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*The 2022 Royal Studies Journal and
Winchester University Press
Biennial Book Prize*

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The 2022 *Royal Studies Journal* and Winchester University Press Biennial Book Prize Report

Once again, I have the very great pleasure to announce in print the winner of the *Royal Studies Journal* and the University of Winchester Biennial Book Prize for 2022. The past two years of living and working “covidly” have not only presented many of us with personal and professional challenges but also demonstrated just how productive and creative our scholars can be even under the many pressures wrought by the recent global pandemic. Moreover, to reiterate the sentiments I expressed last year when announcing the *Royal Studies Journal* and Winchester University Press Biennial Postgraduate/Early Career Scholar Article Prize for 2021, the expert readers of our nominations who continue to give so much of their precious time and scholarly expertise to ensure the success of our awards each year must be thanked unreservedly for their continuing generosity in ensuring the ongoing development, expansion, and visibility of royal and monarchical studies, particularly in these most challenging times.

After two years of conducting our Royal Studies Network conferences virtually, many of us were able to attend our Kings and Queens eleventh annual conference in person, hosted by the Université de Nantes (now Nantes University) and organized meticulously in hybrid form by Professor Françoise Le Jeune and her team. As a result, I was thrilled and honoured to announce the winner of this year’s book prize in the magnificent surroundings of the Nantes Town Hall in the presence of conference organizers and delegates as well as the mayor of Nantes, Mme. Johanna Rolland, who generously welcomed conference delegates with a cocktail reception.

Many of the nominations for this year’s book prize award were developed and written during the isolating years of the pandemic. It is a testament to all our nominees that they have produced work of such expertise and scholarly merit “under fire.” This year we received ten fantastic nominations with subjects ranging from studies of thirteenth-century rhetorical strategies of English government via its epistolary communications to the bourgeois royalist and Catholic journalist, Pierre-Sébastien Laurentie, working for the revival of his movement through the press in post-revolutionary France. Other topics included: the politics and piety of the seventeenth-century Spanish monarchy; monarchy and print culture in early modern England; medieval kingship in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castile; women and economic power in premodern royal courts; deposing monarchs and state formation in the early modern period; gift-book exchanges between Tudor princesses; and a comparative study of four second sons in early modern French monarchy. Engaging, thought-provoking, and durable studies all, and yet we would love to see even more diversity in topics covering global royal and monarchical studies in future prize campaigns. So, spread the word amongst your international colleagues and collaborators!

Once again, to assist the prize jury in coming to a well-informed and objective decision from such a competitive stable of potential winning nominations, we recruited a panel of more than thirty peer reviewers to give us the benefit of their specific experience and targeted scholarly expertise. The unreserved goodwill of our international colleagues

drawn from multiple fields of research interest and disciplines continues to amaze us—especially in the troubling and difficult times from which many of us are still slowly emerging. Without their valuable and precious input, the award and continued integrity of our prizes would be difficult to maintain. Collectively, and without exception, our distinguished external readers took considerable time and care over their reviews, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each nomination in significant detail.

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

👑 Estelle Berthereau, *La fabrique politique du journal. Pierre-Sébastien Laurentie, un anti moderne au temps de Balzac* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2021);

👑 Kathleen Neal, *The Letters of Edward I: Political Communication in the Thirteenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2021); and

👑 Jonathan Spangler, *Monsieur. Second Sons in the Monarchy of France, 1550-1800* (London & New York: Routledge, 2022).

We commend these wonderful books to you for their innovative research in the field of royal and monarchical studies and thank their authors whole-heartedly for putting forward their nominations for this year's biennial Book Prize. Ultimately, after considerable reflection and careful additional rereading of these three finalists, the jury came to its hard-won decision in ascending order:

👑 **Honourable Mention:** Estelle Berthereau for *La fabrique politique du journal. Pierre-Sébastien Laurentie, un anti moderne au temps de Balzac*;

👑 **Highly Commended:** Kathleen Neal for *The Letters of Edward I: Political Communication in the Thirteenth Century*;

👑 **The Winner of the 2022 Royal Studies Journal Book Prize in association with Winchester University Press:** Jonathan Spangler for *Monsieur. Second Sons in the Monarchy of France, 1550-1800*. Congratulations Jonathan!

The expert and highly distinguished external readers of Jonathan's prize-winning nomination had this to say about his book:

Reader 1:

Jonathan Spangler's Monsieur—a comparative study of four younger brothers of French kings over a 200+ year span—is an immensely learned and carefully crafted work which will be of great value for decades to come for historians of royalty, princely courts, historic high culture, and early modern politics and government ... it really is a very hard act to pull off a book that spans around 250 years, and provides comparisons with earlier periods and with contemporaneous early modern royal brothers elsewhere in Europe, and to do it as well and as accurately as Spangler has ... it is very elegantly written, making it that rare thing: in effect it is a monograph but one that is very accessible to educated readers with some background understanding of early modern France ... Does it succeed? Triumphantly so, and no reader could finish this book without appreciating that through the era in which absolute monarchy was at its apogee the French monarchy in fact remained in spirit—and in certain regards, usually behind the scenes, in practice too—a “corporate family monarchy” ... This is a book I knew needed to be written 25 years ago, 10 years ago, 5 years ago, and yet has only now been achieved ... I can therefore think of no better way to conclude this review than by saying it is a book I would have been proud to have written myself.

Reader 2:

The book is more than the sum of its parts. It does indeed provide an interesting study of second sons; their circumstances and roles in their elder brother's monarchy and the politics of their reigns. It elucidates the arrangements of their respective households and the patterns of their intellectual and architectural/artistic patronage ... It also helps to survey the hinterland between the institution of monarchy and the wider nobility; a space that 'Monsieur' habitually occupied—for good or ill ... it makes a contribution to our understanding of the French nobility more widely and shows the connections between noble families within France and well beyond—rather as Jonathan does well in his other publications ... A model of comparative history-writing that also draws together a substantial amount of primary source material that is usually deployed in other contexts, providing a useful synthesis of those sources and showing how they can be used to inform new areas of enquiry and research.

In 2023, to shed light upon excellence in new research from postgraduate students and early career scholars, we will award our biennial Postgraduate and Early Career Researcher Article Prize for the best published or unpublished article or book chapter in the field of royal and/or monarchical studies. The nominations will need to have been published or authored between 2020–2023 (prior to the nomination deadline of 1 March 2023).

Launched in June 2015 as an annual prize, the *Royal Studies Journal* Postgraduate/Early Career Researcher Article Prize is awarded now biennially to a current postgraduate or early career researcher (either working towards a higher degree or within five years of its award at the time of nomination) for the best published or unpublished scholarly article-length work (approx. 5,000–10,000 words) based on original research. The *Royal Studies Journal* and the

prize co-sponsor, Winchester University Press (WUP), are committed to assisting, encouraging, and supporting the career development of postgraduate and early career researchers in a highly competitive professional research environment. The prize purse for 2023 is valued at £100 and will be awarded officially at the Kings and Queens 12 conference to be held in Uppsala, Sweden 28-30 June 2023.

In closing, I urge all of you to call upon your diverse and extended social and scholarly networks to publicize our biennial prize campaigns. The work of all scholars, regardless of career stage, beavering away in their respective scriptoria and institutions, needs our combined support and encouragement, and we need their fresh insights and ideas if we are to continue to nurture and encourage both new and established talent in the wide-ranging and burgeoning field of royal and monarchical studies. Do please spread the word to your colleagues and collaborators of our forthcoming 2023 Biennial Postgraduate and Early Career Researcher Article Prize. Full particulars as well as nomination forms will be available soon on our *Royal Studies Journal* and Royal Studies Network websites and via links on our social media platforms.