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*The 2020 Royal Studies Journal
and The University of Winchester
Biennial Book Prize Report*

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Is gives me very great pleasure to announce and report upon the outcome of *Royal Studies Journal* and The University of Winchester Biennial Book Prize for 2020. This year of living ‘covidly’ has presented all of us with significant personal and professional challenges, not least of which was the organization of our now biennial book prize campaign. While many of us were working remotely from our professional spaces, all those who gave so generously of their time and scholarly expertise to ensure the success of our book prize award this year must be thanked and acknowledged for their continuing generosity in ensuring the ongoing development, expansion, and visibility of royal and monarchical studies.

Last year, in the warmth and collegiality of our eighth annual Kings and Queens conference held in Catania, Sicily, we announced that in the interests of streamlining our book and article prize campaigns, doubling our prize purse to £100, and concentrating our efforts we would refresh and re-launch our existing annual prize campaigns as alternating biennial events. This meant that this year’s *Royal Studies Journal* and The Winchester University Press Prize for 2020 was open to the Best Book of Scholarship in monarchical studies and/or royal studies (monograph or edited collection) on any subject, covering any time period and geographical location, and in any discipline.

And, what a response we had to our new-look prize campaign! We received twelve extremely competitive and high-quality nominations from scholars across the disciplines, geographies, politics, and time periods. To assist the prize jury in coming to a well-informed and objective decision from such a diverse stable of potential winning nominations, we recruited a panel of some thirty peer reviewers to give us the benefit of their specific experience and targeted expertise. The scholarly goodwill of our international colleagues drawn from multiple fields of research interest continues to amaze us—especially in these troubling and difficult times. Without their valuable and precious input, the award and continued integrity of our prizes would be difficult to maintain. Collectively, and without exception, our distinguished external readers took considerable time and care over their reviews, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each nomination in significant detail.

Our exhaustive review and short-listing process highlighted four excellent nominations, which the prize jury recognized as being Highly Commended works of scholarship. They are, in alphabetical order:

👑 Christine Adams and Tracy Adams, *The Creation of the French Royal Mistress: From Agnès Sorel to Madame du Barry* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2020);

👑 Thomas Barton, *Victory’s Shadow: Conquest and Governance in Medieval Catalonia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019);

👑 Sean L. Field, *Courting Sanctity: Holy Women and the Capetians* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019); and

👑 Silva Z. Mitchell, *Queen, Mother, and Stateswoman: Mariana of Austria and the Government of Spain*, (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2019).

We commend these scholars to you for their innovative research in the field of royal and monarchical studies and thank them wholeheartedly for putting forward their nominations for our 2020 Book Prize.

Having narrowed down a highly competitive field of twelve nominations to just two books, we were faced with a difficult dilemma with an edited collection and a monograph vying for this year's award. Ultimately, after considerable reflection and careful additional re-reading of these two finalists, the jury came to the only decision possible. It could not separate the two final short-listed entries nor judge that a monograph should take precedence over an edited collection. The two prize-winning nominations for the *Royal Studies Journal* and The University of Winchester 2020 Book Prize therefore are Kavita Mudan Finn and Valerie Schutte (US-based Independent Scholars) for their magisterial and insightful edited collection, *The Palgrave Handbook of Shakespeare's Queens* (New York Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), and Susie Protschky (Senior Lecturer in History at Monash University, Australia) for her groundbreaking and methodologically innovative monograph, *Photographic Subjects: Monarchy and Visual Culture in Colonial Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019).

The expert external readers of Kavita and Valerie's nomination pointed to and highlighted that:

The collection offers a careful and thorough insight into the early modern perceptions and representations of queenship as well as our own contemporary expectations and projections. Its vast gallery of protagonists or secondary roles, which causes an interesting negotiation between the historical fact and the literary or theatrical interpretation, provides much food for thought about early modern politics or notions of power, visibility and influence, but also about universal values such as female solidarity, loyalty, resistance, or even very topical issues like cultural mixing. Given its important contribution to the area of Shakespeare studies, gender studies, and early modern studies in both literature and history, it will appeal to scholars from various fields as well as a more general readership is undeniable.

And:

The essays are all well-written and edited, even those by scholars with less experience. The essays are not redundant even when they overlap in topic; each one covers a specific aspect of the play(s) they discuss. Some repetition in frequently referenced lines or ideas (for example, I saw Elizabeth I's "heart and stomach of a king" referenced in at least three different essays) is expected and necessary, but each author's approach to analysis was their own.

While Susie's distinguished peer reviewers observed that:

Susie Protschky's *Photographic Subjects* is highly innovative and extremely well researched. This is a subtle and far-sighted book, analysing how photographs manifested an absent monarch in order to create subjecthood. She shows that this involved accommodation of difference and diversity, which is quite a striking finding in itself, in that critics of colonialism might expect a less complex recognition of the nature of the colonised population. Protschky also shows how the taking and circulation of photographs contributed to the paradigm established through royal photography. This book is both a startling contribution to the study of Indonesian history and a new departure in colonial history. It represents a coherent and sophisticated new approach to visual culture.

Second:

In this meticulously researched book, Susie Protschky explores images of and for the queen, examining the role that the photography played in creating imperial subjects whose relationship to colonial authority was powerfully mediated by images. What makes this book so unique and important is the way that Protschky extends our understanding of the relationship between photography and monarchy beyond the role of official imagery as props in state-sponsored spectacles. She focuses our attention on vernacular practices and on the new relationship between sovereignty, citizenship, and images that emerged in the age of mass photography. This book persuasively shows that making, collecting, and circulating photographs played a crucial role in the formation of imperial subjects and imagined communities across the Dutch empire. In so doing it opens a new chapter in the study of monarchical rule.

And finally:

There are many strengths to the volume. One is the breadth of research in images in the Dutch Royal Collection, and other private and public collections (including many not before published) and in archival documentation relating to her subject. She seamlessly, and deftly, integrates theoretical material from art history, anthropology and cultural studies about photography, monarchy, gift-giving, Indonesian and Dutch traditions, and the role of the press. Dr Protschky persuasively argues that images of the Dutch monarch, and the indigenous rulers, constituted a major way in which they could affirm their respective rights and status, advance their causes, and create links between the Dutch and East Indian royal houses. The book shows the author's in-depth knowledge of Dutch and Indonesian history, as well as of the history of monarchy and of photography, and these fields are brought together in a novel and thoughtful treatment. The book makes a substantial contribution to the study of modern monarchy through its general theme of photographs relating to monarchy and by the choice of a case study of the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies.

Naturally, we had all looked forward to making our prize announcement *in situ* at our ninth annual Kings and Queens conference, organized by the Miami University John E. Dolibois European Center in Luxembourg, which ought to have been held in the glorious

setting of the Château de Differdange in the grand duchy of Luxembourg under the patronage of His Royal Highness, Prince Guillaume de Nassau, Hereditary Grand Duke of Luxembourg.

However, during this discombobulating year of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic got in the way. With stout heart and profound goodwill, the conference organizers, under the cheerful and patient leadership of Dr Thierry Leterre, rose to the challenge and efficiently pulled together a virtual iteration of our ninth annual conference, enabling us to make our happy announcement to conference attendees tuning in from all over the world. This despite technical hurdles to overcome and multiple time zones to surmount.

Notwithstanding the very early start in the USA, Kavita and Valerie were able to join us for the announcement and share their thoughts with us. They noted that they were very proud of what they had achieved with *Shakespeare's Queens* and the ways in which their collection offers both a comprehensive examination of matters pertaining to queenship in Shakespeare's plays and pushes scholarship forward in new and exciting ways.

Meanwhile in Australia, Susie took advantage of the temporary easing of lockdowns in Melbourne to take some well-earned annual leave, heading south to Wilson's Promontory, the unspoiled, southernmost point of the Australian mainland. Best known for its rugged granite mountains and abundant wildlife, including kangaroos and wombats, rather than its wifi connectivity, Susie was unable to join us in real time from her sanctuary on the 'Prom'. Susie nonetheless expressed her appreciation for the observations made by the peer reviewers as well as her delight in having had her book recognized by the *Royal Studies Journal* in naming *Photographic Subjects* joint winner of its book prize for 2020.

In 2021, to shed light upon excellence in new research from post-graduate students and early career scholars, we will award our inaugural biennial Postgraduate and Early Career Researcher Article Prize for the best published or unpublished article or book chapter in the field of royal and/or monarchical studies. The nominations will need to have been published or authored between 2019-2021 (prior to the nomination deadline of 1 March 2021).

Launched in June 2015 as an annual prize, the *Royal Studies Journal* Postgraduate/Early Career Researcher prize is awarded henceforth biennially to a current postgraduate or early career researcher (either working towards a higher degree or within five years of its award at the time of nomination) for the best published or unpublished scholarly article-length work (approximately 5,000-10,000 words) based on original research. The *Royal Studies Journal* and the prize co-sponsor, the Winchester University Press, are committed to assisting, encouraging, and supporting the career development of postgraduate and early career researchers in a highly competitive professional research environment. The prize purse for 2021 is valued at £100 and will be awarded officially at the tenth Kings and Queens conference to be held in late June 2021 in Perth, Scotland. Fingers crossed.

In closing, I urge all of you to call upon your wider social and scholarly networks to publicize our biennial prize campaigns. The work of all scholars, regardless of career stage, beavered away in their respective scriptoria and institutions, needs our combined support and encouragement and we need their fresh insights and ideas if we are to continue to nurture and encourage both new and established talent in the wide-ranging and burgeoning field of royal and monarchical studies. Do please spread the word to your colleagues and collaborators of our forthcoming 2021 Biennial Postgraduate and Early Career Researcher Article Prize. Full particulars as well as nomination forms are available on our *Royal Studies Journal* and Royal Studies Network websites and on our social media platforms.