

*Chaucer's Queens: Royal Women, Intercession, and Patronage in England, 1328–1394.* Louise Tingle.

Queenship and Power. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. viii + 240 pp. €88.39.

*Chaucer's Queens* is not a literary study of Chaucer. It is a monograph of historical research, which examines the key components and customary duties for medieval queenship: producing an heir, intercession, patronage, agency, and influence. Its research purpose is to reassess the “actions and reputations” (6) of three royal women who utilized their “soft power” (5, 7, 13) for personal and public ends in Chaucer’s England. This book adopts a thematic approach that compares and analyzes different achievements of Philippa of Hainault, Anne of Bohemia (queen consort), and Joan of Kent (mother of Richard II), through whom Tingle demonstrates self-representations, generational and cultural contrasts, and the highly personalized art of image-making in medieval iconography and literature.

Tingle’s book is constitutive of two parts comprising ten chapters. The introductory chapter explores the potential of queenship, pinning down the archival sources that inform these royal women’s networks of social influence. Chapter 2, “Pregnancy, Maternity and Childlessness,” conducts a situational analysis of the queens’ positions at court through the discussion of Philippa’s motherhood and Anne’s childlessness. Chapter 3, “Agency and Intercession,” looks into two historically memorable models of highly “ritualized” (52) intercession respectively performed by pregnant Philippa at Calais in 1347 (based on Jean Froissart’s account) and by childless Anne in London in 1392 (based on Richard Maidstone’s *Concordia*).

In chapter 4, “Pardons and Influence,” Tingle argues that in the intercessory activities of the 1381 Peasants’ Revolt where Joan and Anne petitioned for the rebels, Anne’s political position as queen proved more successful than Richard’s mother Joan. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of royal women’s petitionary pardons is also presented. The fifth chapter, “Queen’s Gold and Revenues,” is the most original and interesting section of the book. It pursues in detail the entitlements and sources of Philippa’s income, the workings and challenges of her finances, and the dispute, default, and cancellation of payment, all of which explain her motivations for intercession and patronage.

Chapter 6, “Material Culture and Patronage,” argues that in the cycle of gift-giving, the (foreign) queen is fundamentally an asset, not only a gift to England but also a maker of material culture rich in symbolic communication, through which she could preserve, cement, and secure social bonds and political alliances. Chapter 7, “Artistic Representations,” scrutinizes the queens’ material signs of power through a close reading of their self-styling images and regal objects—seals, scepters, attire, heraldry, effigies, and tombs—indicative of the power to possess and exercise cultural discourse.

Chapter 8 argues that religious patronage is an important royal legacy and a necessary channel for royal women to build mutually beneficial relationships with their favored



connections, especially the pope. Religious patronage is a double-edged act of (public) piety and (personal) transaction. The final chapter, “Literary Patronage,” discusses the surviving manuscripts, books of hours, psalters, and artwork commissioned and owned by Philippa and Anne, who were the “conduit for cultural transmission” (183) and important sources of inspiration for writers like Froissart and Chaucer. Even though there is no direct evidence to testify to the queens’ patronage of Chaucer, Tingle attempts to crack the regal tropes in Chaucer’s poems, which are read historically.

This book is written for medieval specialists. It provides no historical timelines and illustrations to help general/global readers understand the visual culture and the rich iconographical language of medieval queens. And, as the discussion of Chaucer comprises only nine pages, the book’s title may disappoint Chaucerians. Nevertheless, Tingle’s comparative analyses of Philippa, Joan, and Anne do contribute new knowledge to the thriving field of queenship studies. Even though the topics of intercession and patronage are not new, Tingle usefully presents a systematic body of knowledge for three lesser-known medieval royal women. The strengths of this study lie in its comparative vision and its well-researched contextual materials. The well-connected themes are also mutually informing. Among the already published seventy or so monographs of Palgrave Macmillan’s *Queenship and Power Series*, this book is a valuable addition to the evolving and increasingly globalized scholarship of queenship, which is complementing and revising the master narrative of the historiography of kingship.

Chi-fang Sophia Li, *National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan*  
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*Crime and Consequence in Early Modern Literature and Law.* Judith Hudson. Edinburgh Critical Studies in Renaissance Culture. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021. xii + 232 pp. \$110.

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This excellent and elegantly written book provides another useful reminder that the great landmarks of common-law jurisprudence built their conclusions around stories drawn from both life and literature. Twenty-first-century jurists routinely cite Edward Coke’s (1552–1634) writings and opinions as settled precedent. Before he cemented his status as a venerated legal authority, however, Coke argued for the defense in an unusual libel trial, as Hudson notes in a particularly telling example. The case stemmed from an apocryphal story printed in numerous editions of martyrologist John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* (1563). In gruesome detail, Foxe described the dramatic and painful death of William Grimwood of Hitcham in Suffolk as evidence of providential punishment for perjury. When a local rector shared a version of this story from the pulpit with Grimwood (very much alive) in attendance, the aggrieved man opted to sue for damages. In court, Coke successfully argued that there had been no malicious intent in sharing the story, a new precedent that he would cite