

Chapter 3 examines images that show Bartholomew's threefold ministry. Beresford distills the saint's evangelical activities to exorcism, shattering of the idols, and the sacrament of baptism, which each resonated in a different way with the viewer. In the representations, Bartholomew is an unfinished product and a spiritual wanderer, like the viewer. The end result was that devotional, social, and national identity in Iberia were shaped by the images of the evangelical ministry of Bartholomew. The distinctions between what Catholicism is and what it is not, as well as the distinction between races in Iberia, are further developed and crystallized in the representations of Bartholomew's martyrdom, which Beresford takes up in chapter 4. The self-other relationship takes prominence as the saint is tortured, flayed, and killed. Beresford argues that at the sight of the cycle of the martyrdom, the mixed emotions of empathy, disgust, excitement, and morbid fascination trigger anxiety and nervous self-doubt in the viewer and further the process of the creation of self-identity. The saint's removed skin becomes a canvas for identity and a text in and of itself, attesting to the holiness of Bartholomew, which influenced the way Iberian Christians saw themselves and others in their midst.

The book's themes are carried forward into the seventeenth century and beyond in chapter 5. The book concludes with a comment on how the evolution of the images of the saint reach a culminating point in which the artistic representation can be seen as a product of the confrontation between races and religions in Iberia in the medieval and early modern periods. In the end, skin, identity, and selfness are linked in the imaginations of those who looked upon Bartholomew. One would be remiss not to mention the production value of the book itself. Reference to the beautifully reproduced artistic representations and their convenient location in the text adds to the clarity of the argument and to the reading experience.

Sacred Skin adds much to our understanding of the legacy of Saint Bartholomew. The idea that skin can transmit identity, selfness, and otherness to the observer of artistic pieces has the potential to move the field forward. Furthermore, although the book is focused on Iberia and on one saint in particular, the analytic and theoretical tools that Beresford employs could very much be extended to other holy figures and their cults in various locations—ultimately, this is the book's greatest value to scholars.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2022.51

Princely Power in Late Medieval France: Jeanne de Penthièvre and the War for Brittany. Erika Graham-Goering.
Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought: Fourth Series 117. Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2020. xiv + 288 pp. \$99.99.

The tumultuous life and career of Jeanne de Penthièvre, Duchess of Brittany, has been overshadowed by her more renowned namesake, Jeanne de Montfort. Following the

Breton civil war, later referred to as the War of the Two Jeanes, the latter would ultimately emerge as the founder of a new dynasty, which would rule the Duchy of Brittany until its final annexation by France two centuries later. Thanks to the meticulous scholarship of Erika Graham-Goering of Ghent University, the so-called other Jeanne is being reclaimed as an equally imposing figure of female agency during the early Hundred Years' War. Graham-Goering's systematic study of known and previously unknown legal and administrative sources from Jeanne de Penthièvre's twenty-three-year-long reign presents Jeanne as a worthy match for her contemporary rulers, including her own celebrated and later canonized husband and co-regent, Charles de Blois.

In 1341, the succession of Charles and Jeanne as Duke and Duchess of Brittany was approved by her uncle, John III and the French king alike, but would soon be challenged by the recently deceased duke's distant Montfort relatives, whose claims were backed by England. Disaster struck in 1347, when Charles was taken prisoner by the English, after which Jeanne ruled Brittany herself for almost a decade while trying to raise the funds to pay the exorbitant ransom for her husband. The money-stricken duchess would pay a heavy price for her accumulating debts, which were rarely settled. She would again be left to fight for herself when Charles was killed in battle in 1364, leaving her with little real power other than her increasingly meaningless title of Duchess of Brittany. The administrative and legal sources scrutinized in this monograph show Jeanne as a competent administrator of her realms but include only rare and elusive glimpses into her own character. The canonization process of Charles de Blois following his death and her dethronement provide some insight into her personal affairs. Eyewitness accounts underscored the governing skills of the duchess, which sometimes overshadowed those of Charles himself. Her attendance at royal councils grew threefold in Charles's absence, and many among his former staff and servants were originally employed by Jeanne. Her dynastic line and extensive landholding throughout Brittany did indeed give her a stronger claim to the duchy than those of her socially inferior husband, whose main asset was that he was a blood relative of the French king.

The granting of lands and favors to a network of cherished vassals was often signed jointly by the two co-rulers, and occasionally "at her insistence" ("a listance dixelle"), as emphasized in their gift of numerous Breton properties to Antoine Doria, admiral of France and Jeanne's captain of La Roche-Derrien. For almost a quarter of a century, Jeanne would try to balance Brittany's precarious and constantly shifting position between France and England, while witnessing demographic collapse brought about by the bubonic plague and trying to keep her many creditors (including the Avignon papacy) at bay. Jeanne would occasionally accept painful compromises, as in the ransom treaty dictated by England's rulers, who at one point held not only her husband but also the upper military hand in Brittany, following a series of French defeats in the 1350s. Throughout her turbulent reign, Jeanne was able to maintain her position as a leading female powerbroker, tied to other European courts and countries through dynastic

marriages and determined to keep her titles and lands long after her own formal dethronement.

Graham-Goering's book sheds new light on Jeanne's later career, when she managed to have some of her outstanding debts covered by the French king. She would soon spectacularly break diplomatic relations with him, when France again threatened Brittany's proud but perilous political autonomy. In their joint opposition to France's deadly embrace, the two Jeanne's were eventually forced to bury the hatchet. The formerly competing dynasties of Jeanne de Penthièvre and Jeanne de Montfort would henceforth have to coexist until the inevitable demise of the Breton duchy.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2022.52

The Creation of the French Royal Mistress: From Agnès Sorel to Madame Du Barry.
Tracy Adams and Christine Adams.

Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020. xii + 236 pp. \$89.95.

This book constitutes the first comprehensive, scholarly account of the rise of the French royal mistress. Other royal women—the queen and the queen regent—have been analyzed. But the official mistress has been treated as a scandalous creature, interesting only because of her bad press and public sexuality. *The Creation of the French Royal Mistress* takes a different approach, emphasizing the cultural and political importance of the mistress and aiming to explain the birth of the position. The authors define the royal mistress as “an extra conjugal alliance of the king,” who was a “constituent element” of his grandeur and a “politician.” The royal mistress, the authors stress, “rivaled in power even the king’s closest advisors.” She became, they assert, “an institution” (5).

The book explores the development of this institution through biographies of nine mistresses, from Agnes Sorel (1422–50), the mistress of Charles VII, to Madame Du Barry (1743–93), the mistress of Louis XV and the last woman to be a publicly recognized royal mistress. Given the chronological scope of the project, it is understandable that the authors rely on secondary sources. Still, each chapter “examine[s] the intellectual, emotional, and physical environment” that facilitated the woman’s rise to power and assesses her political and cultural influence (2). Special attention is paid to each mistress’s self-representations, be they appearances at royal entries or in court pageants, commissioned portraits, or the decoration of the mistress’s castles and estates. The longest chapters deal with the lesser-known mistresses of the sixteenth century, women like Anne de Pisseleu d’Heilly, Duchesse d’Etampes, mistress of Francois I, and Diane de Poitiers, mistress of Henri II, who benefited from the mixture of informal and formal politics in these early courts to gain a power that was probably never surpassed by subsequent royal mistresses.