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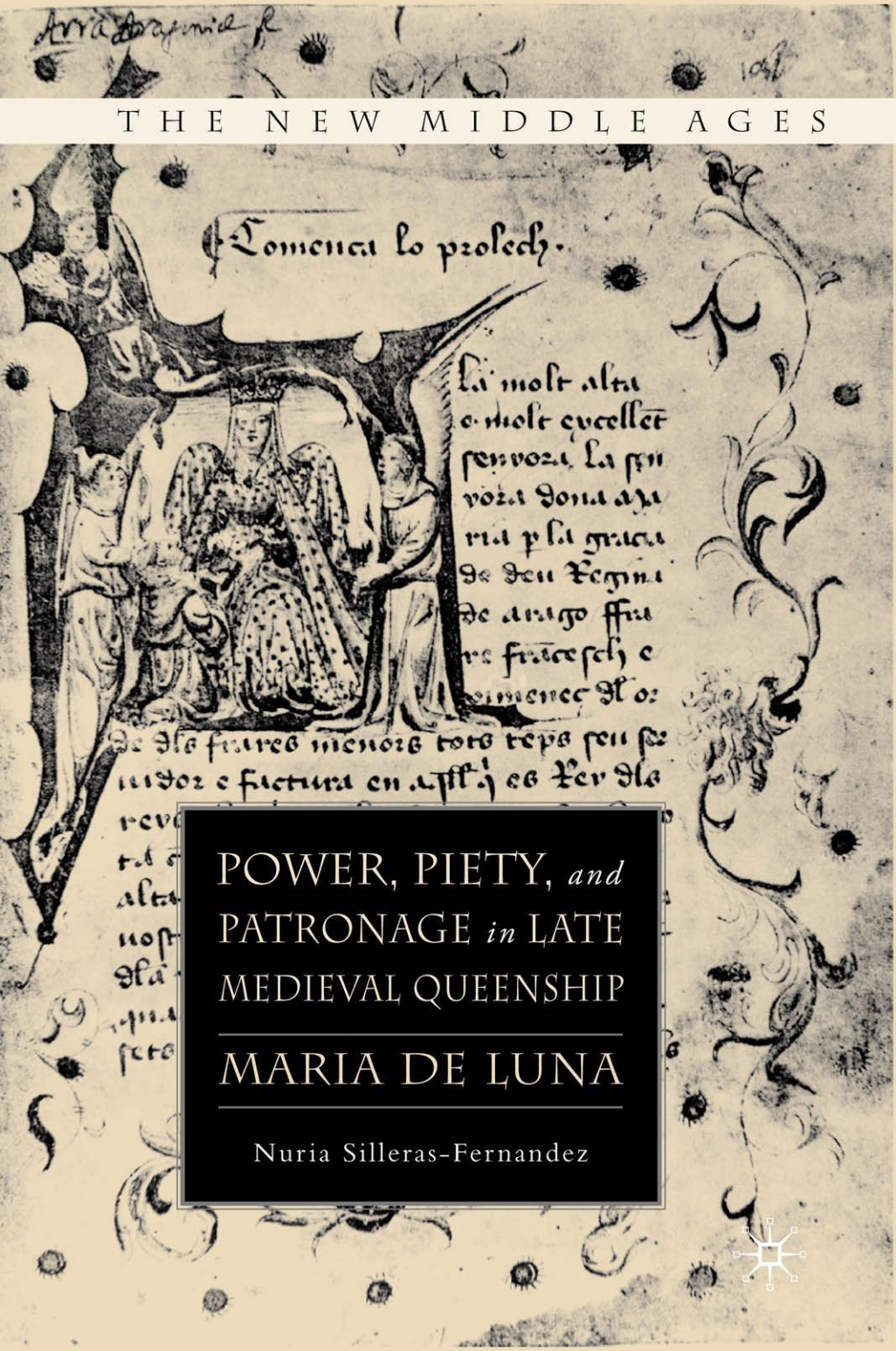

# POWER, PIETY, *and* PATRONAGE *in* LATE MEDIEVAL QUEENSHIP

## MARIA DE LUNA

Nuria Silleras-Fernandez

# THE NEW MIDDLE AGES

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by Nuria Silleras-Fernandez

# POWER, PIETY, AND PATRONAGE IN LATE MEDIEVAL QUEENSHIP

## MARIA DE LUNA

*Nuria Silleras-Fernandez*

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*A mis padres, Luis y Estrella.*

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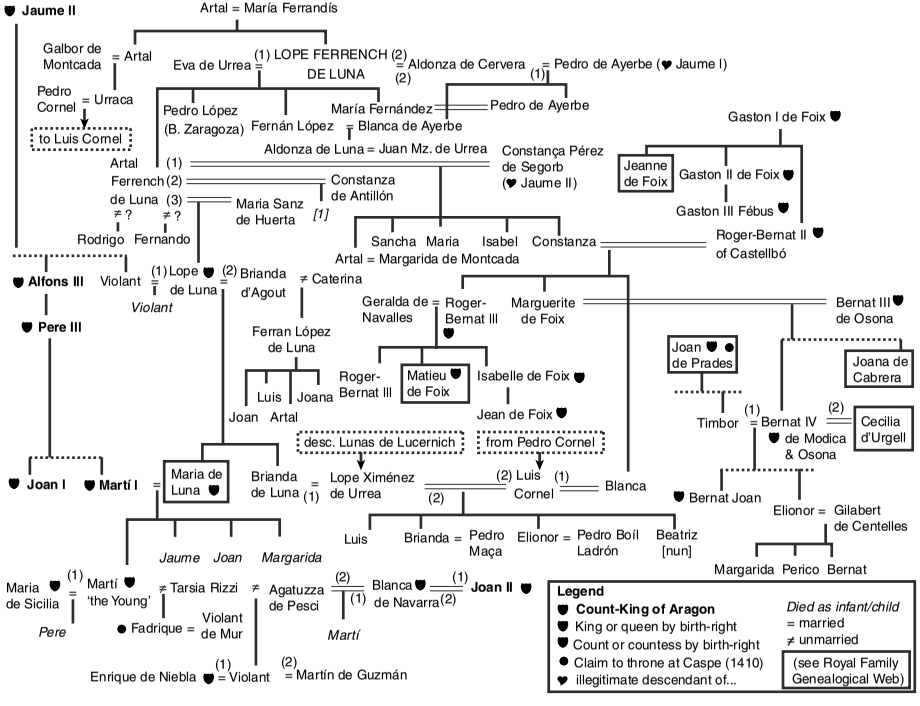
# NOTE ON USAGE

Most of the persons in this book moved in multilingual environments: Latin, Catalan, Aragonese, Valencian, Italian, and French and had identities that were not necessarily anchored in any single linguistic tradition. To maintain consistency and a sense of historical fidelity, as a general rule individuals' names are given in the variant that corresponds to their domestic linguistic environment. Hence, King Joan "the Hunter" is preferred over "John" or "Juan"—the Barcelona dynasty's "native" language was Catalan. Consequently, some equivalent names appear in different forms when referring to different people (e.g., Leonor and Elionor, Joan and Juan, etc.). Exceptions are made for Popes and for individuals who are normally referred to by a standard form (e.g., Eleanor of Aquitaine). The honorifics and titles of kings and queens are given in English. Technical terms, such as the names of court officers, taxes, and currency, which pertain to the Crown of Aragon are given in Catalan (e.g., *infant* rather than *infante*). Likewise, the Catalan numeration of rulers is preferred (e.g., "Pere III" rather than "Pedro IV"). When a place name is an element of a royal or comital title the English version of the name is used, when a place name serves as a surname the local variant is used (e.g., "Count Jaume of Urgell," but "Jaume d'Urgell"). Similarly place names are provided in the version that is used today by their inhabitants, unless a standard English version of the name exists. Hence, Girona (Catalan) is preferred over Gerona (Castilian), but Rome (English) over Roma (Italian).

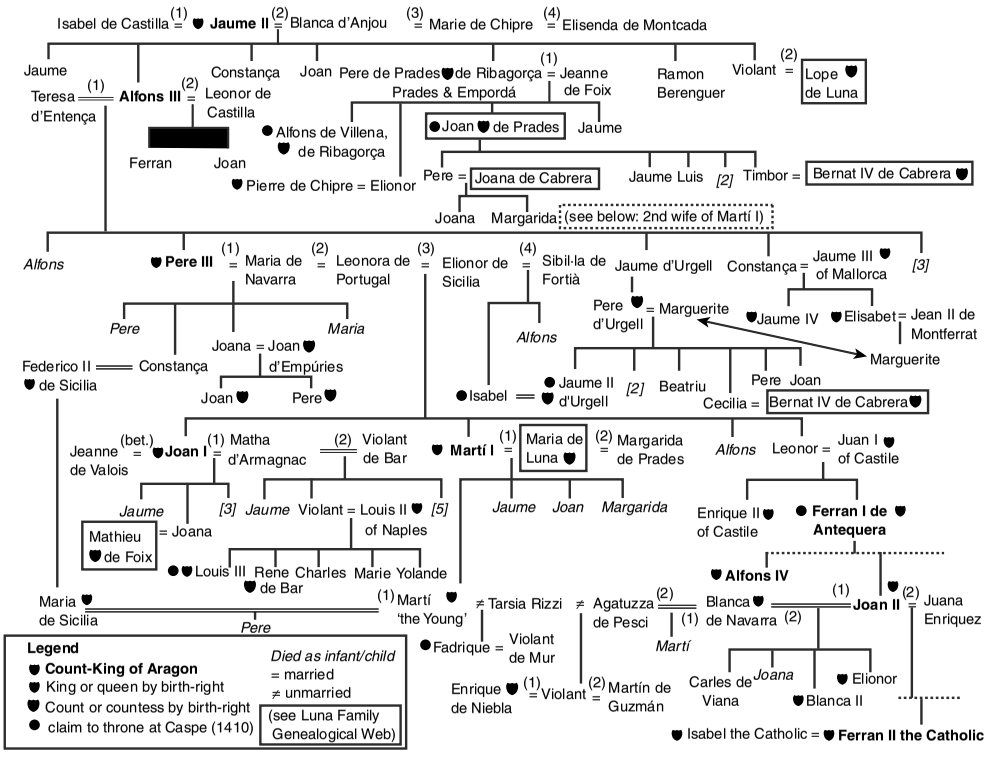
# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACA | Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó (Barcelona) |
| ACB | Arxiu de la Catedral de Barcelona |
| AEM | *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* |
| AEMed | *Aragón en la Edad Media* |
| AHPZ | Archivo Histórico Provincial de Zaragoza |
| AIA | *Archivo Ibero-americano* |
| AMS | Arxiu Municipal de Segorb |
| AMV | Arxiu Municipal de València |
| ARV | Arxiu del Regne de València |
| AST | *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensi* |
| BNC | Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya |
| BNE | Biblioteca Nacional de España |
| *BRABLB* | *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* |
| *BRAH* | *Boletín de la Real Academia de Historia* |
| c | caja/capsa |
| C | Cancillería/Cancelleria |
| carp | carpeta |
| Cast. | Castilian |
| Cat. | Catalan |
| CHCA | Congrès d'Història de la Corona d'Aragó |
| *CODOIN* | Próspero de Bofarull, ed. *Colección de documentos inéditos de la Corona de Aragón* (Barcelona: 1847–1910) |
| *Cortes* | *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de Aragón y de Valencia y Principado de Cataluña* (Madrid: 1896–) |
| CR | Cartas reales/Cartes Reials |
| CRM | Cartes Reials, Martí I |
| *Crònica* | Pere III el Cerimoniós, *Crònica* (Barcelona: 1995) |
| *DB* | *Diccionari Biogràfic* (Barcelona: 1966) |
| DdS | Diversos de Segorb |
| GCN | Pedro Garcés de Cariñena, *Nobiliario de Aragón* (Zaragoza: 1983) |

| | |
|---|---|
| GIM | Daniel Girona Llagostera, *Itinerari del rey En Martí, 1396–1410* (Barcelona: 1916) |
| JZA | Zurita, *Anales* |
| LlM | Lletres Missives |
| MC | Manual de Consells |
| MNA | *Manual de novells ardits* (Barcelona: 1892) |
| MR | Mestre Racional |
| MRABLB | *Memorias de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* |
| ms. | manuscrito |
| perg. | pergamino/pergamí |
| PgR | pergaminos reales |
| PR | Privilegios reales/privilegis reials |
| PrC | Procesos de corte/Processos de cort |
| PrM | Privilegis reials, Martí I |
| RAH | Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid) |
| reg. | registro/registre |
| RP | Real Patrimonio/Reial Patrimoni |
| sb. | *sous de Barcelona* |
| sign. | signatura |
| sj. | *sueldos de Jaca* |




Luna Family Genealogical Web




Royal Family Genealogical Web

# INTRODUCTION

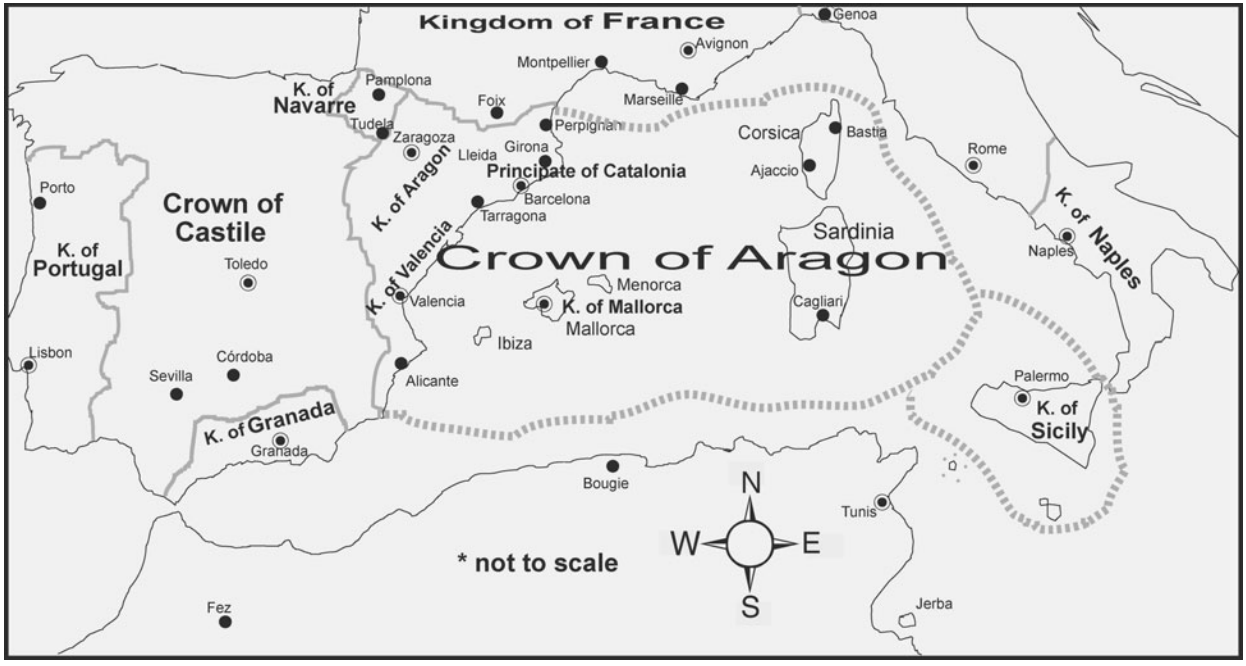
Maria de Luna was an unexpected queen, brought to the throne of the Crown of Aragon by the accidental death of her brother-in-law, Joan I the Hunter (1387–96), on 19 May 1396. Joan left no son to succeed him and, as a result, the Crown went to his younger brother, Martí. Maria, then Countess of Luna and Duchess of Montblanc, and who had been married to the *infant* Martí since 1372, became queen.

While a few medieval queens ruled kingdoms in their own right, most were little more than consorts. They had no direct authority, and they derived influence from their access to the royal patrimony and their role as intercessors between remote kings and supplicant subjects.[1] The special influence queens wielded both over their husbands and their children made them a favorite target of nobles, courtiers, clerics, or other individuals who hoped to petition or influence the king. Maria de Luna did indeed exercise this type of queenly influence, exemplified by figures such as the biblical Queen Esther and the Virgin Mary, the "queen of Heaven," but this was only one dimension of her political power.[2] Maria's authority also derived both from her official status as lieutenant, and from her own birthright.[3] As heir to the powerful count, Lope de Luna, Maria exercised independent seigniorial authority over a vast and valuable feudal dominion in Aragon and Valencia. She was endowed with royal authority by her husband, and she twice acted as Martí's lieutenant and enjoyed plenary authority as his representative. The first of these episodes spanned her initial year as queen, when Martí was absent in Sicily and Maria governed the Crown of Aragon as lieutenant-general. The other was in 1401, when dynastic affairs called Martí to the neighboring Kingdom of Navarre and Maria was appointed lieutenant of the Kingdom of Valencia. She became the direct ruler of the crisis-ridden kingdom, a post she held up to her death in 1406.

The Crown of Aragon was a geographical aggregate. In addition to the mainland territories of Catalonia, Aragon, and Valencia, it included Mallorca (the Balearic Islands), Sardinia, and Corsica, as well as

further flung territories such as Sicily (intermittently since 1282), Naples (from 1442), Jerba (1284–1333), Athens, and Neopatria (1381–8). Its dispersed character presented a unique challenge to rulers in the age of feudal monarchy (see map I.1).[4] Contemporaries, as much as historians, realized that the ideal of a monarchy as the authority of an all-powerful king was rather more theoretical than real. Without the physical presence of the ruler, it was very difficult to maintain royal authority in the face of rebellious nobility, ambitious municipalities, and common folk suffering from the after-effects of the fourteenth-century crisis. In a territory as diffuse as the Crown this was simply out of the question. Delegation of royal power and the duplication of royal personality was the only solution and yet there could only be one king—an indivisible, individual sovereign. How could the king be in more than one place at once?

This problem was resolved by Jaume I (1213–76), the king who—with the founding of the kingdoms of Mallorca (1229) and Valencia (1238)—most dramatically increased the territory of the Crown. By establishing the office of lieutenant, *locum tenens*, he created an *alter nos*—an individual who would be an autonomous, fully empowered representative of the king, a living extension of the royal power.[5] It was a position that bore some relation to the royal favorite, in that the lieutenant would be an individual intimately close to the king, whose authority was completely dependent on the monarch's will. However, a crucial difference was that the lieutenancy was a formal office, the competency of which was anchored in law, while the favorite was merely the king's protégé.[6] Typically, the lieutenancy was occupied by the king's firstborn son. Thus, the office served also to formally associate the heir with the throne, to give the king-to-be political experience, and to legitimize him in the eyes of his future subjects. But in certain situations, such as when there was no heir, or when he was too young to participate actively in government, it was customary to give the post to a close family member, such as a brother, uncle, or wife. In such cases proximity to the throne normally overrode gender considerations, making the queen preferable as candidate over more distant male relatives. Hence, lieutenancy provided queens in the Crown of Aragon with a rare opportunity to wield formal authority, given that women were effectively excluded from inheriting the throne, and never had the opportunity to serve as regents.[7] Further, the emerging importance of queens' service in this position in the Crown of Aragon contradicts the thesis of a dramatic decline in the position of elite women—queens in particular—that is often suggested to have taken place after 1100, supposedly resulting from the development of primogeniture, the reestablishment of the dowry, and centralizing trends that accentuated the division between public and private spheres.[8]




**Map I.1** The Crown of Aragon during the Reign of Maria de Luna

## Queen-Consorts and Queen-Mothers

Naming the queen-consort as lieutenant-general rather than naming some other member of the royal circle offered certain advantages for the sovereign. For example, given that her authority as queen derived solely from the king's, and that as a woman she could hardly hope to rule alone, the queen-consort would be in no position to compete against or dispense with the king. Hers was a figure that did not challenge or undermine the image of the monarch but, rather, which completed it. Thus, in principle, the king could expect that her agenda would coincide with his regarding the future of the dynasty and, most of all, the fortunes of their children—at least when one of these was poised to inherit the throne. However, when this was not the case, queens often worked at cross-purposes to those of their husband's dynasty.[9]

Correspondingly, a queen-mother also occupied a special position in the royal family, not only because of her relationship to the king, but also because of her bond with and influence over the future monarch, her son, whose upbringing and education she normally supervised at least until he reached his early teens. Perhaps the most dramatic example of such a relationship in medieval Europe is provided by Eleanor of Aquitaine (Queen of England, 1154–89; d. 1204), who was so closely bound to her sons that she led them into rebellion against their father, Henry II (1154–89), and helped place first her favorite, Richard the Lion-Hearted (1189–99), and subsequently her youngest son, John Lackland (1199–1216), on the English throne. Even so, while Henry lived, Eleanor remained under her husband's jurisdiction, suffering sixteen years of imprisonment because of her machinations.[10] Queen-mothers were also frequently chosen to serve as regents for their minor sons in various European kingdoms, such as Castile, France, and England. In fact, the regency was the foreign institution most similar to the Catalano-Aragonese lieutenancy.

This tradition was also well established in Iberia, both in Navarre and particularly in Castile, where there were a series of active and independent queen regents.[11] For example, Urraca (1080?–26), the eldest daughter and heir of Alfonso VI of Castile (1072–1109) and León (1065–1109), became her son's co-regent, along with the Archbishop Diego Gelmírez of Santiago de Compostela. As an adult, Alfonso VII was forced to take arms to dislodge his mother, but had to be content with sharing power until her death.[12] Berenguela de León was regent for her brother, Enrique I (1214–17), and inherited the throne after his death, abdicating within months in favor of her son Fernando III.[13] María de Molina, wife of Sancho IV of Castile, acted as regent both for her son, Fernando IV (1295–1321), and for her grandson, Alfonso XI (1312–50). Maria de Luna's contemporary, the English princess, Catherine of Lancaster (1372–1418),

ruled as co-regent of Castile in the name of her son, the young Juan II.[14] In fact, Urraca, Berenguela, and later Castilian queens, including Isabel the Catholic (1474–1504) and her daughter Juana the Mad (1504–55) each inherited the crown in her own right. This never occurred in the Crown of Aragon except in the case of Juana the Mad who inherited the title of queen in 1516 but never actually ruled.[15]

The panorama was similar across Europe, where queens were generally able to rule in their husband's name only when the king himself had appointed them and was in a position to impose this choice on his subjects. For example, Margaret of Anjou twice ruled in her husband's stead, once while Henry VI of England (1422–71) was incapacitated by illness (1453–4) and the second time during his year of captivity (1460–1). In the first instance, when Henry's ill-health called his future into question, the queen had great difficulty in compelling her subjects to recognize her authority, while in the second, her legitimacy as regent was recognized because it was expected that the king would return.[16] Similar examples can be found in France, where queens acted as regents and tutors while their husbands were absent on crusade. Hence, Adele de Champagne served as co-regent with her brother, Archbishop Guillaume of Rheims, while her son Philippe II went on crusade in 1190.[17] Blanca de Castilla (1182–1252) ruled France for eighteen years during the minority of her son, the king and future saint, Louis IX (1226–70), and later for six years during his ill-fated Crusade to the Holy Land.[18] Finally, Isabeau de Bavarie (1385–1435) ruled in the name of an ill and incompetent husband, Charles VI, who was regarded as insane by his subjects. The common element in each of these examples is that the authority of reigning queens was generally recognized beyond dispute when it was based, whether explicitly or implicitly, on the higher authority of a male figure.[19] Nevertheless, paradoxically, queen-consorts were often in a more secure position to exercise power than queens who ruled in their own right. As the experiences of Matilda, tenuously recognized as successor to the English throne in 1127 and subsequently defeated in rebellion, show, women who inherited royal title were often disempowered by having their right to succeed challenged on the basis of their gender, or by being married off and placed under the political authority of an unsympathetic foreign prince.[20]

## Queens-Lieutenants of the Crown of Aragon

In contrast to the situation in other European kingdoms, including Castile, women in the Crown of Aragon were barred from inheriting the throne. No law expressly established the right of inheritance, but custom and the testaments of the kings effectively prevented female succession.[21] Yet, a tradition of delegation of royal power to queens encouraged a recognition

of women's capacity to serve as lieutenant. This originated with Blanca d'Anjou (1295–1310), who served as her husband's representative in April 1310, while Jaume II was on crusade in Almería.[22] A few years later, Teresa d'Entença took on this role in 1327 during the illness of her husband Alfons III (1327–36).[23] The formidable Elionor de Sicilia (1349–74), Maria de Luna's childhood guardian and role model, was named lieutenant by her husband in 1374; ten years earlier she had convened the *cortes* in the name of Pere Ceremonious while he was fighting in Castile.[24] On the latter occasion Elionor was not formally designated as lieutenant, but this was no impediment to her aggressively independent political capacity, which was well-known to her contemporaries. In 1375, Matha d'Armagnac, wife of the heir and future king Joan I, and not yet a queen, was sent to the Kingdom of Valencia as a royal representative to quell the constant feuding of the nobility.[25] Once king, Joan appointed his second wife, Violant de Bar, as lieutenant for a short period when he was anticipating leading a military expedition to Sardinia in person.[26] He had preferred his brother for the post, but from 1392 Martí was occupied in Sicily.

However, it would be Maria de Luna who would first serve formally as lieutenant-general to the king, with jurisdiction over the whole Crown of Aragon and for the longest period of any queen up to that point. In 1396 she was acclaimed queen by the burghers of Barcelona and the nobility of Catalonia, and subsequently received Martí I's commission as his deputy in the Crown of Aragon. Later she served as his lieutenant in the Kingdom of Valencia. The last female lieutenant associated with the dynasty would be Blanca de Navarra. Blanca was Maria's daughter-in-law, having married Martí the Young, who had himself acquired the Kingdom of Sicily by marriage. She first served as lieutenant of Sicily for a few weeks in 1404 while Martí the Young visited Barcelona; after her husband's death she regained the position under the authority of Martí I, and retained the office during the interregnum of 1410–2. But with the death of her last royal male patron Blanca became vulnerable to the predatory ambitions of noblemen like Bernat IV de Cabrera.[27] Events in Sicily clearly demonstrate the derivative nature of women's political authority—as a lieutenant appointed by powerful men, Blanca had the full authority of a ruler, even though she was a foreign princess; on the other hand, her husband's first wife, Maria de Sicilia (1377–1402), had inherited the Kingdom of Sicily from her father but was effectively dispossessed of authority once she had married Martí the Young.

The direct male line of the house of Barcelona died out in 1410 with Martí, and at the assembly known as the "Compromise of Caspe" his nephew Ferran, or Fernando, de Antequera was acclaimed successor. A Trastámara from Castile, he claimed the throne through his mother,