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*The 2021 Royal Studies Journal
and Winchester University Press
Biennial Early Career /
Postgraduate Researcher Article
Prize*

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The 2021 *Royal Studies Journal* and Winchester University Press Biennial Early Career/Postgraduate Researcher Article Prize

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It gives me very great pleasure to announce and report upon the outcome of the *Royal Studies Journal* and Winchester University Press biennial Early Career/Postgraduate Researcher Article Prize for 2021. This second year of living ‘covidly’ has presented all of us once more with significant personal and professional challenges, not least of which was the organization of our now biennial prize campaigns. While many of us continued working remotely from our professional spaces, all those who gave so generously of their time and scholarly expertise to ensure the success of our article 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.

You might recall that, in 2019, during 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this year’s *Royal Studies Journal* and Winchester University Press prize for 2021 was open to the best published or unpublished scholarly article authored by an early career or postgraduate researcher in monarchical studies and/or royal studies on any subject, covering any time period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 fifteen extremely competitive and high-quality nominations from scholars across 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 more than thirty peer reviewers to give us the benefit of their specific research interests and targeted expertise. The 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 the 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 and objective detail.

Our exhaustive review and short-listing process highlighted three truly excellent nominations, which the prize jury recognized as being significant and durable works of early career scholarship. They are, in alphabetical order:

👑 Dr Rachel Delman (University of York) for her unpublished article, “The Queen’s House before the ‘Queen’s House’: Margaret of Anjou and Greenwich Palace, 1447-1453”;

👑 Dr Sihong Lin (University College Dublin) for his soon-to-be published article in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 75 (2021), “Justin under Justinian: The Rise of Emperor Justin II Revisited”; and

👑 Dr Michele Seah (University of Newcastle, Australia) for her recently published article in *Parergon*, “My Lady Queen, The Lord of the Manor’: The Economic Roles of Late Medieval Queens.”¹

We commend wholeheartedly to you these three early career scholars for their innovative research in the field of royal and monarchical studies, and thank them unreservedly for putting their nominations forward for our 2021 prize campaign.

Having narrowed down a highly competitive field of fifteen nominations to just three articles, we were faced with a difficult dilemma with a published, a soon-to-be published, and an unpublished article vying for this year’s award with barely any daylight between them. Ultimately, after considerable reflection and careful additional re-reading of the three short-listed articles and their respective readers’ reports, the jury came to the only decision possible. It could not separate the eventual two frontrunners’ entries nor judge that an article accepted for publication should take precedence over an unpublished article.

The joint winners therefore of the *Royal Studies Journal* and Winchester University Press Early Career/Postgraduate Researcher Article Prize for 2021 are:

👑 Dr Sihong Lin’s “Justin under Justinian: The Rise of Emperor Justin II Revisited”; and

👑 Dr Rachel Delman’s “The Queen’s House before the ‘Queen’s House’: Margaret of Anjou and Greenwich Palace, 1447-1453.”

The expert external readers of Dr Lin’s nomination pointed to and highlighted that:

This is an elegantly written and tightly structured article, published in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, one of the leading international journals in the field of Byzantine Studies. It is meticulously researched and referenced. By tracing the influential early career of the

¹ Michele Seah, “My Lady Queen, The Lord of the Manor’: The Economic Roles of Late Medieval Queens,” *Parergon* 37, no. 2 (2020): 9–36.

future eastern Roman emperor Justin II as a *curopalates* and the intricate web of familial/political networks in which he and his wife and future empress, Sophia, were embedded, the paper demonstrates why Justin was ideally placed to succeed the emperor Justinian I in 565. The paper also casts light on the fascinating complexity of political life in Constantinople, its influence on imperial succession, and the fact that the latter could be effectively decided many years in advance of an emperor's death.

This is a really excellent and impressive article published in one of the leading international journals in the field of Byzantine studies. It provides a detailed and convincing analysis of the rise to power of the Emperor Justin II—often dismissed by historians as a hapless political operator and poor tactician (which, once on the throne, he was). It is rooted and detailed with convincing command of the sources and makes an important contribution to the machinations of the Byzantine imperial court in the mid sixth century.

Dr Delman's distinguished peer reviewers observed that:

This paper contributes significantly to several interlinked fields: the history of Greenwich and its royal associations; queenship studies, and studies of gender and space—not necessarily in that order!

This is an absolutely excellent article, which is certainly prize-worthy. It presents a significant volume of evidence not previously in the public domain, drawn from the accounts of the fifteenth-century building work at Greenwich. This evidence is persuasively interpreted to present a vivid reconstruction of the rooms and gardens occupied by the queen and king. The wider implications for Margaret of Anjou's influence and identity are rigorously examined from all angles. The work is very clearly argued, set firmly and comprehensively in both historiographical and historical context, thoroughly referenced and wholly convincing. The article is of significance both for political historians and those examining gender and archaeology. For the former, it contributes to an ongoing debate about the extent of Margaret's agency, demonstrating the considerable value of examining material culture in a context where that is too often overlooked. I would expect it to become an integral part of future assessments of Margaret of Anjou's queenship. For the latter, it reinforces a number of recent assessments, enriching the field by bringing in rare evidence relating to a queen consort.

The jury singled out for high commendation Dr Seah's submission, and urged readers to consult her groundbreaking article. Dr Seah's expert readers made the following observations:

The author provides a good case study in a many times neglected field: “a queen before marrying a king.” Seah is very much at home in contemporary ‘real estate,’ property and succession law, introducing cases of quitclaim and *femme couverte or femme sole*. It is a fresh idea that Margaret of Anjou was under the influence of strong-minded women who had held independent power. Seah has a significant novel contribution: she has an analytical eye to income, expenses and estate management. Seah argues that queens were actively engaged in their roles as landholders and estate administrators as well as demonstrating the significance of including the economic perspective in their representation. Seah extends our knowledge in the exercise of medieval queenship in the field of economy and finances. The article also adds to the scholarship of the economic landscape of fifteenth-century England. It is a fine work on “good ladyship.”

This is a solid reassessment of the economic power and potential local power wielded by Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville during their respective reigns as queens of England in the late fifteenth century. The author is right to point out that this is a relatively understudied aspect of late medieval queenship in England, and is to be commended for her contribution. The article is clearly written, its research thorough and wide-ranging, and it is an excellent example of the kind of methodical archive work that is often overlooked in favour of flashier arguments.

Naturally, we had all looked forward so much to making our prize announcement *in situ* at our tenth annual Kings and Queens conference, organized by Lucinda Dean and Amy Hays, and their hard-working team, at the University of the Highlands and Islands in Perth, Scotland. Once again, our hopes and expectations for an in-person conference were dashed by the long tail of the current pandemic. Yet, they were mitigated to a great extent by the meticulous and time-consuming work of all involved in its virtual realization. Thanks to the team at the University of the Highlands and Islands, we were able to make our prize winner announcement to conference attendees tuning in from all over the world in a special drinks session on 2 July despite technical hurdles and multiple time zones.

Unable to join us synchronously, Sihong and Rachel sent us their reactions upon hearing of their joint award. Sihong sent us his well wishes, requesting that we pass on his thanks to all those who work with the *Royal Studies Journal* and Royal Studies Network for supporting its prize-giving initiatives, noting that it is certainly much needed in a very tough year. He particularly appreciated the support given to early career researchers with the award of this particular prize. Rachel wanted to pass on her warmest thanks to the committee and the peer reviewers for selecting her article, and for their generous and kind comments, noting that she was honoured to share the prize with Dr Ling.

In 2022, to shed light upon excellence in book-length new research from scholars, regardless of their career stage, we will award our biennial book prize for the best monograph or edited

collection in the field of royal and/or monarchical studies. The nominations will need to have been published between 2019 and 2022 (prior to the nomination deadline of 1 March 2022). The prize purse for 2022 is valued once again at £100 and will be awarded officially at the Kings and Queens 11 conference, to be held between 29 June and 1 July 2022—hopefully in person—in Nantes, France. Fingers crossed. Again.

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, beavering 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 of our 2022 biennial book prize amongst your colleagues and collaborators and of course on social media. Full particulars as well as nomination forms are available on our *Royal Studies Journal* and Royal Studies Network websites and on our associated social media platforms.