

POLITICS, POWER AND PRESTIGE: THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF
MEDIEVAL ENGLISH QUEENS, 1821-1998

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is an investigation of the histories of medieval English queens published from 1821 to 1998. The purpose of this study is to highlight how since its inception historians have interpreted these royal women as significant historical actors who wielded power and influence. First the circumstances surrounding how and why there emerged a popular interest in queens is determined. The nineteenth-century women who first penned the biographies of these royal women are acknowledged and the content of their histories explored. By the turn of the twentieth century academic historians, the majority of them men, assumed dominance over the perpetuation of this subject by publishing short articles for journals and essays in full-length books. Finally the scholarship published during the last twenty years is examined in order to highlight how historians' interpretation and explanation of "queenly power" has developed. This broad historiographical analysis will help delineate periods of growth and pinpoint areas in need of greater development. This approach to the history of medieval English queens places past work in its proper place of significance to the development of this lengthy tradition. This understanding of the historiography is one modern historians have yet to acknowledge or incorporate in their scholarship today.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an analytical overview of the historiography of medieval English queens since 1821. Such an investigation is the first of its kind to attempt a complete examination of the ways these queens have been portrayed by historians. Introduced in the nineteenth century, these histories focus primarily on how royal women accessed and exerted power in official as well as unofficial capacities. It is the contention of this thesis that a perception of “queenly power” has dominated the historiography over the last two centuries. By rescuing from obscurity the historiography published prior to 1980 this thesis acknowledges a continuity of interpretation that has delineated these royal women. This broad approach will also provide the subject of queens with a much needed coherence by recognizing the most important periods of historiographical development.

The appearance of this thesis proves timely for it falls within the growing academic interest concerning women’s involvement in reading, writing, and disseminating history. Of particular note is D. R. Wolf’s examination of women’s contribution to the development of history as a modern genre in England from 1500 to 1800.¹ Wolf argues that as women’s interest in the past grew some historians “regendered” their work to encompass domestic or private matters in order to appeal to female readers.² This incorporation of the private sphere as a new area of inquiry broadened mainstream history

¹D. R. Wolf, “A Feminine Past? Genre, and Historical Knowledge in England, 1500-1800” American Historical Review (102 [3] June 1997) 645-679.

²Wolf, 665.

by including areas in which women were perceived to dominate. Women writers in the nineteenth century took this one step further by replacing men with women as the dominant historical actors in popular biographies or memoirs. As Wolf elucidates,

These works would set the tone for female historical interests in the first half of the new century, and the tensions signaled in them between the political and social, the public and the private, would continue to mark the “golden age” of historical writing and the great age of the Victorian novel.³

This conceptualization of women’s involvement in the emergence of history as a modern discipline provides a sound basis for the present work. This thesis acts as a continuation of Wolf’s own work and his call for studies that examine women’s involvement in writing history. This is achieved by forming a greater understanding of the trail blazing way nineteenth-century women writers changed the way in which writers, scholars, and historians conceived of and wrote history.

Before commencing it is important to note for those interested in pursuing a similar historiographical examination the significance and proper use of the Internet. This thesis would not have been possible without the ability to access information readily available on the Internet. In terms of locating full-length works or first editions a large number of academic, public, and private libraries provide their catalogues on-line. The majority of these sites are readily available to anyone and do not require passwords. Some sites are dedicated to compiling bibliographies on specific topics. Another valuable source is the publication of periodicals on-line. The convenience of such an innovation is only matched by the ability to use search engines to uncover information regarding authors,

³Wolf, 676.

subjects, and titles. There are also numerous sites that reproduce both traditional and non-traditional forms of primary material. When accessing information on-line it is important to use sites affiliated with a recognized academic institution, organization or professional group. Most web sites include a list of credentials that enable one to easily distinguish how appropriate the site is. This research tool was crucial in the successful completion of this project and would be so for anyone wishing to pursue a similar study.

It is also of crucial importance to define explicitly the subject of this thesis and provide time frames for it. Only queen-consorts and female monarchs of England who lived during the High Middle Ages (1066-1399) will be examined.⁴ Second, this study will restrict its analysis to a reading of books, essays and articles dealing specifically with medieval English queens published between 1821 and 1998. More general political histories that might contain information dealing with queens and works of fiction were not examined.

The historiography of queens is dominated by two forms of scholarship. Popular biographies of queens emerged during the early nineteenth century replacing men with women as the dominant historical actors in their narratives. These writers increasingly recognized both private and public events that supported royal women's influence in traditional and non-traditional ways.⁵ The second form is a more recent development that

⁴Matilda of Flanders (1031-1083); Matilda of Scotland (1080-1118); Adelicia of Louvaine (1103-1151); Matilda of Boulogne (1105-1152); Empress Matilda (1102-1164); Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204); Berengaria of Navarre (1163-1230); Isabella of Angoulême (1186-1246); Eleanor of Provence (1221-1291); Eleanor of Castile (1244 -1290); Margaret of France (1282-1318); Isabella of France (1292-1358); Philippa of Hainault (1314-1369) and Anne of Bohemia (1366-1394).

⁵ The label "popular biography" is derived from a statement made by John Carmi Parsons concerning this genre: " In the popular tradition founded by Agnes Strickland, biographies of medieval queens still

most scholars argue emerged as a result of the women's movement of the 1960's.⁶ This genre is known as the study of queenship. Its purpose is to analyze how specific queens manipulated family and administrative relationships derived from their office and how this enabled them to exert political power. Scholars can then pinpoint how the experiences of queens, regardless of when or where they lived, converged as well as diverged.⁷ One of the leading historians of the study of medieval English queens, John Carmi Parsons, elucidates why this approach is crucial to the development of the study:

Certain themes are common to the lives of royal women throughout the Middle Ages, but the lives of any two queens were more likely to be markedly different than similar, the variables almost beyond counting....This diversity highlights the need to explore the variants in queenly experience as well as the similarities, to identify points at which the lives of these women correspond and diverge, and to see what might be inferred from difference as well as resemblance....The process may reveal new points of contact among the lives of medieval queens, imply new ways of looking at royal women to focus future research.⁸

In broader terms it is the effort to understand the public roles of queens by comparing them to universalities formed about queenship more generally. This allows scholars to

magnify to excess the virtues and vices handed down in anecdote and legend, reducing queens to a moral puppet show complementing "great," "weak," or "evil" kings." John Carmi Parsons, Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 2.

⁶For statements made concerning how the study of queenship emerged since the 1960's see Rachel Gibbons, "Review Article: Medieval Queenship: An Overview" Reading Medieval Studies (21, 1995) 97; Louise Olga Fradenburg, "Introduction: Rethinking Queenship" in Louise Olga Fradenburg, ed., Women and Sovereignty (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 1; and John Carmi Parsons, ed., Medieval Queenship (New York: St. Martin's Press), 1.

⁷For a more complete definition of this genre of history see Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean, eds., Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), xvi-xvii; John Carmi Parsons, Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 5.

⁸ Parsons, 5.

analyze how specific queens measure up against their counterparts.

The logical assumption to be made from the above outline is that the first type of history concerns the life, not the office, of these royal women, while the later is inextricably linked to an understanding of women and power. In contrast with this presupposition this thesis will demonstrate that the scholars who wrote either popular biographies of queens or studies of queenship shared a common perception of their subject matter. Both strains of scholarship invariably focused on the queens' significance to history as a result of the political and social power these royal women held through official and non-official channels. The three distinct periods that delineate this topic also reflect key developments in the understanding of forms of power. For the women writers, scholars and amateur historians who penned their biographies in the nineteenth-century this was achieved by simply acknowledging the political role royal women at times assumed. This historiography also recognized that queens could exert unofficial power as a result of their influence as wives and mothers. Professional historians at the turn of the century perpetuated this perception by providing well documented and researched evidence to support examples of both forms of queenly power. In the last twenty years historians have produced increasingly complex and sophisticated historiographies of how royal women accessed and exerted both social and political power. This continuity of interpretation of subject and theme is an element of the historiography historians today have yet to acknowledge.

The elusive perception that connects the above outlined historiographies is a recognition that power comes in more varied forms than political or economic ones alone.

This stems from an acceptance that power is not necessarily bestowed or held by individual males who exert their will over others through the use of force. A broader definition sees power as the ability of individuals or social groups to attempt to exert their will through threats or acts of violence, persuasion, manipulation or adherence. This thesis will illustrate the shift in the historiography from a symbolic recognition of distinct forms of female power to a functional understanding of social power. Thomas Wartenburg explains that a “theory of social power conceptualizes the forms that power takes in intersubjective human life, abstracting from the specific character of more particular forms of power such as political and economic power.”⁹ The significance that all these historians placed on gender and/or human interaction preceded historians of women who have recently called for gender to replace women as a more inclusive category of analysis.¹⁰ This indicates that the topic of queens has developed in isolation from women’s history and the theories that define it.

The historiography of queens has, since its inception, attempted to prove its worth by portraying royal women as significant historical actors causing both social and political change. The marginalization by women’s historians during the 1960’s and 1970’s of a focus on royal women did little to bolster interest in this topic. These tendencies help explain why historiography has maintained its focus on the significance of queens to political history.

⁹Thomas E. Wartenburg, The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 3.

¹⁰Mary Maynard, “Beyond the ‘Big Three’”: the Development of Feminist Theory Into the 1990s” Women’s History Review (4 [3] November 1995) 269.

It follows then that only when scholars recognized that the wife of the king could exert power and influence in their own right could the study of queens emerge in biographies. What triggered interest in the history of these royal women during the nineteenth century? This thesis argues that historical interest is aroused both by female reigning monarchs and the popularity of king's wives. Royal women who captured the hearts and imagination of their subjects prompted innumerable biographies. The public foibles and scandals of these royal wives fascinated the public and triggered interest in discovering the queens' societal roles, privileges, and legal rights. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries these women led their lives in a public spotlight that allowed English society to witness first hand their triumphs and failures more fully than in previous years. Many people came to feel not only an affinity for these women, but also to acquire a sense that they actually knew them. This knowledge of the human failings of queens and princesses initiated the de-mystification of the royal family.

Each chapter will begin with a brief outline of the specific events which helped define societal beliefs with a special emphasis on England. This focus is required due to the fact that during the nineteenth century the majority of authors contributing to the study were born, lived and worked in England. The following two chapters will also place special emphasis on eighteenth and nineteenth century women's role and the burgeoning feminine awakening experienced in England. This is necessary because female writers formed the majority of contributors at this time. This will be followed by an account of the approaches used by the authors and their interpretation of the position of the queen-consorts.

The second chapter of this thesis will examine the impact of events such as the French revolution, medievalism, the gothic novel, and women's participation in the public sphere had on historical work. This chapter outlines in greater detail than the rest of the thesis the events that shaped societal perceptions for the working classes, bourgeoisie, and the aristocracy in England (1750-1821). This provides an explanation why there was a growing interest in queens and queenship during the later half of the nineteenth century.

The third chapter is an investigation of the writers and publishers of this genre of history. In this regard there were important differences between men and women authors. From approximately the 1830's to the turn of the century women formed the majority who produced histories of queens. It will be argued that female writers composed biographies of queens as covert feminist propaganda. Female writers used the history of queens and their participation in the public sphere or influence on society as evidence of women's greater capabilities and impact on history.

By the turn of the twentieth century the professionalization of history and of other disciplines heralded the end of women's dominance over this type of scholarship. History as a discipline was now claimed by professional historians and dominated by their interests. The fourth chapter, therefore, will shift its focus away from amateur scholars toward the primarily male contributors to the history of queens. With more training and better education these historians increasingly produced works of high academic merit. Unfortunately, these often appeared as short articles that reproduced translated and edited archival documents for academic journals or part of full-length works. These circumscribed works left room for the continued production of popular biographies of

queens written fairly equally by both sexes in the twentieth century. These amateur historians, however, did little to advance conceptions because they often simply reproduced many of the historical fallacies created by the Victorians. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate that during the twentieth century the historiography of queens is delineated by two separate approaches to the history. Amateur historians continued to produce popular biographies of queens while professionals began composing short histories intent on interpreting queens as public figures who influenced history.

It is the purpose of the fifth chapter to outline general trends of continuity and change to reveal the contemporary situation. By the 1980's the British Isles witnessed not only a reigning female monarch simultaneously with its first female Prime Minister but also the media construction of a "fairytale" Princess of Wales who captured the public spotlight. The appearance of the first two figures provided explicit evidence to prove that women could and did successfully attain prominence. This recognition provided the legitimization for academic scholars who wished to delve into an understanding of female versus male forms of power. This trend is readily apparent through a reading of the historiography of queens published since the 1980's. Academics have created increasingly sophisticated arguments concerning queen-consorts and any way of analyzing power. Simultaneously there was the virgin wife of the future king, Diana who, being young, beautiful and naive, helped perpetuate the romanticized and idealized view of the role of royal wife and mother. This is seen through the recent publication of popular biographies of medieval English queens that simply regurgitate many of the same historical fallacies created by the Victorians. The late twentieth century also saw increasingly politically

active or powerful women. These contradictory movements help explain why the study of queens is still divided into two historiographical strains that share a dominant interpretation of queens as significant historical actors. Scholars approached the study of queens with a common purpose of illustrating their subjects significance to history. To do this they increasingly explored these royal women's forays through the official and unofficial forms of power available to them.

The thesis follows in chronological order with each chapter representing a distinct stage in the historiography since 1821. Providing such a broad investigation into the historiography of medieval English queens will achieve several goals. The first is to place the appropriate significance and importance on the pioneering scholars who helped create a popular interest in the history of queens during the nineteenth century. Second, examining the historiography will rectify misconceptions concerning the study and how it evolved. By composing a complete historiographical overview of the study of medieval English queens since 1821, it is believed that more informed suggestions can then be made regarding areas of the history in need of further development.

CHAPTER 2

MEDIEVALISM, MODERNISM AND
FEMININE AWAKENING

The aim of this chapter is to examine the major trends that contributed to the emergence of the study of medieval English queens after 1821. During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries English society experienced a medieval revival. By highlighting the events, contemporary beliefs and artistic trends surrounding medievalism, a greater understanding of the influences affecting English society is achieved. In particular, eighteenth and nineteenth-century women used this renewed interest in the medieval period as an outlet to express emotions and relay experiences invoked by their gender. Medievalism, as an abstract reality, allowed some women to take a first tentative step toward questioning societal oppression without directly or explicitly refuting the status quo. An in-depth examination of the development of this subculture explains why, by the mid-nineteenth century, a number of works by women emerged focussing specifically on medieval English queens.¹ These narrative histories provided intimate, imaginative and exciting biographical sketches of former queens. Almost overnight these works moved women's achievements to centre stage. By depicting queens as public figures they offered as evidence a female paradigm that challenged society's view that women's role be limited to the private sphere.

Before examining the emergence of medievalism, a brief summary of some of the beliefs that formed society, affected women and led to medievalism is required. During the eighteenth century the main ideology that influenced elites was the spirit of

¹See Bibliography, 165.

cosmopolitanism. Micheline R. Ishay, in Internationalism and its Betrayal, explains that cosmopolitanism -- a secular world view conceptualized during Greek and Roman antiquity -- fostered a “collective spirit” that downplayed nationalism by promoting the education and virtue of its “male propertied class.”² During the Renaissance and the Enlightenment the idea of “world citizenship”³ was reestablished in a way that was facilitated by the shared interests and privileges enjoyed among the aristocracy. This class dominated society through legal and governmental prerogatives that over time created a set of interests that helped perpetuate their dominance.⁴ By the eighteenth century the values and beliefs revered by the aristocracy found their greatest expression in the qualities venerated by the Enlightenment: unity, rationality and the progressive nature of mankind.⁵ An elite male’s education reflected these values through the study of Latin and a thorough reading of the classics composed during Roman and Greek antiquity.⁶ This idealization of man provided a unity, through common experience, for the aristocracy allowing a greater exchange of ideas within the European community.⁷

²Micheline R. Ishay, Internationalism and its Betrayal (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), xxiv.

³ Ishay, xxv.

⁴R. J. Smith, The Gothic Bequest: Medieval Institutions in British Thought, 1688-1863 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 72.

⁵Gerald Newman, The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740-1830 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), and Newman, 6.

⁶John Kenyon, The History Men: The Historical Profession in England since The Renaissance (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983), 41.

⁷Newman, 14.

In particular, the aristocrats in France and England enjoyed one of the closest interrelationships through the imitation of ideas and cultural pursuits, with the French taking the lead. The English aristocracy experienced a mounting craze for all things French that ultimately resulted in the growing significance placed on the impact of the Norman Conquest (1066). This was then used to illustrate how French culture had dominated English society since the medieval period. The English aristocracy nostalgically evoked medieval French traditions and customs such as chivalry, romantic literature, the crusades and feudalism.⁸ Adoption of these traditions and customs reinforced the status quo and highlighted the dominance of French culture in England.⁹ By the mid-eighteenth century the first phase in the emergence of medievalism was dominated by the interests pursued by the aristocracy.¹⁰ How did women contribute to or participate in this medieval revival? To explain this phenomenon the severe societal constraints imposed on women and how some overcame this will be outlined.

Arguably the first and most important hurdle women faced was their complete exclusion from or limited access to formal schooling. To overcome this some women of prominent social standing used the private sphere to access the world of learning. An early example of this was the conversation parties first held in France and hosted by

⁸This frenzy for all things French resulted in approximately 12,000 English visitors traveling to France in 1765. This number jumped to 40,000 by 1785. See Newman, 43.

⁹Smith, 71.

¹⁰The period from 1740 to 1789 is known as pre-romanticism, the dying of neoclassicism, the rise of primitivism, the growth of feeling, and the spread of sensibility. See Newman, 88.

women in their salons.¹¹ What is of significance was that though women organized these parties through their domination of the private sphere, thereby gaining visibility in and access to learning, they catered mainly to men who formed the majority at such events.¹² The most important and influential of these eighteenth-century French hosts included Madame de Geoffrin (1699-1777), Germaine de Staël (1766-1817) and Madame Roland (1754-1793).¹³ Taking their lead from the French, the English soon established salons of their own, the most important of which was hosted by Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1800).

Born on 2 October 1720 into a wealthy family, Elizabeth married Edward Montagu (1742) and established a salon of her own at their London townhouse.¹⁴ After meeting and becoming acquainted with Voltaire's unflattering view of Shakespeare, she anonymously published An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare Compared with the Greek and French Dramatic Poets with some remarks upon Misrepresentations of Monsieur de Voltaire (1769).¹⁵ The work was an immediate success, and the identity of the author soon revealed. Montagu was not only a role model for her gender but also

¹¹Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Women and The Enlightenment" in Renate Bridenthal, Claudia Koonz and Susan Stuard, eds., Becoming Visible: Women in European History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987), 251-277.

¹²Marlene Le Gates, Making Waves: A History Of Feminism in Western Society (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd., 1996), 126.

¹³Lynne Brakeman and Susan Gall, eds., Chronology of Women Worldwide: People, Places and Events that Shaped Women's History (Detroit: Gale, 1997), 131, and Fox-Genovese, 256.

¹⁴Brakeman, 131.

¹⁵Elizabeth (Fidget) Montagu (<http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~worp/>): Archived on 3 August 1998.

provided, through her social affairs, a place that fostered women's intellectualism.¹⁶

Labelled the "Bluestockings," Montagu's circle of female friends encouraged each other in their academic pursuits. Some of the women included Elizabeth Carter's Poems on Several Occasions (1762), Catherine Talbot's Essays on Various Subjects (1772), Hester Chapone's Letters on the Improvement of the Mind (1773).¹⁷ The support these women provided each other was crucial, giving them the self-confidence to pursue their goals at a time when society only hesitantly accepted very limited female participation in public life.

Simultaneously, another more accessible public forum for female interaction emerged in the debating society. In London this cheap form of recreation -- 6 pence approximately for admission -- grew rapidly in popularity amongst women.¹⁸ Due to the increasing demand, women had, by the 1780's, organized four all-female societies: La Belle Assemblée, the Female Parliament, the Female Congress and the Carlisle House Debates for Women.¹⁹ The first step in organizing such a debate was to advertise in advance the intended question for discussion. At the debate, remarks and opinions from the audience were received and then voted upon to determine the outcome.²⁰ Many of the most popular and profitable subjects dealt with the role of women in society

¹⁶La Belle Assemblée or The Bluestockings Archives: University of Massachusetts (<http://omega.cc.umb.edu/~fayeng/archive2.html>): Archived on 4 August 1998.

¹⁷La Belle Assemblée or The Bluestockings Archives: University of Massachusetts (<http://omega.cc.umb.edu/~fayeng/archive2.html>): Archived on 4 August 1998.

¹⁸Donna T. Andrew, "'The Passion for Public Speaking': Women's Debating Societies" in Valerie Frith, ed., Women and History: Voices of Early Modern England (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1995), 165.

¹⁹Andrew, 165.

²⁰Andrew, 165.

providing many, perhaps for the first time, with a public forum in which to express feelings and experiences unique to their gender.

Women also contributed to and participated in a much less esteemed pursuit by reading and writing gothic novels.²¹ This “minor literary upheaval” -- characterized by its sentimental and romantic style -- emerged during the second half of the eighteenth century and is traditionally explained as a reaction against the Enlightenment’s veneration of reason, order and politics. Approximately 5,000 gothic books were produced between 1760 and 1820.²² Set in the Middle Ages these novels revelled in the mystical and spiritual quality that the Catholic medieval period seemed to embody. Traditionally the publication of the first gothic novel is attributed to Horace Walpole’s The Castle of Otranto (1764)²³ although Sarah Fielding’s The History of Ophelia (1760),²⁴ and Thomas Leland’s Longsword, Earl of Salisbury (1762) preceded it.²⁵ Regardless, by the late eighteenth century this was the most popular form of fiction in England with women in particular flocking to read and produce their own gothic novels.²⁶ A common

²¹The Gothic Literature Page: The English Gothic Novel from 1764-1820 (<http://members.aol.com/iamudolpho/basic.html>): Archived on 3 August 1998.

²²The Gothic Literature Page: The English Gothic Novel from 1764-1820 (<http://members.aol.com/iamudolpho/basic.html>): Archived on 3 August 1998.

²³Laura Dabundo, ed., Encyclopedia of Romanticism: Culture in Britain, 1780s to 1830s (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1992), 603.

²⁴Sarah Fielding, The History of Ophelia (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974).

²⁵Virginia Blain, Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy, eds., The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 445.

²⁶Joanne Shattock, The Oxford Guide to British Women Writers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 185.

explanation for this interest in the gothic novel is that it provided women with a medium within which to express emotions concerning experiences specific to their gender:

It has been variously read as family romance, as voicing inarticulate female fears of male violence, as combining the thrill of adventure with the reassurance of a passive victim heroine, or heroined, or as subversively protesting against the feminine mystique and gendered allocation of power.²⁷

Female contributors to this genre included: Sophia Lee's Recess: A Tale of Other Times (1783), Anne Fuller's Alan Fitz-Osborne (1786), Ann Radcliffe's Sicilian Romance: A Highland Story (1790),²⁸ Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey (1798)²⁹ and Mrs. Bonhote's Bungay Castle (1796).³⁰ In this way women had contributed to the slowly emerging interest in the medieval period in a uniquely gender specific way that provided an outlet for feelings aroused by their sex.

As the eighteenth century wore on the desire to revive the Middle Ages took on increasingly varied forms. The medieval or gothic revival showed in Horace Walpole's interest in architecture. In 1748, Walpole purchased Strawberry Hill and remodelled it in the gothic style. Today the castle-like structure is considered one of the most famous neo-gothic buildings erected in England.³¹ It was also at this time that it became

²⁷Blain, 445.

²⁸Anne Radcliffe is considered one of the premiere gothic novelists. For a list of works by Radcliffe see Appendix 2.

²⁹Brakeman, 139.

³⁰The Gothic Literature Page: The English Gothic Novel from 1764-1820
(<http://members.aol.com/iamudolpho/basic.html>): Archived on 3 August 1998.

³¹Smith, 97.

fashionable in England to build gothic ruins in gardens.³² Another conservative who contributed to the medieval revival in architecture was King George III (1738-1820). George commissioned the premier gothic revivalist, James Wyatt, to serve as his personal architect. He also reinstated the Order of the Garter Knights in an elaborate ceremony held in 1805.³³ In these ways George, in the last remaining decades of the eighteenth century, paid homage to his feudal roots in an attempt to bolster the prestige and stability of his constitutional monarchy through the use of historical authority.

By the end of the eighteenth century, it seemed women were increasingly willing to challenge their restricted access to public life through their participation in salons, debating societies and in print. Women's increased visibility in public life sparked intense debates concerning the necessity of female education.³⁴ The literary and public niche women had slowly carved out for themselves provided them with the confidence to argue for women's case in print. Two of the most important writers who advocated for women's education were Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) in Thoughts on the Education of Daughters (1787)³⁵ and Mary Hays (1760-1843) in Anonymous Appeal to

³²Dabundo, 8.

³³Mark Girouard, The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and The English Gentleman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 24.

³⁴Some eighteenth-century works that encouraged women's intellectual development include Thomas Seward, The Female Right to Literature (1748), John Duncombe, The Femiad (1751), Mary Wollstonecraft, Thoughts on the Education of Daughters (1787) and Catherine Macaulay, Letters on Education (1790). See La Belle Assemblée or The Bluestockings Archives: University of Massachusetts (<http://omega.cc.umb.edu/~fayeng/archive2.html>): Archived on 4 August 1998.

³⁵Brakeman, 143.

the Men of Great Britain on Behalf of Women (1798).³⁶ Wollstonecraft was born into a poor lower-middle class family and sustained herself by working as a ladies' companion, governess, schoolmistress and finally as a writer.³⁷ Hays -- born into a family of "Rational Dissenters" in Southwark -- wrote numerous works including fiction, non-fiction, children's books and sermons. The money from those allowed her to support financially her widowed mother and two sisters.³⁸ Prior to the Revolution (1789) Hays met Wollstonecraft whom she greatly admired and attempted to emulate.³⁹

Unfortunately Hays' opinion of Wollstonecraft placed her in a minority among their contemporaries who primarily viewed the radical views of both with derision and disparaged them for the abnormal lives they led.⁴⁰ This was partly due to the appearance of a posthumous biography, Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1798), by Wollstonecraft's widower William Godwin. Society was shocked to discover that while living in Paris during the French Revolution Wollstonecraft had lived out of wedlock with an American, Gilbert Imlay, and borne his illegitimate child.⁴¹ In

³⁶Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, eds., The Dictionary of National Biography vol xix (London: Oxford University Press, 1917), 298.

³⁷Karren Offen, "Was Mary Wollstonecraft a Feminist? A Contextual Re-reading of A Vindication of the Rights of Women, 1792-1992" in Uma Para meswaran, ed., Quilting a New Canon: Stitching Women's Words (Toronto: Black Women and Women of Colour Press, 1996), 4.

³⁸C. S. Nicholls, ed., The Dictionary of National Biography of Missing Persons (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917), 298.

³⁹Janet Todd, ed., Dictionary of British Women Writers (London: Routledge, 1989), 321.

⁴⁰Brakeman, 143.

⁴¹Jane Arscott, "Ending Injustice as a Precondition for Political Equality: The Emancipatory Discourse of Mary Wollstonecraft and Marie de Gouges" in Uma Para meswaran, Quilting a New Canon, 35.

contrast today Mary Wollstonecraft is most frequently heralded as one of the first feminists for her more recognized work Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1791). The negative reputation Wollstonecraft gained after her death was also part of a more general trend that saw the persecution and censure of the women who had challenged the status quo before, during and after the French Revolution (1789).⁴²

The emerging feminine awakening that women experienced during the second half of the eighteenth century ultimately failed to secure greater equality and freedom. Rather women quickly lost the small foothold they had gained largely as the result of a backlash against their forays into male dominated pursuits that had been precipitated by the French revolution. The largely negative impact the Revolution had on women's position in society necessitates a brief examination of this period of social upheaval. In the closing years of the eighteenth century French society rose up and overthrew its absolute monarchy. Women assumed the forefront of subversive activity by demonstrating publicly against king and government.⁴³ At first, public opinion in England concerning the French Revolution remained largely divided. At one extreme radicals heralded it as a great achievement and associated it with England's Glorious Revolution (1688).⁴⁴ Their hopes for greater civil and political equality rested on the belief that the principles of the

⁴²Jane Rendall, The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1860 (New York: Schocken Books, 1984), 33.

⁴³Rendall, 47.

⁴⁴Nicola J. Watson, Revolution and the Form of the British Novel 1790-1825 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 2. Watson provides examples of writers who supported the revolutionary cause including William Godwin, Mary Hays, Charlotte Smith and Mary Wollstonecraft. See Watson, 3, and David Cody, "French Revolution" The Victorian Web (<http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/hypertext/landow/victorian/history/hist7.html>): Archived on 5 April 1998.

Revolution -- reason and rational thought -- would help promote reforms. Both radicals and liberals lauded the Revolution as the final overthrow of feudalism and the realization of principles of the Enlightenment. A few women, emboldened by revolutionary demands for greater freedom and equality, actively campaigned for women's equal rights in the new republic.⁴⁵

One of the more significant of these French revolutionary women was Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793). After the revolutionary government published The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789) -- a document that omitted women entirely from having any political or civil rights -- de Gouges responded by writing The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Female Citizens (1789).⁴⁶ This pamphlet provided women with the same political and civil rights as men:

Considering that ignorance, disregard of or contempt for the rights of women are the only causes of public misfortune and of governmental corruption, they have resolved to set forth in a solemn declaration, the natural, inalienable and sacred rights of women; to the end that this declaration, constantly held up to all members of society, may always remind them of their rights and duties; to the end that the acts based on women's power and those based on the power of men, being constantly measured against the goal of all political institutions, may be more respected; and so that the demands of female citizens, henceforth founded on simple and indisputable principles, may ever uphold the constitution and good morals and may contribute to the happiness of all.⁴⁷

Gouges can easily be seen as one of the most radical feminists at this time for she, unlike the majority of reformers, did not see a difference between the rights of man and those of

⁴⁵Darline Gay Levy and Harriet Branson Applewhite, "Women and Political Revolution in Paris" in Bridenthal, Koonz and Stuard, Becoming Visible, 280 and Le Gates, 117.

⁴⁶Brakemen, 143.

⁴⁷As cited in Le Gates, 138.

woman.⁴⁸ Other radicals expressed their dissent by founding organizations intended to channel support for women's rights. The most important of such groups was the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women (February to October 1793).⁴⁹ Three of its most important members dedicated to championing women's rights included Pauline Léon, Etta Palm d'Aelders and Théroigne de Méricourt.⁵⁰ Their often militant and radical public participation shocked the establishment who had not foreseen this revolutionary development.

Such militant and visible political action by women in France did little to ease the reservations conservatives in England entertained toward the revolution. In response, the conservative elements of the elite moved quickly and aggressively to attack the spirit and events surrounding the revolution. Completely terrified that the same events could sweep England into its own revolution, the first public denunciation arrived with the publication of Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790).⁵¹ Burke, like many other conservatives, argued that radical change was unlawful and unnatural. He contended that the development of philosophical and ideological beliefs occurred naturally over many centuries to form the "wisdom of the ages."⁵² Published prior to the violent turn of the revolutionary movement, Burke used the minor discomforts

⁴⁸Rendall, 50.

⁴⁹Brakemen, 134.

⁵⁰Le Gates, 139.

⁵¹David Duff, Romance and Revolution: Shelley and the Politics of a Genre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 15.

⁵²Girouard, 23 and Duff, 14.

experienced by the Queen of France, Marie Antoinette, to proclaim the end of chivalry.⁵³ He stated that, "I thought 10,000 swords must have leaped from their scabbard to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone."⁵⁴ Burke summoned the chivalric code of the Middle Ages to highlight an even greater disruption to the status quo. If chivalry was dead did that mean the traditional role of women within society had also changed? If tradition once protected women by arguing for their inferiority, did the end of chivalry mean equality for women? Burke's Reflections had obviously struck a chord as, after more than 50,000 copies of the booklet were sold, a stream of responses sparked the Pamphlet war of 1790.⁵⁵

The principles set forth by the revolution enabled women and men of all social means to demand greater political and civil rights. This heightened political awakening soon gave pause to aristocrats, liberals, and many of the middle and working classes in England who had at first supported the revolution.⁵⁶ The radical and violent turn that the revolutionary movement proceeded to take deepened antagonisms. By January 1793, the French king was executed (the queen's execution followed in 1794); the French government then declared war on Britain and proceeded to purge its own ranks with the

⁵³George Claeys, ed., Political Writings of the 1790s vol i, Radicalism and Reform: Responses to Burke 1790-1791 (London: William Pickering, 1995), xxix.

⁵⁴As cited in Duff, 21.

⁵⁵Duff, 9. Claeys states that approximately 4,000 pamphlets appeared between 1791 and 1795. See Claeys, liv.

⁵⁶Claeys, xvii.

commencement of the Terror (September 1793 to July 1794).⁵⁷ Women were among the primary targets because the revolutionary government feared the disruptive and radical elements that female organization inspired.⁵⁸ All women's clubs, in particular the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, were disbanded in the fall of 1793. Women were then denied the right to attend political meetings, assemble in groups of larger than five individuals, petition or join the army.⁵⁹ The persecution of individual women was even more severe: Olympes de Gouge and Madame Roland were executed, Etta Palm d'Aelders and Germaine de Staël were exiled while Théroigne de Méricourt was committed to a lunatic asylum.⁶⁰ This backlash against women received further confirmation after Napoleon seized control of the French government. In 1804, Napoleon reinstated patriarchal law that placed control of property in the hands of husbands.⁶¹ It also meant that wives needed their husbands' consent to live apart from them, attend university and work outside the home.⁶² Husbands retained sole custody of children and even had the right to have them imprisoned. Wives faced a two-year prison sentence if found guilty of adultery and even death if their husbands caught them in the

⁵⁷Claeys, xviii.

⁵⁸Rendall, 51.

⁵⁹Le Gates, 139.

⁶⁰Le Gates, 137.

⁶¹Levy, 300.

⁶²Le Gates, 149.

act. By the turn of the century the French government was not alone in tightening its grip over society to create a false impression of political and social stability.

In response to the violent turn of the revolution, public opinion in England became increasingly united against a society that seemed to be spiralling out of control. In England it seemed to many that the seeds of unrest had already been sown due to the growing civil disobedience: two naval mutinies (1797) and reports of subversive activities by radical groups. The Irish revolt, supported by the French revolutionary government, heightened anxieties.⁶³ English society was unified more than ever before against any activity or group that could sweep the British Isles into its own revolution. The French revolution was ultimately a failure for those radicals in England who had hoped it would bring greater freedom to their country. The ensuing Napoleonic wars also contributed to the justification of heavy handed measures to ensure the preservation of the old order in England.⁶⁴ This resulted in the government passing legislation that suspended Habeas Corpus (1794) and banned public meetings.⁶⁵

It is at this time that medievalism, as an outgrowth of romanticism, gained wider support and recognition in England.⁶⁶ Examples of this movement found expression in

⁶³Claeys, xlvii.

⁶⁴Speck, 46.

⁶⁵Speck, 47.

⁶⁶Charles Dellheim, The Face of the Past: The Preservation of the Medieval Inheritance in Victorian England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 4.

the revival of gothic poetry, architecture and the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites.⁶⁷ By the second half of the eighteenth century the aristocracy's traditional reverence for French culture was increasingly met with hostility from the bourgeois and working classes that felt betrayed and humiliated by the deference required of them.⁶⁸ Instead many turned to the Anglo-Saxon period and embraced their English heritage. This resulted in a rising tide of nationalism spawned by anti-foreign and anti-aristocratic inclinations.⁶⁹ The primary cause of this growing intolerance was largely due to the financial burden placed on the middle and working classes who financed Britain's almost continuous war effort: the Seven Years' war, the American War of Independence, and the conflicts with the revolutionary and Napoleonic governments of France.⁷⁰ By the turn of the century some individuals explored their national heritage with growing enthusiasm. This resulted in the compilation and publication of "native" or "primitive" folk work such

⁶⁷The English romantic movement copied the spontaneity of the medieval romance through poetry. Three important contributors to this style were William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Blake.

⁶⁸Simmons argued further that those with political interests interpreted the Norman Conquest as responsible for stifling Saxon constitutionalism. Clare A. Simmons, Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in Nineteenth-Century British Literature (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 3; and Newman, 228.

⁶⁹The two most significant events, on a macro level, included the Industrial (1750-1850) and French revolutions (1789). Girouard, The Return to Camelot, 23; and Dellheim, 13.

⁷⁰Newman, 112.

as: ballads, poetry, dance and music.⁷¹ In literature this movement emphasized elements from the medieval period that included heroism, chivalry, mystery and passion.

One of the most important contributors to medievalism was the famous historian, novelist and collector Sir Walter Scott. Throughout his life Scott constructed a living reality in line with his conservative, royalist and medieval sympathies.⁷² Scott's most lavish and exotic tribute to medieval architecture was his purchase and extensive remodelling of Abbotsford. Scott used this "baronial pile" to replace his lost inheritance, Dryburgh, after his relative sold it.⁷³ Scott's prolific and popular novels provided the financial backing needed for him to play his idealized role, that of retired country squire. However, Scott's most lavish and exotic tribute to medievalism is the impact his historical novels had on contemporary society.⁷⁴

At the turn of the century the historical novel captured society's nationalist mood by relating a distinct inheritance in England as well.⁷⁵ Mark Girouard's The Return to

⁷¹The first published work of this genre was Thomas Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (1765). In it Percy claimed that a continuous British poetic tradition existed. Simmons argues that in "editing these poems, [Percy] was asserting the value of heritage, and the interest in old literary remains prompted by the ballad "revival" (a term itself suggesting a concrete past) expanded to include other literary forms." Simmons, 45.

⁷²Girouard, 31.

⁷³For a picture of Abbotsford see Stephen Bann, The Clothing of Clio: A Study of the Representation of History in Nineteenth-Century Britain and France (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 94.

⁷⁴Scott's literary tributes to the Middle Ages include: Ivanhoe (1820), The Talisman (1825), Quentin Durward (1823), Anne of Geierstein, Count Robert of Paris, Castle Dangerous and the Siege of Malta. See A. N. Wilson, The Laird of Abbotsford: A View of Sir Walter Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 157.

⁷⁵Simmons, 9.

Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman, conceptualized the impact of Scott's writing:

Scott gave his thousands of readers a Walter Scott of the Middle Ages that captured their imagination because it was presented so vividly, was so different from the life they themselves lived yet seemed to express certain virtues and characteristics which they felt their own age was in need of.⁷⁶

In short, Scott's greatest influence lay in his ability to capture the spirit of the Middle Ages.⁷⁷ This sparked the imagination that in turn influenced many to study their seemingly lost inheritance. Scott's writing came at a time when English society hungered for history to fulfill rising national longings.⁷⁸ As a result, a number of historians turned to the study of their national history: Catharine Macaulay, John Millar, John Whitaker, John Pinkerton and Robert Macfarlane.⁷⁹

This focus on England's medieval inheritance stood in direct opposition to the formal, rational, scientific and artificial qualities that the neoclassicism of the Enlightenment had revered.⁸⁰ It alternatively freed the individual from a rigid intellectual

⁷⁶Girouard, 34. As Wilson further argues, "Emotionally, Scott revealed the past to the nineteenth century, less through the novels in which he actually possessed a wealth of historical insight and memory than through the romances; and he did so not merely for the poets, but for the serious historians, the novelists, the romancers and the architects." Wilson, 153.

⁷⁷Wilson also states that, "Something over a thousand paintings [were] inspired by [Scott's] work and well over 50 operas, not to mention the Gothic residences, all partaking a little of the quality of Abbotsford." Wilson, 3.

⁷⁸Simmons, 9.

⁷⁹Newman, 115.

⁸⁰Dellheim, 4.

structure by providing an escape -- the study of history -- helping many overcome feelings of social dislocation caused by revolution and industrialization.⁸¹ This emerging interest in history ultimately resulted in the foundation of societies that pursued the publication of ancient and medieval manuscripts in an effort to retrieve and pursue England's native past. The first of such learned societies to be established had been the London Society of Antiquaries (1707),⁸² but the nineteenth century saw many more emerge. Examples include the Roxburghe Club (1812), the Camden Society (1830), and the Royal Historical Society (1868).⁸³ The male members of the upper classes dominated many of these clubs, but as the nineteenth century wore on their memberships were extended or new societies emerged catering to the male members of the lower classes.⁸⁴ Why were these clubs so popular and the interest in English history so widespread?⁸⁵

⁸¹Nina Auerbarch, Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 1. An example of this type of work is found in Richard Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance (1762). Hurd extolled the virtues of Romanticism found in medieval and early modern poetry. See Newman, 109. Also published at this time was Samuel Johnson's Lives of the Poets (1779-81), and Thomas Warton's History of English Poetry (1774-81). See Newman, 113; J. W. Burrow, "The Sense of the Past" in Lawrence Lerner, ed., The Victorians (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1978), 123, and W. A. Speck, A Concise History of Britain 1707-1975 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 51-53.

⁸²Dabundo, 8. Other societies included the Athenaeum Club (1824) whose members exceeded 1,200 people and the Society of Dilettanti (1732).

⁸³Simmons, 49.

⁸⁴Accompanying this cultural flowering of historical societies there also occurred the publication of Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language (1755), the Biographia Britannica (1747-66), the Encyclopedia Britannica (1768-71), the founding of the Royal Academy (1768) and the opening of the British Museum (1759). See Newman, 112.

⁸⁵Some female clubs included Albemarle (1875), Bath and County Ladies' Club (1896) and Berners Club (1871). See Janet Horowitz and Anna K. Clark, eds., The Englishwoman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions: An Index (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), 56.

One answer to this question was that in England after the French revolution English there occurred a prolonged period of “anti-Jacobinism.” In order to come to terms with the social upheaval caused by the Revolution many turned to history to glorify England’s past accomplishments in order to add lustre to new ones. This era of suppression also facilitated the consolidation of conservative political interests that successfully squashed any radicalism until the end of the Napoleonic wars (1820).⁸⁶ After twenty years of suppressed radicalism a well fermented expression of dissent was finally released upon the most visible symbol of government authority: the royal family.

By the end of George IV’s reign (1830), medievalism had touched every level of society indiscriminate of social and economic status as well as political or religious beliefs.⁸⁷ In its first stage the medieval revival was utilized by the upper classes to benefit themselves; now the middle and working classe interpreted medievalism to suit their own ends. The widespread use of historical authority by all social classes in England make it difficult to form generalizations about something that remained a minor movement. At its most basic level medievalism is often explained as society’s response to modernism.⁸⁸ By reclaiming a past inheritance, English society shaped the values of present and future

⁸⁶Speck, 47.

⁸⁷Simmons, 2.

⁸⁸Dellheim, 13.

generations.⁸⁹ In short, individuals used historical authority to reaffirm or challenge societal continuity during a time of seemingly uncontrollable change.⁹⁰

The eventual outlet for these expressions occurred when George IV (1762-1830) finally succeeded his father to the throne of England in 1820. The cause of these problems lay in George's marriage to Princess Caroline of Brunswick (1768-1821), on 8 April 1795.⁹¹ The "Caroline Affair" began with George's father arranging his marriage to a protestant princess. The prince of Wales had only acquiesced under the assumption that parliament would then settle the enormous debts he had accrued. The match was an unmitigated disaster, for the prince, a bigamist, gambler and later adulterer, revered qualities in a woman which Caroline did not possess. Surprisingly, his shoddy treatment of his bride did not dampen Caroline's zest for life. Instead of wallowing in this neglect and rejection she set up her own house, threw lavish parties and eventually travelled overseas.

To say the couple hated each other is kind. They produced one daughter, Charlotte (1796-1817), during their first year together.⁹² As heir to the throne Charlotte was a wildly popular figure. She stood in stark contrast to the reprehensible behaviour of her father, mother and uncles. Her parents soon separated and Caroline eventually left

⁸⁹Leslie Workman and Kathleen Verduin, eds., Medievalism in England II (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996), 5.

⁹⁰Dellheim, 3, and Workman, 3.

⁹¹Thomas W. Laqueur, "The Queen Caroline Affair: Politics as Art in the Reign of George IV," Journal of Modern History (54 [3] September 1982) 41-82.

⁹²E. A. Smith, A Queen On Trial: The Affair of Queen Caroline (Dover: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1993), 7.

the country to travel on the continent. On 2 May 1816 Princess Charlotte married Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saafeld.⁹³ In 1818, after several miscarriages, the princess was again pregnant. The press closely monitored Charlotte's progress providing the general public with an image of their future sovereign in terms the average person could identify. This fostered support and sympathy for the continued health and happiness of their future queen and her young family. After giving birth to a stillborn son, Charlotte died as a result of complications from the pregnancy. The entire country mourned because she had become the symbol of domestic happiness and England's hope for the future.⁹⁴ Stephen C. Behrendt's "Mourning, Myth and Merchandising: The Public Death of Princess Charlotte" conceptualizes English society's reaction to the death of the princess:

The people came, not surprisingly, to see in Charlotte's plight a measure of their own, and because she was attractive both physically and socially (in contrast to both her parents), they found it easy to invest her with what we may recognize as essentially mythic qualities that reflected their own aspirations as well as their idealistic nationalistic view of 'Englishness': liveliness, extroversion, independence of mind and spirit, and an easy commerce with the public generally.⁹⁵

Public mourning was soon translated into more tangible forms when Charlotte's image was depicted on consumer goods like ceramic tea services, commemorative coins,

⁹³David Williamson, Brewer's British Royalty (London: Cassell, 1996), 168.

⁹⁴Dror Wahram, "'Middle-Class' Domesticity Goes Public: Gender, Class and Politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria" Journal of British Studies (32 [4] October 1993) 401.

⁹⁵Stephen C. Behrendt, "Mourning, Myth and Merchandising: The Public Death of Princess Charlotte" in The Death of Princess Charlotte Augustus (1796-1817): A Research Archive (<http://sparc20-1.unixlab.virginia.edu/~ams4k/Charlotte/>): Archived on 3 August 1998.

scarves, ribbons, and a sculpture erected at St. George's Chapel, Windsor.⁹⁶ Biographies of Charlotte soon appeared and included William Hone's Authentic Memoirs of the Life of the Late Lamented Princess Charlotte (1817) and Thomas Green's Memoirs of her Late Royal Highness Charlotte Augustus of Wales (1818).

This tragic loss and its impact on the nation was also captured through poetry. One such contribution was made by a young Agnes Strickland -- author of Lives of the Queens of England -- who anonymously published "Monody on the Death of the Princess Charlotte" for the Norwich Mercury in 1817:⁹⁷

Chill Autumn blast hath swept away
The smiling gift of Summer's sky
And darkly sad and witheringly,
They droop and die
A keener chill, a wilder blast,
O'er England's brightest prospects passed,
And heavy, was the mournful hour
When sunk in death her Royal Flower⁹⁸

These words conceptualized the loss experienced in England following the death of their princess and England's perceived hope for the future. Many had also believed that Charlotte's succession would have brought an end to government corruption through the legislation of reform.⁹⁹

⁹⁶Stephen C. Behrendt, "Mourning, Myth and Merchandising: The Public Death of Princess Charlotte" in The Death of Princess Charlotte Augustus (1796-1817): A Research Archive (<http://sparc20-1.unixlab.virginia.edu/~ams4k/Charlotte/>): Archived on 3 August 1998.

⁹⁷Janet Todd, ed., Dictionary of British Women Writers (London: Routledge, 1989), 652.

⁹⁸Una Pope-Hennessy, Agnes Strickland: Biographer of the Queens of England 1796-1874 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1940), 16.

⁹⁹Dorothy Thompson, Queen Victoria: Gender and Power (London: Virago Press, 1990), 7.

As an only child, Charlotte's death sparked a marriage frenzy when the king's brothers hurried to find brides to ensure the line of succession. After hearing the news of her daughter's death, Caroline questioned, "This is not only my last hope gone, but what has England lost."¹⁰⁰ Caroline lost not only her daughter but the last link holding her marriage together. George, unhampered by a daughter's love for her mother, initiated divorce proceedings known as the "Caroline Affair."¹⁰¹

For his coronation George IV revived the Ceremony of the Challenge where the king's champion on horseback and in full armour would enter the banquet hall to defend the king's honour. Three hundred guests wore period costumes while spectators viewed the entire medieval event from gothic galleries built especially for the banquet.¹⁰² Determined that Caroline should have no part in the ceremony, George offered her £50,000 to remain on the continent.¹⁰³ She refused to be bought off and returned to England.¹⁰⁴ The Times announced the queen's arrival, invoking history and nationalism in her support:

We should be inclined to say, that neither at the landing of William the Conqueror, nor at that of the Earl of Richmond, nor of William III, were the people's bosoms of this metropolis so much agitated as they were last

¹⁰⁰Williamson, 63.

¹⁰¹Laqueur, 417.

¹⁰²Girouard, 26.

¹⁰³Laqueur, 420.

¹⁰⁴Wahram, 399.

night, when it was known her Majesty the Queen of England had once again - bravely we will say - once again set her foot on British ground.¹⁰⁵

In retaliation George petitioned the House of Lords to grant him a divorce on grounds of adultery.¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately the king had lived such a completely immoral existence his unpopularity plunged even lower. Public opinion could not turn a blind eye to the hypocrisy and obvious sexual double standard George attempted to hide behind.¹⁰⁷

English society rallied to support the queen, determined to prove to Burke and society at large that, unlike France, chivalry in England was alive and well. Historian Dror Wahram pinpoints the “Caroline Affair” as the pivotal event that provided a consciousness for the formation of middle class values. Public opinion backed the queen because as a “wronged woman,” the courageous or chivalrous action was leap to her defence.¹⁰⁸ The middle class was not the only social group that identified and used the symbolic nature of Caroline’s predicament to feed their own political interests.

Radicals used the trial to openly criticize the government for corruption and the aristocracy’s lack of morality.¹⁰⁹ Thomas Laqueur’s “The Queen Caroline Affair” argued that,

She [Caroline] provided a shield behind which to defy and confront authority in relative safety; at the height of post - Napoleonic repression,

¹⁰⁵As cited in Smith, 29.

¹⁰⁶Wahram, 400.

¹⁰⁷The list of George’s sins are too numerous to outline here, but included bigamy, adultery and corruption. See Thompson, 15.

¹⁰⁸Wahram, 405.

¹⁰⁹Smith, xi.

censorship was helpless against so massive a mobilization, one which, in any case, asked only that the rights of the king's consort be recognized.¹¹⁰

Radicals equated the queen's honour with the constitutional rights of the people and argued that both suffered under a corrupt, unjust and oppressive system.¹¹¹ In this way they justified challenging the legitimacy of the government.

People petitioned in the streets for Caroline and forced spectators to cheer for the queen. One slogan chalked on the wall stated "The Queen Forever, the King in the river."¹¹² This type of campaigning quickly deteriorated into violence. Individuals physically attacked by the mobs included the aristocrats who supported the king, magistrates and the military. The degree to which Caroline's trial threatened the social order was interpreted by Princess Lieven, a Russian aristocrat living in London, in a letter written to her relative Prince Metternich:

I am very much afraid we may reach the crisis which I have long feared; I have told you of my anxiety on this score. The Ministers are in a most dangerous position. They have put up a glorious fight against greatest difficulties, foreign and domestic, that have ever confronted a government; and now they are going to be defeated by a woman.¹¹³

This passage indicated how volatile the situation had become. Supporters of Caroline also sent her presents of dresses, bonnets, carpets and plateware. Among them were

¹¹⁰Laqueur, 421.

¹¹¹Laqueur, 434.

¹¹²Laqueur, 424.

¹¹³As cited by Smith, 35.

seventeen petitions from all female groups defending the queen.¹¹⁴ Women, it seemed, took the misfortunes of Caroline personally. Many consequently rallied in her support.

The sexual double standards that the trial highlighted united women behind a political cause as never before. Caroline's difficulties brought the "fragility" of women's legal position in marriage under harsh scrutiny.¹¹⁵ Neither the queen nor any other woman for that matter, under English law, could divorce her husband on any grounds including adultery or abuse. Custody of children also remained the sole prerogative of husbands. When Caroline and George separated he allowed her only limited and supervised access to their daughter.¹¹⁶ Upon marriage a wife's property reverted to the control of the husband even if the couple separated. In case of abandonment or death, all property was turned over to male trustees.¹¹⁷ The trial of Caroline effectively hampered a known adulterer from divorcing his wife on the grounds of adultery. The matter rested on George's attempt to rid himself of an unwanted wife and not from any kind of physical or financial mistreatment. This made Caroline's case the exception to the rule as her very public life protected her from such treatment.

¹¹⁴Thompson, 12.

¹¹⁵Laqueur, 442.

¹¹⁶Laqueur, 443.

¹¹⁷As Smith elucidates, "Women were legally, socially and personally inferior to men, and they had no political rights - they were not themselves citizens of the state; had no right to vote, could not sit in Parliament and, though in certain circumstances they could acquire or inherit peerages they could appear in the House of Lords only on ceremonial occasions, and then not in their own right but as guests of husbands or brothers." See Smith, 99.

The precursors to such political action were the abandoned and mistreated wives, many of whom first defended queen Caroline's actions. Some fought for women's equality before the law, while the majority sought the continued protection by society of women on the grounds of female inferiority. Mary Hays, Caroline's contemporary biographer, summed up popular opinion in England:

Burke had he now lived, would have retracted his assertion, that the age of chivalry had passed away; it revived, in all its impassioned fervour, amidst the soberest and gravest people in the civilized world... Woman considered it as a common cause against the despotism and tyranny of man. Morals are of no sex, duties are reciprocal between being and being.¹¹⁸

The men who defended Caroline used any means available to argue her case.

The lawyer and Whig MP, Henry Brougham (1778-1868), was one of the queen's legal representatives.¹¹⁹ Born on 17 September 1778, Brougham was educated at High School and attended the University of Edinburgh, eventually gaining admittance to advocate (10 June 1800).¹²⁰ He was also one of the founders and a main contributor to the Edinburgh Review (1802).¹²¹ After this Brougham turned his attention to politics and was successfully elected a MP for several years until becoming Queen Caroline's attorney

¹¹⁸Mary Hays, Memoirs of Queens Illustrious and Celebrated (London: Printed for T. and J. Allman, 1821), 127.

¹¹⁹Smith, 17.

¹²⁰Frederic Boase, ed., Modern English Biography: Containing Many Thousand Concise Memoirs of Persons Who Have Died Between the Years 1851-1900. With An Index of the Most Interesting Matter (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965), vol. i, 426.

¹²¹Boase, vol. i, 426.

general from 22 April 1820 until her death 7 August 1821.¹²² He had little respect for the queen and had accepted her cause as his own to humiliate the Tories.¹²³ In 1814, George's ministers investigated Caroline's alleged adulterous behaviour.

In that same year Brougham published a pamphlet entitled Some Inquiry into the Constitutional Character of the Queen Consort.¹²⁴ The pamphlet contended that for economic, social and political reasons England's queen consorts held special status before the law. This provided freedom from censure of their actions in both their public and private lives. Brougham argued that queen consorts rarely exerted their independent rights which meant that their constitutional privileges remained inaccurately defined.¹²⁵ He then set out to interpret them himself. He first argued that public opinion demanded the joint coronation of both the king and queen to legitimize their reign. Brougham intended his argument to whip up public opinion against George for attempting to deny his queen the throne:

If, therefore, unhappy discord has arisen between the possessors of the throne, or it has ever been attempted to fix a taint on the chaste allegiance of the queen and consequently on the succession, such a public recognition by the monarch and by the people of her as queen, and the right of her issue, of those living especially, is doubly necessary for the future tranquillity of the realm. In fact a distinct refusal of a coronation, either by monarch or people, would be a public declaration that the party refusing does not acknowledge her as queen; and proclaims a belief and

¹²²Boase, vol. i, 426.

¹²³Girouard, 69.

¹²⁴Henry T. Vaux Brougham, Some Inquiry into the Constitutional Character of the Queen Consort (London: Printed for James Ridgway, 1814).

¹²⁵Brougham, 5.

intent; which may reasonably be thought to have views far beyond the mere mortification of a hated female.¹⁵

With these words Brougham reasoned that if George's attempt to divorce Caroline proved successful, it would then place in jeopardy their daughter's right to succeed. Brougham realized that the people, who had shown their outward love and support for Charlotte on numerous occasions, would not tolerate any threat to the princess of Wales' right to succeed her father. By highlighting Charlotte's correlation to her disgraced mother, Brougham used this line of reasoning to stir up public support. He also noted that the families of foreign queens had at times avenged the ill-treatment of their daughters through warfare. He then stated that "monarchs of such chivalrous spirit have existed."¹⁶ In this way Brougham compared Caroline's husband's unchivalrous behaviour toward her to other historical figures. He also highlighted the possible armed conflict George's actions could inflict upon the innocent people of Britain who in fact supported their queen.

Ironically, Brougham argued most convincingly that queens' special legal status meant that they retained independence in both their private and public lives.¹⁷ He argued further that the special status of queens under the law provided them with the benefits of an unmarried woman or femme sole. Queens, unlike married women, retained property

¹⁵Brougham, 45.

¹⁶Brougham, 24.

¹⁷Brougham contended that because Magna Carta did not specifically name queens they then could not stand trial because they had no peers: "Were it possible to constitute a higher court of royal peerages, who alone could be her equals, it would in the queen's case be making her own family her judges." See Brougham, 19.

and wealth of their own. They also bequeathed their holdings without the king's permission.¹⁸ These factors recognized queens as individuals before the law while their assets provided financial independence from their husbands.¹⁹

The coronation of the monarch alone would not satisfy the intent of ceremony as to both; because the queen being uniformly considered a single woman in the constitution (enjoying her revenue, the controul [sic] of her household, her state, their dignities as such) her right to give heirs to the realm is not so much derived from him, as from the people's recognition of her as their queen.²⁰

The author cited as evidence of the queen's economic independence the revenues she gained through taxation, honours and real estate. It is ironic to note that more than one hundred and fifty years passed before scholars again emphasized the nature of queenship and the independence it afforded queens through their offices, patronage and personal wealth.²¹

How the views expressed in the pamphlet influenced English society is open to speculation. The fact that the pamphlet remains extant today hints at its popularity. Another indication of the popularity of the views Brougham expressed in his pamphlet is the fame his involvement in the trial afforded him. Frederic Boase's Modern English Biography noted that the "result of Queen Caroline's trial made him [Brougham] extraordinarily popular and the Brougham's head became a common tavern sign; at time

¹⁸Brougham, 6.

¹⁹Brougham declared that, "The distinction of her twofold character could not be meant to be inferred without a positive statement of it; while her public capacity (if undefined) would naturally be supposed uniform with her private." See Brougham, 8.

²⁰Brougham, 37.

²¹For a full account of this trend please see chapter five of this thesis.

of passing of the Reform bill plaster casts of his head were sold by the tens of thousands....”²² Another indication of its impact was found in Arthur Taylor’s The Glory of Regality: An Historical Treatise of the Anointing and Crowning of the Kings and Queens of England.²³ Taylor’s history dealt primarily with the evolution of the coronation of kings from its Germanic roots to its incorporation of Roman traditions. Taylor’s study contributed nothing to the greater understanding of the queen’s coronation; in fact, he mentioned the topic only when arguing that it lacked importance in comparison to that of the king’s coronation. He argued further that its only significance lay in the sanctification of the queen’s character as “the wife and mother of kings.”²⁴ Taylor then explicitly refuted the claims made by Brougham’s Some Inquiry into the Constitutional Character of the Queen Consort:²⁵

An attempt hath [sic] been made in a late anonymous pamphlet, which abounds more in gratuitous reasoning than historical deduction, to represent the coronation of the English queen as an acknowledgement of a right of succession in her issue, and as “a recognition of her constitutional character as essential as that of the monarch himself.” Of these doctrines, however, a sufficient refutation may be derived from the following obvious considerations .²⁶

Taylor based this contention on two main arguments. At no given time in history had the queen’s coronation or lack thereof resulted in a succession crisis. Secondly the political

²²Boase, vol. i, 426.

²³Arthur Taylor, The Glory of Regality: An Historical Treatise of the Anointing and Crowning of the Kings and Queens of England (London: R and A Taylor, Shoe Lane, 1820).

²⁴Taylor, 48.

²⁵As cited by Taylor in his 93rd footnote.

²⁶Taylor, 49.

nature of the king's coronation distinguished it from the queen's. Kings swore an oath and received homage and allegiance whereas queens did not.²⁷ This illustrated Taylor's rather scanty and limited knowledge of the queen's coronation ritual and revealed a nineteenth-century mentality toward women's symbolic and passive role in society.²⁸

In the same year as Taylor's constitutional history Francis Lancelott's The Prerogatives of a Queen Consort: 'The King's Wife is Participant of Many Privileges Above Other Women'²⁹ was published. Similar in tone, the work reiterated many of the same arguments as Brougham's pamphlet. Lancelott argued that the laws of England provided the king's wife with seven main prerogatives:

I. Making Grants, Gift, or Contracts, without the king. II. Receiving by Gift from her Husband, (which no other Feme-Covert may do.) III. Suing, and being sued without the King, &c. IV. Having her Courts and Offices, as if she were a sole Person. V Its being Treason to plot against her Life. VI. Her Trial for Offences; and, lastly, VII. Her ancient Revenue of Queen Gold.³⁰

The author went on to cite numerous examples as evidence of his claims. In 1858 Lancelott would be the only male historian to publish a compilation biography of medieval English queens.³¹

²⁷Taylor, 49.

²⁸An argument that the late twentieth-century historiography of queens is primarily involved in refuting.

²⁹Francis Lancelott, The Prerogatives of a Queen Consort of England (London: G. Smeeton, 1820).

³⁰Lancelott, 21.

³¹Francis Lancelott, The Queens of England and Their Times: From Matilda, Queen of William the Conqueror, to Adelaide, Queen of William the Fourth (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1858).

In the end Caroline reacted to her husband's actions with hostility and active subversion. Public opinion supported her so completely against the king that the House of Lords found it impossible to proceed with their case. This provided an example of how, contrary to Taylor's argument, public opinion and a queen consort influenced history. Having won her court battle the public -- the majority still loyal monarchists -- soon abandoned her cause. Shortly after the king's coronation Caroline died of a bowel obstruction on 8 August 1821.³² Upon her death the public quickly rallied behind the queen for the last time. George, the unchivalrous "gentleman" he was, attempted to smuggle his wife's coffin to the ship set to take her back to Brunswick for burial. The people would have none of it and they waylaid her funeral cortege and forced the troops that accompanied the body to wind their way through the streets of London.³³ Henry Brougham travelled to Harwich to see the queen safely to the ship and later wrote:

The multitudes assembled from all parts of the country were immense, and the pier crowded with them, as the sea was covered with boats of every size and kind, and the colours of the vessels were half-mast high, as on days of mourning. The contrast of a bright sun with the gloom on every face was striking, and the guns firing at intervals made a solemn impression....the barge that conveyed it [the coffin] bore the flag of England, floating over "Caroline of Brunswick, the injured Queen of England."³⁴

In contrast, when her husband, George, died nine years later (26 June 1830) his passing caused little heartache and very few mourned. In fact, The Times reported that in the

³²Laqueur, 420.

³³Alison Plowden, Caroline & Charlotte: The Regent's Wife and Daughter 1795-1821 (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1989), 217.

³⁴As cited in Plowden, 217.

streets people acted more like revellers who rejoiced in hearing good news than mourners.³⁵

Caroline's death and the political activity her trial produced contributed to another flourishing of female activity in the public sphere. An increasingly frequent medium of public participation used by women was biographies of queens. One of the first works by a female writer to tackle the subject of queens during the modern period was the friend of Mary Wollstonecraft and supporter of women's rights, Mary Hays. Why did Hays, who had championed women's greater equality through her writing in the previous century, provide a watered down history of eminent women?³⁶ Biographer Janet Todd explained that Hays was forced to modify her feminism after the turn of the century in reaction to society's rejection of radicalism.³⁷ As a result, Hays compiled a highly acclaimed six-volume work entitled Female Biography or Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Women of All Ages and Countries (1803).³⁸ In the preface she explained the aim of her work:

To excite a worthy emulation, the following memorial of those women, whose endowments, or whose conduct, have reflected luster upon the sex, is presented more especially to the rising generation who have not grown

³⁵As cited in Plowden, 218.

³⁶For more works by Hays see Appendix 2, 150.

³⁷Todd, 321.

³⁸Nicholls, 298. Others who also contributed to the development of biographies of eminent women include Mary Betham, Biographical Dictionary of Celebrated Women of Every Age and Country (176-1852) and Mary Pilkington, A Mirror For the Female Sex. Historical Beauties for Young Ladies (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin for O. D. and I. Cooke, 1799). See Bonnie G. Smith, "The Contribution of Women to Modern Historiography in Great Britain, France and the United States, 1750-1940" American Historical Review (89 June 1984) 714.

old in folly, whose hearts have not been seared by fashion and whose minds prejudice has not yet warped.³⁹

In this passage Hays explained her intention to inspire the next generation of women to aim for new heights. In this way she could indirectly challenge the status quo without having to fear from reprisals from the community. She later stated that her goal was “the happiness of my sex, and their advancement in the grand scale of rational and social existence.”⁴⁰ Her biographical compilation formed the basis for her later work, Memoirs of Queens Illustrious and Celebrated. This work appeared the same year that Queen Caroline died (1821).⁴¹ What is of significance to note here is that Hays’ biographies of queens appeared toward the end of her career. This stands in contrast with the next generation of biographers of queens who often cut their literary teeth on this genre of writing, penning these histories much earlier in their careers. An explanation for this was the greater acceptance of women’s literary contribution prior to the Revolution, an event that precipitated a much more hostile environment toward women in general. Hays’ more implicit contribution to a greater understanding of women’s capabilities at this time was meant to build a foundation that would better support women’s claims for equality.

The political and social upheaval that marked the turn of the century helped foster an emerging feminine awakening in England yet eventually suppressed it. The French

³⁹As cited by Women of the Romantic Period Austin: University of Texas (<http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~worp/worp.html>): Archived on 4 June 1998.

⁴⁰As cited by Todd, 321.

⁴¹Mary Hays, Memoirs of Queens Illustrious and Celebrated (London: Printed for T. and J. Allman, 1821).

Revolution had provided women with the opportunity to step beyond their perceived role and stretch their political legs. The lack of mass support for the extension of women's political and civil rights allowed men to reimpose restrictions on women's participation in the public sphere. The economic and social dislocation caused by the rapid pace of modernization and the increased demand for female education and political rights forced women's issues to the forefront. This was fostered by the very public lives of Caroline and Charlotte that English women not only witnessed firsthand but helped to champion. Charlotte had represented Britain's hope for a brilliant future. In contrast Caroline, who flagrantly disregarded societal mores, provided the catalyst that united women in defence of their rights. These events helped set the stage for a more widespread support and momentum for the women's movement in the second half of the nineteenth-century. How did the female scholars who contributed biographies of medieval queens contribute to this growing female awakening? The following chapter will provide an in-depth examination into the lives, influences and experiences of the women writers who composed biographies of medieval English queens.

CHAPTER 3

‘LADY HISTORIANS’
THE BIOGRAPHERS OF QUEENS, 1830-1899

“But history, real solemn history, I cannot be interested in....I read it a little as duty, but it tells me nothing that does not either vex or weary me. The quarrels of popes and kings, with wars or pestilences [sic], in every page; then men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all - it is very tiresome.”¹

Catherine Morland in Jane Austen’s Northanger Abbey (1817)

The second chapter of this thesis outlined why medievalism resurfaced during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and how it impacted women. In addition, the events surrounding the lives of princesses Caroline and Charlotte were explored to determine their effect on women’s rising feminine consciousness when medievalism had begun to allure. By the late 1830’s English society was again confronted by the prospect of another female monarch, Victoria, whose name is used to delineate this period. Victoria’s successful succession to the throne of England once again placed the public spotlight on a woman. For Victorian women, who had little in the way of legal or civil rights, this meant that a woman held the most visible and symbolic position of authority in a society in many ways defined by female oppression. From the time of Queen Victoria’s coronation a number of women, increasingly aware of society’s double standard for them, published biographies of medieval English queens. Through these histories they conveyed how queens, as wives and mothers held unofficial power as well as official power through their status and economic circumstances. This acknowledgment provided evidence to support the wider range of

¹As cited in Distinguished Women of Past and Present (<http://www.netsrq.com/~dbois/>): Archived on 22 July 1998.

women's capabilities in both the public and private spheres. First a brief examination of contemporary issues, like Victoria's reign, will provide a contextual basis illustrating the role these events played in fostering or hampering this type of history. This will then be followed by brief biographical sketches of women responsible for this genre in order to illustrate how they used history to support the emerging women's movement. It is the primary purpose of this chapter to recognize and provide the history of this first phase of the modern historiography of medieval English queens.

Before commencing with this analysis it is first important to define terms employed in this chapter to delineate these individuals. The most fundamental distinction to be made is that differentiating the amateur from the professional historian. For the nineteenth to approximately the mid-twentieth century the majority of professional historians were men who received formal schooling, held teaching position in academic institutions, and published extensively in academic journals as well as full-length mainstream histories. In comparison amateur historians did not receive the same level of education or employment and did not exclusively publish mainstream histories. For this chapter a further distinction can be made concerning the women who wrote biographies of queens. Some of these women were scholars who though they did not enjoy formal schooling they did attempt to employ some of the same standards of scholarship employed by professional historians. In contrast writers of this genre simply transposed the information found in secondary sources to create their own interpretations without any attempt at historical accuracy.

The nineteenth-century amateur historians who penned the histories of queens broadened the traditional approach to history. First they replaced men with women as the

dominant historical actors in their narratives. Second they examined events occurring not only in the public sphere but the private one as well. The majority of them were women from middle class families. Many grew up in all-female households either because their fathers died early and/or brothers departed quickly to make their fortune overseas. As a result, these female authors needed to support themselves through literary efforts that included writing, editing and/or translating. The nineteenth-century women discovered to have contributed to this genre include: Mary Hays (1760-1843),² Hannah Lawrance (1795-1895),³ Anna Brownell Murphy Jameson (1794-1860),⁴ Elizabeth Strickland (1794-1875), Agnes Strickland (1796-1874),⁵ Mary Botham Howitt (1799-1888),⁶ Mary Anne Everett

²Mary Hays, Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Sovereigns (London: T. J. Allman, 1821). For other works by Hays see Appendix 2, 150.

³Hannah Lawrance, Historical Memoirs of the Queens of England From the Commencement of the Twelfth Century (London: Edward Moxon, Dover Street, 1838). For other works by Lawrance See Appendix 2, 154.

⁴Anna Brownell Murpy Jameson, Lives of Celebrated Female Sovereigns and Illustrious Women, Including the Empress Josephine, Lady Jane Grey, Beatrice Cenci, Joan of Arc, Anne Boleyn, Charlotte Corday, Semiramis, Zenobia, Boadicea, Isabella of Castile, Berengaria, etc., ed., Mary Elizabeth Moore Hewitt (London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1831, Rpt: Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1870). Mary Elizabeth Moore Hewitt went on to publish Lives of Illustrious Women of All Ages (Philadelphia: G. G. Evans, 1860). For more works by Jameson see Appendix 2, 152.

⁵Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland, Lives of the Queens of England: From the Norman Conquest: With Anecdotes of their Courts, Now First Published from Official Records and other Authentic Documents, Private as well as Public (London: H. Colburn, 1841-48). For other works by the Stricklands see Appendix 2, 161.

⁶Mary Botham Howitt, Biographical Sketches of the Queens of England, from the Norman Conquest to the Reign of Victoria (London: Virtue, 1866). Howitt was also responsible for translating numerous works. See Appendix 2, 151-152.

Wood Green (1818-1895),⁷ Mary Leslie (1842-1920),⁸ Lydia Hoyt Farmer (1842-1903)⁹ and Mrs Matthew Hall (fl. 1855).¹⁰ The most significant comparison to be made is that all these women produced compilation histories that included numerous biographies of queens usually in multiple volumes, opting not to focus on a single individual. The majority of them only produced a single history of queens early on in their literary career. The similar approach and context used by these women suggest that the genre of biography was used as implicit feminist propaganda to highlight women's continuous contribution to society as seen through history. Due to financial constraints and limitations placed on them because of their gender, none concentrated solely on the study of history. To support their families these women wore many different literary hats, including those of poet, preacher, editor, children's author and novelist. It was perhaps this need for commercial success that prompted these women to write readable histories that captured the imagination of the average reader.¹¹

Before providing an analysis of this historiographical movement a specific set of

⁷Mary Anne Everett Wood Green, Lives of the Princesses of England from the Norman Conquest (London: H. Colburn, 1849-1855). For other works by Green see Appendix 2, 149.

⁸Mary Leslie, Rhymes of the Kings and Queens of England (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1896). For other works by Leslie see Appendix 2, 155.

⁹Lydia Hoyt Farmer, The World's Famous Queens (London: Walter Scott Ltd., 188?). For other works by Farmer see Appendix 2, 148.

¹⁰Mrs Matthew Hall, Lives of the Queens of England Before the Norman Conquest (New York: Worthington, 1859). For other works by Hall see Appendix 2, 150.

¹¹Anne Crawford et al, The Europa Biographical Dictionary of British Women (London: Europa Publishing Limited, 1983), 383.

criteria needs to be outlined explaining why some scholars and their work were omitted while others were included. Most significantly, this chapter will focus on female authors, because they formed the majority of contributors to the genre of biographical compilation histories of medieval queens. The male contributors to this genre will be examined in the fourth chapter. To provide greater clarity to this thesis only those works that included medieval English queens who lived between 1066 and 1399 will be examined. Based on this criterion Mrs. Matthew Hall's Lives of the Queens of England Before the Norman Conquest will be omitted, because she examined those queens who lived prior to the Norman Conquest (1066).¹² The first chapter of this thesis examined several histories of coronations and queens published prior to the 1830's that will not be reviewed here. All the remaining women writers under analysis were born after the beginning of the French Revolution (1789). None of them therefore witnessed first hand the political awakening that women briefly enjoyed during the eighteenth century, but they lived through the conservative backlash against it. This chapter is devoted to an analysis of the period when these authors

¹²One reviewer stated, "We have no doubt that many innocent people will fill up one end of the shelves which contain their Lives of Queens with this suppositious preface and introduction to them. But it is a pure delusion; and we beg to assure all well-intentioned persons that Sir E. B. Lytton's Harold contains a hundred fold more of real historical information about the early Saxon Princesses than they will find in the empty and pretentious pages of the Queens Before the Conquest; where Edith the Good and Edith the Fair come in after all the Cartismanduas, Gueneveres, and look as lifeless and mythical as...." As cited in S. Austin Allibone, A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1858), 764. Yet another contemporary stated that, "A bolder woman than any other of her sisterhood is Mrs Matthew Hall -- who does not hesitate to declare of her two pretty volumes, that they "will be found to present the first history of royal women prior to the Norman Conquest." We are entitled to expect something serious from such an important preface; but we are straightaway startled before we are aware, by an instantaneous leap to fabulous or conjectural history of sundry illustrious and princely people who....were usually found in more sophisticated society." As cited in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine (78 [480] October 1855) 443, in The Internet Library of Early Journals (<http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ilejl/>): Archived on 6 August 1998. Hall's work includes real as well as a number of fictional queens such as Cartismandua, Boadicea, Gwenissa, Julia, Victoria, St. Helena, Cartandis, Helena Ap eudda, Rowena, Gwenever I, Gwenever II, Gwenever III, Bertha, Ethelburga, St. Ebba, etcetera. The fictional nature of Hall's Queens Before the Conquest further supports its omission from analysis in this chapter.

flourished from the time of Victoria's coronation (1837) approximately up until her death (1902) and the commencement of the First World War (1914).

Three histories, Mary Hays' Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Sovereigns, Lydia Farmer Hoyt's The World's Famous Queens,¹³ and Anna Brownell Murphy Jameson's Lives of Celebrated Female Sovereigns and Illustrious Women¹⁴ are all biographical compilation histories of queens that included female consorts and sovereigns not affiliated with England's royal family. Hoyt and Jameson's works are analyzed in this chapter because they devoted part of their work to medieval English queens.¹⁵ Only one female author, Mary Leslie, produced a work intended for children, not an adult audience.¹⁶ A final analytical restriction is then made limiting this study to books intended for adult audiences.

A recurring trend affecting the study of queens, as seen in the second chapter, is found in the inspiration these authors derived from a princess of Wales and the royal family. After King George IV's death, his brother, William IV (1830-1837), succeeded him and reigned for only seven years. In general, society viewed William most favourably of all George III's sons. He married Adelaide of Saxe-Coburg-Meiningen and fathered two

¹³Hoyt's work included only one biography of a medieval English queen, Matilda of Flanders wife of William the Conqueror. See Hoyt, 110-119. The importance of this book lies in Hoyt's argument that each of the women she examined were sovereign rulers in their own right. See Hoyt, Preface v.

¹⁴Jameson's Lives comprises biographical sketches of two medieval English queens: Isabella of Castile and Berengaria of Navarre.

¹⁵Hays' work was published prior to Victoria's coronation, therefore does not fit the chronological criteria for inclusion in this chapter.

¹⁶Leslie's Rhymes of Kings and Queens of England attempted to delineate through rhymes the personality of England's kings and queens as well as the progress achieved during each reign. In this way the author attempted to stimulate children's interest in English history. See Leslie, 35.

daughters who died during infancy.¹⁷ The throne then passed to William's niece Victoria whose father, the duke of Kent, had died.¹⁸ Only two politically significant events occurred that shaped William's reign. The first took place in 1832 when the government passed the Reform Bill that extended the franchise. The second was William's inability to produce a legitimate heir which meant the throne then passed to his eldest niece Victoria. William had hated Victoria's mother, the duchess of Kent, and viewed her as a negative influence on his niece. He stated publicly that he hoped only to live long enough that Victoria could succeed at age eighteen and not require a regent.¹⁹ His one last request was duly achieved when he died shortly after Victoria's eighteenth birthday.

In 1837, when Victoria ascended the throne, many factors contributed to the social, economic and political unrest then experienced by British society. The country itself was an amalgam of different peoples and regions whose interests increasingly conflicted.²⁰ How then did society react to a woman barely eighteen on the throne? Historian Dorothy Thompson, in Queen Victoria: Gender and Power, contends that Victoria's succession appeased radicals and conservatives alike.²¹ It was believed that as a woman Victoria would become the symbolic head that society wanted. As a woman she would be less concerned

¹⁷Thomas Leman Hare, The Portrait Book of Our Kings and Queens: 1066-1911 (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1911), 41.

¹⁸Thompson, 2.

¹⁹Thompson, 23.

²⁰Speck, 50.

²¹Thompson, xv.

with meddling in politics providing government with more freedom and less monarchical control. The perception of her upstanding values and morals stood in stark contrast with her predecessors who had not provided society with a monarchy it respected and revered. Society then had a monarch who embodied middle class, conservative family values enabling a renewed faith in Britain's political system. Victoria also represented a destabilizing factor for women who, increasingly aware that their country continued to deny them rights, enjoyed a female as monarch.

It is often argued that during the nineteenth century English society more than ever before attempted to separate societal roles based on gender.²² The male domain became that of the public sphere while females were relegated to the domestic duties of the private sphere. Ironically, Victoria held the position of supreme head of this system, a circumstance that underlined the hypocrisy of the construct of this social hierarchy. Under her direction legislative reform increasingly widened the franchise to the exclusion of women whose political rights were largely denied until after the First World War. Victoria as a female sovereign did little to help change women's status as second class citizens during her reign. Victorian women continued to be oppressed while the rest of English society experienced greater social and political freedom.²³

Although Victoria did not champion women's rights, her presence on the throne emboldened some women to petition the queen directly concerning women's rights. One

²²Thompson, xv.

²³As Speck states, "It is remarkable that the aristocracy dominated the national government of Britain down to the First World War." See Speck, 54.

woman who had no qualms approaching the queen for her help was Caroline Norton (1808-1877). Caroline's divorce proceedings provided an example of how women's limited rights before the law affected one woman who, largely forgotten to history, demanded change. After enduring several physical attacks from her husband, Caroline left him in 1830.²⁴ In retaliation he accused her of adultery and initiated divorce proceedings. This action stripped her of access to her children, her inheritance and even the earnings she received through her writing after she had left her husband.²⁵ Before the law everything Caroline had brought to her marriage and earned after she left Mr. Norton remained his sole possession. As a result of this experience Caroline championed reforms to the married women's act campaigning actively to have it revised.²⁶ In a published letter to the queen, "A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor Cranworth's Marriage and Divorce Bill," Caroline sought Victoria's help to reinstate legislative reforms to the marriage and divorce laws that had recently been withdrawn. Caroline clearly saw the hypocrisy of Victoria's reign:

I desire to point out the grotesque anomaly which ordains that married women shall be "non-existent" in a country governed by a female Sovereign; and secondly, because, whatever measure for the reform of these statutes may be proposed, it cannot become "the law of the land" without your Majesty's assent and sign manual. In England there is no Salique law. If there were....your Majesty would be by birth a subject, and Hanover and

²⁴Julia O'Faolain and Lauro Martines, eds., Not in God's Image (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 325.

²⁵Beverly E. Golemba, Lesser-Known Women: A Biographical Dictionary (London: Lynne Rienner Pub., 1992), 62.

²⁶Caroline pleaded for reforms to the legal rights of married women by arguing that a "married woman in English law has no legal existence: her being is absorbed in that of her husband. Years of separation or desertion cannot alter this position. Unless divorced by special enactment of the House of Lords, the legal fiction holds her to be 'one' with her husband, even though she may never hear of him." As cited in O'Faolain, 326.

England would be still under one King.²⁷

Without substantial public support or fanfare Mrs. Norton wrote pamphlets and waged a war in court against her husband. Her first success came nine years later when Parliament passed the Custody of Infants Act (1839).²⁸ Caroline continued her crusade and was influential in passing the Marriage and Divorce Act also known as the Matrimonial Causes Act (1857). This granted married women the status of femme sole before the law. This meant that legally, regardless of whether married or not, women could hold property in their own right, making them financially independent. With the extension of women's legal rights and the presence of a female monarch on the throne women's interest in politics, not seen since the eighteenth century, resurfaced with greater mass female support.

Alongside this burgeoning political activism, women who needed to work to support themselves were aware of the difficulty in publishing their work.²⁹ By mid-century women increasingly founded their own presses within which to publish works concerning women's issues: English Woman's Journal (1858); English Woman's Review (1865); Woman's Gazette (1875) and Woman and Work (1874).³⁰ This provided a stepping stone for women

²⁷Caroline Norton, "A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor Cranworth's Marriage and Divorce Bill" (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855) reproduced in A Celebration of Women Writers (<http://cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/mmbt/www/women/norton/alttg.html>): Archived on 4 May 1998.

²⁸Under this new law children below the age of seven came under the custody of the mother unless the woman was convicted of adultery. Golemba, 62.

²⁹Dennis Griffith, ed., The Encyclopedia of the British Press 1422-1992 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 687.

³⁰Susan Hamilton, 'Criminals, Idiots, Women and Minors': Victorian Writing by Women on Women (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1996), 9.

to cross boundaries into the male preserve or professional world of journalism.

Another way female authors accessed the public sphere was by creating their own literary niche through the appropriation of biography. They were successful in this endeavour because they soft pedalled their work by labelling them as memoirs instead of histories. The tremendous success and subsequent imitation of this form was acknowledged with the publication of two full length articles in Blackwood's Magazine dedicated to exploring this new literary craze. In 1851, the first of these appraisals, simply entitled "Biography," heralded this form of "composition" as the most perfect literary genre available to women:

There is no branch of historical composition so suitable for woman as biography;He [God] foreshadowed man as the appropriate historian of the general march of human events -- woman, as the best delineator of individual character, the most fascinating writer of biography....As it is the nature of woman's disposition to form an idol, so, when she comes to composition, we rejoice to see her form idols of her heroes.³¹

Contemporaries recognized the popularity of this type of work and attempted to explain its prominence as female authors created their own role models. This type of scholarship, known today as "popular history," provided nineteenth-century readers with books that fell somewhere between the historical novel and increasingly inaccessible and elitist academic scholarship that emerged. This fulfilled a growing desire for historical knowledge in exciting and new form that placed women's experiences above that of men.

In 1855, the steadily increasing number of these works necessitated another

³¹"Biography" Blackwood's Magazine (69 [423] January 1851) 43; The Internet Library of Early Journals (<http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ilej/>): Archived on 6 August 1998.

commentary, "Modern Light Literature -- History," in Blackwood's Magazine.³² By "modern light literature" what the author meant was not poetry or historical novels but primarily the new literary genre of biographies of queens:

Old chambers of old palaces wake up to echoes of their ancient housewifery; and through this quaint telescopic glass we have a strange and one-sided glimpse of the larger historic scene, its positions reversed for once, and its great people coming in only as incidental figures, to the clearer revealing of the throned and sceptred lady who was but a very secondary personage in our other view of this same scene. It was a pretty thought, and struck the popular fancy; and if we are not tolerably well satisfied by this time with the records of feminine royalty, we are very ungrateful people, and do not appreciate as we ought the exertions of Miss Strickland, and of the host of disciples and imitators who have followed in her train.³³

More openly hostile to women's literary contribution, the author of this article at times praised and then attacked such work. In particular the author noted the historical embellishment of Agnes Strickland but qualified this criticism with comments like "Nor does Miss Strickland's weakness in this respect go half so far as some of her greater contemporaries."³⁴ What is important to note here is the impact the biographies of queens had in stimulating debate and interest in the history of queens. This was reflected in the number of letters of inquiry generated by Strickland's work and published in journals like Notes and Queries.³⁵

³²See "Modern Light Literature -- History" Blackwood's Magazine (78 [480] October 1855) 437-451; The Internet Library of Early Journals (<http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ilej/>): Archived on 6 August 1998.

³³"Modern Light Literature -- History" Blackwood's Magazine (78 [480] October 1855) 439; The Internet Library of Early Journals (<http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ilej/>): Archived on 6 August 1998.

³⁴"Modern Light Literature -- History," Blackwood's Magazine, 439.

³⁵See "Queen of Hearts" Notes and Queries (1 [20] 16 March 1850) 320; "Queen Mary" (72 [445] November 1852) 614; "Miss Strickland and Mary Queen of Scots" Notes and Queries (12 [318] December 1 1855) 417

Putting aside for the moment the factual weaknesses of these early biographies of queens, what generalities or trends are readily apparent? An analysis of these works indicates the existence of a silent or implicit argument that raged amongst these authors. At the one extreme some authors intended to offer biographies of eminent women as inspiration to their contemporaries, thereby challenging society's idealized role for women in the domestic sphere. At the other extreme, some authors wished to glorify the achievements of famous historical figures, providing significance to women's lives in the domestic sphere through the glorification of their traditional roles as wives and mothers. These interpretive differences reflected the greater social struggle experienced by women who attempted to reconceptualize themselves and their position in society. The common ground for all these works rested on the emphasis placed by each on a broader conceptualization of women's capabilities and their impact on history.

An example of how authors linked the private and the public spheres is the contention that Matilda of Flanders (queen of William the Conqueror) sewed the Bayeux Tapestry. The author who credited Matilda with this achievement was Agnes Strickland in Lives of the Queens of England. One of Agnes Strickland's contemporaries, John Lingard, noted her mistake in a review of her work: "In ancient subjects no one should ever be guided by modern writers. Miss Strickland tells us that the Bayeux tapestry was embroidered by

in "Lady Percy, Wife of Hotspur (Daughter of Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March)" Notes and Queries (8, 196 [30 July 1853]) 104; Hermentrude, "Queen Eleanor's Purchases" Notes and Queries (10 [249] 6 October 1866) 264; "Berengaria of Sicily" Notes and Queries (24 [42] 17 October 1868) 368 and John Williams, "Queen Philippa's Portrait" Notes and Queries (122 [294] 17 August 1861) 126.

Matilda....She suffered herself to be led astray by Ducarel or some other modern.”³⁶

Regardless of Lingard’s correction Agnes Strickland’s imagery found fertile ground with future generations who perpetuated this historical fallacy.³⁷

Some thirty years later Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland co-authored Lives of the Queens of England. With Lydia Hoyt Farmer’s The World’s Famous Queens as well, the tradition of glorifying English women’s domestic role in society continued.³⁸

Matilda of Flanders has made famous the needle, rather than the sword; and with that little domestic instrument, the industrious fingers of the first Norman queen, assisted by her attendant ladies, gave to the world a very important historical document....And thus the sword of the king and the needle of the queen have become indissolubly associated in the history of this momentous mediaeval event.³⁹

The perpetuation of this historical fallacy provided by the Stricklands and embellished by Farmer allowed these authors to relay to the reader that women could accomplish heroic and important feats by remaining within the confines of the domestic sphere. In this way Farmer’s work provided contemporary women with an historical role model they could identify with and emulate.

³⁶ As cited by Delormes, 46.

³⁷ See Elizabeth Villiers, Love Stories of English Queens (London: Stanley Paul and Co. Ltd., 1924), 40; Elsie Thorton Cook, Her Majesty: The Romance of the Queens of England, 1066-1910 (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 9. Cook stated that, “Matilda, as she stitched at her interminable tapestry, found herself torn in two ways.” Howitt argued, “That this epic in embroidery, which celebrates the warlike achievements of William, was a work of love on the part of his wife, may be easily believed; and in this point of view it also acquires a deep additional interest.” See Howitt, 5.

³⁸ Farmer’s The World’s Famous Queens, limited its analysis of English medieval queens to Matilda of Flanders. See Farmer, 110-119.

³⁹ Farmer, Preface v.

This example supports the contention that those women who were reading and writing history hungered for role models who could inspire confidence in female capabilities in either official or unofficial capacities. In this way evidence was accumulated that the boundaries limiting women's role to domestic duties of the private sphere were artificial in nature. Composing these biographical compilation histories of queens also helped women to express ideas concerning a growing feminine awakening. Most of these authors composed their biographies of queens in the early stages of their literary careers. Often this outlet led to more overtly political tracts by these scholars elucidating how and why women's position remained oppressed. To illustrate this point a more in-depth examination into the lives and professional accomplishments of these women is necessary.

Published in 1837, Hannah Lawrance's Historical Memoirs of the Queens of England was the first of the mid-century female biographers of queens. Little is known about Lawrance's life even though she was a prolific writer.⁴⁰ Lawrance is one of eleven women whose work appeared in periodicals over fifty times.⁴¹ Only one copy of Historical Memoirs, published by Edward Moxon, remains in circulation in North America at the Seattle Public Library. For historians today this work is significant because Lawrance was the first to include, among her biographies, entire chapters that dealt with more general topics that included "Society in England during the Middle Ages," "The 'Poet-Fathers' of

⁴⁰Only a single biographical sketch of Lawrance was found and it only listed the two titles of the full-length works attributed to her. See Frederic Boase, English Biography: Containing many Thousand Concise Memoirs of Persons Who Have Died Between the Years 1851-1900. With an Index of the Most Interesting Matter (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1965), vol. ii, 326.

⁴¹Lawrance contributed frequently to the Athenaeum and Blackwood's Magazine.

England,” “The Arts in the Thirteenth Century,” and “The Learning of the Cloister.”⁴² This approach did not surface again until the publication of individual biographies of queens in the 1990's.⁴³ What is perhaps more significant is that Lawrance's second full-length history, The History of Woman in England, and Her Influence on Society and Literature, From the Earliest Period, was published by Henry Colburn.⁴⁴ It is entirely possible that an earlier edition of Historical Memoirs, like her second work, was first published by Colburn. Regardless, Colburn's publication of any of Lawrance's work forms the first of a number of connections found to exist between the publisher and the study of medieval English queens. The significance of this link necessitates a fuller examination of Colburn's career.

Henry Colburn (? -1855), it was widely suspected, was the illegitimate son of the Duke of York or Lord Lansdowne.⁴⁵ If true this helps explain why Colburn's date of birth and the source of his financial backing are unknown, as well as his continuing fascination with royalty and nobility. Between 1806 and 1852 Colburn published nine hundred and ninety-six new titles as he gained a reputation as a publisher of fiction and light literature. Among the writers he published were Mme de Genlis, Mme de Staël, Mme Sophie Cottin,

⁴²See Lawrance, Historical Memoirs.

⁴³See chapter five of this thesis, 127.

⁴⁴Hannah Lawrance, The History of Woman in England, and her Influence on Society and Literature, from the Earliest Period (London: H. Colburn, 1843).

⁴⁵John Sutherland, “Henry Colburn Publisher” Publishing History (19, 1986) 64, and Patricia J. Anderson and Jonathan Rose, eds., Dictionary of Literary Biography vol. 106: British Literary Publishing Houses 1820-1880 (Detroit: A Bruccoli Clark Layman Book, 1991), 39.

Lady Sydney Morgan, Benjamin Disraeli and John Burke.⁴⁶ Colburn's ability to gauge what the public wanted made him a financial success bringing in an astounding £20,000 per annum between 1825 and 1829.⁴⁷ His shameless puffing of his lists, through the appearance of advance paragraphs in periodicals, gained him the hatred of his fellow colleagues and cost him approximately £27,000 between 1829 and 1832.⁴⁸ One contemporary, Michael Sadleir, said that Colburn was an "opportunistic peddler of shoddy books."⁴⁹ Eventually Colburn found it increasingly difficult to publish his puffs, forcing him to invest in new periodicals. As a result Colburn at one time or another held shares in numerous journals that included New Monthly Magazine (1814), Universal Register (1814) Literary Gazette (1817), Literary Magazine (1828)⁵⁰ Athenaeum (1828), United Services Magazine (1829) and Court Journal (1828).⁵¹ Driven more by financial ambition than any literary aspiration Colburn did not hesitate to support female authors and editors as long as they produced. Elizabeth

⁴⁶ These publications include 527 novels, 394 three deckers (3 vol.), 141 travel books, 207 memoirs and 29 poetry books. See Anderson, 39.

⁴⁷ Anderson, 41. When Colburn died he left his widow 35,000 and a number of valuable copyrights. See Dennis Griffiths, ed., The Encyclopedia of the British Press 1422-1992 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 162.

⁴⁸ John Sutherland contends that Colburn revolutionized publishing through his use of advertisement: "Colburn perfected the art of the advance paragraph, supplied by the publisher to be shown in a review, or the papers intelligence column." See Sutherland, 62.

⁴⁹ Sutherland, 59.

⁵⁰ Boase, vol i, 669.

⁵¹ Griffiths, 162.

Strickland edited Colburn's Court Journal⁵² until she left to help her sister Agnes Strickland write Lives of the Queens of England.⁵³ Meanwhile, another biographer of queens, Anna Brownell Murphy Jameson, became one of Colburn's most successful, admired and prolific writers.⁵⁴ She was summarily listed as "essayist, travel writer, biographer, literary and art critic."⁵⁵

Jameson was born in Dublin, the eldest of five daughters.⁵⁶ Her father Denis Brownell was the Painter-In-Ordinary to princess Charlotte. When she was age four, her family moved to London where Jameson was educated at home. She became a governess at age sixteen until her marriage to Robert Jameson in 1825.⁵⁷ Though Robert was supportive of her writing the marriage was not a success and it is doubtful that it was ever consummated.⁵⁸ After separating Robert left Britain to fill an appointment he had received

⁵²Boase, vol iii, 800.

⁵³Todd, 652.

⁵⁴Other works by Jameson published by Henry Colburn and later his partner Richard Bentley included: The Beauties of the Court of King Charles the Second; a Series of Portraits, Illustrating the diaries of Pepys, Evelyn, Clarendon, and other Contemporary writers. With memoirs Biographical and Critical, by Mrs. Jameson. The Portraits from Copies Made for her Late Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte, by Mr. Murphy (London: H. Colburn by R. Bentley, 1833); Memoirs and Essays, Illustrative of Art, Literature and Social Morals (London: R. Bentley, 1846), and Memoirs of Celebrated Female Sovereigns (London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1831). See Anderson, 41.

⁵⁵As cited by Blain, 569.

⁵⁶Hamilton, 26.

⁵⁷Hamilton, 26.

⁵⁸Allibone, 953. See also Olive Banks, ed., The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists vol i, 1800-1930 (New York: New York University Press, 1985), 100.

as Vice-chancellor of Upper-Canada.⁵⁹ Jameson did attempt a reconciliation when she followed Robert to Canada. There she penned Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada (1838), her first work dealing explicitly with women's oppression.⁶⁰ When she left Canada her husband provided her with a small allowance ending any hope of their resurrecting the marriage. In 1842 Jameson's economic situation worsened when her father died leaving her as the sole means of financial support for the family.⁶¹ Jameson was forced to rely on her writing for monetary gain. By 1851 Robert, now an alcoholic, resigned from his position and suspended payment of Jameson's allowance. He died three years later but left her nothing in his will (1854).⁶² Jameson supported herself through the kindness of friends who provided her with an annuity while the queen, recognizing Jameson's considerable accomplishments, gave her a civil list pension (1851).⁶³

The financial difficulties Jameson experienced throughout her life explains why, of all the biographers of queens examined in this chapter, she participated most actively in the women's movement. Susan Hamilton, in 'Criminals, Idiots, Women and Minors': Victorian Writing by Women on Women, pinpoints Jameson's feminist activity as increasing markedly

⁵⁹Blain, 570. It is at this time that Jameson's Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada (1838) compared the treatment of aboriginal women with that of women of European descent.

⁶⁰Banks, 100.

⁶¹Banks, 101.

⁶²Hamilton, 28.

⁶³Hamilton, 28.

during the 1840's, a trend that occurred simultaneously with her financial problems.⁶⁴ Her earlier work perhaps provided the author with the confidence to produce more overtly political tracts. Of her early work, which included her biography of queens, Hamilton says: "Her next books, Loves of the Poets (1829) and Celebrated Female Sovereigns (1831), displayed the growing interest in biographies of women in literature and women's wielding of power that characterizes much of her writing."⁶⁵ This assessment is upheld through an examination of Jameson's biographical sketch of one of England's most obscure medieval consorts, Berengaria of Navarre, wife of Richard I.⁶⁶ Jameson, unlike most of her contemporaries, noted Berengaria's acts of patronage including the founding of an abbey.⁶⁷ Even more significant was that Jameson recognized Berengaria's successful struggle with her husband's two successors to the throne of England, John and Henry III, who attempted to withhold from her the widowed queen's dower payments.⁶⁸ For Jameson, what must have it been like to discover that such a lofty personage as the queen of England also experienced financial difficulties and had the courage to defend her rights? The lessons Jameson derived from learning about specific examples taken from history contributed to her understanding of women's oppression by society. As a result, Jameson fought for the rights of married

⁶⁴Hamilton, 27.

⁶⁵Hamilton, 26.

⁶⁶Jameson, "Berengaria of Navarre" in Lives of Celebrated Female Sovereigns and Illustrious Women, 45-74.

⁶⁷Jameson, 73.

⁶⁸Jameson, 71-73.

women to secure their own earnings⁶⁹ as well as the extension of employment and educational opportunities for women.⁷⁰

In stark contrast to Jameson's social activism is the most famous of the female biographers of queens, Agnes Strickland, who did little if anything to champion women's rights. Strickland gained prominence and financial success with the publication of Lives of the Queens of England (1841-48).⁷¹ As one contemporary noted,

The great popularity and widely extended sale of Miss Strickland's Queens of England, almost equalling, we believe, that of any living author in this country, and much exceeding that of any prior writer, whether of her own or the other sex, in the same period in biography, is a proof both of intrinsic excellence of that work, and the thirst with which exists in the public mind for works of that description.⁷²

Proof of Lives popularity is seen in that sections of the series were translated and published in France: Agnes Strickland, "Alda, l'esclave bretonne" and Agnes Strickland, "La vie d'Éléonore de Castille."⁷³ What does not seem common knowledge today is that Agnes

⁶⁹"Obituary" Englishwoman's Review (x January-December 1879) 26.

⁷⁰In 1843 she published an article in the Athenaeum under a man's name criticizing the Royal Commission's report on the employment of women and young people. She also published The Relative Position of Mothers and Governesses (1846). See Banks, 101.

⁷¹Joanne Shattock, The Oxford Guide to British Women Writers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 412.

⁷²"Biography" Blackwood's Magazine (69 [423] January 1851) 44; The Internet Library of Early Journals (<http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ilej/>): Archived on 22 August 1998.

⁷³See Bonnie G. Smith, "The Contribution of Women to Modern Historiography in Great Britain, France and the United States, 1750-1940" American Historical Review (89 June 1984) 713. Agnes Strickland, "Alda, l'esclave bretonne" trans. Mme. Louise de Montanclos (Tours A. Marne & Cie, 1859) and Agnes Strickland, "La vie d'Éléonore de Castille" in Raymond Petit, ed., Le Ponthieu et la dynastie anglaise au xiii^e siècle. Études et textes réunis et traduits par Raymond Petit en collaboration avec Adrien Joron (Abbeville: Société d'émulation historique et littéraire, 1969) and Agnes Strickland, "Vie de Marguerite d'Anjou" trans.

Strickland co-authored this work, with her older sister Elizabeth Strickland who penned approximately half of each volume.

Elizabeth and Agnes Strickland were the two eldest daughters of Thomas Strickland and his second wife Elizabeth Homer. The girls spent most of their youth at Reydon Hall, Suffolk, where their father educated them at home in Greek, Latin, history and mathematics.⁷⁴ The two sisters had seven other siblings four of whom achieved literary acclaim: Jane Margaret (1800-1888), Samuel Strickland (1809-1867), Mrs Susanna Moodie (1803-1885)⁷⁵ and Mrs Catherine Parr Traill (1802- 1888). On 18 May 1818, Thomas Strickland died and left his daughters to financially support the family. All of Thomas Strickland's sons had moved away to seek their financial future abroad. As a result, the Strickland sisters turned to their literary talents to support their ailing mother. Agnes Strickland's first love was poetry and she especially enjoyed the work of Sir Walter Scott whom she met in 1827.⁷⁶

The two eldest Strickland sisters, Agnes and Elizabeth, began their literary collaboration when they composed several popular historical children's books such as: Historical Tales of Illustrious British Children (1803) and Tales and Stories from History

Mme C. G. (Paris, 1850).

⁷⁴Una Pope-Hennessy, Agnes Strickland: Biographer of the Queens of England 1796-1874 (London: Chatto & Windus, 1940), 5.

⁷⁵Susanna Moodie is recognized as one of Canada's premiere nineteenth-century writers.

⁷⁶Stephen, 48.

(1836).⁷⁷ Their success with children's history books prompted Agnes to solicit Elizabeth's help on a much more ambitious work. With the succession of Victoria to the throne of England Agnes decided that it was the perfect time to compose the biographies of English queens. She then convinced her sister, Elizabeth, to resign from her position as editor of the Court Journal to work on the project full time.⁷⁸ Agnes then turned to the owner of the Court Journal, Henry Colburn, with her idea. He immediately accepted the proposal.

Wishing her contribution to the series to remain unknown, Elizabeth sent Agnes to negotiate with Colburn. A contract was eventually agreed upon entitling Colburn to half of the proceeds garnered from the series.⁷⁹ After the first two volumes sold briskly, Colburn attempted to withhold any earnings from the Stricklands. He also demanded that Agnes honour the contract and complete the series. Distraught from such underhanded dealings, Agnes Strickland became ill and retired to Reydon Hall.⁸⁰ In response, Colburn had his lawyer draft a letter that stated if the series was left incomplete Agnes Strickland would suffer severe monetary penalties. In response she sent a medical note from her doctor to Colburn as proof of her illness.

This forced Elizabeth Strickland to step out of the shadows and act as arbitrator. What forced Colburn's hand was primarily the popularity of the work and the fact that

⁷⁷Crawford, 383.

⁷⁸Todd, 652.

⁷⁹Hennessey, 65.

⁸⁰Hennessey, 67.

unbeknownst to him, Elizabeth -- not under contract -- had co-authored the work. As a result, he paid the sisters £150 per volume and £2,000 for the copyright.⁸¹ At Colburn's death the estimated worth of the manuscript had tripled to £6,900. The sale of this valuable copyright was documented in Notes and Queries:

This valuable copyright is secured by agreements. The purchaser to have the option, to be exercised within seven days, of taking, or not, the benefit of the clause in the agreements providing for an abridgement of the work to be executed by Miss Strickland for the use of schools &c. This abridgement has been made, and is now ready for press; the price to be settled by reference, Mr. Charles Dickens having been named as umpire. Put up at 1,000£, and, after a spirited competition, finally knocked down for the sum of 6,900£ for the copyright and 2271.5S for the stock.⁸²

Unlike Jameson, the tremendous popularity of Lives provided Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland with a financial success that ensured their economic and social future. Agnes Strickland in particular enjoyed the public spotlight and the entree to interact with royalty and the nobility it provided. These reasons alone explain why neither Agnes nor her retired sister sought to disrupt the status quo by actively participating in the women's movement. The need for social activism was obviated by the way society had provided financially and socially for the Stricklands.⁸³

In contrast with the mixed response shown for Strickland's work during the nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries, today it is met with contempt for its

⁸¹Sutherland, 77.

⁸²"Miscellaneous: Notes on Books, Recent Booksales, etc." Notes and Queries (32 [75] 6 June 1857) 458: The Internet Library of Early Journals (<http://www.bodlev.ox.ac.uk/ilej/>): Archived on 22 August 1998.

⁸³A biography of Agnes Strickland found in Boase noted that she was granted a civil list pension of £100 on 3 August 1830. See Boase, vol III, 800.

historical inaccuracies and is vilified for influencing succeeding scholars. One of the most condemning critiques is found in John Carmi Parsons' "Eleanor of Castile (1241-1290): Legend and Reality Through Seven Centuries."⁸⁴ Parsons' essay by reconstructing how Eleanor of Castile gained her reputation over the last seven centuries. He accomplishes this by uncovering past historians' flawed judgment of her character. Parsons contends that Strickland's work bore little resemblance to scholarship: "We cannot be surprised that so dedicated a literata and so devoted a romantic as Agnes Strickland dipped her pen in syrup to describe Queen Eleanor. Though other factors did play a part in determining the tone of Strickland's work."⁸⁵ Putting aside Parsons' patronizing tone and flip assessment he incorrectly attributes authorship to Agnes Strickland. In fact the section under discussion was penned by Agnes's sister Elizabeth who wrote more than half the series, a fact clearly stated by Una Pope-Hennessy in her biography of Agnes Strickland.⁸⁶ This is a serious omission considering the vehemence of Parsons' denunciation of this work. It also smacks of a nineteenth-century work taken out of its historical context and unfairly measured by late twentieth-century standards, and unsurprisingly, found wanting. For the period in which the Stricklands wrote Lives, their achievement was indeed groundbreaking.

A rebuttal in defence of the Stricklands, and in response to Parsons and others, might

⁸⁴ John Carmi Parsons, "Eleanor of Castile" in David Parsons, ed., Eleanor of Castile 1290-1990: Essays to Commemorate the 700th Anniversary of her death: 28 November 1290 (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1991), 24.

⁸⁵ Parsons, 43.

⁸⁶ As cited in Parsons, 43. In defence of Parsons he does offer a balanced examination of the historiography that contributed to Eleanor of Castile's reputation in Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

at the outset mention that neither sister received any formal education at even the primary level. Further, as women they were barred from attending University. They did receive instruction in Latin, but they also needed to learn palaeography to enable them to decipher medieval manuscripts. Agnes Strickland readily attempted to learn such a skill so important to any medievalist.⁸⁷ It was at the British Museum where Agnes Strickland received instruction in palaeography from the staff although this took place while work on Lives was already well under way.⁸⁸ Another of Parsons' criticisms rests on the fact that Strickland had consulted only a few of the numerous primary sources available to her. In hindsight this seems a justified critique, but Parsons does not consider the limitations imposed on a nineteenth-century woman. In fact Agnes Strickland and her sister were barred, due to their sex, from entering the State Paper Office.⁸⁹ Between 1815 and 1850 Britain had followed France's lead and opened its government archives to scholars; however, by "scholars" what was meant was men only.

Another consideration that Parsons fails to recognize was the condition, organization and location of primary sources during the nineteenth century. Historian John Kenyon, in The History Men, stated that,

In England, however -- and probably elsewhere, in fact -- the main obstacle to open research was dirt, confusion and disorder. Records were stored higgledy-piggledy, and often inaccessibly catalogued where they existed at all, were quite inadequate; and there were no staff available to issue

⁸⁷Hennessey, 37.

⁸⁸Hennessey, 37.

⁸⁹Mary Delorme, 'Facts, Not Opinions' - Agnes Strickland" History Today (38 February 1988) 48 and Hennessey, 67.

documents and monitor their use.⁹⁰

Not until the nineteenth century was a committee even appointed by the House of Commons to organize, let alone locate, national archives.⁹¹ Four years after the Westminster fire destroyed all Commons Records and some Treasury Records the Public Record Office Act was passed in 1838. This legislation required that all government transfer papers be held in the Record Office, a monumental task that was not completed until 1862. It was only after the opening of the first stage of the Record Office building that the organization of the Calendars of State Papers commenced.⁹² Upon whom did this monumental task fall? Britain's universities had no rising professionals within the discipline to call upon. One person asked to edit part of the collection was Mary Anne Everett Green Wood who will be discussed further on in this chapter. It is clear that many of the comforts scholars today take for granted were unavailable to the nineteenth-century scholar.

Another argument to counter Parsons' is to note the sheer magnitude of what Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland accomplished. For today's historian it is normal if not expected that he or she specialize on a single queen or time period. An example of this is Parsons, whose work focuses primarily on Eleanor of Castile. In comparison the Strickland sisters' work encompassed twelve medieval queens alone and continued up until the nineteenth century, a feat that they accomplished under the constant and persistent problems inflicted

⁹⁰John Kenyon, The History Men: The Historical Profession in England since the Renaissance (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983), 89.

⁹¹Kenyon, 91.

⁹²Kenyon, 92.

on them by their publisher Henry Colburn.

In the preface, Agnes Strickland dedicated Lives to Britain's present sovereign queen, Victoria. Agnes qualified the honour by contending that Victoria had been England's only uncontested female ruler.⁹³ The author then argued that this would help her plot the linear progression of English civilization through an examination of the queens' impact on it.⁹⁴ This followed the tradition of mainstream history at this time which emphasized how persons of political importance influenced contemporary issues. In this way the Stricklands' groundbreaking work added women to the traditional view of mainstream historians' perception of history:

The wives of the kings of England, though wisely excluded by the constitution of the realm from any share in the government, have frequently exercised considerable authority in affairs of state, and some have been regents of the kingdom; everyone has been more or less a character of historical importance, as will be shewn in their respective biographies.⁹⁵

Here Agnes qualified the study of women's history by appeasing contemporary society in that she emphasized the inferior status of queens at the same time as she outlined their significance to history by measuring the impact they had on politics and government. Her view that English civilization experienced a linear progression reflected her belief in the growing influence queenship exerted between 1066 and 1841. This was indicative of Agnes'

⁹³Strickland, vol i, xviii.

⁹⁴Strickland, vol i, xvii.

⁹⁵Strickland, vol i, xix.

argument that no previous queens-regnant were fully recognized as legitimate sovereigns in their own right until Queen Victoria ascended the throne.⁹⁶ This argument was backed by Elizabeth's account of Mary Tudor's reign and Agnes' of Elizabeth Tudor.

As sovereigns who ruled England in their own right, Mary and Elizabeth Tudor would seem to be perfect examples refuting Agnes' claim that Victoria was the first legitimate queen of England. Yet, to back Agnes' contention the Stricklands emphasized the illegitimacy of Mary's reign as the product of a marriage that ended in divorce, and likewise that of Elizabeth whose mother was executed for adultery. The Stricklands' analysis of England's first two queen regnants, Mary and Elizabeth, took a cautious and at times conciliatory approach. In the several chapters outlining Mary's reign the focus remained on attempting to explain "unfeminine" behaviour by attributing "feminine" characteristics to her:

To do Mary justice, this is the only instance recorded of her presence and satisfaction at any exhibition of cruelty [bear baiting]....She [Mary] seldom hunted, even in her youth, and she never swore, either on paper or by utterance, - negative good qualities, which candor demands should be recorded to her credit, when so many evil ones have been alleged against her.⁹⁷

Elizabeth Strickland excused many of the "alleged" evils that Mary committed, using this kind of conciliatory language. After Mary ascended the throne she had her cousin, Lady Jane Grey, executed. The author explained that Mary acted only at the behest of her council

⁹⁶ Strickland, vol i, viii.

⁹⁷ Strickland, vol v, 431.

when she signed Lady Jane's death warrant.⁹⁸ The execution of a person accused of treason, who had a tenuous but legitimate claim to the throne -- especially during the instability of Mary's reign -- seemed a logical step for a ruler to make. Elizabeth Strickland, however, viewed this as an inexcusable act for a woman to commit: "The executions of this lovely and innocent girl [Lady Jane] and her young husband must ever be considered frightful stains on the reign of a female sovereign."⁹⁹ She judged Mary's actions not as those of a prudent albeit paranoid ruler, but in terms of what contemporaries thought appropriate behaviour for a woman.

In comparison, Agnes Strickland's depiction of Queen Elizabeth I followed the same pattern set forth by her sister. By staying within the confines of a preconceived formula of female behaviour, the Stricklands now needed to resolve how to depict two such powerful rulers as Mary and Elizabeth who defied this sentimentalization. On the one hand they attempted to qualify the actions of those queens who did not conform with ideal feminine traits while at the same time emphasizing those who did. This partially explained why the Stricklands emphasized the illegitimacy of Mary and Elizabeth's reigns. As a result, the Stricklands could argue for the progressive nature of England's history that had culminated in the lawful or legitimate reign of Victoria as queen of England. Did the Stricklands praise Victoria's reign simply because the series was published during Victoria's lifetime? Does the Stricklands' approach reflect the changing perception of women's status in society?

The Stricklands' account offered a narrative of the lives of these royal women and

⁹⁸Strickland, vol v, 359.

⁹⁹Strickland, vol v, 359.

made no attempt to champion women's rights. Agnes and Elizabeth offered an analysis of their subject matter that indicated a strong bias concerning women's proper behaviour in society. In the section dealing with Queen Elizabeth I, Agnes unabashedly judged and at times condoned or condemned Elizabeth:

It has been truly said, however, that no man is a hero to his valet de chambre, and it is impossible to enter into the personal history of England's Elizabeth without shewing that she occasionally forgot the dignity of the heroine among her ladies in waiting, and indulged in follies which the youngest of her maids of honour would have blushed to imitate.¹⁰⁰

Unable to completely whitewash these powerful women's forays into the masculine world of power politics, the Stricklands sat as judge and jury, either excusing or condemning their actions as they sought fit.

Historians like the Stricklands attempted to view the history of women as at times a silent but continuous development of the elevation of women's position but not rights in society. This is seen in the Stricklands' contention that women's status continued to evolve over time, slowly improving how they were perceived while their importance to society increased. This soft pedalled proclamation of women's inherent contribution to society was probably one of the main reasons the work enjoyed such tremendous success and by 1854 was already in its fourth edition.¹⁰¹ The first edition of the work appeared in twelve volumes and provided biographical sketches of queens in chronological order from Matilda of Flanders to Anne of Denmark. In 1864, a condensed six-volume edition appeared and sold

¹⁰⁰Strickland, vol vi, 2.

¹⁰¹Stephen, 48.

over 11,000 copies, a testament to its continued popularity.¹⁰² The avid denunciation of Lives by historians like Parsons is perhaps a reaction to the tremendous influence the Stricklands had on contemporary and future scholars.

Agnes Strickland's celebrity status prompted her to encourage other scholars to write similar biographies. One such author was Mary Ann Everett Green [née Wood] who coincidentally had Henry Colburn publish several of her works.¹⁰³ Green was perhaps the only one of her contemporaries that we can view as more historian than writer. She was born on 19 July 1818 in Sheffield to a Wesleyan minister, Robert Wood.¹⁰⁴ Educated at home, Green spent her youth travelling, as her father's position required, and stayed in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Manchester. In 1841, her parents moved the family to London where Green, accompanied by her mother, started her career as an historian at the Reading-Room of the British Museum. In 1846, she married a painter, George Pycock Green, and published -- still using her maiden name -- Letters of Royal Ladies of Great Britain, from the Twelfth-Century to the close of Queen Mary's reign.¹⁰⁵ "Chiefly from the originals in the State Paper Office, the Tower of London, the British Museum, and other state archives."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰²Shattock, 412.

¹⁰³See Appendix 2.

¹⁰⁴Green delayed the publication of her work until after the Stricklands' work was completed in 1848. See Stephen, Dictionary of National Biography vol. xxi, 840.

¹⁰⁵Mary Ann Everett Green Wood, Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies of Great Britain from the Commencement of the Twelfth Century to the close of the Reign of Queen Mary (London: H. Colburn, 1846).

¹⁰⁶Green, title page.

In her preface she acknowledged the numerous people who had helped her or provided her with access to the archival material cited in her footnotes. This is found in the first five pages of her introduction and leaves the reader with a strong impression that Green had a considerable number of acquaintances who held lofty positions or titles. It also illustrated that Green did not restrict her research to England alone but travelled to France, Italy and Spain as well. In opposition to this triumphant list of her impressive connections she offered this humble statement of intent at the end of her acknowledgments:

In conclusion, the Editor would beg to offer an apology for the seeming, perhaps real, presumption with which she has ventured upon a field usually occupied only by the learned of the other sex. Inspired by an ardent love for antiquarian literature, and encouraged by the wishes of her friends, she has undertaken her present task, not from any unwarranted conceit of superior talent, but simply because she felt convinced that it was one in which the energy and industry which any one who has time at command may bring to bear upon a given subject were the greatest essentials to success. Of the truth or fallacy of her opinion the public must now be the judge.¹⁰⁷

At once ingratiating, Green's words were also defiant. This passage illustrates that she believed that women like men could successfully study history, allowing her work to speak for itself. This work also represents the most academically rigorous scholarship written at this time and was well received by her contemporaries.¹⁰⁸ For although the translation of primary material was the main focus, Green also provided a short history which interpreted

¹⁰⁷Green, xi.

¹⁰⁸A review in the Athenaeum stated that "In closing this last review of the work, we cannot finally part from Mrs. Green without again bearing out testimony to the careful research and diligent examination of authorities which each volume displays. Along the line of six hundred years much incidental light has been thrown, not only on English but on Continental history; and as a valuable contribution towards both we recommend these volumes." As cited in S. Austin Allibone, A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1858), 732.

the political and social impact of the letters she chose.

Of the possible sixteen medieval English queens, from 1066 to 1399, nine are represented through letters in Green's work. All the letters chosen are political in nature and the majority of them are dated towards the end of each queen's life. One example of Green's positive interpretation of her subject is found in her depiction of the empress Matilda. As Henry I's only legitimate heir to the throne of England, Matilda had campaigned for several years to regain it from her cousin Stephen who had usurped her claim. Many contemporary historians explained Matilda's involvement as limited and her illegitimate half brother as Stephen's real antagonist. In contrast, Green included a letter that illustrated Matilda's intelligence and personal interest in politics. Asked to act as arbitrator between her son and the archbishop Becket, Matilda penned a letter to Nicolas of Rouen. Providing her summation of the incident, the author attached a passage: "There are few more beautiful schemes in history than that presented by the aged empress, fast declining in the vale of years, yet rousing her expiring energies to guard the interests of that son in whose favour crown and coronet had been alike relinquished."¹⁰⁹ The aim of Green's introduction to each letter outlined how each of these women affected medieval politics and how they exerted "power."

In some ways Green's work is revisionist in nature. For example, when discussing Matilda of Scotland, consort of Henry I, Green argued that historians "too often and largely dwelt" on this figure's religious nature. Alternatively the author utilized Matilda's involvement in ecclesiastical problems to illustrate her subject's political influence. Green

¹⁰⁹Green, 10.

provided the example of Henry I's dispute with the Archbishop Anselm over the church's right versus the government's right of investiture. As the fight escalated Henry had the Archbishop expelled from England. Green described five letters sent between Matilda and Anselm. These provided evidence that showed Matilda's influence over her husband. Green transcribed the final letter from Matilda to Anselm that included a message from Henry. In the end, Anselm was grudgingly allowed back into England and his right of ecclesiastical investiture recognized. In this way Green illustrated how a royal consort could and did effect political change at the same time as she recognized the importance religion played during the Middle Ages.

Green's histories of royal ladies was not her only scholarly work; she also edited the Letters of Queen Henrietta Maria, including her private correspondence with Charles the First. Collected from the public archives and private libraries of France and England (1857), and Diary of John Rous (1856).¹¹⁰ By 1853, her reputation as a scholar was such that Sir John Romilly nominated her an editor for the calendars of state papers. This work consumed Green's life for the next forty years. In the old state paper office and then in the Public Record Office, Green edited forty-one volumes including the Calendars of State Papers for the Reign of James I (1857-9, 4 vol.); Charles II (1860-6, vol. I-vii); Elizabeth I (1867-72, vol. iii-viii and xii) and of the Commonwealth (1875-85, 13 vol.). Ultimately this enormous undertaking hampered the progress of Green's own work: 'Mrs. Green's time was so fully occupied with her Record Office work that she was unable to carry out plans which she had formed of a memoir of the electress Sophia, and of lives of our queens of the

¹¹⁰For a more complete list of Green's work see Appendix 2, 149-150.

house of Hanover, for which she had collected a large body of material."¹¹¹ We are left to speculate what further contributions to the study Green might have made. She died on 1 November 1895 and was survived by her three daughters.

Another work which more closely followed the tradition set by the Stricklands than that of Green was Mary Howitt's Biographical Sketches of the Queens of Great Britain or Royal Book of Beauty.¹¹² Born on 12 March 1799 at Coleford, Gloucestershire, Howitt was the daughter of Quakers Samuel Botham (a land surveyor) and Anne Wood.¹¹³ Howitt -- the only author of biographies of queens to be educated outside the home -- attended a Quaker boarding school until the age of 13 with her sister Anna,¹¹⁴ after which time the girls continued their education on their own.¹¹⁵ Mary married William Howitt on 16 April 1821 and bore three children who died at birth as well as a son who died at two years.¹¹⁶ Howitt and her husband collaborated on numerous literary schemes. This in part explained how Howitt generated the number of works accredited to her. In all her name appeared as

¹¹¹Stephen, Dictionary of National Biography, vol xxi, 841.

¹¹²Mary Botham Howitt, Biographical Sketches of the Queens of England, from the Norman Conquest to the Reign of Victoria or the Royal Book of Beauty (London: Virtue, 1866).

¹¹³Stephen, Dictionary of National Biography, vol. x, 122.

¹¹⁴Joan Perkin, Victorian Women (New York: New York University Publishing, 1993), 33.

¹¹⁵Of her education Howitt said she "studied poetry, botany and flower-painting. These pursuits were almost out of the place of permitted Quaker pleasures, but we pursued them with a perfect passion, doing in secret what we dared not do openly, such as reading Shakespeare, the elder novelists, and translations of the classics." As cited in Perkin, 33.

¹¹⁶Perkin, 7.

editor, author and translator over one hundred and ten times.¹¹⁷ Howitt died in Rome of bronchitis on 30 January 1888.¹¹⁸

In the preface to Howitt's Biographical Sketches of the Queens of Great Britain, she, like the Stricklands, claimed that the work met only the highest standards of academic and historical accuracy due to its inclusion of primary sources.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately Howitt also recreated many of the same historical fallacies.¹²⁰ In contrast with the Stricklands, Howitt attempted to highlight how queens held "power" and "influence" in their own right. As an example Howitt argued that, "Matilda of Flanders, wife of the Norman Conqueror, was one of those royal consorts who have exercised great influence, not only over the minds of their husbands, but of the nation at large."¹²¹ Howitt contended that Matilda's royal lineage added the prestige the illegitimate William, duke of Normandy, needed to control his duchy.¹²² Howitt also credited Matilda with counselling William into showing his subjects greater clemency. The depth of the queens' power, it was argued, rested in their ability to influence their husbands. They chose to focus on the unofficial power queens exercised as intercessors. For Howitt and some of the other writers it did not signify that queens held

¹¹⁷Perkin, 122. See Appendix 2, 151-152.

¹¹⁸Stephen, Dictionary of National Biography, vol x, 122.

¹¹⁹It is important to note that no footnotes, endnotes or bibliography appear in this work.

¹²⁰An example of this that can be ascribed to both is crediting Matilda of Flanders for constructing the Bayeux tapestry.

¹²¹Howitt, 1.

¹²²Howitt, 3.

power in their own right through patronage and or their personal wealth. The idea of a queen's power, beyond that which she received from her husband, was something pursued by twentieth-century scholars.

In a compelling way, Howitt discussed the impact Matilda of Scotland had over husband Henry I's government and English society:

To be able to effect this, she must have possessed more power in the government than is generally the prerogative of a queen-consort; but Henry doubtless remembered that she had at least an equal right to the throne with himself. Still Matilda had need of all her woman's tact and gentleness to preserve the line between a queen exercising the power which was her right, and a wife owing all to her husband, and acknowledging with the willingness of love his superior rule.¹²³

This statement reflected an affinity for the intangible role queens played. Howitt seemed to be evoking a more personal feeling about the difficult and contradictory position held by these women.

The connection Howitt experienced for her subject is apparent on a more personal level. The ingrained Victorian morality that a woman's role be shunted aside was apparent in the judgments Howitt made regarding Eleanor of Aquitaine. One of the most infamous queens in history, Eleanor was a great heiress in her own right and the only woman crowned both queen of England and France. Eleanor also turned her sons against their father during an open revolt against his rule. Howitt's interpretation illustrated her attempt to justify Eleanor's behaviour to her Victorian audience:

Eleanor of Aquitaine was pre-eminent among the great women of her age; and if her early life was darkened by follies and even by crimes, the nobility of her character in after life, her commanding talents, her legislative wisdom,

¹²³Howitt, 19.

and her deep sorrows made ample atonement and demand from us admiration rather than blame.¹²⁴

In this passage Howitt seemed to thrill at the prospect of Eleanor's tremendous "power" and influence.

What historiographical heritage can the twentieth-century scholar rely on to help him or her advance our understanding of the history of medieval English queens? Would reading the scholarship penned by the Victorians capture the imagination of the next generation so that they would perpetuate the study? The ambiguous answer to such questions would probably depend on what type of histories one reads. This is largely due to the fact that the study of medieval English queens is represented by two historiographical extremes. During the early to mid-nineteenth-century the subject gained popularity as a result of Victorian romantics whose accessible and extremely popular histories reached a wide audience. By the mid-to-late nineteenth century professional historians laid claim to the study of queens. They published articles in learned journals that reached only a small, select readership. The majority of these publications focused on how the ramifications of larger political issues touched the lives of queens. Both these groups wrote for very different audiences with diverging interests. As well the educational background, approach and medium used by amateurs in their "popular histories" stood in stark contrast with professional historians' articles for scholarly journals. It would, therefore, not be difficult for these groups to ignore one another. These two types of histories both enjoyed followers who perpetuated their work well into the twentieth-century. The importance of examining these two

¹²⁴Howitt, 63.

methodological approaches in chapter three is to realize that the study of queens has a much longer and important historiographical tradition than today's scholars often recognize.

By the close of the nineteenth century, interest in the history of medieval English queens ended as Britain's female sovereign, Victoria, aged, and in 1902, died. For historians the study of the Middle Ages experienced a resurgence in interest in England due in no small part to the opening up of the national archives to scholars and the growing interest in England's constitutional past. It is for this reason that this phase in the historiography of the study of queens has remained largely ignored and discounted as unimportant.

Simultaneously, as the writing of history moved from the domain of amateurs to the responsibility of professional historians, ideas concerning appropriate subject matter arose. The study of women, like queens, was not deemed significant in the larger political spectrum. Not even the radical changes that occurred in the 1960's could affect sporadic publication of the topic. Only another medieval revival could once again ignite the imagination of historians who have again returned to the study of medieval English queens.

The medieval revival of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries created a craze for the recovery of England's historical identity. Simultaneously, royal women Caroline, Charlotte, and Victoria stole the national spotlight away from their male counterparts and captured the hearts and attention of their subjects. From approximately 1820 to 1900 female authors inspired or influenced by these events turned their attention to writing the biographies of medieval English queens. These women sat in judgment over their historical subject matter by positively or negatively interpreting the political and social actions of queens. Some of these writers praised individual queens as ideal models of female

domesticity while condemning others who aggressively sought political influence and control. In contrast, other writers condoned and at times glorified the actions of queens who exercised political power in ways considered distinctively male. In either case these female writers used biographies of medieval English queens to highlight women's importance to history and society in general. The publication and popularity of these histories occurred simultaneously with a growing feminine awakening aimed at securing women's greater participation in public life. This chapter has illustrated how many of these authors used their biographies of queens as a form of propaganda intended to support women's greater emancipation. With limited education, no formal training, little financial backing and restricted access to archival material, these professional female authors surmounted serious obstacles by successfully crossing boundaries into a man's land where the work of few women writers was accepted. The primary aim of this third chapter was to acknowledge the contribution of these nineteenth-century women who produced and published such groundbreaking history as well as to recognize the importance of all that they accomplished.

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CHAPTER 4

HISTORY MEN AND
THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF QUEENS, 1900-1979

By the turn of the century “popular biographies” of medieval English queens experienced a lull in publication as a result of Victoria’s death (1902) that signalled the end of interest in royal women as historical actors and medievalism as a movement. This trend persisted until the First World War after which time this genre reappeared claiming both men and women as equal contributors to it. The consistent if not prolific publication that has persisted since the 1920’s acts as a testimonial to the faithful and enduring readership that has remained prevalent.¹ Unfortunately these popular biographical compilations of queens did not attempt to build on the better foundations set in the nineteenth century but tended to reproduce and embellish many of the historical fallacies created by the Victorians. The only new element introduced to this genre was the full-length biography dealing with individual queens. Like the compilation biographies penned during the nineteenth century, these works helped generate popular interest in medieval English queens for the twentieth century at the same time as they emulated the same mediocre standard of scholarship. Content was no more developed through research than it had been in the past. This stagnation allowed professional historians to slowly lay claim to this sub-discipline by ignoring entirely any debt owed to these earlier works.

From approximately the late nineteenth century onward a number of professional historians, with ever increasing regularity, began publishing translated archival material

¹See Appendix 1, 145.

written by or concerning queens in short articles for academic journals or essays in full-length works. More often than not these contributions included explanatory paragraphs that preceded the translated or edited documents. These brief anecdotes illustrated how newly discovered primary sources could be linked to a specific queen with a view to their impact on political, economic or social history. What is most apparent from a reading of this scholarship is the focus on the privileges or impact of queenship. Intended only for a small and elite readership, none of these professional historians went on to produce biographies of queens. A persuasive argument can be made that this historiography, produced by professional historians, formed the precursor to the study of queenship that emerged in the 1980's. This stands in opposition to today's leading scholars who suggest that the emergence of women's history in the 1960's triggered interest in the study of queenship.² Women's history as a subject tended to emphasize the importance of uncovering the experiences of average women and viewed eminent women, like queens, as interesting but irrelevant. In contrast it is the contention of this chapter that the development of women's history as a result of second wave feminism has since the 1960's hampered interest in the history of both queens and queenship.

The historians who contend that the feminist movement of the 1960's heralded the

²Rachel Gibbons, "Review Article: Medieval Queenship: An Overview" Reading Medieval Studies (21, 1995) 97; Louise Olga Fradenburg, "Introduction: Rethinking Queenship" in Louise Olga Fradenburg, ed., Women and Sovereignty (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 1 and John Carmi Parsons, ed., Medieval Queenship (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 1. For statements regarding renewed interest in medieval women in general linked to the 1960's see Susan Mosher Stuard, "A Swift Coming of Age: History of Medieval Women" Journal of Women's History (8 [3] Fall 1996) 229. Stuard contends that "three generations of scholarship appear to have been squeezed into a couple of recent decades." Stuard, 229; Susan Mosher Stuard, Women in Medieval History and Historiography (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 12, and Gerda Lerner, The Majority Finds its Past: Placing Women in History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

beginning of the study of queenship are providing a too simplistic view of a sub-discipline already more than several decades in the making. This chapter will argue that the study of queenship emerged as a result of theoretical developments made in political history or, more succinctly, the history of kings and kingship. In particular, since the Second World War historians analyzing kingship argued with increasing fervor the importance of family politics and the close proximity of the royal family to the center of political power. This recognition preceded developments during the 1980's when women's history and feminist theory stressed gender relationships and power derived from it.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is twofold. First, to illustrate that by the turn of the century the study of queens had splintered into two main camps: amateur scholars who produced "popular biographies" of queens and professional historians focused increasingly on the significance of the offices of the queen. The second aim is to more carefully reconstruct how and why the study of queenship emerged and the most important factors influencing it.

Before beginning with an analysis of the historiography it is necessary first to define certain terms in order to avoid any ambiguity. Since one of the main aims of this chapter is an understanding of the politics of the roots of studying medieval queenship in the twentieth century it is useful here to provide a description of it by contemporary professional historian John Carmi Parsons,

The majority of recent studies on queenship in the Christian Middle Ages have had as their focus the nature of a queen's position, the means whereby she reached it, the resource it offered her and the use she made of them to sustain and protect herself. Such studies have greatly expanded understanding of secondary official role, queens effectively exerted "unofficial" power, and in common with most women in patriarchal societies they actively sought to

maximize that power.³

The study of queenship then is concerned primarily with how successfully royal women manipulated administrative and family ties in order to exert “unofficial” power.

Next it is important to qualify the distinction made between amateur and professional historians. The scarcity of biographical information concerning twentieth-century scholars makes it necessary to then quantify how the amateur status was determined and the professional one confirmed. To rectify this problem an alphabetical list of contributors to the historiography of queens followed by other works attributed to them is found in appendix 2 of this thesis. What this uncovered was that the majority of professional historians produced several articles for scholarly journals and/or full length works dealing with more traditional topics such as law, politics, and religion. The amateur historians rarely claimed any additional histories; if they did, these were invariably more biographies and sometimes works of fiction.⁴

To begin an analysis of the historiography we will first turn to the academic scholarship compiled by professional historians intent on uncovering, editing, translating and publishing archival material. From the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century history, as a discipline, gained a greater prestige and importance. As Western nation-states clamored for supremacy and expanded their borders governments turned to

³John Carmi Parsons, “Ritual and Symbol in the English Medieval Queenship to 1500” in Louise Olga Fradenburg, ed., Women and Sovereignty (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 60.

⁴See Appendix 2, 146-164.

historians to uncover distinct national identities and map constitutional progress.⁵ What Western society deemed significant, therefore, was a progressive or positivist analysis of political, legal and constitutional history.⁶ For the medievalist this meant long hours searching through diplomatic and other government correspondences.⁷ What the Victorian period had achieved was the shift away from a negative view of the Middle Ages, as barbaric and uncivilized, to a craze for anything related to it.⁸

Simultaneously, British universities began to develop curricula that initiated the professionalization of the discipline. This development was spearheaded by scholars in Germany who demanded a rigorous and scientific approach to history based on archival material.⁹ By the late nineteenth century Germany had a well-established professional force of historians able to translate medieval manuscripts that were then published in their scholarly journal Monumenta: The Institute for Research on the German Middle Ages.¹⁰

⁵Ernst Breisach, Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994), 306. See also Maxine Berg, A Woman in History: Eileen Power, 1889-1940 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6.

⁶David Cannadine, "British History as a 'new subject': Politics, Perspectives and Prospects" in Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer, Uniting the Kingdom?: the Making of British History (London: Routledge, 1995), 14.

⁷Philippa Levine, The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England 1838-1886 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3.

⁸Norman F. Cantor, Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century (New York: William and Morrow and Co., inc., 1991), 29.

⁹Kenyon, The History Men, 89; David J. Sturdy, "'Continuity' Versus 'Change': Historians and English Coronations of the Medieval and Modern Period" in János M. Bak, ed., Coronations Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 231; and Breisach, 269.

¹⁰Cantor, 32.

Historian Norman F. Cantor, in Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century, explains the importance of Germans to the formation of history as a discipline: “National governments all over Western Europe emulated the Germans in subsidizing the publication of medieval records, to demonstrate their countries’ origins, even when such evolutionary organism was farfetched.”¹¹ The demand for an explanation of the development of national identities increased the craze for history.¹² This quickly catapulted the discipline into the spotlight as a choice for study.

This phenomenon held true for Britain where history dominated every school’s curriculum and replaced the classics as the appropriate education for “gentlemen” pursuing careers in government.¹³ Historian John Campbell, in “William Stubbs (1825-1901)”, summarizes the impact of German ideas and organization of the discipline on British contemporaries:

The development of historical ideas and the organization of historical learning in England followed German models; the Rolls Series was related to (but as a very poor relation) the Monumenta Germaniae Historica (founded in 1819), and the English Historical Review (founded in 1886) follows the Historische Zeitschrift. The intellectual influence of Germany was particularly strong in Stubbs’s formative years, and Georg Waitz’s *Verfassungsgeschichte* is a model for the Constitutional History.¹⁴

The influence of German scholars and their reverence for archival material is readily

¹¹Cantor, 33.

¹²Levine, 4.

¹³Cannadine, 14.

¹⁴John Campbell, “William Stubbs (1825-1901)” in Helen Damico and Joseph B. Zavadil, eds., Medieval Scholarship Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995), 79.

apparent in the approach used by British scholars writing about medieval English queens prior to the First World War.

Taught to revere the pursuit of archival research some of these men published short journal articles that reproduced or discussed a medieval manuscript accredited to or concerning a specific queen. These works dealt primarily with marriage contracts, household expenditures, personal as well as administrative correspondences and medieval architecture.¹⁵ Nine of these works were found published between 1821 and 1899;¹⁶ while eight appeared between 1900 and 1920. Of these works only one woman contributed to this genre up to 1920: Beatrice Adelaide Lees's "The Letters of Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine to Pope Celestine III" (1906).¹⁷ Men dominated academic history.

The earliest and most significant of these contributions to this genre was that by Beriah Botfield (1807-1863). An educated, politician, editor, publisher and member of numerous societies Botfield represented all the attributes of the ideal modern historian. Botfield was educated at Harrow and Christ Church Oxford where he received a Bachelor

¹⁵Thomas Dinham Atkinson, "Queen Philippa's Pews in Ely Cathedral" Cambridge Antiquarian Society Proceedings For 1943-7 (xli, 1948) 59-66; F. A. Cazel Jr and Sidney Painter, "Notes and Documents: The Marriage of Isabelle of Angoulême" English Historical Review (63, 1948) 83-89.

¹⁶ See H. W. C. Davis, "The Anarchy of Stephen's Reign" English Historical Review (18 April 1911) 331-2; Charles George Crump, "The Arrest of Roger Mortimer and Queen Isabel" English Historical Review (26 April 1911) 331-2; L. Mirot, "Isabelle de France, reine d'Angleterre, comtesse d'Angoulême, duchess d'Orléans" Revue d'histoire diplomatique (xviii 1904) 60-95, Alfred Pope, "Queen Eleanor Crosses" and J. H. Round, "The Landing of Queen Isabella of Angoulême" Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club, (28 1907) 209-15 and Walter E. Rhodes, "The Inventory of the Jewels and Wardrobe of Queen Isabella (1307-8)" English Historical Review (12 July 1897) 517-521.

¹⁷Beatrice Adelaide Lees, "The Letters of Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine to Pope Celestine III" English Historical Review (21 January 1906) 78-93. Lees argued that Eleanor did not write three letters to Pope Celestine III attributed to her but rather her secretary Peter of Blois penned them as drafts for the queen. See Lees, 80.

of Arts and Master of Arts (1847).¹⁸ A MP representing Ludlow for over thirteen years, Botfield still found time to set up a private printing press at Norton Hall, his place of birth, where he published a travel journal concerning the Highlands.¹⁹ He also edited books for a number of clubs for which he was a member: Abbotsford, Bannatyne, Roxburghe Club, Maitland and the Surtees Society.²⁰ He was also a fellow of the Royal Society, the Society of Antiquaries as well as a chevalier of the order of Albert the Brave of Saxony.²¹

In 1841, Botfield published "Rolls Containing the Payments made by the Executors of Eleanor, Consort of Edward the First" in Manners and Household Expenses of England in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century.²² This work was groundbreaking. With "all the aid derivable from the records of her time," Botfield said, "our narrative will present little more than a sketch of the circumstances attending her marriage and her death."²³ In fact this work does much more by providing the reader with the location of archival documents relating to Eleanor of Castile.²⁴ He also refuted historical fallacies

¹⁸Frederic Boase, Modern English Biography: Containing Many Thousand Concise Memoirs of Persons Who Have Died Between The Years 1851-1900. With An Index of The Most Interesting Matter (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965), vol. vi, 346.

¹⁹Boase, vol. vi, 436.

²⁰Boase, vol. vi, 346.

²¹Boase, vol. vi, 346.

²²Beriah Botfield, "Rolls Containing the Payments Made by the Executors of Eleanor, Consort of Edward the First" in Beriah Botfield, ed., Manners and Household Expenses of England in the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Century (London: William Nicols, Shakespeare Press, 1841).

²³Botfield, i.

²⁴Botfield, xciv.

perpetuated about Eleanor²⁵ and recognized that royal women could utilize both family relationships and their office to pursue their own ends:²⁶

If we look to the writers contemporary with Eleanor for any particulars of her character we shall be disappointed. They afford the brief, and, as far as it goes, satisfactory information that she was chaste and pious; but the annalist of Dunstable, who is equally worthy of credit with the rest, alluding neither to her devotion nor her virtue, notes that she was by birth a Spaniard and that she acquired many rich manors; an equivocal observation, which speaks as much for Edward's generosity as for her own deserts.²⁷

This provides the first hint of Eleanor the wealthy landowner who utilized her office to advance her own interests. The significance and knowledge surrounding Eleanor's vast wealth is something scholars have recently analyzed at great length. Botfield also attempted an analysis of art history through an examination of the Eleanor Crosses erected by Edward upon his queen's death.²⁸ The life cycle approach used here by Botfield mirrors that of scholars in the 1990's who broach biographies of specific queens by emphasizing how circumstance and their status provided these royal women with power.

A less ambitious but more representative article for this period was Walter Rhode's, "The Inventory of the Jewels and Wardrobe of Isabella of Angoulême (1897)." Here Rhodes provided political significance to what seemed a mundane list of household

²⁵See Botfield, lxvii.

²⁶Botfield, lxiii.

²⁷Botfield, lxxii.

²⁸Botfield, lxxix.

items.²⁹ Rhodes stated that it “is the jewels mentioned that Edward is said to have handed over to Gaveston, thereby causing the first quarrel between himself and Isabella.”³⁰ Like many other historians Rhodes contended that the deterioration of the king and queen’s marriage resulted from Edward’s partiality to his favourites above that shown to his wife. Rhodes, however, provided primary material - Isabella’s list of jewelry - that he used as evidence that more than likely caused friction in the royal marriage. Events like this, Rhodes argued, undoubtedly led Isabella to plot the downfall of her husband the king. This example illustrates the basic logic used by these early historians whose aim was not to uncover the lives of queens but to provide greater political significance to the newly discovered archival material concerning them.³¹ By the turn of the century these historians would mount increasingly sophisticated arguments as they became more aware of the significance of the queens’ close proximity to the center of political power.³²

By the close of the nineteenth century the importance society attached to history deepened as the desire to embellish the development of the nation-state grew. Historian Victor Feske, in From Belloc to Churchill: Private Scholars, Public Culture, and the Crisis

²⁹For more work by Rhodes see Appendix 2, 159.

³⁰Rhodes, 518.

³¹Along this same subject matter C. G. Crump’s “The Arrest of Roger Mortimer and Queen Isabel” reprinted a letter Isabella’s son, Edward III, sent to pope John XXII hinting at the eventual overthrow of his mother and her lover. See C. G. Crump, “The Arrest of Roger Mortimer and Queen Isabel” English Historical Review (26 April 1911) 332.

³²One of the earliest essays of this kind was Edward Augustus Bond’s “Notices of the Last Days of Isabella Queen of Edward the Second” Archaeologia (35 1854) 453-469. For other works by Bond see Appendix 2, 147.

of British Liberalism 1900-1939, explains that the Victorian ideal of respectability and virtue drove historians to interpret English civilization as having experienced “sustained moral progress.”³³ Feske states that,

Traditional Whig historiography provided legitimacy to the social and political realities of Victorian England by chronicling, in a direct line of descent, the evolution of liberty, justice, enlightenment, and prosperity from Magna Carta and the Reformation through the civil wars, the Glorious Revolution and opposition to George III, to the reform acts of the nineteenth-century.³⁴

This resulted in a burgeoning demand for political, legal and constitutional histories.³⁵ For the early twentieth-century historian, therefore, uncovering the history of medieval English queens was not a top priority.

A slowly growing group of professional historians were primarily made up of men who had access to higher education and attained teaching positions at the growing number of universities which had history faculties.³⁶ The “Edwardian approach” to the Middle Ages focused on the study of law as the means by which one could uncover a greater

³³Victor Feske, From Belloc to Churchill: Private Scholars, Public Culture, and the Crisis of British Liberalism 1900-1939 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1996), 3.

³⁴Feske, 3.

³⁵An example of the pursuit of uncovering the “history of liberty in England” is William Stubbs’s Constitutional History. See Damico, 77. Along the same vein David J. Sturdy stated that, “Most historians in late-Victorian England sensed a duty to seek moral, religious, political laws in history which would raise English civilization to ever more splendid heights. Even the greatest scholars were inveterate searchers after “Truth” in their study of the past, being ever prepared to point to a moral or to read into history signs of the present times.” Sturdy, 234.

³⁶Feske approximated the number of university based historians who could be viewed as academic professionals as: 30 by 1880’s, 200 by 1914 and fewer than 400 by the Second World War. See Feske, 6.

understanding of medieval society.³⁷ The result was numerous legal, administrative, constitutional and manorial histories. Historian János Bak, in Coronations Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual, has linked the emergence of the study of coronation studies with a ‘European chauvinism’³⁸ that demanded that the political and ideological importance of these ceremonies be emphasized.³⁹ Bak argued further that the political and ideological implications of these ceremonies made them of particular interest to German scholars who during the nineteenth-century were influenced by the resurgence of the empire.⁴⁰ What was perceived as important was the origin, growth, structure and power of monarchial rule.

This did not stop a few historians from publishing archival material in short articles intended for academic circles alone. They included: Fred A. Cazel and Sidney Painter, “Notes and Documents: The Marriage of Isabelle of Angoulême;”⁴¹ Henry Stephen Lucas, “A Document relating to the Marriage of Philippa of Hainault in 1327;”⁴² Henry Gerald Richardson, “The Letters and Charters of Eleanor of Aquitaine” and Peter Walne, “A

³⁷Berg, 112.

³⁸Bak, 3.

³⁹Bak contends that “Later, especially under the impact of *Geistesgeschichte*, partially also in response to the challenging studies of Georg von Below, scholars came to consider the wider question: the structure of power in premodern polities and the origin and growth of the modern nation state in general.” Bak, 3. See also Helen Damico and Joseph B. Zavadil, eds., Medieval Scholarship Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline (New York: Garland Publishing inc., 1995), xxi.

⁴⁰Bak, 3.

⁴¹For other work by Painter see Appendix 2, 157.

⁴²For other work by Henry Stephen Lucas see Appendix 2, 156.

'Double Charter' of the Empress Matilda and Henry, duke of Normandy."⁴³ These circumscribed initiatives produced by professional historians left the perpetuation of biographies of queens largely in the hands of amateur historians. These writers continued, in the tradition of their Victorian predecessors, to publish "popular" or "public" histories accessible to large audiences. Awed by the work of Victorian scholars such as Agnes Strickland and her contemporaries, amateurs relied on this earlier work and revered it as something approaching gospel. In this way the historical fallacies laid out by the Victorians continued unabated well into the late twentieth-century. During the twentieth century approximately nineteen biographical compilations dealing with medieval English queens were published.⁴⁴ Of these works men laid claim to half. In the previous century they had only produced five in total.⁴⁵

Elsie Prentys Thorton-Cook's Her Majesty: The Romance of the Queens of England, 1066-1910⁴⁶ exemplifies the popular approach. She provided a romantic story concerning each queen, their courtship and or their parents. In this way the author argued that the queen's private life was the most significant factor affecting historical events. In the chapter concerning Empress Matilda, daughter and heir of Henry I, the author related a melodrama that could easily match any found in romantic fiction. Thorton-Cook argued

⁴³For other work by Peter Walne see Appendix 2, 162.

⁴⁴See Bibliography, 166-167 and 169.

⁴⁵See Bibliography, 165.

⁴⁶ In the preface the author argued the importance of queens to history: "Human nature has not changed during the thousand years that intervene between the coming of Matilda of Flanders and Alexandra of Denmark, and was there yet a wife who has not influenced her husband for good or evil." See Thorton-Cook, Her Majesty, vii.

that the animosity that existed between Matilda and her cousin as well as rival for the throne, Stephen, resulted from a love affair that ended badly. Instead of relating that Matilda justifiably hated the person who had usurped her rightful claim, Thorton-Cook attempted to justify a woman's battle for supremacy over a man. The author argued that Matilda's jealousy over Stephen's marriage cost her the throne: "The two Matildas were rivals. Queen Matilda had married the man the ex-Empress loved, and jealousy is cruel. Her answer to the queen's pleading was so arrogant that all Matilda's courageous spirit was roused."⁴⁷ This arrogance explained why Matilda was ousted from London and fled the upcoming onslaught of Stephen's queen, Matilda's army.⁴⁸

Thorton-Cook's interpretation of empress Matilda's campaign for the throne would receive an important shift in interpretation later in the twentieth century. Geoffrey Trease's The Seven Queens of England⁴⁹ included empress Matilda as one of seven female sovereigns discussed in this work.⁵⁰ Trease justified Matilda's inclusion through her more legitimate claim to the throne than Stephen, "and her effective control of the country was about as great."⁵¹ In comparison with Thorton-Cook, Trease's work sets out to argue that Matilda's arrogance as a result of her upbringing in Germany cost her the throne

⁴⁷Thorton-Cook, 24.

⁴⁸Following Strickland's lead Thorton-Cook also attributed Matilda of Flanders with constructing the Bayeux tapestry. See Thorton-Cook, 9.

⁴⁹Geoffrey Trease, The Seven Queens of England (New York: Vanguard Press, 1953).

⁵⁰The others include Mary I, Elizabeth I, Mary II, Anne, Victoria and Elizabeth II.

⁵¹Trease, Foreword.

rather than her love for Stephen:

Maud... offended Englishmen by being too cold and distant in the German manner which had been forced upon her as a child....She had the courage and enterprise of a man. Perhaps if her more feminine qualities had not been so thwarted when she was young, she might have won more support in England.⁵²

Published after the Second World War, Trease's words perhaps reflect a bias against all things German that allowed the author to argue that Matilda's arrogance was a product of her environment rather than character flaws. It is also interesting to note that Trease acknowledged Matilda's attempt to gain the throne as more successful than not. He qualified this by highlighting the traditional leadership characteristics of courage and "enterprise" that Matilda possessed. Is it not grossly unfair to argue that Matilda achieved what she did because of the male traits she possessed, but as a woman they ultimately cost her the throne?⁵³

In comparison, an earlier journal article by professional historian H. W. C. Davis, "The Anarchy of Stephen's Reign," also argued that Matilda's faction had gained about as much control of England as had Stephen's. Published in 1903, Davis' essay did not advance our understanding of Matilda's role in the civil war. It was Davis' contention that medieval England at this time was ruled by two people, neither of whom was Matilda:

There were two sovereigns in England, of whom each was recognized and generally obeyed in a small group of shires. The empress, or rather her protector, the earl of Gloucester, held sway over a belt of territory in the West which varied greatly in extent from time to time but of which the

⁵²Trease, 11.

⁵³For other works by Trease see Appendix 2, 161.

nucleus was formed by Somerset, Gloucestershire, the modern Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, and occasionally Worcestershire.⁵⁴

Davis attempted to justify the involvement of a woman in politics and achieved this by downplaying her role. This interpretation stands in stark contrast with Trease and Thorton-Cook who pinpoint Matilda's flawed character traits or problems in her private life to explain what hindered her from claiming the throne. These diverging interpretations highlight the very personal view the authors brought. In general, the amateur historian followed the lead set by the Victorians.

The use of biographical compilations of medieval English queens has continued to enjoy adherents more recently as seen in: Heather Jenner, Royal Wives; Norah Lofts, Queens of England; Sidney Dark, Twelve Royal Ladies;⁵⁵ Micheline Dupy, Francaises, reines d'Angleterre, Elizabeth Villiers, Love Stories of English Queens⁵⁶ and Marc Alexander, The Outrageous Queens.⁵⁷ The advent of the women's movement did little to change the approach although the tone of some was altered.

An example is provided by Norah Lofts's Queens of England.⁵⁸ In it, Lofts sees her subjects as living through tragic circumstances. As victims through their marriages to

⁵⁴Davis, 631.

⁵⁵For other work by Dark see Appendix 2, 148.

⁵⁶For other work by Villiers see Appendix 2, 161.

⁵⁷Heather Jenner, Royal Wives (London: Duckworth, 1967); Norah Lofts, Queens of England (New York: Doubleday, 1977); Micheline Dupy, Francaises, reines d'Angleterre, Paris: Perrin, 1968); Elizabeth Villiers, Love Stories of English Queens (London: S. Paul, 1924) and Marc Alexander, The Outrageous Queens (London: F. Muller, 1977). For other works by Alexander see Appendix 2, 146.

⁵⁸Lofts, Queens of England.

foreigners, they emerge as mere political pawns whose most important goal was to secure legitimate succession by giving birth to sons.⁵⁹ She did, however, argue further that “amongst the sad stories there are success stories.”⁶⁰ Matilda, for example, is portrayed as a wily strategist: “People who disliked her called her proud and arrogant - but the great barons of England and the princes of the church were proud and arrogant themselves and needed curbing. She would probably have done better than Stephen who was so affable and agreeable.”⁶¹ This is more of a judgment of Stephen than any understanding of Matilda’s bid to claim the throne in her own right. This fact is born out by a later statement regarding Stephen’s marriage to his queen-consort, also named Matilda: “She [Matilda] married Stephen of Blois and proved to be a good wife to a bad husband. Stephen was handsome and charming and completely unreliable, as unfaithful to his marriage vows as he was to his oath to accept the Empress Matilda as his overlord.”⁶² Lofts’ morally reproachful tone applied a twentieth-century set of ethics to the Middle Ages by attacking Stephen as a philandering husband. For the author, Stephen’s behaviour toward his wife provided the evidence to explain why he proved an ineffectual leader.⁶³

This is not the only example of Lofts condemning the actions of historical figures

⁵⁹Lofts, 9.

⁶⁰Lofts, Foreword.

⁶¹Lofts, 26.

⁶²Lofts, 29.

⁶³For other works by Lofts see Appendix 2, 156.

based on a late twentieth-century set of values. This is most clearly seen when the author examines the life of Isabella of France, queen of Edward II (1292-1358). Isabella, one of the most infamous queens, was responsible for having her husband deposed in favour of her lover Mortimer. Instead of focusing on the incredible events leading up to the breakdown of monarchical rule, Lofts's primary interest is to deal with conjecture:

It has long been the rule, though not until this century openly expressed that a woman can get away with anything, even murder, as long as her sexual sheet is clean....It is certain that had Isabella not taken a lover, her story would have been very different. Instead of being shamed, imprisoned creature that she was, she would have retained her title of 'The Liberator,' the one who had saved England from a weak and disastrous rule and put a strong king on the throne. She would have been not one of the most dishonored Queens, but one of the most honored.⁶⁴

Lofts' tone here can only be described as bitter for the unfair and hypocritical sexual double standard women endured. Recent work on Isabella suggests that the queen was in fact not disgraced but that her son made every effort to have his court accept his mother who freely traveled and received numerous visitors. Published in 1977, this forms part of the work compiled after the 1960's that still perpetuated the historical fallacies of the Victorians.

Full-length biographies concerning a single queen published at this time include:

Amy Kelly's Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings; Marion Meade, Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Biography; Nesta Pain, Empress Matilda: Uncrowned Queen of England,⁶⁵

⁶⁴Lofts, 60.

⁶⁵For other works by Pain see Appendix 2, 157.

and Curtis Howe Walker, Eleanor of Aquitaine.⁶⁶ The only queens deemed significant enough to merit a full length work were Empress Matilda, duchess of Normandy and Lady of the English, her step-daughter, Eleanor of Aquitaine, queen of France and England, duchess of Aquitaine and Poitou, and Philippa of Hainault. The first two women received this attention because they are perceived as the most politically active figures of all medieval English queens. The most famous of these works is undoubtedly Amy Kelly's 1959 biography of Eleanor of Aquitaine since it gained almost instant success. It is also interesting to note that Amy Kelly was the only writer of this genre who published an article in an academic journal and then completed a full length biography based on it.⁶⁷ None of the other historians at this time published both an article and a book dealing with medieval English queens.

The first half of this chapter has sought to provide examples representative of the bulk of work concerning queens published since the turn of the century up until 1980. An outline must now be provided to explain why women's history and theory has not had the impact on the study of queens that contemporary scholars suggest. Considering the ready interest in queens illustrated by society's enthusiastic reception of such work during the nineteenth century, why did professional historians not readily pick up this challenge? The answer to this question lies in the reversal of the importance placed on political history and

⁶⁶Amy Kelly, Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings (New York: Vintage Books, 1959); Marion Meade, Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Biography (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1977); Nesta Pain, Empress Matilda: Uncrowned Queen of England (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1978) and Curtis Howe Walker, Eleanor of Aquitaine (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1950).

⁶⁷Amy Kelly, "Eleanor and her Courts of Love" Speculum (xii, 1 (January 1937)) 1-19. For other works by Amy Kelly see Appendix 2, 154.

the belief in the progressive or positive nature of human development.⁶⁸ What triggered this reversal was the First World War and the Great Depression that followed. As a result, historians turned to economic and social history as being more relevant.

At the forefront in these studies was groundbreaking medievalist Eileen Power. A recently published biography, Maxine Berg's A Woman in History: Eileen Power, 1889-1940, recounted Power's incredible success story that included the award of several scholarships and appointments at various universities.⁶⁹ While she attended the École des Chartes in Paris on the Gilchrist scholarship, her advisor chose as Power's Master's or graduate topic Isabella of France, wife of Edward III. This subject was deemed suitable for a female historian and by the end of her time in Paris, Power had collected a sizable amount of information concerning Isabella. Yet Power soon abandoned the topic entirely and never completed a book or paper dealing with Isabella. This might be due in part to Power's greater involvement in fighting for women's rights.⁷⁰ Power also wrote and studied during the initial push for women's suffrage that influenced many women between the 1890's and 1920's.

It is not surprising then that Power turned to recovering the history of "ordinary lives" and more specifically women during the Middle Ages.⁷¹ In her biography Maxine Berg contends that Power never forgot to incorporate the approach used by her female

⁶⁸Cantor, 43, and Breisach, 323.

⁶⁹Berg, 38.

⁷⁰Ellen Jacobs, "Eileen Power" in Damico and Zavail, Medieval Scholarship, 219.

⁷¹See Berg, 200, and Jacob, 226.

Victorian counterparts which had focused on the events of real people's lives and with which she then combined with "good research." "The models she then perceived as available to her lay in the biographical traditions, studies of characters, and commentaries on diarists and letter writers long practiced by popular female historians, few of whom were academics."⁷² Power's contribution to the fields of economic, social and women's history has regained its proper place within the discipline due in no small part to recent biographical scholarship that focused on her.⁷³ What is important to recognize is that the interest of the historical discipline as a whole shifted, Power and others put aside the study of medieval English queens in favour of female religious figures, then "ordinary women," and finally both the men and women who made up the lower orders of medieval society. This exploration is not meant as a criticism of Power for omitting queens from her studies, but to highlight the subjects she deemed in need of more immediate attention. Power's attraction to social history might explain why during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries few scholars turned their wholehearted attention to the study of queens.

The impact of the Second World War, despotic governments, and the Cold War all contributed to a deepening interest in social history away from the politics of great men. The effect of this shift in focus is readily apparent in developments made in the

⁷²Berg, 134.

⁷³See Ellen Jacobs, "Eileen Power" in Helen Damico and Joseph B. Zavail, eds., Medieval Scholarship Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1995); Maxine Berg, "Foremothers III: Eileen Power and Women's History" *Gender and History* 6 [2] August 1994) 265-274; Maxine Berg, A Woman in History: Eileen Power, 1889-1940 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Cantor, Inventing the Middle Ages.

historiography of kings that has since the 1940's increasingly focused on kingship.⁷⁴

James W. Alexander, in "A Historiographical Survey: Norman and Plantagenet Kings Since World War Two," argues that scholarship since the 1940's has recognized the importance of family relations to the success or failure of a king's reign.⁷⁵ This meant that the king had to be a "canny" politician in order to exert his will over an administration closely related to the royal family.⁷⁶ The study of kingship then increasingly sought to place the history of kings in its proper social context.⁷⁷ Historians interested in royal women made the next logical step by applying this conceptualization to queens and queenship. Anne J. Duggan explains that,

As monarchy became progressively dynastic and legitimate birth an essential requirement in the transmission of the right to rule, royal women, as daughters, wives, mothers and grandmothers — and hence as princesses and queens — played a crucial role in the creation and protection of the legitimacy upon which male rulers depended for the transmission of the throne to their lawful offspring.⁷⁸

The effect of this theoretical shift was quickly picked up by those interested in the history of queens and queenship. One of the first to recognize the implications of this for queens

⁷⁴James W. Alexander, "A Historiographical Survey: Norman and Plantagenet Kings Since World War II" *Journal of British Studies* (24 [1] January 1985) 97; and Joel T. Rosenthal, "A Historiographical Survey: Anglo-Saxon Kings and Kingship Since World War II" *Journal of British Studies* (24 [1] January 1985) 73.

⁷⁵Alexander, 94.

⁷⁶Alexander, 97.

⁷⁷Alexander, 103.

⁷⁸Anne J. Duggan, "Introduction" in Anne J. Duggan, ed., *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997), xviii.

was Elizabeth A. R. Brown's "Eleanor of Aquitaine: Parent, Queen, and Duchess."⁷⁹

Brown criticizes preceding scholars who have "filled books and articles ostensibly dedicated to Eleanor with cultural and political events only loosely connected with her life, instead of focusing on Eleanor and her family."⁸⁰ Alternatively, Brown analyzes how Eleanor used her tremendous wealth and manipulated family ties that enabled her to exert power and influence:

Her children were important to her; but, self-sufficient, self-concerned activist that she was, she tended to view them as instruments of her will, or obstacles blocking its exercise, rather than as individuals to be nurtured and cherished. She never plotted against them as she plotted against her husbands, but the balance and intensity of her loyalties shifted in response to changes in their relative power and usefulness to her.⁸¹

In this short essay Brown is very successful in linking the important roles Eleanor exercised as queen, wife, and mother.

This recognition of the substantial political power women could exert "unofficially" was a concept not readily incorporated by women's historians who, since the study's emergence in the 1960's, advocated a circumscribed approach to women's history. For those who increasingly lobbied for equality during "second wave feminism" of the 1960's it was deemed much more significant to understand the position of the majority of women than of the elite. This provided a united history of women that ignored the individual and embraced the idea that their collective experience was different from

⁷⁹Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "Eleanor of Aquitaine: Parent, Queen, and Duchess" in William W. Kibler, ed., Eleanor of Aquitaine: Patron and Politician (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), 9-34.

⁸⁰Brown, 9.

⁸¹Brown, 24.

that of men. Separate spheres theory would form the theoretical basis in this way of thinking; it has been prevalent in women's history until recently. This approach adhered to a belief that society traditionally limited women's role to those activities and experiences attributed to the "domestic" or "private" sphere. Boundaries existed limiting women's role to that of the "domestic sphere," in this view, while traditional history accorded the greatest importance to what was occurring in the "public sphere."⁸²

Linda K. Kerber's, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History" traced the use of separate spheres theory by women's historians. Kerber argued that the inclusion of women in the nineteenth-century political historian Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy in America caused women's historians to take notice of his work.⁸³ Tocqueville introduced separate spheres theory when he discussed the role of American women. He characterized women's experience in society as separated and limited in comparison with that of men. Women's historians recognized the analytic value of explaining women's subordination as socially constructed through their systematic exclusion from the "public" sphere and limited role to the "private." This idea provided a framework for explaining women's traditional oppression. Unfortunately by viewing women as a unified group the study denied difference. At the same time, it separated their experience from that of men's through the dichotomy "private" and

⁸²Kathleen B. Jones and Anna G. Jónasdóttir, eds., The Political Interests of Gender Developing Theory and Research with a Feminist Face (London: Sage Publications, 1988), 12.

⁸³Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female World, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History" Journal of American History (75 [1] June 1988) 10.

“public” spheres.⁸⁴

Separate spheres theory ultimately freed women’s historians from focusing on “elite” women like queens who did not fit the new criteria as significant to the history of women. Queens did not fit the emerging theory that women operated only in the private sphere; instead, they exemplified women who crossed these boundaries. As a result, these women’s roles and identities proved ambiguous. Some historians continue to view queens’ unique position within the center of political power as negating them from contributing to an understanding women and their role in society.⁸⁵ Published in 1989, Karen Glente and Lise Winther-Jensen’s, Female Power in the Middle Ages, perpetuates the view in their introduction of the insignificance of studying medieval queens:

Although a women’s history cannot be written, just by putting this particular group [elite] women one after the other, they do represent what is possible. And although they represent isolated phenomenon in a general historical context, they were part of a particular historical context when alive. They are important because we know a little about them, but they are trivial in the long run.⁸⁶

This adequately sums up the current view that informs the general consensus regarding medieval English queens and elite women in general. Instead of being considered exceptional, medieval English queens should be viewed by today’s scholars as examples of

⁸⁴Joan Wallach Scott ed., Feminism and History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3.

⁸⁵Rachel Gibbons, “Medieval Queenship: An Overview” Reading Medieval Studies (21, 1995) 97.

⁸⁶Karen Glente and Lise Winther-Jensen ed. Female Power in the Middle Ages (Copenhagen: B. Stougaard Jensen, 1989), 24. As well Gerda Lerner states that “The resulting history of ‘notable women’ does not tell us much about those activities in which most women engaged, nor does it tell us about the significance of women’s activities in society as a whole.” Gerda Lerner, The Majority Finds its Past: Placing Women in History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 145.

how women aware of their subordinate position in society used different means at their disposal to gain agency over their lives.

Some historians of women, wearying of the perpetual negative view of “average” women’s role in society, searched for a “Golden Age” when women enjoyed greater freedom and equality. The most popular example of this form of nostalgic escapism is found in the belief that women, prior to the Norman Conquest, enjoyed greater freedom and equality. Historian Pauline Stafford, in “Women and the Norman Conquest,” questions the idea that a “Golden Age” for women existed during the medieval period.⁸⁷ Stafford deconstructs how the idea of a “Golden Age” for medieval women first germinated. She begins by identifying those Victorian scholars who composed histories sentimentalizing women’s role in the domestic sphere during the early Middle Ages. Historians of women reading these histories soon embraced the idea that Anglo-Saxon women enjoyed privileges and linked the loss of them to the Norman Conquest (1066). Stafford argues that both conservative and radical scholars who provided such interpretations did so to promote their own self-interest: “For one [conservative] it can be nostalgia for a time of clear and unquestioned hierarchies and relationships, for the other [radical] an inspiring and reassuring reminder that changes sought now are merely a return to the past, are possible now because they existed then.”⁸⁸ After having isolated the motives of these scholars, Stafford then proceeds to examine the problems with this

⁸⁷Pauline Stafford, “Women and the Norman Conquest” Transactions of the Royal Historical Society sixth Series iv (London, 1994), 221-249.

⁸⁸Stafford, 224.

approach used by women's historians. She attacked the "unilinear" interpretation of women's development by scholars who viewed them as a single cohesive unit sharing a common experience. This discounted or ignored any difference these women might have experienced by region, economic status, or that of life cycle.

In conclusion, this chapter has provided an overview of the major trends affecting the study of queens and how this directly influenced the tone and approach used by both political and amateur historians. What then caused the resurgence of interest in the study of queens? Surprisingly many of the explanations that account for the surge in interest in the history of medieval queens during the nineteenth century can be applied to the resurgence during the 1980's. Like the nineteenth-century, the answer is provided by the rise of royal women to a greater prominence in the 1980's than Elizabeth II, Princess Margaret and Princess Anne had enjoyed in previous decades.

CHAPTER 5

QUEENSHIP, 1980-1998

The second and third chapters of this thesis have outlined how and why the historiography of queens emerged in the nineteenth century. It was concluded that the primary aim of this body of work was to illustrate that women's lives could have an impact on history. This accomplishment provided a positive view of a feminine presence in history that countered society's limited perception of women's capabilities. It also furthered a growing public awareness and interest in medieval English queens. Chapter four recognized that Victoria's death in 1902 heralded the end of the medieval revival resulting in a lapse in the publication of popular biographies of queens.¹ At the same time a few academics began to publish translated and edited archival material attributed to queens.² After the First World War the publication of popular biographies began again.³ Both types of historiography continued to focus on the political significance of queens, but remained divided between the mediocre popular biographies produced by amateur scholars and the increasingly sophisticated arguments concerning the office of the queen pursued by academics. Only very recently have academics challenged this historiographical tradition through the publication of a small number of biographies dealing with individual queens. As a result, a new stage in the historiography of queens has emerged because scholars are more willing to devote the time and energy needed to

¹See Appendix 1, 145.

²See Bibliography, 166 and 168.

³See Appendix 1, 145.

complete full-length biographies of queens.

This chapter will provide an overview of the last phase, from approximately 1980 to 1998, in the historiography of queens. The focus will remain primarily on the work produced by academics, although examples from popular biographies of queens will be provided. Since the 1980's the study of queens has enjoyed the renewed attention of both academics and amateur scholars. The scholarship produced in academic circles has focused primarily on the political involvement of queens as seen through their retention of "power." Amateur historians still produce popular biographical compilations that recreate the historical fallacies laid out by the Victorians. This stagnation of content provides evidence to support the groundbreaking way nineteenth-century scholars perceived these royal women that twentieth-century writers readily incorporate. It also highlights the isolation of academic scholarship in its slight impact on popular biographical compilations. Published primarily in academic journals for an elite readership, such work is seemingly dismissed by those writing popular biographies of queens. Increasingly the bulk of this academic work has pursued the conceptualization of queens as political figures who wielded power. A more general observation concerning this historiography is the scramble by professional historians to determine if the medieval queen or queens they depict created and exerted power on their own terms, or if their status and circumstance alone predetermined their access to it.⁴ While such investigations prove interesting, their rapid development omits histories of queens who

⁴Pauline Stafford, "Emma: The Powers of the Queen in the Eleventh Century" in Duggan, Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe, 3.

did not lead politically relevant lives.

A renewed interest in the Middle Ages has developed during the past two decades. 'Neo-medievalism,' 'retro medievalism,' or the 'new medievalism' are all catch words employed by today's historians as labels that identify and explain the resurgence of interest in the medieval period.⁵ This medieval revival is reflected in the contributions made by popular culture as seen in: movies,⁶ web sites,⁷ books⁸ and medieval theme restaurants.⁹ Acknowledging that popular interest in the medieval period is alive and well, the next question one might ask is what prompted this flourishing?

⁵See Howard R. Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols, eds., Medievalism and the Modernist Temper (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 1; and Cantor, Inventing the Middle Ages, 410.

⁶Films set in the medieval period and released after 1980 include: First Knight (1995), Excalibur (1996), Braveheart (1995), Robinhood, Prince of Thieves (1995), Robinhood Men in Tights (1995) The Name of the Rose (1986), Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (1993), Henry V (1995) and LadyHawke (1985). For a complete list of movies set during the medieval period consult PSC Medieval Society: Official Medieval Movies Page (<http://oz.plymouth.edu/~medsoc/movies.html>): Archived on 24 July 1998.

⁷Web sites dealing with the medieval period are becoming increasingly prevalent with some affiliated with and funded by universities such as: Arthuriana (<http://dc.smu.edu/Arthuriana/>): Archived on 24 July 1998; Women Writers of the Middle Ages (<http://www.millersv.edu/~english/homepage/duncan/medfem/medfem.html>): Archived on 24 July 1998; Exemplaria: Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies (<http://web.english.ufl.edu/exemplaria>): Archived on 24 July 1998; Berkeley Digital Library: The Online Medieval and Classical Library (<http://sumsite.berkeley.edu/OMACL/>): Archived on 24 July 1998, and The Labyrinth: Resources for Medieval Studies (<http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/labyrinth-home.html>): Archived on 24 July 1998.

⁸There exists also a web site for those interested in contemporary medieval fiction that includes Michael Ashley's The Merlin Chronicles; Marion Zimmer Bradley's The Mists of Avalon; Bernard Cornwell's The Winter King; Helen Hollick's The Kingmaking, Sharon Kay Penman's The Queen's Man: A Medieval Mystery; T. H. White's The Once and Future King, and Jack Whyte's The Skystone.

⁹This craze for the medieval period has resulted in theme restaurants where live entertainment is provided in the form of jousting and other medieval activities. This restaurant chain is called The Medieval Times and is a company which builds castle-like structures to perform in. These castles stand in Kissimmee, Florida; Buena Park, California; Lyndhurst, New Jersey, Schaumburg, Illinois; Dallas, Texas; Toronto, Ontario and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The "castle" in Toronto is located at Exhibition Place and is able to seat 1,400. See Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament (<http://medievaltimes.com/toronto.htm>).

It is interesting to note that historians who contend that a medieval revival has occurred employ many of the same arguments used to explain this similar movement during the nineteenth century. Norman F. Cantor, in Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century, pinpoints the economic and social upheaval that gripped society -- as in the nineteenth century -- as the primary cause prompting renewed interest in the medieval period.¹⁰ More specifically the economic depression of the 1970's and 1980's, the end of the cold war -- signalling the "failure of capitalism and socialism" -- and environmental catastrophes caused by industrialization all contributed to the desire to escape to an idealized past:

Affirmation of the heritage of the Middle Ages is going to be a prominent trend on the academic scene in the 1990's broadening out into a larger intellectual and cultural movement as we reach the end of the second Christian millennium with the cultures of capitalism and socialism, neo-Victorianism and modernism considered irreparably etiolated and redundant.¹¹

Like our Victorian predecessors a disenchantment exists with society's present course which has led academics, artists, writers, musicians and others to identify with the Middle Ages. Faculties deemed expendable, such as the humanities and social sciences, bear the brunt of fiscal cutbacks. Under such circumstances it becomes of crucial importance that such specialties such as medieval English queens cultivate popular interest in order to sustain development. Academics can ill afford to continue to cater to themselves alone, but must also appeal to a larger audience if they hope to entice and preserve a loyal

¹⁰Cantor, 411.

¹¹Cantor, 414.

following. How can this be assured? To provide answers to this question it is important to first outline why there exists a popular interest in queens and queenship.

Since the 1980's one event has single handedly created a craze for royal women. This was Diana Spencer's marriage to Prince Charles in 1981. Young, vivacious, beautiful and impetuous, Diana embodied qualities found in two nineteenth-century Princesses of Wales, Caroline of Brunswick and her daughter Charlotte.¹² Diana's fairytale wedding to her Prince Charming rivetted the world like Charlotte's had done on a much smaller scale for England in the previous century.¹³ In 1981, new technological advances allowed one billion people around the world to watch via satellite and listen over the radio to the ceremony.¹⁴ As with Charlotte, the media allowed the public to experience firsthand the events that affected Diana in both public and private life. For example, both Charlotte and Diana's pregnancies were closely monitored and reported in local, national and global newspapers as well as television.¹⁵ Caroline, Charlotte and

¹²See chapter two for an outline of Caroline and Charlotte's character and a brief biography of each.

¹³The resurgence in interest in Charlotte has resulted in new webpages devoted to her life that include reproductions of Charlotte's wedding dress and ceremony. See Princess Charlotte's Wedding Page (<http://locutus.ucr.edu/~cathy/char.html>) and Death of Princess Charlotte Augustus (1796-1817): A Research Archive (<http://sparc20-1unixlab.virginiz.edu/~ams4k/Charlotte/>): Archived on 7 August 1998. For recent scholarship concerning Charlotte and Caroline see Stephen C. Behrendt, Royal Mourning and Regency Culture: Elegies and Memorials of Princess Charlotte (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Alison Plowden, Caroline and Charlotte: The Regent's Wife and Daughter, 1795-1821 (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1989); Thea Holme, Prinny's Daughter: A Life of Princess Charlotte of Wales (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1976) and Franco Crainz, An Obstetric Tragedy: the Case of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte Augusta, some unpublished documents of 1817 (London: Heinemann, 1977).

¹⁴"Diana Princess of Wales" in The British Monarchy: The Official Web Site (<http://www.royal.gov.uk/>): Archived on 21 September 1998.

¹⁵"Diana Princess of Wales" in The British Monarchy: The Official Web Site (<http://www.royal.gov.uk/>).

Diana all enjoyed an adoration that overshadowed their uncharismatic husbands.¹⁶

Journalist Martin Jacques attempted to conceptualize the form of influence Diana exerted:

Of course she [Diana] had no power in the conventional sense. She was neither Queen nor Prime Minister. But what her popularity reveals is that power no longer resides in institutions the way it used to. Di's influence – through the way she lived, her confessional style, her clothes, her reinvention, the causes she espoused – is a reminder that we live in the era of soft rather than hard power, of cultural symbolism rather than institutional fiat.¹⁷

Jacques contends that this form of “soft power” is a late twentieth-century phenomenon, but history indicates that women prior to Diana had accessed and asserted it.

The foibles and failures that Caroline and Diana, as royal wives, played out in the public spotlight increased their popularity to the detriment of their husbands' reputations. They both represented everything that the royal family, reserved and aloof, did not. The royal wives, with the help of the media, brought the royal family “down” to a level that the public could identify. Andrew Adonis compares Diana's popularity to that of Caroline's:

Diana had the appeal of Queen Caroline, the immensely popular estranged wife of George IV. Like Caroline, Diana was the emblem of “us” in the face of “them,” cultivating a persuasive – however misplaced – sense that had been repudiated by “them” because they identified too much with “us.”¹⁸

This public affinity for Caroline, Charlotte and Diana meant that in moments of crisis the

¹⁶See “The Cult of Diana” The Economist, (346 [7] February 1998) 59.

¹⁷Martin Jacques, “Ancient and Modern” New Statesman (10 [469] 5 September 1997) 6.

¹⁸Andrew Adonis, “Tribute to Diana” New Statesman (10 [469] 5 September 1997) 8.

majority of people in Britain backed them completely. For example, since Charlotte's death as a result of complications during childbirth was an experience that had affected many Regency women and their families, her passing was deeply mourned. It also brought public scrutiny to bear on pre- and post-natal care that resulted in the publication of books, outlining the need for reforms, such as W. M. Ireland's An Inquiry into the Most Proper Means to be Adopted in the Management of Lying-in Women: With critical Remarks on the Medical Report, and the Death of Princess Charlotte of Wales (1818).¹⁹

Stephen Behrendt states that,

A traumatic public event like the princess's death provides a dramatic levelling of social and societal strata, one that in this instance furnished fertile ground for writers, publishers, artists, artisans and other commercial entrepreneurs across a broad social, political, economic, and intellectual spectrum.²⁰

Behrendt is speaking here of Charlotte's untimely demise but this princess could easily be replaced by Diana or Caroline.

For Caroline, her divorce trial provided English women with a rallying point to express their outrage over injustices and inequalities all women suffered before the law.²¹ English society in general showed her mass support by protesting in the streets, signing petitions, and accosting conservatives.²² In Diana's case it was her role as mother and as

¹⁹See Stephen C. Behrendt, "Mourning, Myth and Merchandising: The Public Death of Princess Charlotte" in The Death of Princess Charlotte Augustus (1796-1817): A Research Archive (<http://sparc20-1.unixlab.virginia.edu/~ams4k/Charlotte/>): Archived on 3 August 1998.

²⁰Behrendt, "Mourning, Myth and Merchandising."

²¹Adonis, 8.

²²See chapter two for a more complete account of the public demonstrations of support for Caroline.

charity worker that captured the hearts of the public.²³ It was her battle with bulimia and marital problems that shattered the fairytale, but also enabled people to feel affinity for a woman whose life proved as problematic as everyone else's. Although Caroline and Diana were never crowned the public symbolically referred to both as queens after their deaths. When Caroline died she was labelled by her legal representative Henry Brougham and others the "Injured Queen of England."²⁴ Diana after her tragic death in a car accident was heralded by Prime Minister Tony Blair as "The People's Princess" and by the media as the "Queen of Hearts."²⁵

One tangible way in which Diana's immense popularity was translated can be seen through the numerous biographies of her life that followed swiftly after her marriage.²⁶ The Diana craze also heralded a renewed interest in the history of England's royal women in general. The existence of this trend is also readily supported by the plethora of popular biographies and academic scholarship concerning queen-consorts published since 1980.²⁷ For example, royal women like Caroline and Charlotte represent two among

²³Christina Lamb, "Love among the Landmines: How Diana Captured the Most Hard-Bitten" New Statesman (10 [469] 5 September 1997) 9.

²⁴Alison Plowden, Caroline & Charlotte: The Regent's Wife and Daughter 1795-1821 (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1989), 217.

²⁵"The Moderniser" New Statesman, (10 [469] 5 September 1997) 5.

²⁶For a biography of Diana's life see: Mary Clarke, Diana: Once Upon a Time (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1994); Brian Hoey, The New Royal Court (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1990); Penny Junor, Diana, Princess of Wales: A Biography (Sidgwick and Jackson, 1982); Robert Lacey, Princess (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982); Andrew Morton, Diana: Her True Story (London: Michael O'Mara Books, 1992).

²⁷ See Michael De-la-Noy, The Queen Behind the Throne (London: Hutchinson, 1994); David Duff, George and Elizabeth: A Royal Marriage (London: Collin, 1983); Anne Edwards, Matriarch: Queen Mary and the House of Windsor (New York: Morrow, 1984); Erickson Carolly, Mistress Anne (New York:

many who have recently enjoyed a greater recognition in both academic circles and through popular culture.

The majority of historiography deals with early modern or modern royal women, although a few medieval English queens are included.²⁸ Since the 1980s the popular biographies produced by amateur historians echo the organization and approach used by the Victorians. The most mediocre reproduction of this tradition was found in Margot Arnold and Petronelle Cook's Queen Consorts of England. Like the majority of these works, Arnold and Cook do not include any footnotes or biographical references directly in the body of the book. The bibliography cites only a brief list of the secondary sources consulted.²⁹ A disclaimer, reminiscent of those written by nineteenth-century scholars, states that, "Hundreds of Books and Original Sources on England's queens were consulted in compiling this volume, but in the interests of brevity and practicality the books listed here for ongoing study are ones that are most readily available in libraries and bookstores."³⁰ In an excerpt taken from this work, Cook describes Eleanor of Aquitaine's desire to follow her husband on crusade:

Summit Books, 1984); Grania Forbes, My Darling Buffy: The Early Life of the Queen Mother (London: Richard Cohen, 1997); Antonia Fraser, The Lives of the Kings and Queens of England (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) and Antonia Fraser, The Six Wives of Henry VIII (New York: Knopf, 1992).

²⁸For popular biographical compilations of queens see Arnold Margot and Petronelle Cook, Queen Consorts of England The Power Behind the Throne (New York: Facts on File, 1993) and Robert Gray, The King's Wife: Five Queen Consorts (London: Secker and Warburg, 1990). Gray's work includes a biography of Eleanor of Aquitaine. For more academic biographical compilations of early modern and modern royal women see Guida Jackson, Women Who Ruled (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1990) and Louise Olga Fradenburg, ed., Women and Sovereignty (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992).

²⁹Cook, 289-291.

³⁰Cook, 289.

The only snag was that Eleanor insisted on coming along too; she also insisted on bringing along her own troop of female crusaders, all highborn ladies who did not know a longbow from a crossbow. They designed their own uniforms (white tunics embroidered with red crowns and slit at the sides to show scarlet tights and long red leather boots).³¹

Although Eleanor accompanied her first husband on crusade, the rest of the information contained in this passage is fictional. This embellishment was traced back to Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland's Lives of the Queens of England. The Stricklands recounted,

When Queen Eleanora received the cross from St. Bernard at Vezalais, she directly put on the dress of an Amazon and her ladies all actuated by the same frenzy, mounted on horseback, and forming a lightly armed squadron, surrounded the queen when she appeared in public, calling themselves Queen Eleanora's body-guard.³²

Arnold's and Cook's reproduction of this tale illustrates that today's amateur scholars are still very much willing to take as gospel works produced long ago. Published in 1993, this work completely ignores the academic scholarship available concerning Eleanor of Aquitaine.

In contrast, since 1992 professional historians have produced three exceptional biographies focusing on individual queens and one compilation history of archival resources attributed to medieval English queens.³³ This latter form is seen in Anne Crawford's Letters of the Queens of England, 1100-1547. Crawford replicates the work of a nineteenth-century scholar Mary Anne Everett Green by providing translated and

³¹Cook, 30.

³²Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland, The Lives of the Queens of England, 297.

³³A recent biography concerning Berengaria was completed although the level of its academic merit has not yet been determined. See Mairin Mitchell, Berengaria: The Enigmatic Queen of England (Pooks Hill: A. Wright, 1986).

edited letters attributed to queens of England.³⁴ Both these scholars accompanied these letters with brief biographies of the royal women who penned them. Crawford's work is a good starting point for students because she is the first twentieth-century academic to attempt a biographical compilation of queens.³⁵

Others have done the same thing in other ways. This form of historiography has traditionally focused on a select group of medieval English queens that included Eleanor of Aquitaine, Empress Matilda, Eleanor of Castile and Isabella of Angoulême. Scholars focused on these royal women because, being politically active, their historical relevance is assured. Recent contributions by academics to this genre include Marjorie Chibnall's The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother, and Lady of the English (1992); John Carmi Parsons' Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth Century England (1995) and Margaret Howell's Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England (1998).³⁶ Howell's unprecedented biography of Eleanor of Provence is one of the most important recent contribution to the study of queens in England. Due to the freshness of these biographies, an outline is needed.

In 1992 Chibnall produced the first of these academic biographies of queens. She broached her subject, Empress Matilda, as Beriah Botfield did in his study of Eleanor of

³⁴ Anne Crawford, Letters of Queens of England, 1100-1547 (Stroud: A. Sutton, 1994). See also chapter three for an analysis of Green's Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies of Great Britain (London: H. Colburn, 1846).

³⁵ Another good starting point for students interested in medieval English queens is Anne Echols and Marty Williams' Annotated Index of Medieval Women (New York: Markus Wiener Publishing, 1992).

³⁶ Marjorie Chibnall, The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother, and Lady of the English (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Parsons, Eleanor of Castile and Margaret Howell, Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England (Oxford: Malden M. A. Blackwell, 1998).

Castile in the nineteenth century and Elizabeth A. R. Brown did for Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1977.³⁷ Chibnall accomplishes this by emphasizing the momentous political and social occurrences that take place as a result of changes during Matilda's life cycle. In this way the historian interprets Matilda's life through the circumstances that shaped it. First, in a chapter entitled "Great by Birth," Chibnall carefully maps out Matilda's royal lineage and careful upbringing. This is quickly followed by "Greater by Marriage" which concerns her marriage to the German Emperor Henry V and the duties political and social this entailed.³⁸ The bulk of this work details Matilda's personal involvement in her struggle with Stephen over sovereign rule of England. Chibnall's work, therefore, is dedicated to returning Matilda to her proper significance in the civil wars that gripped England during the twelfth century. This approach is useful when examining those queens whose political significance is assured due to the status and circumstances that readily defined their lives. Chibnall succeeds in restoring the significance and scope of Matilda's involvement in the succession crisis that gripped England and affected Western Europe during the Middle Ages. The reader is, however, no closer to experiencing an affinity for Matilda or her life experiences.

Parsons also uses this life cycle approach in his biography of Eleanor of Castile. However, he broadens this examination by comparing and understanding Eleanor in terms of the political and social context that affected her. This is accomplished by describing and providing examples as evidence of the development of queenship during

³⁷For an analysis of Botfield and Brown's work see Chapter 4. For an analysis of the historiography concerning Matilda see the introduction to Chibnall's biography of Matilda. Chibnall, 2-3.

³⁸Chibnall, 29.

the Middle Ages. Parsons then explores how Eleanor's experiences enhance and detract from these generalizations. Lawrance completed a biographical compilation of medieval English queens that included chapters dealing with medieval society more generally.³⁹ As Lawrance explained,

A chapter like the present might, at first sight, appear as only serving to interrupt the current of historical narrative; but, when it is remembered how far more important it is to contemplate whatever can throw light, however, faintly, upon the genuine history of mankind, than merely to trace events in their regular sequence; and how necessary to the correct view of any given period is a knowledge of the social condition of the people, we shall find that we cannot better occupy the interval between the death of Elinor of Castile, and the second marriage of Edward, than by an enquiry into the state of society in England during the period these volumes are intended to illustrate.⁴⁰

In this way Parsons' work mirrors the approach Lawrance used in the nineteenth century.⁴¹

Parsons contends that medieval English Queens by the thirteenth century had their public role and access to official power increasingly constrained. In contrast with Chibnall's narrative biography, Parsons analyzes how Eleanor of Castile created her own power at a time when her status as queen did not assure it.⁴² While none of these women are viewed as passive actors or victims, their success is measured by their ability to exert power or not. To facilitate this approach Parsons broaches Eleanor of Castile's biography thematically. First he examines Eleanor's life, like Chibnall, by analyzing

³⁹See Chapter three for a more in-depth outline of Lawrance's work.

⁴⁰Lawrance, vol. II, 1.

⁴¹Lawrance, Historical Memoirs of the Queens of England.

⁴²Stafford, 3.

changes during her life cycle that affected her political and social role. Parsons emphasizes and compares Eleanor to other queens using such themes as marriage, motherhood, patronage, economic resources, social interests and the favouritism shown to blood relatives.⁴³ This facilitates his main conclusion that though the public role of queens had been increasingly constrained, these royal women could still wield “unofficial” power: “If as a wife the queen was directed to a position of submission and compliance, the potential of the interstices she could seek out was heightened by her informal proximity to the centre of authority.”⁴⁴ This contention is born out in the following chapter entitled “Prerogatives, Resources, Administration” that outlines the financial and administrative bases of Eleanor’s power and how she wielded it.⁴⁵ Parsons explains that Eleanor’s manipulation of family ties and her close proximity to the centre of royal administration facilitated the accumulation of tremendous wealth. As a result Eleanor could then dispense patronage freely, creating bonds that assured her power and influence. Parsons then turns to an analysis of contemporary medieval chroniclers and what they tell us about Eleanor’s character. In his last chapter he provides an historiographical deconstruction of how Eleanor’s reputation evolved since her death. In the end this work paints a very broad picture of Eleanor’s life. While Parsons is to be applauded for attempting such an ambitious work, his all encompassing format tends to

⁴³Parsons, 32.

⁴⁴Parsons, 66.

⁴⁵Parsons, Chapter 2: 69-118.

answer too many questions all at once.⁴⁶ It loses its focus on Eleanor the woman by covering too much ground: biography, queenship, patronage, theory, contemporary views and historiography.

The last and most recent of these contributions is Margaret Howell's thorough investigation of Eleanor of Provence. The first full-length biography of this queen, Howell is perhaps more successful than Parsons at conceptualizing her subject's personal motivations and personality. Like Parsons, Howell remains sensitive toward how Eleanor created and exerted power. Howell provides a much more complex examination because she places Eleanor against a broad understanding of Western European politics. The clearer image of Eleanor's childhood in Provence shows how it influenced the queen's role as wife, mother and queen. This biography conveys a good sense of who Eleanor of Provence was, her accomplishments and failures. Howell combines the approach of both Parsons and Chibnall. First she dedicates a chapter to each of the most significant changes to Eleanor's life cycle: "Childhood, Marriage and Coronation," "The Young Queen," "Queen Regent," and "Queen Mother." The author also includes chapters on the major political events that touched Eleanor's life and in which the queen participated heavily: "Faction," "Revolution," "Reaction," "War," and "A Troubled Peace." Finally, Howell dedicates two "theme" chapters to Eleanor's manipulation of her office and the unofficial power base she created: "Queen's Men and King's Men" and "Queenship: Image, Practice and Resources."

⁴⁶This is especially true of the last chapter which deals with historiography. An early version of this essay is found in John Carmi Parsons, "Legend and Reality: Eleanor of Castile through Seven Centuries" in David Parsons, ed., Eleanor of Castile 1290-1990.

In this study Howell unapologetically emphasizes the political role Eleanor assumed throughout her life as loyal consort to Henry III, as an “affectionate but dominating mother,” and as shameless promoter of her blood relatives.⁴⁷ The close affinity that Howell shows for her subject allows a blurred image of Eleanor of Provence to transcend the ages and finally come into focus. Howell conceptualizes Eleanor of Provence in the following line:

For Eleanor of Provence, personal relationships mattered more than abstract issues. She was normally on good terms with her husband, although there were occasional moments of sharp friction, and the tensions in her relations with her eldest son were at times politically damaging. Even so, a passionate loyalty to the well-being of her family was the strongest motive in her life. Her many friendships meant much to her.⁴⁸

This historian is careful to illustrate the larger political and social ramifications of Eleanor of Provence’s life. The adoption of both a thematic and chronological approach to the biography provides a more complete picture of this medieval woman who was a queen.

Chibnall, Parsons and Howell all emphasize the political significance of each queen’s life. Parsons and Howell illustrate how their Eleanors created as well as accessed power and social influence. In contrast, Chibnall’s biography casts Matilda as gaining power or political significance through her status and circumstances alone. Today’s historians tend to focus on queens depicted in two categories: those whose status and circumstances define them and their access to political power, and those who created their own. Since their inception in the nineteenth century, studies have always

⁴⁷Howell, xviii.

⁴⁸Howell, xviii.

emphasized the medieval queen's impact or influence on politics. Why then have scholars since the 1980's turned to queenship and the power derived or provided by it? If the general public's renewed interest in queen-consorts can be traced to Diana, what events prompted academics to focus on queenship?

Along with Diana's growing public popularity in the 1980's, the United Kingdom experienced a female monarch, Elizabeth II, on its throne simultaneously with its first female Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Since the 1980's a number of politically and socially powerful women openly and successfully stepped into traditional male roles as presidents, prime ministers, heads of states and ministers of war. These women provide explicit examples that shattered stereotypes by revealing women's competency in the public sphere. On the world wide web there are innumerable web sites dedicated to significant women in history, politics and the arts. One interesting site posted in 1996 listed the 100 most powerful women in the world.⁴⁹ The top five women listed in order of appearance include: Benazir Bhutto (Pakistan, 42), Hillary Clinton (US, 48), Queen Elizabeth II (UK, 70), Margaret Thatcher (UK, 70), Alice Mitchell Rivlin, (US, 65). This ability to conceive of women as creating and exerting power has led academics to focus increasingly on queens as women who achieved this.⁵⁰

⁴⁹See The Australian Magazine: The 100 Most Powerful Women in the World (<http://wisdom.psinet.net.au/~lani/100mpw.html>): Archived on 24 July 1998.

⁵⁰See John Carmi Parsons, "Family, Sex and Power: The Rhythms of Medieval Queenship" in Parsons, Medieval Queenship; Margaret Howell, "The Resources of Eleanor of Provence as Queen Consort" English Historical Review 102 [403] April 1987) 372-393; Marjorie Chibnall, "The Empress Matilda and Church Reform" Transaction of the Royal Historical Society Fifth Series (38, 1988) 107-30; Lois Huneycutt, "Images of Queenship in the High Middle Ages" The Haskins Society Journal (1, 1989) 61-71 and Paul Strohm, "Queens as Intercessors" in Hochon's Arrow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

New ways have been developed by scholars to cultivate this interest. In particular, a number of historians have incorporated an anthropological approach to the study of queens. In this way they illustrate how medieval society constructed a public perception of queens and queenship. Crosses erected following the death of Eleanor of Castile have long attracted attention.⁵¹ The romantic notion that Edward I mourned the death of his queen-consort so deeply that he commissioned crosses to commemorate each stop made during her funeral procession persists. Many historians have produced articles examining the significance of the Eleanor crosses both then and now.⁵² The primary purpose of the majority of these works is to illustrate cultural influences affecting medieval society or preceding generations. Thomas Tolley's "Eleanor of Castile and the 'Spanish' Style in England" uses the crosses as a causal link to argue more broadly the impact Eleanor's presence as queen-consort had on the development of art in England:

Even if the case for Spanish influence in the period c. 1250 to c.1300 has been over-emphasised in this paper, enough should have been said to indicate that the presence of a Castilian princess in England certainly had artistic consequences, mostly decorative in character, but also possibly connected with technique. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the crosses Edward I erected to Eleanor's memory have sometimes been considered

⁵¹Doreen Shakesby, "The Crosses of Queen Eleanor" *Medieval History* (3, 1993) 26-29; Thomas Tolley "Eleanor of Castile and the 'Spanish' Style in England" in W. M Ormrod, ed., *England in Thirteenth-Century: Proceedings of the 1989 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford: Watkins, 1991). As well as these essays a full-length work devoted entirely to the Eleanor crosses was also recently published: Jean Powrie, *Eleanor of Castile* (Studly: Brewin Books, 1990).

⁵²In 1990 a conference commemorating Eleanor of Castile's death (1290) was held. David Parsons collected and edited these papers four out of the five deal with the Eleanor crosses. See David Parsons, ed., *Eleanor of Castile 1290-1990: Elizabeth Hallam, "Introduction: The Eleanor Crosses and Royal Burial Customs;" Nicola Coldstream, "The Commissioning and Design of the Eleanor Crosses;" Phillip Lindley, "Romanticizing Reality: The Sculptural Memorials of Queen Eleanor and their Context" and Nicola Smith, "Appendix: A Note on the Conservation of the Geddington Cross."*

to mark the beginning of a new style, the Decorated.⁵³

Tolley provides as evidence a brief outline of Eleanor's cultural and recreational pursuits that he links them to the patronage she showed her fellow Spaniards, thereby showing how Eleanor's presence allowed for the influx of new artistic trends in England.⁵⁴

In one of the most recent and intriguing articles concerning Eleanor of Castile's death, John Carmi Parsons examines the burial of medieval English queens.⁵⁵ Parsons explains that the facts supplied by chroniclers concerning queens' burials remain scanty until Eleanor of Castile's lavish funeral in 1290.⁵⁶ The contention is that kings and queens gained an equality only in death through their comparably lavish burial ceremonies that provided a "monumental legitimization of monarchy."⁵⁷

But I suggest here that kingship's genetic continuity would be made unmistakably clear to observers only when the king's wife was monumentalised and commemorated: links between royal generations would be clearly manifest only upon visualisation of the conjugal and biogenetic factors a queen alone could (literally) embody. It would follow that monumental evocation of a queen next to or near the king, with the implied emphasis on her dynastic motherhood, would afford her (or her successors) means to assert that maternity as a virtually unchallengeable claim to power....Scrutiny of queens' tombs and their representation of the deceased may thus tell us something about queens' collective awareness of their office, or even of their self-image.⁵⁸

⁵³Tolley, 192.

⁵⁴Tolley, 172.

⁵⁵John Carmi Parsons, "'Never was a body buried in England with such solemnity and honour': The Burials and Posthumous Commemorations of English Queens to 1500" in Anne J. Duggan, ed., Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997), 317-337.

⁵⁶Parsons, "The Burial of English Queens," 323.

⁵⁷Parsons, "The Burials of English Queens," 325.

⁵⁸Parsons, "The Burials of English Queens," 326.

Parsons pays particular attention to Eleanor of Castile's elaborate funeral service and explains the symbolic meaning of her tomb which lies in Westminster Abbey. Evidence of the active participation by royal women in planning their funerals illustrates a conscious effort by the majority of queens to display their ancestral lineage. Royal women also enhanced and glorified their own office by attending the commemoration services of their predecessors.⁵⁹ Parsons concludes that in these ways royal women consciously laid claim to a "distinct queenly identity" that they helped perpetuate and develop.

In a similar effort Elizabeth Danbury's "Images of English Queens in the Later Middle Ages" examines the representation of queens in art and architecture.⁶⁰ Danbury uses an examination of the iconography of medieval English queens to help determine how medieval society perceived the role of queen-consorts.⁶¹ Danbury attempts to achieve this by examining the extant medieval images and symbols of queenship such as wax death masks, the queen's seal, manuscript illuminations, statutes and the few remaining paintings. She concludes that,

First, there is the dominance, over a long period, of the image of queenship found in seals, statues and effigies. This representation features a dignified, distant, standing, crowned and sceptred figure: one which has more in common with the ideals of heavenly sainthood than of earthly power. Second, there is the comparative lack, especially in comparison with French art, of the queens as figures wielding real authority and

⁵⁹Parsons, "The Burials of English Queens," 331.

⁶⁰Elizabeth Danbury, "Images of English Queens in the Later Middle Ages" *Historian* (46, 1995) 3-9.

⁶¹Danbury, 3.

power.⁶²

Danbury contends that medieval society intentionally depicted queens as appendages of the household who held no official or recognized power. It is significant here that the two examples of alternative methods of analysis provided by Danbury and Tolley, who use art history as a medium, attempt to examine the influence or power medieval English queens held.

Contemporary scholars are intent upon examining how queens exerted power without attempting to define such an ambiguous term. In response to this omission, scholars have collaborated to produce full-length works that broach the conceptualization of power and theories of power. These works concern medieval as well as early modern queens and queenship: Louise Olga Fradenburg, Women and Sovereignty (1992); John Carmi Parsons, Medieval Queenship (1993), Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean, Power of The Weak: Studies on Medieval Women (1995), and Anne J. Duggan, Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe (1997).⁶³ The analysis of these works will only take into consideration those essays included that deal specifically with medieval English queens.

Two approaches most readily describe the most significant ways of broaching this area of inquiry. The first and most common is a macro approach that attempts to form generalizations concerning the growth, restriction and redirection of the queen's power

⁶²Danbury, 9.

⁶³Fradenburg, Women and Sovereignty; Parsons, Medieval Queenship; Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean, eds., Power of The Weak: Studies on Medieval Women (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995) and Duggan, Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe.

during the Middle Ages . This approach is exemplified by the work of John Carmi Parsons and others who alter the conception of separate spheres to help determine the ambiguous position of queens. The majority of these scholars contend that as the royal administration bureaucratized, the queens' direct role in government became increasingly curtailed. During the Middle Ages when public power was held in private hands by the noble and royal families, the close proximity of the royal family to the centre of power allowed queens to unofficially use their status, wealth and familial ties to intercede or influence people and political occurrences. These scholars then provide specific examples of queens accessing this "unofficial power" to realize their will over dynastic and Western European politics.

The second approach to this problem adds explicit definitions. The best example of this approach is found in Pauline Stafford's 'Emma: The Powers of the Queen in the Eleventh Century.'⁶⁴ Stafford first quantifies the fluctuation of the power available to Emma as a result of changes during her life cycle as wife, mother, queen and widow.⁶⁵ Defining different forms of power and how they are used affords Stafford a much more sophisticated and in-depth understanding of power's ambiguities and complexities.

Queenly power, she writes,

is paradoxical because it combines the roles of mother, wife, mistress of the household, and the relationships of each to the physical body of the king, with an official role. It must be studied in relation to changing notions of motherhood, wifely activity, the household/domestic domain, family structures, as well as to notions of office and the state, the

⁶⁴Pauline Stafford, "Emma: The Powers of the Queen in the Eleventh Century" in Duggan, Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe.

⁶⁵Stafford, 22.

structure of the court and the household, and to the nature of power.⁶⁶

As the first to incorporate not only a definition of power but the forms in which it appears, Stafford goes beyond simply describing how queens accessed authority and exerted it.

Stafford's study heralds a more inclusive and encompassing analysis with which to uncover the complexities of administrations of queenship.⁶⁷ Historians now attempt to link gender to power through the acceptance of a new social theory of power.⁶⁸ This theory views power as stemming from human interaction⁶⁹ and that it comes in more varied forms than simply political or economic.⁷⁰ The study of human interaction is, therefore, the basis of the examination of forms of power used by men, women and/or social groups.

Who holds power and who does not represents a timeless question pursued by scholars in both the humanities and social sciences. This fascination reflects the current approach by professional historians. In the 1800's historians interested in these royal women viewed them in relation to their close proximity to the centre of "political power"

⁶⁶Stafford, 22.

⁶⁷Karin Klenke, Women and Leadership A Contextual Perspective, (New York: Springer Publishing Company Inc., 1996), 26.

⁶⁸Bhikhu Parekh ed., Contemporary Political Theory (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1982), 10; H. Loraine Radtke and Henderikus J. Stam, eds., Power and Gender: Social Relations in Theory and Practice (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 1, and Linda Molm, "Gender, Power and Legitimation: A Test of Three Theories" American Journal of Sociology 91 [6] May 1986) 1357.

⁶⁹Wartenberg, The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation, 3.

⁷⁰Wartenberg, 3.

in society. The implicit understanding was that since they were placed in a position that enabled them to influence politics, the significance of queens to history is assured. By the 1980's these assumptions became more readily entrenched and legitimized through the growing scholarship that increasingly focused on the offices and appointments derived from queenship. As a result, the historiography is marked by an overall continuity of perception of queens as political figures. As a result, those who are powerful get more attention than those who are not. Historians need to fill the gap currently occupied by the popularizers.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

A broad examination of the historiography of medieval English queens published since 1821 has revealed many insights into the ways in which both popular and scholarly history have conformed to trends. In terms of periodization this thesis has uncovered four major time periods. Following in chronological order, these chapters have delineated why interest in the study first emerged and then reemerged during the last two centuries. It has also provided information on who the first scholars producing histories of queens were and what their significance was. Finally, the two types of historiography that have dominated the study since its inception and the correlation between them has been recognized.

The main function of the first part of this thesis was to determine how, when and why the study of medieval English queens emerged. The examination of eighteenth and nineteenth-century English women's participation in public life illustrated their increasing willingness to traverse into designated male spheres of influence. When English society saw royal women paraded before them in words through the media's coverage of the lives of Princess Charlotte and Caroline this catalyst set off interest in the subject. Charlotte was presented as a romanticized and idealized image of who these royal women should represent. In contrast, her mother Caroline provided evidence of the social influence these royal wives could yield. Caroline's legal problems also triggered interest in the ambiguous nature of the office of the queen that facilitated wildly varying interpretations. The whole concept of queenship, as well as its legal, civil and economic

ramifications were clearly ill-defined. As a result, some scholars provided evidence of past queens who wielded tremendous wealth, social influence, and political power through their titles. Others recognized the precarious situation where these royal women were dependent on the cultivation of family and administrative ties to bolster their social and political position. These contradictory interpretations highlighted the ambiguous nature of queenship and how it varied depending on the capabilities of specific queens and when they lived. It was determined then that from approximately the mid-eighteenth century a feminine awakening and medieval revival triggered interest in the history of queens. Interest was fully realized when female scholars began producing popular biographies of queens from the 1820's up until the turn of the century.

This thesis illustrated how several professional women writers took advantage of the popularity of Britain's Queen Victoria to develop a niche for themselves in the form of histories of queens. Nineteenth-century English society struggled socially, politically and culturally because it perceived women's role as limited to the private sphere. Victorian society maintained this belief despite a rising feminine consciousness that women -- especially those who needed to work to support themselves and their families - - had always existed and had worked in both the private and public spheres. One way these female scholars, primarily from middle class backgrounds, challenged the hypocritical nature of society was through their biographies of queens. This medium allowed these women the freedom to judge the actions of queens in either a positive or negative light. Each of these scholars emphasized how individual queens stepped out of the private sphere and personally influenced or actively intervened in military, economic,

social and political affairs. Unable or unwilling to openly discuss women's contradictory role in society, these scholars used historical authority as evidence to broaden the traditional role of women without directly refuting the status quo. These women created a craze for biographies of royal women that initiated a continuing interest. By popularizing women's history these authors provided evidence of the wider range of female capabilities than Victorian society had thus far acknowledged. This implicit female propaganda used historical authority to argue for women's greater civil and legal rights. By the turn of the century the popularity of these histories waned as historians and society turned to seemingly more pressing issues such as the formation of nation-states, kingship, economic and social history.

With the professionalization of history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the discipline acquired a new sense of self and recognition. As a result, a new and largely male group of "professional historians" claimed the study of queens as well as kings. The majority of the latter histories omitted the role of queens entirely from their narratives or limited the discussion of them to the political significance of royal marriages. In contrast, coronation histories required an examination of royal governments and the offices of the kings and queens. In regard to queenship, historians placed the greatest emphasis on the queens' ritual and symbolic meaning. Like that of Victorian women, the role of queens was interpreted to be a singularly passive phenomenon, significant in the public sphere based on its symbolic value. This limited view denied the substantial achievements attained by queens that preceding female scholars had taken great pains to document. This fourth chapter also illustrated that,

prior to the 1980's, academic precursors to the study of queenship published articles dedicated to using archival material to illustrate specific times when royal women influenced history.

The most recent popular historiography of queens reflected another medieval revival and the appearance of Diana as the wife of the future king. This stagnant area of the history of queens recreated many of the same historical fallacies produced by the Victorians. A female monarch on the throne and the first female Prime Minister in Britain helped a generation more readily believe in the ability of women to exert political power and social influence. Academics also readily incorporated this idea by producing increasingly sophisticated essays and journal articles as well as more recent full length works dealing with female forms of power and how gender relations can contribute to an understanding of them. While the popularity of biographies of queens is assured, academics continue to place the cart before the horse. The general public reads inaccurate biographies of queens while the academic world creates increasingly inaccessible scholarship that focuses primarily on interpreting female forms of power. It is then recognized that two strains of historiography still predominate: popular biographies and articles that delve into the office through an examination of specific strands of archival material. To redress this problem academics need to produce biographies of queens that rectify historical fallacies.

Some historians might argue that because the study of queenship continues, an analysis of its historiography is premature. In contrast, this thesis has illustrated the continuity that exists between the study of queens that emerged in the nineteenth century

and that of queenship in the 1980's. Today's scholars too quickly invoke Strickland as the most perfect example of all that is wrong with Victorian scholarship. By doing this they disregard the breadth of approach, organization and interpretation of serious work that they fail to acknowledge. The primary aim of this thesis is to reveal the debt owed by historians to those Victorian scholars whose groundbreaking work laid the foundation and blazed a trail.

Appendix 1

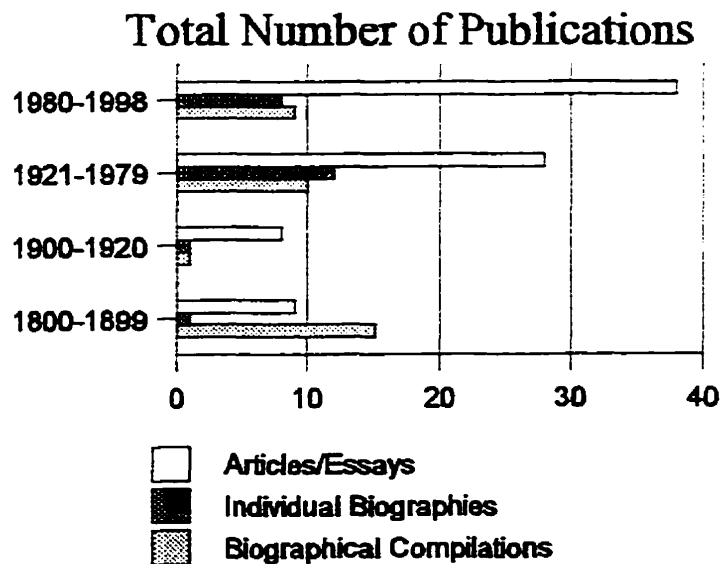
Table 1
Histories Published by Women

	1800-1899	1900-1920	1921-1979	1980-1998
Biographical Compilations	11	0	6	5
Individual Biographies	0	1	5	3
Articles/Essays	0	1	10	19

Table 2
Histories Published by Men

	1800-1899	1900-1920	1921-1979	1980-1998
Biographical Compilations	4	1	4	4
Individual Biographies	1	0	7	5
Articles/Essays	9	7	18	19

Chart 1



APPENDIX 2

(*) An asterix appears before the histories of medieval English queens not located

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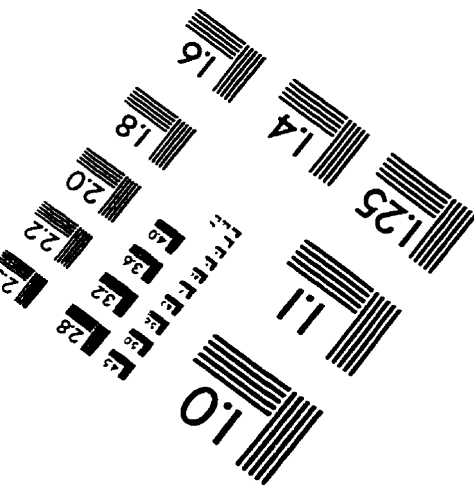
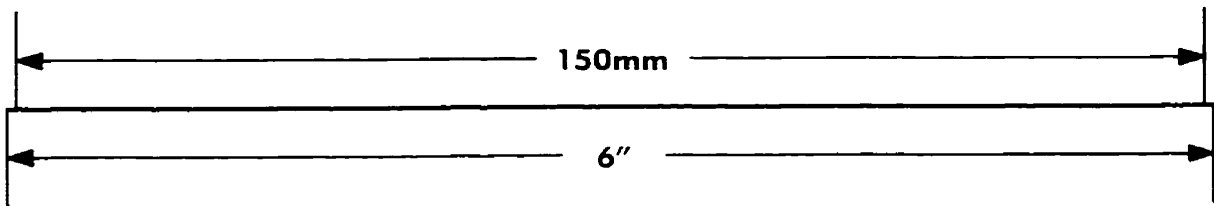
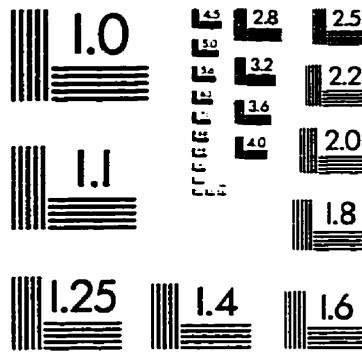
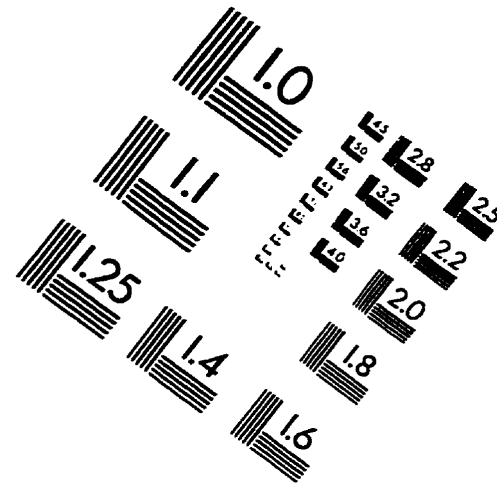
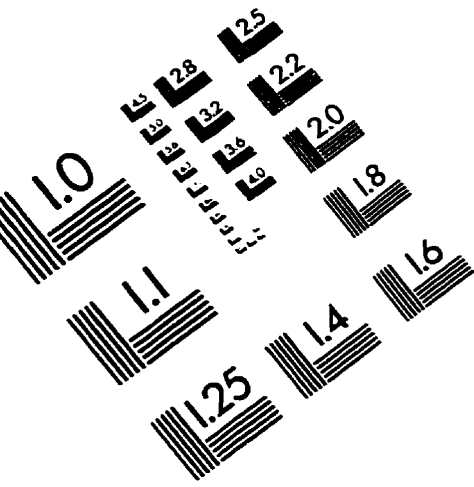
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