Theorizing Queens Consort in Fiction and Nonfiction: Medieval and Early Modern Europe
Workshop: Attending Early Modern Women, June 2018

Workshop Leaders:

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Workshop Description:

In this workshop, we will work towards redressing a scholarly tendency to overlook medieval and early modern queens consort, fictional and historical, as an area of study. Although much scholarly attention has been given to sovereign queens, far less has been given to queens consort, perhaps because queens consort were more often expected to submit to dominant conventions of women as chaste, silent, and obedient. Yet queens consort also wielded real political power and actively shaped their representations and identities. At the same time, these women—fictional or historical—are depicted as having to constantly position and reposition themselves within shifting categories of nationalism, race, religion, and ideas of what a royal wife and mother should be. As such, this workshop intersects with a number of scholarly and theoretical areas of interest, including affect studies, cultural studies, performance studies, queer theory, epistolatory studies, patronage studies, race and ethnicity studies, and visual studies. Whether participants are working on historical or fictional queens consort, whether they are working on English or Continental Queens consort, or whether they are working on medieval or early modern queens consort, we invite workshop discussions focused on the following areas, in particular:

- How were medieval and early modern queens consort, fictional or historical, conceptualized and performed in literature, treatises, portraits, and documents?
- How did queens consort create scenes of power for themselves via their own writings, commissioned portraits, curiously processions, and/or patronage?
- To what extent might queens consort be vulnerable to being scapegoated, exiled, or executed?
- How did early modern writers depict a medieval queen consort like Margaret of Anjou, an early modern queen consort like Anne of Denmark, or a fictional queen consort, like Ariosto’s Lucina?
- How were foreign and non-European queens consort represented?
- How did queens consort find choice and agency when they were sent to live out most of their lives in a foreign country, where they lacked family and clear allies?
As we open the workshop, we plan to present brief introductions of our particular areas of research associated with queens consort. Maria T. Prendergast will discuss the way that the historical Catherine of Aragon shaped her own reputation as Henry's chaste, modest, and pious consort; she will also note the effect of this reputation on early modern literature. Susan Dunn-Hensley will introduce her research on the historical queens Henrietta Maria and Anne of Denmark, as well as the fictional queen Hippolyta (A Midsummer Night's Dream), a character who will allow consideration of dynastic marriage and the violent commodification of women. Jessica DeVos will focus on court poetry praising Mary Stuart as queen consort of France, highlighting how starkly it differed from the propaganda condemning her as the sovereign queen of Scotland. All three of us will return to the continuing situation of queens consort—the question of how these women, fictional or historical, might gain agency and choice, particularly when they were sent to foreign countries as queens consort.

We will then open up discussion to other workshop members by asking them what their particular areas of interest and research are in light of queens consort, then encourage discussion of controversies, lacunae, and points of intersection within this area of study. We plan to end by summarizing the main comments as a way to invite participants to move towards a larger theorizing of queens consort, including areas of restriction and choice within this cultural identity. Throughout discussion, we will pause, when relevant, to consider the readings and portraits associated with this workshop.

Common Readings:
Louise Olga Fradenburg, selection from Chapter 5, City, Marriage, Tournament, pp. 78-83.
Gaywyn Moore," "You Turn me into Nothing": Reformation of Queenship on the Jacobean State," (pp. 27-8; 30-top of p. 34).

If time and audiovisual accessibility allow, during the seminar we will be looking and discussing at portraits as acts of choice by key queens consort, including portraits of Margaret Tudor, Catherine of Aragon, Mary Queen of Scots, and Henrietta Maria.

Additional Suggested Readings:


Juan Luis Vives

THE EDUCATION OF A CHRISTIAN WOMAN: A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY MANUAL

Edited and Translated by Charles Fantazzi

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
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Charles Fantazzi is Distinguished Visiting Professor of Humanities at East Carolina University and professor of classics at the University of Windsor. He has translated several volumes for the Collected Works of Erasmus (University of Toronto Press) and has published critical editions and translations of works of Juan Luis Vives (Brill Academic Publishers).

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PREFACE TO THE BOOKS ON THE 
EDUCATION OF A CHRISTIAN WOMAN.

By Juan Luis Vives,
Addressed to Her Most Serene Majesty,
Catherine of Aragon, Queen of England, etc.

1. Moved by the holiness of your life and your ardent zeal 1 for sacred studies, I have endeavored to write something for Your Majesty on the education of a Christian woman, a subject of paramount importance, but one that has not been treated hitherto by anyone among the great multitude and diversity of talented writers of the past. For what is so necessary as the spiritual formation of those who are our inseparable companions in every condition of life? Feelings of good will are strong among good persons, but not lasting among the wicked. With good reason Aristotle says that those states that do not provide for the proper education of women deprive themselves of a great part of their prosperity. 2 Obviously, there is nothing so troublesome as sharing one's life with a person of no principles. And if this can be said with good cause of states, all the more justly can it be said of the individual household. Moreover, when Xenophon 3 and Aristotle 4 transmitted rules

1. In addition to her education in the usual womanly arts, Catherine was tutored in Latin by Antonio and Alessandro Geraldini and was much influenced by Queen Isabella's zeal for religion. Erasmus often refers to her extraordinary learning in his letters—for example, in the dedication of his Paraphrase of Luke to Henry VIII in 1523, where he speaks of the king's "most noble consort, a unique example in our age of true religion, who with a distaste for the things of no account that women love devotes a good part of her day to holy reading." Erasmus, ep. 1381 (CWE 10:61).


3. Chapters 7 to 10 of Xenophon's Oeconomicus contain a dialogue between Isomachus, a rich property owner, and his young wife, whom he instructs in household management. The work was much admired in the Renaissance and was translated into English in 1532 by Gentian Hervet, a member of the household of Lady Margaret, countess of Salisbury, who was Queen Catherine's friend and governess. Xenophon's Treatise of Householde was the first direct translation of any work from Greek into English that can be dated. Cf. Xenophon, Oeconomicus, ed. Sarah Pomeroy (Oxford, 1994), 80–81.

4. The pseudo-Aristotelian Economics, considered genuine in the Renaissance, formed with the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics a tripartite division of moral philosophy in the works of
for the management of domestic affairs, and Plato for the state, they made some observations pertaining to the duty of the woman. Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, and Fulgentius discussed the status of virgins and widows in such a way that they advocate a way of life rather than give instruction about it. They spend all their time singing the praises of chastity, a commendable undertaking in itself and one worthy of those minds and of the sanctity of that virtue, but they gave very few precepts or rules of life, thinking it preferable to exhort their readers to the best conduct and to point the way to the highest examples rather than give instruction about more lowly matters.

But leaving exhortation to them so that each may choose for herself a way of life based on their authority rather than on my opinion, I formulate practical rules for living. Thus, in the first book, I begin with the first stage of a woman's life and continue up to the state of matrimony; then, in the second book, I make recommendations on how time is to be passed properly and happily with one's husband from marriage to widowhood, and, in the last book, instruction is given concerning widowhood.

2. And since it could not be avoided, many things are said in the first book that pertain to wives and widows, many in the following book that pertain to the unwed, and some things in the third book that pertain to all three. I say this so that the unmarried girl will not think that she has to read only the first book or the married woman the second or the widow the third. I think all of the books should be read by every class of woman. Perhaps I have been more brief in my treatment than some would have wished, but if anyone will consider carefully the reason for my decision, he will understand that it was not done without good reason. For in giving precepts, brevity should not be among the least considerations, lest through verbosity you overwhelm the minds of the readers rather than instruct them. And the

Aristotle. The third book of this treatise, extensively cited by Vives, has come down to us only in two Latin versions in a large number of manuscripts, mostly from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. One of these, the so-called translatio Durandi, supposedly made by a certain Durand País of Spain, procurator of the University of Paris in Rome under Pope Clement IV in 1266, is the more authoritative of the two. This Latin translation enjoyed great popularity in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance for its moralizing character and its precepts on marital life, which accorded well with Christian morality. Leonardo Bruni translated all three books in 1420, changing the medieval Latin of the third book into humanist Latin. Cf. The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni, trans. and introduction by Gordon Griffiths, James Hankins, and David Thompson (Binghamton, 1987), chap. 7, "Moral Conduct in Business and Marriage," 300–17. The best edition of this work is Aristotle, Économique, ed. and trans. B. A. van Groningen and André Wartelle (Paris, 1968).

5. Plato Republic 451D, 475E.
precepts should be such that one can learn them easily and retain them in
the memory. For we must not be ignorant of the laws by which we should
live. This was revealed to us by Christ and after him by the apostles—Peter,
Paul, James, John, and Jude—who transmitted religious teachings to the
world that, besides being divine in origin, were also few and brief. And in-
deed, who could observe those laws that are not even kept by those who
have grown old in them? For that reason I have not extended the examples,
of which I have given a great many, nor have I digressed into the common-
places of virtues and vices, a very extensive topic on which to expatiate,
and one that often presented itself throughout the work and almost invited
elevation. But I wished my book to stay within limits so that it could be
read without fatigue and even reread.

3. In addition, although rules of conduct for men are numerous, the
moral formation of women can be imparted with very few precepts, since
men are occupied both within the home and outside it, in public and in
private, and for that reason lengthy volumes are required to explain the
norms to be observed in their varied duties. A woman's only care is chastity;
therefore when this has been thoroughly elucidated, she may be considered
to have received sufficient instruction. Wherefore all the more hateful is the
crime of those who seek to corrupt this one good that women possess, as if
you were set on extinguishing the sight left to a one-eyed person. There are
those who write filthy and scurrilous poems, and what pretext that has even
the semblance of honesty they can adduce for their intent I do not see, save
that their minds, corrupted by wickedness and tainted with poison, can emit
only poison, with which to destroy everything around them. They say they
are lovers, and I do not doubt it, for they too are blind and insane. It is as if
you cannot gain the submission of your mistress without at the same time
upsetting and defiling all other women along with her. To my mind, no one
was ever more justly exiled than Ovidius Naso, if indeed he was banished
because of the Art of Love. Others have sung of lewd and disgraceful things,
but this supreme craftsman reduced depravity to rules and precepts—can
you imagine—a master of unchastity and public corrupter of the morals of
the state.

4. I have no doubt that to some I shall seem unduly harsh and severe,
but if they were to read the minute particulars that sacred writers discuss
and see how meticulously they examine every detail, and with what severity

6. In his poems of exile, the Tristia, Ovid states that two things brought about his ruin: commen
tet error, "a poem and an error," (Tristia 2.207). The Art of Love was published in A.D. 1 or 2
and Ovid was exiled to Tomis (the modern Constanza) on the Black Sea in A.D. 8.
of language and tone, they would judge me to be too mild and indulgent. But such is the nature of things that to the good the path of virtue seems very accessible and pleasant, while that of vice seems narrow and rough. For the wicked, neither the path they tread is pleasant, nor is the path of uprightness wide enough or open to them. This being the case, we must agree more with the good and believe that the wicked are more easily deceived in their judgment than the generality of good men. Pythagoras and others of his school, adopting the letter Y [upsilon] as their symbol, say that after overcoming the first difficulties in the acquisition of virtue, the rest is easy. And Plato, concurring with Pythagoras, urges us to choose the best way of life, which habit will render most agreeable. Our Lord in the gospel called the path to the kingdom of God narrow, not because it is so in very fact, but because few enter upon it, unless one were to think that his saying is false: "My yoke is easy and my burden light", along with the promise that there is no one who leaves anything for his sake who will not have much greater things, even in this life. What is meant thereby but the pleasure and satisfaction that virtue brings with it.

5. Therefore, I know who will find my precepts too severe and rigid, young men, the inexperienced, the lascivious, and the depraved, who cannot bear the sight of a virtuous woman, who, like unbridled, well-fed horses, neigh at every mare. Likewise, my precepts will not appeal to stupid, vain, and foolish girls, who enjoy being looked at and courted and would like their vices to be approved by the multitudes of sinners, as if the consensus of the common crowd could change the way things are. It is nothing new that the wicked hate those that give good advice. On this same subject Theophrastus gave many stern precepts about marriage and in so doing

7. The Greek letter Y, according to Pythagoras and his followers, symbolized the two paths of life: virtue and vice. Cf. Diogenes Laertius 8.32 and Hesiod Works and Days 289.
8 Plato Republic 331A.
12. Theophrastus (c. 370–288 B.C.E.) was a disciple of Aristotle and succeeded him as head of the Lyceum. He continued and extended Aristotle's teachings in almost every discipline, but only his work on botany is extant. In addition to the botanical studies, his Characters were influential in the seventeenth century. See the various volumes published by William Fortenbaugh, et al., in the series Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities. Saint Jerome in his Against Jovinianus cites passages from a lost work of Theophrastus on marriage, which he may have derived from a lost work of Seneca. It is also possible that these fragments may have come from a work of Aristotle on marriage cited by the fifth-century lexicographer Hesychius. At any event, these passages were often cited on the authority of Jerome in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.
incited the wrath of the courtesans against him; and Leontion, the concubine of Metrodorus,13 rushed forward to spew out a senseless and shameless tract against a man of such learning and eloquence. The deed was seen to be so scandalous that, as if to signify there was no hope left, it gave rise to the proverb: “to choose a tree to hang yourself.”14 Saint Jerome writes to Demetrias about something that happened to him in the following manner:

“About thirty years ago I wrote a book on the preservation of virginity, in which it was necessary for me to lash out against vices and expose the snares of the devil for the instruction of the young girl whom I was counseling. This language gave offense to many since each one, interpreting what I was saying as directed against himself, did not accept my words as a friendly admonition but felt aversion toward me as one who was incriminating his actions.”15 Thus says Jerome. So, what kind of persons will I offend with my pious admonitions? Those from whom if I were to please I would earn reprehension and blame.

6. On my side I will have men of sobriety and common sense, chaste virgins, virtuous matrons, prudent widows—in a word, all those who are truly Christian at heart and not only in name, all of whom know and recognize that nothing can be more mild and moderate than the precepts of our faith, from which may Christ never allow us to divert our minds and our thoughts by even a hair’s breadth. To holy women I have merely given gentle advice concerning their duties. Others I have chastised, at times rather sharply, because I saw that teachings alone are of little benefit to those who resist one who guides them and must be dragged along almost against their will to their proper goal. Therefore, I have spoken rather plainly on occasion to that seeing the repulsiveness of their conduct as if it were depicted in a painting, they might feel ashamed and cease acting in a shameful manner. At the same time, good women might have reason to rejoice that they are far removed from these vices and might make all the more effort to distance themselves even further and to retreat into the innermost precincts of virtue. I have preferred, following the advice of Jerome,16 to run the risk of offending propriety rather than undermining my argument, without however lapsing into indecency, the worst thing a teacher of chastity could do. As a result, sometimes more things are to be understood than are

13. Leontion was an Athenian courtesan who became the mistress of Metrodorus of Lampsacus (c. 331–277 B.C.E.), the most famous of Epicurus's followers.
expressed. Things that would not accord with accepted moral standards I have supported and sustained with the testimony of great authorities, lest they be nullified by the force of public opinion.

7. I dedicate this work to you, glorious Queen, just as a painter might represent your likeness with utmost skill. As you would see your physical likeness portrayed there, so in these books you will see the image of your mind, since you were both a virgin and promised spouse and a widow and now wife (as, please God, you may long continue), and since you have so conducted yourself in all these various states of life that whatever you did is a model of an exemplary life to others. But you prefer that virtues be praised rather than yourself. Although no one can praise female virtues without including you in that same praise, I shall nonetheless obey you, provided that you know that under the rubric of excellent and outstanding virtues other women similar to you may be mentioned by name, but it is you always, even if tacitly, who are spoken of. For virtues cannot be extolled with praise without commending those who, though unnamed, excelled in those virtues. Your daughter Mary will read these recommendations and will reproduce them as she models herself on the example of your goodness and wisdom to be found within her own home. She will do this assuredly and, unless she alone belie all human expectations, must of necessity be virtuous and holy as the offspring of you and Henry VIII, such a noble and honored pair. Therefore, all women will have an example to follow in your life and actions, and, in this work dedicated to you, precepts and rules for the conduct of their lives. Both of these they will owe to your moral integrity, by which you have lived and through which I have been inspired to write. Farewell.

Bruges, 5 April 1523

17. Beginning with the Basel edition of 1538, Vives changed his description of Catherine's marital status with Arthur, Prince of Wales, from uxor (wife) to sponsa (promised spouse), thus supporting the Queen's cause.
III's unpopularity by his queen, who — in a final "overturning" of roles — is said to have been poisoned. In her Italian vita, at any rate, Margaret of Denmark exemplifies the power of queenship to "purify" hierarchy of its brutalities, to make "absolute authority the more attractive as it appear[s] removed from paternal sternness."38

Of the best-known communitarian heroine of the later Middle Ages — Joan of Arc — Jean Gerson wrote in De quaedam puella that "it is congruent with the Scriptures that God should have made blessed salvation manifest to the peoples and the kingdoms of the world per fragilem sexum et innocentem aetatem."39 Joan was devoted to the reinstatement of the French monarchy (threatened by accusations of Charles's illegitimacy) and the identification of the monarchy's triumph as a sign of the "election" of the French as God's chosen people; the fructuities of fifteenth-century French politics were badly in need of sovereign love. Regarding a later "epiphany of the triumphant virago," Winfried Schleiner notes the close connection between descriptions of Elizabeth as an Amazon and the Armada conflict: he mentions a Latin ode which comments, "A woman triumphs over a man, indeed over a mighty one," and mentions also the commemorative coin celebrating the English victory, which "bore the Virgilian tag "Dux Foeminae Fecit": "A woman was conductor of the fact." Thus the English victory over Spain was consciously celebrated as the victory of a woman.40 At stake in the art of the Armada, as in the biblical metaphors of the story of Joan of Arc, is the larger wholeness of the community — its invulnerability to wounding, to perforation, to invasion, whether from without or from within.

In the debates on gynecocracy, too, some writers invoked God's power to work miracles as justification for female rule; others saw female rule as plague, as monstrous and prodigious. Both interpretations were ascribed female rule as an overturning of the normal course of history.41 Thus the emphasis on unanimity often characteristic of the queenly art of rule may, depending on historical and cultural circumstances, be talismanic or even deliberately provocative of the very power of change against which it also defends. When "exchanged" in marriage, queens are, as Stafford points out, "the greatest of gifts": but by that very token they can be the most threatening of gifts, most capable of changing that to which they are given.42 As the story of Troy suggests — in which Venus "gives" Helen to Paris — the ambiguity of the gift is likely to come to the forefront when the queen's foreignness becomes a source of unease and her fidelity is questioned. The foreignness of queens — which compounds the liminality of their femaleness—heightens the stakes of sovereign paradoxicality.43 The distance of queens from their subjects, as well as their intimacy with their subjects, will as often as not begin in and may readily take on an aura of dubiousness, danger, even crisis. Thus to the queen is attributed a specially frightening power to alter identities, and the crime of which she is most frequently accused, other than adultery, is witchcraft (in Jonson's Masque of Queens, the antimask is one of witches).44 In extraordinary cases queens are enemies; but even ordinarily they are "representatives of rival families," "personifications of old grievances."45 And queenly power is itself likely to be a contradictory compound of what Bourdieu calls "official" and "unofficial" power — of secrecy and publicity, of "private negotiations" and public decrees.46 Thus, since the queen is likely to be considered in some sense a "masculine" woman as well as exemplary of Woman, her art of rule is likely to be riskier and more complicated than that of the king — especially since she is often asked to take on risk and complexity for the king.47

The paradoxicality of sovereignty, then, is in the case of queens given a critical, too often literally a life-and-death, consequentiality (the history of queens in Europe is a history of far greater vulnerability to failure than that of kings). For queens are not only unlike their subjects in that they are queens but are frequently unlike them in that they are foreigners and are unlike the bearers of official power in that they are women; and they are like their subjects not only in that they are human but also in that, unless they are regnant, they owe fidelity and must dedicate their creativity, their bodies as well as their hearts, to the king. The often intense association of queens with questions of division and unity, discontinuity and continuity, suggests that the role of queens in historical agency and experience may in fact be more critical and less purely ornamental than has traditionally been supposed. The art of queenship, for example, appears to have been even more difficult to negotiate in the later Middle Ages than was true earlier in the period. JoAnn McNamara and Suzanne Wemple have argued, at any rate, that the xenophobia of the later Middle Ages found it increasingly difficult to tolerate the foreignness of queens.48 Margaret Tudor married James IV of Scotland fifteen years after James III's pursuit of a policy of peace with England was alleged as justification for his overthrow. And the question of gynecocracy exacerbated the problem of foreignness even further, by opening up the possibility that, for example, Spaniards and Scots might rule England, or a Frenchwoman (Mary of Guise) rule Scotland. Succession problems made anxieties about national identity especially fervid.

The best-known of these troubled successions to historians of England is of course the long history of the Tudor dynasty's failure to achieve anything remotely resembling primogeniture and its reliance, as a result, on
two female "princes," one of whom was half Spanish and had married a Spaniard, the other of whom had been declared illegitimate by her father. It is less well known, but more significant for our purposes, that throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in Scotland a series of mishaps produced not so much orderly succession as a succession of lengthy minorities, when Scotland had to wait for its seventeen-month-old or six-year-old kings to grow up and had to endure the political intricacies of regencies. With the exception of Rosalind Marshall, historians of fifteenth-century Scotland have largely failed to appreciate the significance of the fact that the minorities threw queens into situations both of heightened opportunity and peril and gave them a leading role in the rule of Scotland. The history of that role remains to be written, but the framework of events at least is fairly clear.

As is well known to scholars of The Kingis Quair, James I met Joan Beaufort during his eighteen-year imprisonment in England, and it seems that their engagement improved his situation and hastened the willingness of the English to arrange his release. After James I's murder in 1437, Queen Joan governed the country in association with the fifth Earl of Douglas and the Chancellor, Bishop Cameron of Glasgow. The government lasted two years, after which time, Donaldson suggests, the queen's marriage to Sir James Stewart of Lorne and the rise to power of the Livingstons seem to have brought an end to her effective power. After her marriage, the queen lost custody of the king. James II married Mary of Gueldres on 3 July 1449. On Monday, 23 September 1449, there was a mass arrest of Livingstons; two members of the Livingston family who controlled significant parts of Mary of Gueldres's marriage portion were executed, and the day after, the marriage portion was confirmed by Parliament. In these events, writes Donaldson, "it may even be possible to detect the hand of the new Queen." When her husband was killed by exploding artillery in 1460, Mary of Gueldres took over the administration of the country and managed with some success the complexity of Scotland's foreign affairs during the time of the English War of the Roses. According to Donaldson, however, an alliance with Hepburn of Hailes and an ensuing attempt to "gain control of the young King's person . . . yoked [her], in much the same way as Joan Beaufort had been by her marriage with Stewart of Lorne. Mary of Gueldres died in 1463, and the death of Bishop Kennedy, who had succeeded her, in 1465, left the young king vulnerable to the machinations of the Boyds. James III married Margaret of Denmark in July 1469, and, as his parents had done with the Livingstons, he used the occasion of his marriage to ruin the Boyds. Margaret also played an important role in the crisis of 1482.

It is perhaps not wise to draw conclusions from this admittedly bare chronology, but some preliminary considerations emerge that are at least worth registering, partly in light of their importance to Margaret Tudor's story. In the earlier fifteenth century, Scotland's queens were aristocratic women, but not princesses, before their marriages: Mary of Gueldres's father was the Duke of Gueldres; Joan Beaufort's, the Earl of Somerset. In the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Scotland's queens were royal princesses: Margaret of Denmark came from a country with a longstanding tradition of amity with Scotland, and Margaret Tudor came from a country with a longstanding tradition of enmity with Scotland (Margaret Tudor's marriage to James IV was negotiated in circumstances quite different from those surrounding the marriage of Joan Beaufort to James I, and Margaret's status as a royal princess considerably raised the stakes involved in her marriage, since it was undoubtedly clear to all concerned that any issue from the marriage would have strong claims to the throne of England). Whether royal princesses or not, though, the foreignness of Scotland's queens does not seem to have prevented the country from turning to them in time of need; at the same time, their liminality poised clearly felt dangers during those times of need, since remarriage or factional alliance seems often to have called their fidelity to national interests into question and to have put an end to their official practice of powers of regency and to their control of the heir.

These considerations broke out with special force during the minority of James V. The structural complexities of Margaret Tudor's position during the minority proved almost impossible to negotiate, and small wonder. She was the widow of James IV; mother of James V, likely heir to the throne of England; if Henry VIII were to have difficulties producing an heir of his own; and sister of Henry VIII, whose army killed her very popular husband. The contradictions of this position have not been much appreciated by historians, who have instead applied to Margaret the character flaws associated historically with queens — nastiness, selfishness, fickleness — and accordingly have interpreted her actions as narrowly self-interested and therefore somehow categorically different from the selfless, high-minded pursuit of Scotland's best interests presumably displayed by her powerful male rivals. The possibility that Margaret may herself have attempted on occasion to remain loyal to Scotland's interests as well as to her own, while enduring continual harassment at the hands of her brother — who essentially sought to make Margaret into an agent for English interests — has not often been mentioned. Scholars have underestimated the extent of her influence in Scottish politics — complained of constantly by Henry VIII himself — and the extent to which, as an English outsider, she was dis-
Marriage

trusted by the Scottish nobility, some of whom began intriguing against her immediately upon James IV's death. Had she been possessed of the talents of Elizabeth I, Margaret would still have faced enormous difficulties in exercising power during the minority of her son.

Thus, in Margaret's case, scholars have tended to replicate rather than to address the difficulties of queenship. Donaldson, commenting on the similarities between Margaret's situation and those of Joan Beaufort and Mary of Gueldres, writes: "But Margaret Tudor differed from those earlier Queens in two ways, for she was the sister of the reigning King of England and she was conspicuously unstable in her affections. Indeed, her matrimonial adventures came near to rivalling those of her brother, Henry VIII. . . . This was the woman who, in terms of James IV's will, was to be the regent for her son as long as she remained a widow, and therefore head of the government."

Henry VIII himself leveled similar accusations at his sister; he repeatedly, ironically, and without any apparent sense of contradiction, accused Margaret of deceitfulness and of making herself "a shame and disgrace to all her family," because she tried to divorce a man—Archibald Douglas, sixth earl of Angus, whom she had married in 1514—favored by Henry for his apparent friendliness to English interests. Donaldson's rhetoric—"this was the woman"—seems designed to make us feel the folly of anyone's giving power to Margaret (why her husband, who knew her well, did so in his will—apparently against custom—remains a mystery). But Margaret's "matrimonial adventures" hardly come near "rivaling those of her brother." None of her three husbands died by her writ. Moreover, some degree of matrimonial adventurism was standard practice for the day—even, when one recalls the examples of Joan Beaufort and Mary of Gueldres, not altogether unusual for fifteenth-century Scottish queens. Margaret seems to have incurred displeasure largely because, despite the fact that she was a woman, she refused to retire gracefully from the pursuit of power. Margaret complained to her brother about Lord Dacre, warden of the march—a man deeply involved in Anglo-Scottish "diplomacy" during the time of the minority and therefore deeply involved in Henry's attempts to subordinate Margaret's interests to his own. "Also I complain to the King my brother of what my Lord Dacre does and says to my hurt, for he says to Scottish folk, 'that he marvels that they will let any woman have authority, and specially me.' Quilk words should come of others, not of Englishmen. For, the more honor I get, England will have the more; and such words as these may do me mickle ill."

Sovereign Love

in pursuing power than kings—Margaret herself wrote angrily to her brother of Angus's ill treatment of her, saying: "As to my part, your Grace sal find no fault, but I am a shaman [woman], and may do little but by friends." And queens have also often had to bear the symbolic charge of changefulness. Though we must keep in mind that very little is known about the participation of Scotland's late medieval queens in ruling the country during times of comparative tranquility, it remains striking that those queens—and above all, Margaret, the Tudor princess—should emerge with special force, both in scholarly writing and apparently also in fact, at moments of crisis, of "passage," when rulers were marrying, dying, or being born, coming into or losing their power; when aristocratic fortunes were made and unmade; at moments when change made way for both ambition and failure, gain and loss.
"You Turn Me into Nothing": Reformation of Queenship on the Jacobean Stage
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"YOU TURN ME INTO NOTHING": REFORMATION OF QUEENSHIP ON THE JACOBEAN STAGE

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ABSTRACT: Henry VIII’s divorce of Katherine of Aragon and execution of Anne Boleyn mark the beginning of the English Reformation and a substantial alteration of the queen consort role. Early modern plays that feature Henry VIII’s queen, such as Samuel Rowley’s When You See Me, You Know Me and William Shakespeare and John Fletcher’s King Henry VIII, focus on the transition from a medieval to an early modern notion of queenship and represent the dismantled position of the queen consort in early sixteenth-century England. They also highlight the unstable and reduced position that future English queens would inherit.

KEYWORDS: queenship, King Henry VIII, Samuel Rowley, William Shakespeare, John Fletcher, Jacobean drama, Katherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn

When Katherine of Aragon exclaims in William Shakespeare and John Fletcher’s King Henry VIII, with equal parts fury and despair, "You turn me into nothing" (3.1.14),¹ she describes more than the consequences of her impending divorce. Her personal loss of identity marks a larger cultural shift in Reformation England as queenship itself suffers an identity crisis. Katherine of Aragon’s reign (1509–33) marks the end of the medieval queen in England.² What does that mean for Anne Boleyn, who, then, must be the first Renaissance English queen? English queens consort after Katherine of Aragon have neither a role model nor defined position to guide their early attempts at ruling as Henry’s queen. Indeed, the title “queen consort” introduces a kind of anachronism into our consideration of Renaissance queens’ roles. While descriptive of their marital status, “queen consort” does not appear as a formal title until Henrietta Maria (r. 1625–49); Katherine of Aragon was queen, not queen consort. Unmoored from its medieval moorings by Henry’s divorce of Katherine and decapitation of Anne, queenship itself suffered a schism because of the part it played in the
English Reformation. Not coincidentally, early seventeenth-century English dramas about Henry VIII revisit this schism in queenship as England welcomed a new queen consort, Anne of Denmark (English r. 1603–49), the first since Henry VIII's reign ended. These plays expose the dismantled position of the Renaissance English queen at the historical moment that medieval queenship fails and highlight the unstable and reduced position that future English queens would inherit.

Both Samuel Rowley's *When You See Me, You Know Me* (1606) and William Shakespeare and John Fletcher's *King Henry VIII* (1613) contribute to the conversation about the status of the Renaissance English queen during, and after, Henry VIII's reformation of the queen's role as royal consort, wife, and mother. The parade of wives on the stage underscores for the seventeenth-century spectators the cultural confusion surrounding the fluctuating role of queen and the shifting boundaries of the royal household. By presenting the fissures evident in Henry VIII's household, these plays display the disrupted and still developing role of queen within the English royal household as part of an ongoing conversation that engages anxieties over the queen's role in the commonwealth and spiritual health of England. Since each play presents two of the six queens, together they create pointed reminders about those queens who have been forgotten and those who have been replaced, creating a patchwork of queenship and a pattern of bodily substitution that evokes a contradiction at the core of the private/public queen role: the queen consort's two bodies.

**MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE QUEENS**

Usage of the term "queen consort" begins, according to the *OED*, around 1640, when it is applied to Charles I's wife, Henrietta Maria. The queen/queen consort distinction is more than semantics. The old English word queen (*queen* or some variation of this) generally means a king's wife or consort, although sometimes the term applies to a noblewoman. A separate term, *regina*, explicitly denoted a female monarch, although the former term could also apply to a reigning monarch as well as a wife or consort, and the latter term may indeed also have been applied to a queen consort, especially through a coronation ceremony. Percy Ernst Schramm, in *The History of the English Coronation*, suggests a connection between the title "queen" and coronation practices, as early as 973 for Queen Aelfthryth; however, he qualifies the use of the term "queen" in the
ceremony, noting the inconsistency of title and coronation ceremony from queen to queen. The coronation ceremony for the queen evolved, of course. Soon after the alterations to Aelfthryth's coronation that accord her the title "queen," encompassing some acknowledgment of rule, the coronation of William I's wife, Matilda, solidified the title and its expanding implications for a form of joint rule. The ceremony stated that Matilda "has been placed by God as a Queen among her people" and thus God "has made her a sharer in the royal power." Within a few hundred years, the role and status of the English queen, at least as defined by the coronation ceremony, had become fairly standard. By the mid-thirteenth century, the queen's status had increased, as evidenced by the greater significance attached to her coronation.

Expanding on Schramm's research into coronation ceremonies, J. L. Layesmith notes that the ceremony encompassed more than fertility rites and blessings for future heirs. Coronation ceremonies constructed an image of ideal queenship that, taking into account the individual who would embody this future ideal, both complemented and enriched the king and legitimized his role. The fifteenth-century ceremony included the same, if modified, features as the king's coronation ceremony and appears, according to descriptions from audience members, to have been regularly misunderstood as identical to the king's. The ring, the anointing, and the crown were supposed to "symbolize the assimilation of [a woman's] potential into the public body of the king, as these two became one."

While the symbolic and allegorical details may have been lost on the larger audience, queens' coronation ceremonies were carefully planned events that offered a description of the queen's ideological role as more than simply a wife and mother of the body politic. Furthermore, the pre-coronation ceremonies took the specific queen and her qualities into account, altering the language of the ceremony to emphasize the queen's role as peacemaker (Katherine of Valois) or even assistant judge (Margaret of Anjou). Layesmith argues that, by the fifteenth century, the queen's coronation had abandoned earlier forms that emphasized the queen's role as intercessor and mother, and instead had become a standard feature of queenship that emphasized "the queen's role as an integral part of the king's public body." Through his marriage, the king adds another body to his body politic, and unlike a lord or advisor, the queen consort is not just part of his household but shares in the king's two bodies as well, a piece of the consecrated monarchical spirit that endures beyond the corporeal self. In this context, Henry VII's delayed coronation for Elizabeth of York until after the birth of a male heir and
Henry VIII’s neglecting the coronation ceremony for his last four wives suggest a significant alteration in the status and role, as defined by ceremony, of the queen consort.

Anne Crawford corroborates this view by exploring the English medieval queens’ own council, a governing body made necessary by the queens’ acquisition of lands—royal lands that, for the most part, composed her dower and supported her household during her tenure as queen and later as widow. This particular contractual agreement for an English royal marriage made widowhood profitable; the queen dowager became one of the primary landowners in the country (the lands reverted back to the crown upon the queen’s death). N. R. R. Fisher makes the same point about Tudor and Stuart queens: “[M]ost, if not all, of [Henry VIII’s] queens consort had their own council to administer their jointure lands and put such independence into practical expression.” By the fourteenth century, the queen had a large household, from agricultural workers to judges, whom she employed to administer, execute, and defend her orders and rights. Although the king had some hand in the organization of his queen’s household, the queen retained “wide powers of independent action,” which the very scale of the household made necessary. In fact, many recorded judicial rulings from queens and the queens’ (legal) court suggest that a queen’s role as judge remained in place through Anne of Denmark: “When James I established the judicial subsection of his queen’s council as a separate court in 1605... he was formalizing a situation which had been in existence for centuries.” Importantly, the level of interaction a queen could have while running her own administration means that, given her individual probities, she could, and often did, have a considerable grasp of financial and legal governmental institutions to bring to bear on the governance of the country—although how willingly her spouse listened remains a separate issue.

As the role and significance of the queen waxes in England by the mid-thirteenth century, medieval French queens’ role as queens consort wanes. Focusing on evidence from 978 to 1273, Marion F. Facinger’s influential research considers each queen’s career from bride to dowager queen. While we cannot look to the French courts for a direct correspondence with English courts and the corresponding queen’s roles, many of Facinger’s descriptions and conclusions walk a familiar path for both English and French queen consorts. One such similarity is the lack of a clearly articulated definition of the status and role of the queen consort: “Perhaps because [the queen’s share of royal power] was never questioned... the shape of the office always remained ambiguous.” Facinger complements and complicates Schramm’s conclusions.
about the codification of a queen consort’s status and role as determined by her
coronation ceremony by also noting the use of the coronation ceremony as a signif-
cant procedure for exalting the image of royalty. Exalting royalty supports the goal
of dynastic security for a royal family whose tentative claim to the throne requires
buttressing—as does the choice of the queen consort herself. How does one choose
a queen? According to Facinger, that depends on the time period in question. If the
royal family needs to shore up its claim to the throne, lineage remains the primary
criterion (after basic suitability has been determined according to criteria such as
previous engagements or marriages and consanguinity). Secondary to the candidate’s
lineage, a future queen might bring advantages such as political alliances, which are
also helpful for securing a dynasty. However, once the family feels secure about its
royal seat, landed property replaces lineage as the primary criterion determining a
future queen’s worth. Interestingly, the historical shift from emphasizing political to
economic advantage accompanies a shift from seeing the queen as a (lesser) partner
in governance to seeing her as a private partner with little to no direct role in gov-
ernance. This shift is largely due to organizational changes within the governmental
body that begin to create a bureaucracy and divide the queen, quite literally, from
the king’s side. Specifically, Facinger points out that the king and queen were regularly together: “[The king’s] every act and decision was
approved or assisted or contended by the queen because she was there, and because
custom and tradition allowed that the queen was an ally and partner in governning.”
However, the proliferation of governmental administrators and separate living spaces
for the king and queen (hôtel du roi and hôtel du reine) greatly diminish the intimacy
of the early medieval court; no longer does the queen approve, assist, or contend
the king’s every act—she is simply not there.

Before bureaucracy became the royal buttress for dynastic security, France’s
queens could play a significant role in ruling the kingdom. The queen’s role as wife
included managing the royal household, traveling with her husband-king from
castle to castle, and securing heirs for the throne and future of the country. Her
role as a royal queen also required her to participate in ceremonial occasions and
charitable activities. Many of the queens Facinger describes provided judgments
in legal courts. Should she survive her husband, she could remain active and influ-
ential at court as dowager queen and even act as regent for the kingdom. Early
medieval queens, and for France this exclusively means queens consort, governed.
The queen could influence the king through the intimacy of their marriage and
even publicly.

Ultimately, according to Facinger’s analysis, the French queen became an
unnecessary part of governmental functions, although her role as wife and mother
remained essential to the title, and as such, the queen could potentially wield power through her influence with the king. John Carmi Parsons suggests a modification of Facinger's clean continuum between public and private, offering the “flexible and inclusory ‘interstitial’” in place of the more divisional adjectives “private” and “domestic.” “Interstitial” describes the queen's role as existing in a vacuum, although the queen could nonetheless become an active and integral participant in the functioning of the whole. The queen was, and was not, a material piece of the body politic—she occupied a space in between. The concept of interstitial space fits well with Layesmith’s contention that the English queen, by the fifteenth century, had become a part of the king’s body politic and a holder of that indefinable spirit of monarchy; without power herself, she remained an integral part of the whole that existed in the king.

One aspect of the queen’s interstitial functions remained her influence on her husband, a power impossible to define or measure, especially if that influence took place in the bedchamber. Such influence remained fraught with peril for both the queen and those retainers and advisors who gradually took the queen’s place as functional governmental agents, as factionalism and court intrigue became more widespread due to the divided governing body. This transformation was hastened by Philip II (r. 1180–1223), who granted neither of his two queens any official role in the government. In a move eerily anticipating Henry VIII’s own shuffling of governmental bodies (including queens) three hundred years later, Philip II attempted to divorce his second wife (Ingeburge of Denmark, marginally queen from 1193 to 1223). Ingeburge spent the next twenty years opposing the king's enforced separation. The erosion of the queen's office as an essential governmental body supported Philip's divorce attempt despite ecclesiastical disapproval: “It is plausible to argue that Philip treated both his wives so cavalierly precisely because the office of queen was so unimportant to the government of the time.” Ingeburge of Denmark’s queenship, according to Facinger, put the nail in the coffin of the ruling (French) queen: “Queenship had become by the thirteenth century a career embracing a public office clothed in honor and dignity but shorn of all functions except the decorative and symbolic.”

Where might we determine the shift in England’s queen from ancilla to consors, from queen to queen consort? Layesmith argues that Edward IV changed the nature of queenship in England by eschewing traditional choices in a queen and marrying an English (not foreign) widow (not a virgin) for love (not lineage, political gain, or land). Thus for the queens in between Edward IV and Henry VIII (including Katherine of Aragon’s marriage to Arthur), “role models were in
short supply." David Wallace, in what seems a related point, argues that Anne Boleyn's beheading irrevocably changed the nature of queenship in England by terminating both the queen and her intercessory role in the monarchy:

Before Henry, a queen (nobody else) might dare to stand between the accused—a person, a group, or an entire city—and royal displeasure. . . . After Henry, the scope of wifely advocacy (especially after his beheading of a second queen) declined.34

Thus, the late medieval queens paved the way for Henry's unconventional serial matrimony and the irrevocable schism in queenship. Katherine of Aragon marked the end of the medieval queen, a version of queenship that had been in flux since at least Elizabeth Woodville's reign.35

Coronation ceremonies for queens consort evolved as their status and role in the body politic grew during the Middle Ages. The role of queen as wife and mother, while essential to queenship, did not take center stage during coronation ceremonies, which emphasized the individual strengths or hopes that the future queen brought to the office. The ceremony itself became a significant event for acknowledging and imbuing the queen with a share of the monarchy. This increase in power could be perceived as an asset, especially when the queen served as intercessor, or as a liability, especially if the queen appeared to have too much influence in the bedroom. As a femme sole and regina, medieval queens governed through their own households and through their consistent presence at the side of the king during ceremonies and court business. However, changes in the criteria that individual kings used for choosing a queen, as well as changes in the coronation ceremonies, household organization, and a burgeoning bureaucracy, began to shift the role of queenship into a separate, possibly more private, sphere. From a modified form of joint rule in which queenship performed a complementary role in the king's body politic, the end of the medieval period and the beginning of the Renaissance marked a distinct shift in queenship. Queens became less a part of the monarchical spirit and more a reflection of it. This change went so far that many queens did not even participate in a coronation ceremony, or, like Elizabeth of York, they did so only after the birth of a male heir. Medieval queens shared some traditional imagery, such as intercessor to the king, household manager, and patron of culture and churches, in addition to the necessary role of wife, mother, and diplomat to powerful relatives. However, underneath these visible roles, medieval queenship assumed (rather than specified) the role of the individual taking up the mantle of queen. And, adopting Parsons's apt image of the spaces
in between, the interstitial spaces that queens inhabited appear to have become even less articulated as the medieval queen gave way to Henry's Renaissance queens—whose place and space and matter paraded on the Jacobean stage, replicating the historical queens' present absence.

TUDOR QUEENS ON THE STUART STAGE:
REFORMATION OF QUEENSHIP

Two early seventeenth-century dramas that take Henry VIII and his family as their subject, Rowley's When You See Me and Shakespeare and Fletcher's Henry VIII, engage seemingly private and domestic concerns about wives and households. As the model and the root of order in the commonwealth, the household in these plays, no matter how complimentary to Henry VIII, appears in disarray.36 The parade of queens on the stage offers viewers a physical reminder of the schism in Henry's family concerning the legitimacy of marriage and progeny, and the fluctuating boundaries of family-as-household in post-Reformation England, revealing fissures in the role of the queen consort during the Renaissance.

Each play rather judiciously presents only two of Henry's six wives. The doubling of wives on stage, however, evokes the memory of the missing wives. Who could view the coronation of Anne Boleyn without remembering her notorious end, and who could watch the transition from Jane Seymour to Katherine Parr without naming the Anne and Katherine in between? Thus, by always presenting at least two wives, these plays fill the stage with the specters of all the rest—a mental game of name-that-queen and body substitution that underscores both the performance of queenship on stage and the problematic image of a queen shorn of all but performance on the political stage.37 When You See Me and Henry VIII feature a careful selection of Henry VIII's wives who have a kind of body doublelessness, so that they often double themselves through pregnancy, competition with or reminders of Henry's other queens, ghostly images, projected dreams, and the very real dilemma of distinguishing the boundaries and roles of queen, wife, and mother during Henry VIII's reign. This doubling further magnifies familial disruptions and engages not just the four represented queens, but also the distinctly royal dilemma of the two bodies of the queen consort.38 Taken together, these two plays offer a Jacobean commentary on the schism in queenship, which was as much an inheritance of the English Reformation as of the religious turmoil that followed.