Navarre.[5] There was the possibility of civil war if each of the now grown princesses and their powerful husbands fought to press their claim—perhaps even more worrying was the possibility that Isabella or her son, the newly crowned King of England, would come to press her claim to the throne. The decision to exclude both heiresses and claimants through the female line was arrived upon as a way to stem the potential chaos and the more distant Valois line was selected as an alternative. However, Isabella and Edward III refused to accept the invalidation of their claim—this dynastic dispute was later leveraged as part of Edward's justification for invading France and beginning the Hundred Years' War.

Isabella was a catalyst for dynastic dispute in other ways as well. As Michael Evans' chapter in this volume notes, Isabella remains noteworthy as the only English queen ever to dethrone her own husband, Edward II. In her efforts to secure allies on the continent to invade England to effect regime change, she contracted a marriage between her son and Philippa of Hainault, the second consort in our volume. Philippa's tenure as consort took place against the backdrop of her husband's campaigns in France, and those of her sons, including the Black Prince. Philippa's impressive fecundity, giving birth to thirteen children, assured dynastic continuity in terms of providing Plantagenet heirs but this plethora of royal children also provided the seeds of another dynastic dispute, the Wars of the Roses, in terms of creating multiple potential lines of claimants to the English throne.

[4] For Jeanne (later Juana II of Navarre) and her situation, see: Elena Woodacre, *The Queens Regnant of Navarre: Succession, Politics and Partnership, 1274–1512* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 51–75.

[5] For a recent evaluation of the Capetian succession crisis, see: Derek Whaley, "From *a* Salic Law to *the* Salic Law: The Creation and Re-creation of the Royal Succession System of Medieval France," in *The Routledge History of Monarchy*, ed. Elena Woodacre, Lucinda H.S. Dean, Chris Jones, Russell Martin, and Zita Eva Rohr (London: Routledge, 2019), 443–464.

This next internal dynastic dispute began to rear its head in the reign of Richard II, Philippa's grandson, whose two consorts—the imperial princess Anne of Bohemia and the child bride Isabella of Valois—are featured in this volume. While Richard sought to achieve peace with France and stem the conflict of the Hundred Years' War by his marriage to a Valois princess, his tyrannical behaviour towards members of his own family provoked his cousin, Henry of Lancaster, to usurp Richard in 1399. Henry thus became the first of the Lancastrian branch of the Plantagenets to rule.

There was, however, a potential rival to Henry of Lancaster's status as Richard's heir—Edmund Mortimer—the great-grandson of Henry and Richard's uncle, Lionel, Duke of Clarence. In the summer of 1399, Edmund Mortimer was only a seven-year-old boy, not remotely attractive as a king at this moment of political crisis. Moreover, although Edmund's descent from Edward III was from a senior branch, it relied on inheritance through his grandmother, Philippa. There was in England no clear consensus about the validity of royal inheritance via a woman. Consequently, for as long as Henry IV could persuade the English nobility that he offered secure and just kingship, he could ignore the anomalous Mortimer claim, and he crushed rebellions championing Edmund in 1403 and 1405.

Henry IV's consort, Joan of Navarre, was no stranger to dynastic dispute and the Hundred Years' War—her maternal grandfather Jean II "le Bon" had been captured and held in England by Edward III. Her father Carlos II of Navarre had also been a significant player in the conflict, due to his own strong claim to the French throne as the son of Jeanne, the young Capetian princess who was bypassed at the beginning of the succession crisis in 1316. Under the reign of her stepson, Henry V, Joan's loyalties were divided at the famous battle of Agincourt in 1415—while her stepson claimed an impressive victory, she lost French and Breton relatives on the battlefield and her own son, Arthur de Richmond, was taken prisoner. Peace with France was again sealed with marriage—this time between Henry V and Katherine of Valois, sister of Richard II's child consort.

The reign of their son, Henry VI, began with the child king on the thrones of both England and France, theoretically guaranteeing an end to the long conflict—but by the end of his life, not only had he lost his French crown, but his English one as well. His consort, Margaret of Anjou, was later branded a "She Wolf," like her predecessor Isabella of France, for fighting for the claims of her only son, against the heirs of

Edmund Mortimer.[6] Mortimer's sister, Anne, had married Richard, Earl of Cambridge, yet another grandson of Edward III and Philippa of Hainault. Cambridge's marriage to Anne Mortimer had bound her family's potential claim to the throne through Lionel, Duke of Clarence, with his own family's patrilineal descent from Edward III (and its associated ducal title) in the person of their only surviving son: Richard, Duke of York. As Henry VI's fragile grip on France finally crumbled in the 1450s, it was Richard who emerged as the principal opponent of Henry's closest aides and of his Queen.

In the autumn of 1460, the Act of Accord disinherited Queen Margaret's son in favour of the Duke of York. This Act was much like the 1153 Treaty of Winchester, which had secured England for the Plantagenets, in that it allowed Henry VI to remain as king until his death. Unlike the Treaty of Winchester, the Act of Accord was fiercely opposed. York was killed at Wakefield before the year was out, and his claims passed to his son, Edward, Earl of March, who swiftly established himself as Edward IV. The tenures of Margaret of Anjou and of Edward IV's consort, Elizabeth Woodville, overlapped as Henry and Edward were on and off the English throne with power ebbing and flowing between the Lancastrian and Yorkist branches of the Plantagenet dynasty. Even when the House of York seemed supreme after the death of Henry VI in 1471, dynastic disputes continued when Richard III ousted his own nephews to take the crown himself in 1483. Anne Neville, our last consort, may have been the last Yorkist queen as well as the final Plantagenet one, but she could easily have become a Lancastrian consort instead, having been matched previously with Edward of Lancaster, Margaret of Anjou's son. Her life, as the daughter of the "Kingmaker" Warwick and as both a Lancastrian and Yorkist bride, provides an illuminating reflection at the

[6] See Helen Castor for a succinct explanation of how the "She-Wolf" epithet, applied to both women after their deaths, came to be applied to them: Helen Castor, *She-Wolves: The Women who ruled England before Elizabeth* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 31. This notion has in many ways dominated the historiography and particularly popular culture representations of both Isabella and Margaret. See: Michael Evans, "Queering Isabella: The 'She Wolf of France' in Film and Television," in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, ed. Janice North, Karl C. Alvestad, and Elena Woodacre (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 263–282; and Imogene Dudley, "She-Wolf or Feminist Heroine? Representations of Margaret of Anjou in Modern History and Literature," in *Remembering Queens and Kings of Early Modern England and France*, ed. Estelle Paranque (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 199–218.

end of our volume on Plantagenet consorts on the role dynastic dispute played in the lives of these royal women, even if her tenure itself was very brief.

Given the interwoven nature of these internal and external dynastic conflicts, it was difficult to place a dividing line in terms of grouping this conflict into clear thematic sections. However, in our first section, the Hundred Years' War remains the predominant conflict that links the tenures of the first six consorts in our volume together, from Isabella of France, whose Capetian claim provided a pretext for invasion to Katherine of Valois, whose son Henry VI briefly realised Edward III's ambition to be both king of England and France. While Margaret of Anjou could have been kept with her Lancastrian predecessors, Joan of Navarre and Katherine of Valois, she is instead grouped with the Yorkist queens Elizabeth Woodville and Anne Neville due to their involvement in the dynastic dispute of the Wars of the Roses. Anne Crawford's thematic chapter reflects on the role of the conflict in the tenure of all three consorts and the extent to which the turbulence of the period impacted the practice of queenship itself. The practice of queenship or the exercise of the queen's office is given further focus in Katia Wright's thematic chapter on the dower lands of the medieval queens that demonstrates their agency as administrators of vast collections of lands and highlights their often overlooked position as one of the most powerful "lords" of the realm. Finally, Elena Woodacre's Epilogue addresses another distinctive feature of the consorts of this period—the shift at the end of our volume from the more typical foreign queens, whose marriages were brokered to create alliances or seal the peace between England and its neighbours, to our final two consorts who were both Englishwomen, signalling a trend that continued into the Tudor consorts of the succeeding volume in the series.

Quasi-queens

These English-born consorts were prefigured by a series of quasi-queens, women who took up the position of "First Lady" in times when there was no queen consort and who shaped both political events and attitudes towards consorts themselves. Common motifs of alleged adultery, disputed marriages, witchcraft, and ambitious parvenues spun back and forth between queens consort and these quasi-queens, both in contemporary propaganda and in later histories. So too did the more respectable themes of intercession, devotion, duty, patronage, peacemaking, and risking

everything for their heirs. The queens consort in this volume lived their lives in the shadow, or the company, of these uncrowned women whose roles resembled theirs so closely. The first of these quasi-queens was an exceptional royal mistress, Alice Perrers, who stepped into the limelight after Philippa of Hainault's death. She was swiftly followed by a Princess of Wales, Joan of Kent, who was a king's mother but never queen. During the next hiatus between queens it was Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester, wife of the heir presumptive, who took up this role. Her successor as wife of an heir presumptive was Cecily, Duchess of York, although it was only as king's mother that Cecily acquired the identity of "Queene by right." A brief survey of these women provides essential context for comparison with the queens consort whose biographies follow.

Alice Perrers

In the early 1360s Edward III took as his mistress Alice Perrers, the daughter of a London goldsmith and widow of one of the King's jewellers, Janyn Perrers.[7] Alice's opponents would later viciously exaggerate her low birth—Thomas Walsingham claimed that her father was a thatcher—so it has only been in this century that her true identity was revealed by Mark Ormrod and Laura Tompkins.[8] Alice became one of Philippa's *demoiselles*, but supplemented her income from Philippa with a role as a moneylender to merchants and gentry. During Philippa's lifetime she began investing her wealth in property that, Tompkins has estimated, would eventually approach £2000 per annum in value—an income that exceeded that of some earls.[9]

Alice bore the King a son, John Southeray, in about 1365 and from 1367 she received a number of royal grants. Her name is notably absent from the list of Philippa's ladies who received bequests in the Queen's will. Philippa died in 1369 and, unlike other widowed kings of the later Middle

[7] Laura Tompkins, "The Uncrowned Queen: Alice Perrers, Edward III and Political Crisis in Fourteenth-Century England, 1360–1377" (PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 2013), 44. We are very grateful to Laura Tompkins for sharing her unpublished thesis.

[8] W.M. Ormrod, "Who was Alice Perrers?," *Chaucer Review* 40 (2006): 219–229; W.M. Ormrod, "Alice Perrers and John Salisbury," *English Historical Review* 123 (2008): 379–93; Laura Tompkins, "Alice Perrers and the Goldsmiths' Mistery: New Evidence Concerning the Identity of the Mistress of Edward III," *English Historical Review* 130 (2015): 1361–1391.

[9] Tompkins, "Alice Perrers and the Goldsmiths' Mistery," 1361–1384.

Ages, Edward III seems to have made no attempt to look for a replacement queen. Alice then emerged as a public figure, richly rewarded by the King, and sought out by courtiers for her influence over him. In 1373 Edward gave her a collection of the queen's jewels and the following year the Pope himself included her among those he petitioned to influence Edward III to engineer his brother's freedom from captivity. Alice subsequently stole the show at a royal tournament at Smithfield when she dressed as "the Lady of the Sun." Her choice of outfit was probably a deliberate spin on Edward III's own sunburst emblem.[10]

Alice was indubitably a skilled businesswoman with an impressive grasp of property law, but she was also abusing her closeness to the King in order to build up her wealth.[11] Moreover, contemporaries identified her as the heart of a disruptive and malign court clique. Tompkins has argued that Alice's powerful and self-serving influence over the King was perceived as "inverting queenship."[12] During the Good Parliament of 1376, Alice was condemned for the use of maintenance, accused of taking thousands of pounds from the Exchequer, and ordered to stay away from the court, under threat of banishment.

Thomas Walsingham reported that at this time her accomplice in seducing the King was also arrested, a Dominican friar who was an "evil magician" and had used wax effigies of the King and Alice to enable her to "get whatever she wanted from the King."[13] There is no corroborating evidence for this story of arrest, but the idea that low-status women could only attract the admiration of kings or nobles through witchcraft was a pervasive one, especially apparent in Elizabeth Woodville's story, featured in this volume, and probably also in that of a later quasi-queen, Eleanor Cobham, discussed below. Joan of Navarre's experience, also considered in this volume, indicates that royal women who were anomalous in other ways were similarly vulnerable to this association between women of power and witchcraft.

[10] W.M. Ormrod, *Edward III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 548.

[11] Laura Tompkins, "'Edward III's Gold-Digging Mistress': Alice Perrers, Gender and Financial Power at the English Royal Court," in *Women and Financial Power in Premodern Royal Courts*, ed. Cathleen Sarti (Bradford: Arc Humanities Press, 2020), 59–72.

[12] Tompkins, "Uncrowned Queen," 217–230.

[13] *The St Albans Chronicle, Volume I, 1376–1394: The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, ed. J. Taylor, W.R. Childs, and L. Watkiss (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 47–49.