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# Queens Consort, Gender and Diplomacy: Catherine of Aragon, Claude of France and the Field of Cloth of Gold

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## ABSTRACT

In 1520, two queens consort, Catherine of Aragon and Claude of France, attended the event now known as the Field of Cloth of Gold. This article analyses representations of their involvement across three sources; contemporary diplomatic correspondence and two later sources, Edward Hall's *Chronicle* (1548 and 1550) and the Hampton Court Palace painting of the Field (c. 1545). It examines how the producers of these sources shaped the function of the consort according to their own motivations, genre and the context of their own time. It argues that each source acknowledges the consorts as important to the event's success, but that while contemporary letters represent Catherine and Claude as individuals, the later sources exhibit shifting narratives to focus on the trope of ideal queenship. A similar shift was not apparent for kingship. This comparison of contemporary and later depictions of the consorts reveals a gendered reshaping of their role at the Field across time according to the needs of the creators which, in turn, sheds light on understandings of queenship and diplomatic engagement in early modern England.

On 9 June 1520, Catherine of Aragon (1485–1536) and Claude of France (1499–1524) stood 'with many ladies' to watch their respective husbands, Henry VIII, king of England (1491–1547) and Francis I, king of France (1494–1547), set their shields upon two trees of honour in a field in English-held territory in northern France.<sup>1</sup> This ceremony marked the beginning of the event now known as the Field of Cloth of Gold. It had been orchestrated to ratify the 1518 Treaty of London which sought to ally England and France through the marriage of Catherine and Henry's daughter, Mary (1516–1558), to Francis, the French dauphin (1518–1536). It also signalled a direct intervention in the Habsburg–Valois conflicts, also known as the Italian Wars (1494–1559).

Writers of contemporary diplomatic correspondence featured the two queens consort as central to the planning, whether describing their bodies as producers of heirs or noting their capacity for direct diplomatic intervention. The above description from Edward Hall's *Chronicle* (1548 and 1550) depicts the consorts as observers. The unknown artist (or artists) responsible for the Hampton Court Palace painting of the Field (c.1545) portrays royal women presiding over the tournament and entertaining at banquets. There is, however, a lack of scholarship on the broader context of these

sources with attention to the consorts. This article analyses a selection of contemporary diplomatic correspondence in the months prior to the Field (either sent to the English court or with an English subject), Hall's account of the Field and the Hampton Court Palace painting. These sources are Anglo-centric in focus, facilitating the tracing of changes in English perceptions of queenship. The article examines how writers of diplomatic correspondence, Hall and the artist represented the consorts as participants in this diplomatic event and, in doing so, shows how a close reading of these contemporary and later representations adds to existing understandings of queenship, gender and diplomacy in this period.

Catherine and Claude were each more illustrious in their claim to the utmost rank for their sex than Henry or Francis, neither of whom had a clear path to kingship from birth. Catherine was the youngest daughter of Isabel of Castile (1451–1504) and Ferdinand of Spain (1452–1516), whereas Claude was the daughter of a French queen, Anne of Brittany (1477–1514), and a French king, Louis XII (1462–1515). Michelle Beer argues: 'In all likelihood, Catherine would never have known a period in her life when she was not destined to become queen of England'.<sup>2</sup> Claude was raised with similarly high marital expectations. Anne had no surviving sons and if not for Salic Law, Claude ought to have been queen in her own right. As it was, as the eldest daughter she was heir presumptive to the valuable duchy of Brittany.

The Field marked another stage in the Habsburg–Valois conflicts, which began in 1494 with French efforts to claim the kingdom of Naples from the Aragonese and continued until the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis was signed in 1559. Catherine and Claude's families were about to be joined by a marital bond, yet the betrothal brought Catherine's natal and marital allegiances into conflict as the newly elected Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V (1500–1558), was her Habsburg nephew.<sup>3</sup> A Valois marriage would formally align England with France when Charles and Francis were rivals. Catherine and Claude had each been raised to perform as powerful political agents and their diplomatic skills, practised through the display of learnt qualities such as conversation, deportment and hospitality, would be required on a grand scale if the marriage were to proceed. For Catherine and the Tudors, the marriage could secure a Tudor–Valois alliance; the danger lay in jeopardising the existing Tudor–Habsburg one. Catherine and Claude's diplomatic performances at the Field would be critical in advancing towards a resolution in these dynastic conflicts.

Over fifty years ago, Garrett Mattingly's key work on Renaissance diplomacy, predominantly concerning the rise of (mostly) male ambassadors, was published.<sup>4</sup> Recent years have witnessed increased interest in this field, with notable collections shifting women from the periphery to the centre, often through analysing the significant roles played by royal and elite women as diplomatic agents and counsellors.<sup>5</sup> Much of this work directly addresses intersections between gender and power, often exploring women's opportunities to act as agents for change in the political arena, understood here as spanning the intertwined realms of dynastic, national and international affairs.<sup>6</sup> This approach has long been utilised by scholars of queenship studies and, more recently, royal studies.<sup>7</sup> Scholarship on medieval English queenship, for example, has shown how a foreign-born queen might exploit her natal heritage and operate beyond gender norms to her political advantage.<sup>8</sup> The 'international' scope of a queen's political agency, 'thanks to the dynastic interests and international networks

that a foreign-born consort brought to her husband's court', has also been established.<sup>9</sup> Scholars have also recognised the fertility potential of queens and their capacity 'as agents of diplomatic change'.<sup>10</sup> Diplomacy, in this context, encompasses many paths to power. Although other collections productively explore early modern royal women and their engagement in the political and diplomatic realms, there remains much to discover about how these women might be represented as operating through gendered expectations of behaviour during this period.<sup>11</sup>

Historians have not tended to feature Catherine and Claude as significant political agents of their time in quite the same way as other royal women of this period. Mattingly's biography of Catherine and Sharon Jansen's work on early modern European female rulers are exceptions, with each devoting some consideration to Catherine's diplomatic efforts.<sup>12</sup> More recently, Beer's work on Catherine's queenship makes a significant intervention, with her comparative study of Catherine and Margaret Tudor demonstrating their political agency and power, especially as expressed through display and performance.<sup>13</sup> Theresa Earenfight also offers valuable contributions, exploring the early years of Catherine's household and also demonstrating how Catherine's footwear choices expressed her ability to work within gendered expectations of display and performance by using material objects to establish networks of power and demonstrate her allegiances.<sup>14</sup> For Claude, Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier argues for the queen consort's 'major role' at the Field and, more generally, her ability to carve out spaces of agency to promote religious reform and political intervention.<sup>15</sup> However, Claude remains overshadowed by Louise of Savoy (1476–1531), her influential mother-in-law, Francis's mistress, Anne de Pisseleu (1508–c.1580) and her sister-in-law, Marguerite, duchess of Alençon, later Marguerite de Navarre.<sup>16</sup> As this article brings Catherine and Claude together to examine their representation at a particular historical moment, it confirms their status as undoubtably important diplomatic and political figures of this period, despite varied sixteenth-century representations of their activities at the Field. This approach contributes to existing scholarship on royal and elite women who wielded political and diplomatic power during this period and serves as a reminder of how women, even queens consort, might become overshadowed in historical records

Female influence over the trajectory of the Wars took multiple forms. As scholarship recognises the role of early modern royal women as political agents, some of the most illuminating work draws on the relationship between gender, politics and power. However, there is an absence of scholarship on how queenship at a particular moment might be represented differently across sources over time, and especially the myriad forms of female power. This matters for Catherine and Claude, not least because such sources have informed understandings of their political agency and early modern queenship.

Despite the presence of two illustrious queens consort, scholarship concerning women and the Field is scant.<sup>17</sup> Glenn Richardson's comprehensive analysis of the Field provides valuable critical background for this article, although sustained discussion of Catherine and Claude falls outside the scope of his enquiry.<sup>18</sup> Other scholars have explored Catherine and her sister-in-law, Mary Tudor (1496–1533), at the Field within larger studies.<sup>19</sup> Their work demonstrates that contemporaries and later Tudor writers ascribed significant levels of symbolic and political capital to royal women

and were shaping a form of Tudor queenship attentive to broader contexts of genre and period. It also sets a historiographical context for this analysis.

This article examines gendered representations of the queens consort and the Field within a small set of contemporary and later sources. It is divided into three sections, according to creators and their sources. I read these sources as ‘gendered representations’, meaning that societal expectations based on biological sex informed how the queens consort were represented as participating in this event, focusing on their power to influence the meeting and their role as diplomatic agents.<sup>20</sup> The first section analyses a small group of letters by diplomats and courtiers in which the power of the queens consort and their capacity to enhance the diplomatic clout of their respective king is acknowledged.<sup>21</sup> The second section explores how Hall, an English chronicler writing in the later stages of Henry’s reign, represented the two queens consort in his *Chronicle*.<sup>22</sup> Hall’s motivations are significant, particularly as the *Chronicle* is the main English account of Field and features in most historiography on the subject.<sup>23</sup> Although Hall does not discount the capacity of the queens consort to shape diplomacy, he foregrounds the centrality of Henry and Francis. The third section explores how queenship was portrayed by the artist of the Hampton Court Palace painting, roughly contemporaneous with the publication of the *Chronicle*. In this example, Henry’s kingship is celebrated and, although royal women are portrayed as engaged in diplomatic work, their depiction is heavily influenced by established gendered ideologies of appropriate female political engagement.

There are notable methodological benefits in comparing representations of Catherine and Claude across genres. The focus on two women at one event across sources rather than, for example, a group of women across time within one source eliminates a range of other variables in interpretation. The value of an individual-based, cross-genre method of enquiry for gender and political history has been proven. For example, Allison Machlis Meyer’s recent work on chronicle representations of English queenship from the fourteenth to sixteenth century examines early modern dramatic adaptations, whereas Gail Orgelfinger traces depictions of Joan of Arc in contemporary documents, chronicles, plays and artistic sources over four centuries.<sup>24</sup> Both Meyer and Orgelfinger connect shifting representations of their female case studies with changes in English national consciousness and understandings of women and power, themes also central to this article. In light of these recent contributions, this analysis enters a vibrant scholarly conversation. It illustrates that early modern queenship was understood across these sources as a critical element of successful kingship that could incorporate varying depictions, allowing the erasure of an individual without the erasure of the construct.<sup>25</sup> The chronological span of these sources is less than three decades, starkly demonstrating how quickly such transitions could occur. Although restricting this analysis to two consorts at one moment in time enhances understandings of Catherine and Claude’s roles at the Field and broader scholarship on early modern queenship, it does not address whether letters, chronicles or paintings may or may not represent a queen consort differently at any other time. Although a longitudinal study of these sources could potentially yield significant results in this area, it is outside the bounds of this article.

The idea of the erasure of an individual for the promotion of a concept formed the impetus for this article. Among these sources, the letters are most pronounced in

representing Catherine and Claude as individuals. This is unsurprising, as the writers operated in the same circles as Catherine and Claude; if unknown to them personally, they knew of them. Why then, have Catherine and Claude's roles at the Field been neglected, despite extant contemporary correspondence confirming their importance? This article suggests that the absence of attention given to the significance of the queens consort at the Field is due to the predominance of Hall's *Chronicle* and the painting as favoured historical sources for the event. Problematically, these sources are retrospective and refashion these women into a more idealised vision of queenship at the expense of their individual capacities for effective diplomacy.

As this article analyses the queens consort across these sources, it is possible to gauge how their creators thought about gender, royal women, and their capacity to participate in inherently political diplomatic events. Although women were not always central to these sources, they were always present. Furthermore, this article argues that each source acknowledges the queens consort as critical to the success of the Field. However, changes at the Tudor court meant that the later sources exhibited shifting narratives of queenship. Specifically, the creators of the two sources dating from the 1540s focused on the trope of ideal queenship, rather than Catherine and Claude as individuals. They did not do the same for Henry, Francis and kingship. A reading sensitive to each source's specificity and context sheds light on expectations of queenship and how it was understood through contemporary gender ideologies, and especially the queens consort ability to participate in politics through diplomacy.

### Diplomats, courtiers and diplomatic correspondence

This section examines seven letters from diplomatic personnel and courtiers concerning preparations for the Field. These letters are within the collection known as the *State Papers* and the *Letters and Papers* of Henry VIII's reign, published in the early-twentieth century. Following their publication, scholars began to utilise these sources in studies of Tudor politics and diplomacy. As predominantly male-authored correspondence, they have mainly featured in scholarship about men.<sup>26</sup> The seven letters span November 1519 to April 1520.<sup>27</sup> Henry's lord chancellor, Thomas, Cardinal Wolsey, procurator of the event, is the recipient of six of the seven letters, all of which emanate from the French court.<sup>28</sup> Two are sent by Thomas Boleyn, three by Richard Wingfield, and one by Guillaume Gouffier, Admiral Bonnavet.<sup>29</sup> The seventh letter, from Jehan De la Sauch, secretary to Margaret of Austria (1480–1530), provides a Habsburg perspective on the English court.<sup>30</sup> The recipient is Guillaume de Croy, seigneur de Chièvres, adviser to Charles V.<sup>31</sup> The male diplomats and courtiers writing these letters highlight certain qualities of the queens consort. Once these qualities are identified, it is possible to recognise how correspondents worked through existing societal expectations of gender and the consequences of their doing so. As the correspondents represented the queens consort in writing, they participated in the construction of a version of queenship foregrounding the individual qualities of these women.<sup>32</sup>

These letters are part of a longer story of English–European relations and the writers drew on established gendered performances of power, masculinity and conquest that shaped events of the past century.<sup>33</sup> These missives confirm that each court understood that Henry and Francis needed their queen consort at the Field and that letter

writers used Catherine and Claude as critical points of distinction when inevitable comparisons were made between the two men.

Henry became king and married Catherine in 1509, making him the first English king to take a foreign bride since Henry VI married Margaret of Anjou (1430–1482) in 1445.<sup>34</sup> Francis married Claude, Duchess of Brittany, in 1514 and became king in 1515, bringing Brittany under the rule of the French crown. Claude was previously engaged to Charles V in a child betrothal, meaning Francis shored up his claim to the French throne through the acquisition of Claude (and Brittany) and amplified the Habsburg loss.<sup>35</sup> Claude, pregnant and already mother to two living sons and a daughter, would attend the Field as Francis' physical token of conquest, both sexual and territorial.<sup>36</sup> In 1515, Francis claimed the duchy of Milan, commencing his acquisition of prized territories, despite Henry's intervention.<sup>37</sup> The meeting was outwardly a celebration of peace, but remained inseparable from military pursuits. As these correspondents wrote, their words became part of a broader dialogue suggesting that kingly displays of masculinity through conquest could be enhanced by the presence of the queens consort.<sup>38</sup>

Although Salic law meant Claude could not be queen in her own right, she could still function as a figure of visible influence and authority.<sup>39</sup> Letters sent from the French to the English court indicate that this was the case. Male officials discussed Claude's condition and imminent delivery and her pregnancy influenced the date of the meeting.<sup>40</sup> In December 1519, Boleyn wrote to Wolsey that Louise of Savoy wanted the meeting to take place in April or May 1520, because Claude was due to give birth at the end of July.<sup>41</sup> Then, in mid-March 1520, Bonnivet advised Wolsey that Francis had consented to 31 May but, 'as the Queen will be eight months in her pregnancy, he cannot extend it further'.<sup>42</sup> Both English and French correspondents represented Claude's pregnancy as integral to negotiating the date. Over a week later, Wingfield wrote to Wolsey that he had urged for a later date, but Francis replied that if Claude travelled later, 'it would put her in danger'.<sup>43</sup> A 7 April letter recounted another English attempt to delay, as Wingfield suggested to Wolsey that Francis would have agreed, but Claude's lying-in would prevent it.<sup>44</sup> These letters confirm the French court's efforts to ensure Claude's presence, showing that her pregnant body was perceived by her contemporaries as a site of diplomatic power enabling the French to influence the timing of the meeting.<sup>45</sup>

It was not only Claude's body that featured in diplomatic correspondence in the months prior to the Field. For the French contingent, Claude's young, fertile body was a visual sign of the dynastic strength of the realm, eliciting comparison with the body of an older, English queen with a fraught reproductive history. Wingfield conveyed this query by Louise of Savoy to Wolsey:

On her asking whether the Queen was with child, he told her he had no such knowledge, but trusted God would 'send her fruit in time convenient'. She hoped so too, and when the King had a son or two, they and the Dauphin would be brethren; and 'considering as well the en... which was engendered between the two princes, as also that [it had] pleased God to send them one other son, and like to have, by God['s grace], plenty of others; but that the King here could be right we [I] content] to send over the Dolphyn into England, after he shall have a fe[w more] years, to be there nourished and brought up after such ma[nner] as should stand best with the King's highness' pleasure'.<sup>46</sup>

Louise emphasises Francis's fathering of a legitimate, living, male heir in contrast to Henry's lack of the same. This follows a previous allusion to Henry's power as king, through her demand 'of the Queen's grace, and whether I thou [ght her to] have any great devotion to this assembly'.<sup>47</sup> These words suggest Catherine's opinion mattered and that she held considerable power at court; if not located in her ability to produce a son, in her Habsburg connections. Wingfield conveys Louise's anxiety about a powerful foreign-born consort who may oppose an Anglo–French alliance and relays her shrewd intervention concerning Catherine, who has not provided for Henry a living 'son or two'.<sup>48</sup> His letter captures Louise's subtle attack on Catherine's femininity and Henry's masculinity and her astute observations of the English court.

In addition to Claude's pregnancy, the English court's desire to meet with Catherine's nephew, Charles, prior to the Field also affected the timing of the event, indicating that Wingfield's suggestion that Catherine's Habsburg connections were worrisome to Louise was well founded. The Habsburg letter from De la Sauch to Chièvres grants Catherine a significant role in planning this Habsburg meeting. De la Sauch represents successful queenship as fostering natal connections, giving counsel and advising the king.<sup>49</sup> There was every reason to assume Catherine could fulfil these duties. In addition to an ambassadorial position, Catherine had served as regent and governess when Henry was campaigning in France in 1513.<sup>50</sup> The Habsburg letter describes the English royal household only days after Wingfield recorded Louise's concerns. It represents Catherine as Louise's worthy equal, capable of using her diplomatic skills to great political effect.

On 7 April, De la Sauch described proposed meetings between the English royal court and Charles before or after the Field, also recording Catherine's opinion about the meeting.<sup>51</sup> His letter acknowledges Catherine's persuasive powers, without challenging conventional gendered expectations of queenship. De la Sauch recounts Catherine assembling her council to discuss the Field, whereupon Henry arrived, unaware of what was happening. De la Sauch claims that once Henry realised what was taking place, Catherine became only more highly esteemed by himself and his council. The correspondent represents Catherine as meeting her king's approval, while also maintaining a Habsburg diplomatic presence at the English court. Catherine's desire to meet with Charles required a negotiation of dates for the English contingent perhaps equal to the French household's arrangements in relation to Claude. As a mark of her success, a treaty for these meetings was signed on 11 April.<sup>52</sup> Habsburg bias might be expected in this letter, but it illustrates Catherine's authority as queen consort as derived from her experience in diplomacy and counsel.<sup>53</sup>

Correspondents used the bodies of the two queens consort to represent a form of queenship which proved the masculinity and power of kings. The importance of Catherine and Claude's bodies was likely heightened due to the physical similarities between Henry and Francis, also mentioned in diplomatic correspondence and at least one eyewitness source.<sup>54</sup> Henry broke a vow to Francis by shaving his beard prior to the meeting, thus creating an obvious physical distinction between them. Beards, as visible signs of masculinity, have attracted much scholarly discussion.<sup>55</sup> The French court was advised that Catherine desired the beard's removal and, in November 1519, Boleyn wrote to Wolsey that, upon learning this, Louise responded: 'The[eir love] is nat in the berdes, but in the harts'.<sup>56</sup> Arguing that the 'beard vow was one of the

oldest vows of chivalry', Robert J. Knecht suggests that Catherine may have opposed the beard on political grounds.<sup>57</sup> Regardless of reason, Henry's appearance was influenced and commented upon by royal women and deemed worthy of mention in male-authored correspondence between royal households. As men wrote of these matters, they established a precedent for female intervention in established chivalric codes and existing perceptions of masculinity.

These contemporary letters assigned certain expectations to the role of the queens consort. Writers acknowledged Claude's fertility and status as the mother of a living male heir. For Catherine, the Habsburg writer emphasised her connections of birth and highlighted her ability to influence her council and impress her king with her negotiating powers. For these writers, women's bodies, their words and their ability to function through established expectations of ideal female behaviour mattered. As they represented Claude and Catherine in certain ways, it becomes possible to gauge how they understood the role of the queen consort. In turn, the focus is not solely upon two young kings seeking to prove their pre-eminence in carefully staged expressions of masculinity but includes the queens consort as individuals with their own strengths to harness for political advantage. Turning now to a later source, Hall's *Chronicle* offers an opportunity to move from the epistolary form and assess how expectations of queenship and diplomacy were represented as part of a longer history of English rule.

### Hall and his *Chronicle*

1547 marked the year of both Henry and Hall's death. The paths of these two men had crossed, with Henry describing Hall as 'our well-beloved subject'.<sup>58</sup> By contrast, there is no extant evidence that Hall knew either Catherine or Claude. Hall was educated at Eton, Cambridge and Gray's Inn and became a common lawyer. He participated in a number of Henry's parliaments and was probably working on his account of his king's reign throughout the 1530s.<sup>59</sup> After Hall's death, his *Chronicle* was edited and printed by Richard Grafton. Although Hall compiled his *Chronicle* for the London mercantile classes, it may have reached a broader audience. It forms part of a long tradition of English historical writing. The *Chronicle* is shaped by the genre's literary conventions and functions as a grand narrative of English history, including what Hall deems as significant events of each regnal year. Hall's lengthy account of the Field celebrates Henry's appearance on the European stage and was probably based on an eyewitness account. On this, Janet Dillon remarks: Hall 'must therefore have been totally reliant on the sources to which he had access, so that the bias of his sources must form part of the equation in our assessment of Hall's own bias'.<sup>60</sup> Thus, Hall's account of the Field was shaped by his views on Henry's kingship and the anonymous eyewitness account.

The *Chronicle* provides insights into how Hall viewed royal women as participants in political events, showing how he worked through existing understandings of women's roles as he recorded their diplomatic activities. Although Hall's celebration of Tudor triumph includes royal women, they feature less often. Outlining the 'true tenor' of the plans for the Field, Hall writes that the: '... kyng of Englande shal come personally to the castle of Guysnes, with his bedfelowe the quene, and his sister the dowares of Fraunce : and semblably the right Christened kyng of Fraunce, shall come in persone to his Castle of Arde, with the Quene and his mother'.<sup>61</sup> Catherine



and Mary travel with Henry, and Claude and Louise travel with Francis. Hall pairs the royal women, similar in rank. This attempt for balance is consistent across his account. Chronicles were carefully crafted literary sources, but they also served a historical purpose and Hall names the locations as he sets the scene. The women, however, are not named. Moreover, not only is Catherine unnamed, but she is described as Henry's 'bedfelowe the quene'. This is an image of a queen consort as a sexual object. Hall's early insertion of royal women conveys his recognition of the important symbolic and political duties of queenship and the necessity of the queens consort to the success of the Field. However, unlike the writers of contemporary diplomatic correspondence, Hall does not mention these women's individual qualities as contributing to their capacity to participate in the event.

Hall's *Chronicle* was published over two decades after the English and French royal households met in the Pale of Calais, between Guînes and Ardres. In the years following the meeting at the Field, life at the English and the French courts changed dramatically. In 1524, Claude died. As the decade progressed, Catherine and Henry remained without a living male heir, Anne Boleyn became established at court, and Henry began to pursue his separation from Catherine.<sup>62</sup> In 1536, Catherine died; almost three years after her separation from Henry and his marriage to Anne, the second of his eventual six queens consort. Although Hall's details mostly align with contemporary accounts, his depiction of the two queens consort differs vastly to their representation by diplomats and courtiers. This is likely due to the retrospective nature of the source, although his probable absence of familiarity with either of the women must also be taken into account.

The diplomats and courtiers witnessing the queens consort describe Catherine and Claude according to their individual traits. Presumably, Hall lacked such knowledge, encouraging and contributing to his depersonalisation of the two women. Catherine and Claude are reduced to the general category of 'quene'. Henry and Francis are similarly described during the meeting as 'the Frenche kyng, and the kyng of England', complementing the repetitive structure of an account which would often be read aloud. However, these terms follow earlier distinctions between the kings: 'the Frenche kyng Fraunces the firste of Fraunce, and Henry the eight kyng of Englande and of Fruance'.<sup>63</sup> Hall also describes Henry's 'beautie and personage' and Francis as 'stately of countenance, mery of chere, broune coleured, great iyes, high nosed, bigge lipped, fair brested and shoulders, small legges, and long fete'.<sup>64</sup> There are no comparable descriptions for Catherine and Claude. Although each of the queens consort were deceased when Hall's *Chronicle* was published, both kings were still alive, yet middle-aged, when he wrote.

Hall's sleight in relation to the queens consort was likely necessitated by changes in European affairs and the English court over the preceding years. More specifically, these changes were Henry's separation from Catherine and break with Rome and the associated constantly shifting allegiances between the Tudor, Habsburg and Valois dynasties.<sup>65</sup> These events cannot be separated from Hall's depiction of the Field as an English intervention in European affairs and the queens consort roles. Hall's *Chronicle* is clear about the trajectories of Henry's wives (predating Catherine Parr's death), but it would border on dangerous to name Catherine in this account. Instead, Hall transforms the actions of a Spanish-born Catholic queen to an example of ideal queenly behaviour.

His absence of description blurs the identities of the queens consort so that they become interchangeable with their successors. There is no need for him to do the same for the kings, still occupying their thrones.

Ultimately, Hall includes these women in their symbolic role, despite contemporary correspondence showing otherwise. Although Hall may have understood the responsibilities and duties of the queens consort as similar to those expected by correspondents at the English and French court in the months prior to the Field, changes in circumstances across time and the nature of the source necessitated an idealised, rather than individualised, version of queenship. The structure of the *Chronicle* enabled this transition. Chronicles were divided into sections according to regnal year and Hall's account of the Field covers two regnal years; the first concerns the preparations; the second, the event. The *Chronicle* lent itself to a reading of each section as a stand-alone account while still forming part of the whole. Hall's account of the Field could be read as a moment of Tudor glory, representing a 'quene' fulfilling her duties as spectator and participant, without naming the one so dramatically replaced.

Hall's description of the meeting before the Field, a separate section, represents Catherine's Habsburg networks as serving a crucial diplomatic function. He also notes her engagement in other queenly behaviours such as hospitality and intercession. Although Hall omits naming Catherine at the Field, he identifies her here, referring to the 1519 election of 'Emperour Charles kyng of Castell, & nephew to the quene'.<sup>66</sup> This section includes Hall's account of Catherine's welcome of French hostages at court. Hall later describes Henry welcoming Catherine, a masque, and Catherine reciprocating with a banquet. The hostages reappear, requesting a meeting between Henry and Francis, which was agreed.<sup>67</sup> Hall's detailed description ascribes considerable value to Catherine and Henry's hospitality. Richardson rightly refers to the hosting of the hostages as allowing Henry to display 'princely generosity', and Hall's *Chronicle* also incorporates Catherine's generosity.<sup>68</sup> Hall acknowledges Catherine's natal connections through her appellation as aunt of the new Emperor. He concludes with the plans for the meeting, establishing the link between the treatment of the hostages, the Field, and the importance of the meeting between the Charles and Catherine.<sup>69</sup> Hall establishes a version of perfect queenship, illustrating how a queen consort might advance the interests of her natal and marital families while practising learnt skills of hospitality and counsel.

The next section, the account of the twelfth year of Henry's reign, includes the meeting with Charles prior to the Field and the meeting at the Field. For Hall, Catherine's role as a queen surrounded by her court and her power to use her Habsburg connections for English advancement was significant. His account of the eventual meeting between Catherine, Henry and Charles features language heavily gendered according to expectations of courtly conduct. The meeting took place in the final week of May. Charles sailed for Dover from La Coruña on the same day that Henry left Greenwich for the English port, from where the English court would cross to Calais and the Field. After Charles landed at Dover and met Henry, the two men rode to Canterbury: 'specially to see the quene of England his aunte was the intent of the Emperour'.<sup>70</sup> A description of 'the quene with her beautiful trayne of ladies' and welcoming her nephew immediately follows.<sup>71</sup> The horseback journey captures Henry and Charles' physicality, and Catherine's beauty is defined by her entourage. Hall establishes Catherine as

enhancing her king's status, crafting an image of queenship incorporating the queen as diplomatic agent and aligning with broader expectations of appearance and behaviour.

Hall represents the two queens consort as belonging to a category, more so than as individuals, in his description of the Field. He writes that on the first day of the tournament: 'the two Quenes of Englande and of Fraunce came to the campe, where either saluted other right honorably, and went into a stage for them prepared, right curiously hanged, & specially there was for the quene of England a Tapet all of pearle called Huges Dike'.<sup>72</sup> On this occasion, an object distinguishes the two queens, rather than a specific individual trait. Hall's words also align with expectations that royal women observed and participated in tournaments in prescribed ways.<sup>73</sup> Hall omits detailed descriptions of the women's activities, but reinforces their presence through repetition.<sup>74</sup> Tilting was held at the Field from Monday 11 June to Tuesday 19, except for the weekend (16–17), and Monday 18 June, which saw a 'hideous tēpest'.<sup>75</sup> Hall describes the two consorts as attending each day, reinforcing their integral role without compromising the centrality of Henry and Francis.

Hall also includes an image that might warn of the dangers of the powerful queen consort. He writes that, on 20 June, Henry and his company arrived at the tiltyard, travelling on coursers barded with rich cloth:

embrodered with a great rocke or moūtaine, and a picture of an armed knight on a courser barded, vauncyng himself vpon that hill: then was on thesame in riche embrodrye a picture of a ladie cōmyng out of a cloud strikyng the knight into the body with an arow a deadly wound, and beneth on the borders were written in letters embrodered that sayd, *In loue whoso mounteth, passeth in perill*, this was the deuise, so was the kyng of England apparelled and all his parteners of chalenge.<sup>76</sup>

This image of an advancing army of women striking down knight after knight does not openly subvert gendered expectations of female behaviour; it is an image, not an act. Furthermore, it is located within the chivalric tradition. As Sarah A. Bendall argues, it was not uncommon to feature women on armour.<sup>77</sup> However in this context, it is disruptive, possibly portentous and grounded in precedent. At the least, it depicts women in battle, disrupting expectations of military engagement. Hall calls these games 'feates of warre' and the image depicts a female victory.<sup>78</sup> As an allegorical representation, it alludes to enduring French fears of foreign invasion, especially from England and through the infiltration of a foreign-born queen.<sup>79</sup> Although Catherine and Henry's daughter, the princess Mary, was absent from the meeting, the intention was to send her to France as the dauphin's foreign-born bride.<sup>80</sup> For his English audience, Hall may be alluding to the English experience of Margaret of Anjou.<sup>81</sup> If so, his vision of queenship is insular, understandable in the wake of Henry's separation from Catherine, his own foreign-born consort.<sup>82</sup> By contrast, the French situation was reversed. In 1530, Francis married the foreign-born Eleanor of Austria (1498–1558), daughter of Joanna of Castile and Philip I of Castile and sister to Charles V. From the meeting at the Field to Hall's *Chronicle*, the discourse surrounding the preference for foreign or native-born queens consort had shifted. Relatedly, the native or foreign-born status of the current consort in both England and France had reversed. Hall's *Chronicle* retrospectively accommodates this shift through the allegorical account.

Hall expands on this image of women in battle and describes an English party of men and women mounted on horses, the women's dress incorporating elements of Genovese or Milanese fashion and travelling towards the French camp at Ardres.<sup>83</sup>

Hall creates an opportunity for his audience to confuse both military allegiance and sex as the women's clothing recalls an enemy army on the move and his earlier image sets the scene for this description of women engaging in a play on military behaviour. Hall's account of the English party evokes elements of a military attack when, in fact, it is one royal household travelling to visit another. Once arriving at Ardres, the English party were entertained by the 'the Frenche Quene', with 'feast & chere'.<sup>84</sup> A comparable description of the English queen entertaining the French party immediately follows.<sup>85</sup> As Hall describes the two queens consort hosting banquets, he outlines how a queen consort might display the social and material attributes of their position.<sup>86</sup> However, although he describes the occasion as 'without any countenance making or disuiseryng', this reading suggests otherwise, with Hall representing women as capable of military conflict and the queens consort as mediators in an atmosphere of tension.<sup>87</sup>

The *Chronicle's* depiction of the queens consort at the Field is a valuable source for examining expectations of queenship in Tudor England. Hall refers to the English queen and the French queen, rather than Catherine and Claude; a necessity in the wake of the events after 1520. As he does so, Hall constructs a template of ideal queenship shaped by Catherine, Claude and Henry's changed marital state. When his *Chronicle* is considered alongside letters from the time of the Field, the ideal differs. Both Hall and the writers of diplomatic correspondence draw on the symbolic power of the queen consort and their potential for diplomatic engagement as a political activity but represent this differently. These practices attest to the capacity for expectations of queenship to shift according to time and circumstance, with Hall's example demonstrating how an individual might transform to an ideal. Despite these changes, Hall's model still acknowledges that the queen consort could exert political influence through diplomacy. Finally, the Hampton Court Palace painting offers an opportunity to consider how the role of the queen consort might be depicted in artistic form. Although the chronicle and painting both date from after the Field, genre-specific differences illuminate the varied possibilities for representations of queens consort as diplomatic agents.

### The artist and the Hampton Court Palace painting

The Hampton Court Palace painting (Figure 1) is contemporaneous with Hall's *Chronicle* and provides a visual example of royal women at the 1520 meeting. The painting cannot be definitively dated, and it is unknown whether the artist knew Henry, Catherine or, less likely, their French counterparts. Sydney Anglo describes the painting as an example of 'display diplomacy'.<sup>88</sup> In this respect, it functions similarly to Hall's *Chronicle* and illustrates English diplomatic engagement within a larger story of Tudor triumph. Anglo proposes the painting may have been created for a celebration, perhaps hanging in 'a temporary hall, such as that built at Hampton Court in 1546'.<sup>89</sup> The audience was likely a royal and elite one. Similarities to the *Chronicle* might be due to comparable eyewitness accounts. However, the different context warrants mention. Although the painting might have been part of a series, it could be easily separated from any others and function alone. This essential distinction from Hall's *Chronicle* matters when examining these sources for insights into representations of queenship.



**Figure 1:** ‘The Field of the Cloth of Gold’, c. 1545. Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022.  
(Reproduced with permission of the Royal Collection Trust Picture Library).  
[Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://wileyonlinelibrary.com)]

In some respects, the painting is similar to Hall’s *Chronicle*, recognising royal women through examples of the essential diplomatic work expected of them, without placing them centre stage. This brief analysis explores three scenes depicted in the painting; the tournament, dining and the flying of a dragon-kite to consider what the artist saw as meaningful elements in representations of queenship and how these aligned with gendered expectations of ideal female conduct at a diplomatic event. The painting expresses the idea that royal women were necessary as observers and entertainers, enhanced by a Tudor audience’s awareness that women might engage in diplomatic work at the tiltyard or banquet table. The dragon introduces a further important female element to the painting, and another means of successful diplomacy.

Although women are present in the painting, the focus is on men. Henry is central, extravagantly dressed astride a white courser and surrounded by his entourage. This is not, however, the Henry of 1520, but Henry c.1545.<sup>90</sup> Time collapses, and representations of queenship shift. Catherine does not feature here but is reduced to a general model of a later version of queenship, perhaps even a more specifically ‘English’ one. The contrast between the king and his queen consort is striking. Henry is in the foreground, facial features carefully rendered. By contrast, almost faceless women occupy the background. The upper right section of the painting includes two extravagantly dressed women watching over the tiltyard (Figure 2). Two similarly well-dressed men are immediately below them. Although diplomatic correspondence describes Claude and Catherine’s bodies, neither Hall nor the artist identify differences between these two women. Indeed, the artist renders them identical in form and dress.

Below the tiltyard is a white tent, decorated with a red Tudor rose. Inside, another woman, dressed almost identically to those above, presides over an elaborate feast (Figure 3). Together, these images resemble Hall’s version of queenship. The correspondence was clear about the queens consort attendance, providing information about the specific qualities each woman brought to the occasion. In these later de-



**Figure 2:** Crop of 'The Field of the Cloth of Gold', c. 1545. Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022. (Reproduced with permission of the Royal Collection Trust Picture Library). [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.com)]

pictions, the symbolic role of queenship prevails and the Tudor rose functions as a marker of Englishness, possibly reflecting Hall's implication that English queenship had shifted to mean 'English-born'. The painting, like Hall's *Chronicle* and, indeed, the diplomatic correspondence, also displays an undercurrent of tension. Henry's processional entry recalls an army marching towards conquered territories, albeit subdued by the crowd's apparent ease. Similarly, the games of war and multiple tents evoke a battlefield. Although Catherine and Claude (unlike Henry) have been erased as individuals, the artist's representation of queenship aligns with their expected duties at the Field. Importantly, too, their spectatorship and hospitality involve male participation and take place within a predominantly male-inhabited space.

Finally, an image of a dragon rendered in the red and white of the Tudor rose dominates the upper left section of the painting (Figure 4). The dragon was not only the sign of the Tudors, but was associated with the legend of St Margaret and functioned as a symbol of female strength and fertility in both England and France.<sup>91</sup> It is absent from the account of the Field in Hall's *Chronicle*, although the *Chronicle* refers to a dragon-kite at Anne Boleyn's 1533 coronation.<sup>92</sup> Hall's omission hints at the tenuous relationship between queenly power and fertility and the absence of the dragon-kite on this occasion may be due to Catherine's ultimate fate. Having failed to provide Henry with a living male heir, Catherine remained in England during her final years with a reduced household and removed from many of the trappings of her previous position. The artist's motivation for the dragon's presence may be to provide an allusion to female strength and fertility as essential to queenship. It can be included here because, unlike Hall's *Chronicle*, no wider context connects it to Catherine. The painting recounts a single moment in time, whereas the *Chronicle* spans a dynasty.

The dragon also connects the queen's femininity (through fertility) with the king's masculinity. Both the dragon and the procession contain dual meanings; either cele-



**Figure 3:** Crop of 'The Field of the Cloth of Gold', c. 1545. Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022.  
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**Figure 4:** Crop of 'The Field of the Cloth of Gold', c. 1545. Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022.  
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brating the union of England and France, or presaging war. If celebrating fertility, it is apt that the dragon-kite features in Jacques Dubois' contemporary Latin elegiac poem, written for the French court.<sup>93</sup> Claude's pregnancy was a visual symbol of Francis' masculinity which could, in turn, be read as signalling his propensity for victory in warfare. This was a foremost concern for a young king, with contemporary sources connecting bodily strength with male potency.<sup>94</sup> For the French court in 1520, the dragon offered a dual celebration of the femininity of a queen's body rounded in pregnancy and the masculinity of a king's body 'hardened for war'.<sup>95</sup> For the artist of a painting intended for the gaze of the Tudor court in the mid-1540s, the dragon

might function as a distinctly Tudor symbol of the importance of female strength and fertility in portraying queenship.

Writers of diplomatic correspondence focused on Claude's pregnant body as a site of diplomatic power and Catherine's skill in engaging in diplomatic activities incorporating her natal and marital connections. While Hall's *Chronicle* acknowledges Catherine's Habsburg ties, his account of the Field represents the queens consort as almost indistinguishable from each other, although a wider reading would prevent this shift. The painting, as the other later source, takes a similar approach. This type of representation does not suggest a diminishment of the capacity of the queens consort for engagement in this episode in the Wars. Rather, the *Chronicle* and the painting represent these women as fulfilling a symbolic role as queens consort, not as individuals. They do not deny a capability for diplomatic engagement that might change the trajectory of European conflict, yet it is represented differently. Claude attended the Field as a young queen consort in the final stages of pregnancy. When contemporaries depicted the two kings as competitors, Claude's body confirmed Francis' virility. The *Chronicle* and painting, dating from the final years of Henry's reign, would justifiably omit reference to a pregnant consort, a permanent reminder of Henry's repeated failures in this arena. The painting, like the *Chronicle*, creates meaning for the queens consort within a broader social and political realm. 1540s England differed to 1520s England, and it accommodated a changed vision of queenship. Tracking these transformations across sources reveals how the producers of these sources worked through gender and genre.

## Conclusions

This article set out to explore how the writers of diplomatic correspondence, Hall and the artist represented the queens consort as participants at the Field and what a close reading of these contemporary and later representations would add to existing understandings of queenship, gender and diplomacy in this period. Reading across a selection of letters, Hall's *Chronicle* and the painting, it is possible to discern that these creators represented the queens consort as capable of operating as diplomatic agents of significant power. When Catherine and Claude's roles are analysed across sources, it is clear that the malleability of queenship enabled a fashioning according to the aims and motivations of the correspondents, chronicler or artist. For the producer of each source, the presence of the queens consort was integral and relational to men and they represented specific qualities of queenship that were understood as enhancing kingship. Catherine came to the Field as representative of the Habsburg dynasty, rival to the Valois. She was the mother of the betrothed Tudor princess and a queen consort of great potential influence. Claude's status as a French-born queen representing the consolidation and legitimation of Francis' position as king of France and his hold on Brittany, along with her pregnant body and status as the mother of a living male heir gave her considerable power. However, Catherine and Claude's bodies were more than sites of maternity. Through their bodies, they asserted their diplomatic skills and associated ability to shape the course of the Wars.

Networks of allegiance spread across England and Europe and the queens consort were critical to negotiating these connections through their diplomatic skills. Although their actions might incorporate their status as mothers of heirs, they were represented



variously across sources. These digressions according to genre attest to the fluidity of gendered constructions of ideal female behaviours and the associated capacity for representations of queenship to accommodate changing motivations and needs. A close examination of these changing depictions demonstrates the value of cross-genre analysis for studies of the representation of queens consort at political events in the early modern period. It shows how they might be variously represented by their contemporaries, or in later sources, within the broader contexts of gender, power and diplomacy.

The introductory section of this article established Catherine and Claude as individuals and queens consort, arguably born to be queens. Writers of diplomatic correspondence drew on Claude's pregnant body and Catherine's Habsburg connections and expertise in diplomacy and represented these women as queens and individuals. The later sources offer a changing narrative of ideal queenship, although kingship does not appear to have been comparably refashioned. Crucially, Hall reduces the emphasis on Catherine and Claude as individuals to create an ideal of queenship. The unknown artist does similar. A comparison of the queens consort at the Field across these three sources flags differences in genre as relevant but locates changing representations of Catherine and Claude as primarily dictated by changes in English and European affairs. Although a pregnant body was an obvious site for the display of power, changes in circumstance meant it could not be the only one. The correspondents, Hall and the artist, all depicted other opportunities for the queens consort to engage as agents of diplomacy. As they did so, they revealed their understanding of early modern queenship as changeable yet accommodating a range of gendered forms of power.

Overall, this brief analysis of representations of queens consort and the Field raises further questions surrounding royal and elite women's engagement in various forms of early modern diplomacy. It offers potential methods of approaching relatively well-known historical, literary and artistic sources that have yet to be comprehensively mined with attention to their creators, the passage of time and through the analytical lens of queenship, gender and diplomacy.

## Acknowledgements

The research for this article was undertaken as part of the Australian Research Council Discovery Project (DP180102412) 'Gendering the Italian Wars, 1494–1559' held at the University of Western Australia. I am very grateful to Prof. Susan Broomhall for her advice during the preparation of this article. I also thank Prof. Carolyn James, Dr Lisa Mansfield, Dr Sarah A. Bendall and Dr Jessica O'Leary for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article. Finally, I would like to thank the *Gender & History* editorial team and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable suggestions.

Open access publishing facilitated by Australian Catholic University, as part of the Wiley - Australian Catholic University agreement via the Council of Australian University Librarians.

## Notes

1. As this article draws predominantly on English sources, names, with the exception of Marguerite de Navarre, are Anglicised. Edward Hall, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre & York*, H. Ellis (ed.) London: J. Johnson et al., 1809), p. 611 (hereafter, *Chronicle*). The primary sources are sometimes unclear on the dates, meaning those given here are probable, rather than definite.

2. Michelle Beer, *Queenship at the Renaissance Courts of Britain: Catherine of Aragon and Margaret Tudor, 1503–1533*, *Royal Historical Society Studies in History New Series* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, Royal Historical Society 2018), p. 13.
3. Geoffrey Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).
4. Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964). See, too: Garrett Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon* (London: Readers Union Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1944), p. 81. Catherine, appointed by her father as Spanish ambassador to England in 1507, was an exception.
5. Catherine Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). On the inclusion of women: Glenda Sluga and Carolyn James (eds), *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics Since 1500* (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2015); Helen Matheson-Pollock, Joanne Paul and Catherine Fletcher (eds), *Queenship and Counsel in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), esp. Catherine Fletcher, 'The Ladies' Peace Revisited: Gender, Counsel and Diplomacy', pp. 111–33; Jessica O'Leary, *Elite Women as Diplomatic Agents in Italy and Hungary: 1470–1510: Kinship and the Aragonese Dynastic Network* (Amsterdam: ARC Humanities Press, 2022).
6. On the anachronism of separating high politics and culture, see: Adam Morton, 'Introduction: Politics, Culture and Queens Consort', in Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly and Andrew Morton (eds), *Queens Consort, Cultural Transfer and European Politics, c.1500–1800* (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 1–13.
7. For relatively recent overviews, see: Lois L. Honeycutt, 'Queenship Studies Comes of Age', *Medieval Feminist Forum* 51 (2016), pp. 9–16; Theresa Earenfight, 'Where Do We Go from Here? Some Thoughts on Power and Gender in the Middle Ages', *Medieval Feminist Forum* 51 (2016), pp. 116–31.
8. Laura Slater, 'Defining Queenship at Greyfriars London, c.1300–58', *Gender & History* 27 (2015), pp. 53–76, at p. 54.
9. Louise J. Wilkinson and Sara J. Wolfson, 'Introduction: Premodern Queenship and Diplomacy', *Women's History Review* (2020), pp. 713–22, here p. 713. DOI: [10.1080/09612025.2020.1827729](https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2020.1827729).
10. Silvia Z. Mitchell, 'Marriage Plots: Royal Women, Diplomacy and International Politics at the Spanish, French and Imperial Courts, 1665–1679', in Sluga and James (eds), *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics*, pp. 86–106, at p. 98. See, too: Morton, 'Introduction: Politics, Culture and Queens Consort', in Watanabe-O'Kelly and Morton (eds), *Queens Consort, Cultural Transfer and European Politics*, pp. 1–13.
11. Broomhall (ed.), *Women and Power at the French Court*; Elena Woodacre and Carey Fleiner (eds), *Royal Mothers and Their Ruling Children: Wielding Political Authority from Antiquity to the Early Modern Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
12. Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*; Sharon L. Jansen, *The Monstrous Regiment of Women: Female Rulers in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Houndmills, 2002), pp. 115–19.
13. Beer, *Queenship at the Renaissance Courts*, esp. Chapter 2: Material Magnificence. See, too: Michelle Beer, 'Between Kings and Emperors: Catherine of Aragon as Counsellor and Mediator', in Matheson-Pollock et al. (ed.), *Queenship and Counsel*, pp. 35–58.
14. Theresa Earenfight, 'A Precarious Household: Catherine of Aragon in England, 1501–1504', in Theresa Earenfight (ed.), *Royal and Elite Households in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: More Than Just a Castle* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2018), pp. 338–56; Theresa Earenfight, 'The Shoes of an Infanta: Bringing the Sensuous, Not Sensible, "Spanish Style" of Catherine of Aragon to Tudor England', in Tracy Chapman Hamilton and Mariah Proctor-Tiffany (eds), *Moving Women, Moving Objects (400–1500)* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019), pp. 293–317. See, too: Theresa Earenfight, *Catherine of Aragon: Infanta of Spain, Queen of England* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021); although not integrated into this article, this new monograph marks a significant addition to scholarship on Catherine.
15. Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, 'Claude De France and the Spaces of Agency of a Marginalized Queen', in Broomhall (ed.), *Women and Power at the French Court*, pp. 139–72, p. 152. See, too: Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, 'Claude of France: Justice, Power, and the Queen as Advocate for Her People', in Rosalind Brown-Grant, Anne D. Hedeman and Bernard Ribémont (eds), *Textual and Visual Representations of Power and Justice in Medieval France: Manuscripts and Early Printed Books* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 241–72.
16. On Louise: Laure Fagnart and Mary Beth Winn, 'Louise De Savoie: The King's Mother, Alter Rex,' in Broomhall (ed.), *Women and Power at the French Court*, pp. 85–114; Robert Knecht, "'Our Trinity!': Francis I, Louise of Savoy and Marguerite D'Angoulême,' in Penny Richards and Jessica Munns (eds), *Gender, Power and Privilege in Early Modern Europe: 1500–1700* (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003), pp. 71–89; Kathleen Wellman, 'Louise of Savoy: The Mixed Legacy of a Powerful Mother', in Elena Woodacre and Carey Fleiner (eds), *Royal Mothers and Their Ruling Children: Wielding Political Authority*

- from *Antiquity to the Early Modern Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 175–203; On Anne: David Potter, 'The Life and After-Life of a Royal Mistress: Anne de Pisseleu, Duchess of Étampes,' in Broomhall (ed.), *Women and Power at the French Court*, pp. 309–34; On Marguerite: Jonathan A. Reid, *King's Sister – Queen of Dissent: Marguerite of Navarre (1492–1549) and her Evangelical Network*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009).
17. See, for example: Sydney Anglo, 'The Hampton Court Painting of the Field of Cloth of Gold Considered as an Historical Document', *The Antiquaries Journal* 46 (1966), pp. 287–307; Joycelyne G. Russell, *The Field of Cloth of Gold: Men and Manners in 1520* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969); David Grummitt, 'Participants in the Field of Cloth of Gold (act. 1520)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 8 October 2009. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/98210>.
  18. Glenn Richardson, *The Field of Cloth of Gold* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).
  19. Beer, *Queenship at the Renaissance Courts*, pp. 60–69; Erin A. Sadlack, *The French Queen's Letters: Mary Tudor Brandon and the Politics of Marriage in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 130–34.
  20. On gender as socially constructed, see: Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, rev. edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988; 1993).
  21. *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 3, 1519–1523*, in J. S. Brewer (ed.) (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1867), *British History Online*, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen8/vol3> [accessed 11 April 2022] (hereafter *LP*). These online sources are calendared, facilitating a chronological reading.
  22. Hall, *Chronicle*. On chronicles, see: Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004); Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century*, 2 vols., vol 2 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982).
  23. Richardson, *The Field*, p. 252: '... longest and most detailed prose account in either French or English'.
  24. Allison Machlis Meyer, *Telltale Women: Chronicling Gender in Early Modern Historiography* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021); Gail Orgelfinger, *Joan of Arc in the English Imagination, 1429–1829* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).
  25. Cf. Meyer, *Telltale Women*, pp. 1–3, on: 'narratives that consistently reveal and dramas that systematically "drown" female political action in a gulf of forgetfulness' (p. 2). On the relationship between queenship and kingship, see: Joanna L. Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship 1445–1503* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
  26. See, for example: J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 1997 edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968; 1997); Glenn Richardson, *Wolsey*, *Routledge Historical Biographies* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020).
  27. On letters and diplomacy, see: Rayne Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters: Royal Correspondence and English Diplomacy in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); James Daybell and Andrew Gordon (eds), *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).
  28. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:514; 549; 681; 697; 721; 722. On Wolsey's role, see Richardson, *The Field*, pp. 23–37; Richardson, *Wolsey*, esp. Chapter Two: Cloth of Gold: Wolsey's 'Universal' Peace.
  29. In 1519, Boleyn was appointed resident ambassador at the French court. Wingfield was appointed to the same position in 1520. Gouffier was Wolsey's French counterpart in the planning.
  30. On Margaret of Austria, see: Lorraine Attreed, 'Gender, Patronage, and Diplomacy in the Early Career of Margaret of Austria (1480–1530)', *Mediterranean Studies* 20 (2012), pp. 3–27.
  31. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:728.
  32. On women, letters and power see, for example: Susan Broomhall, "'The King and I': Rhetorics of Power in the Letters of Diane De Poitiers', in Broomhall (ed.), *Women and Power at the French Court*, pp. 335–55.
  33. On these themes, see, for example: John Gagné, 'Collecting Women: Three French Kings and Manuscripts of Empire in the Italian Wars', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 20 (2017), pp. 127–84. For recent work on gender and performances of masculinity, see: E. Amanda McVitty, 'Engendering Erudition: Masculinity and Legal Authority at England's Medieval Inns of Court', *Gender & History* 32 (2020), pp. 447–64.
  34. Helen Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003).
  35. On the women of Francis's court, see: Kathleen Wellman, *Queens and Mistresses of Renaissance France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013, ebook), pp. 111–83, Chapter Three 'Women of the Court of Francis I: Wives and Mistresses, Sister and Mother'.
  36. Francis (the dauphin), Henry and Charlotte. A daughter, Louise, was born in 1515 (d. 1517).

37. Richardson, *The Field*, p. 21. Henry attempted to prevent this victory by providing economic support to Swiss mercenaries employed by Emperor Maximilian.
38. On Henry, Francis and masculinity at the Field, see: Glenn Richardson, 'Boys and Their Toys: Kingship, Masculinity and Material Culture in the Sixteenth Century', in Sean McGlynn and Elena Woodacre (eds), *The Image and Perception of Monarchy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publisher, ebook, 2014), pp. 183–206.
39. More generally, see: Susan Broomhall, 'In the Orbit of the King', in Broomhall (ed.), *Women and Power at the French Court*, pp. 9–38, at p. 10.
40. Cf. Richardson, *The Field*, pp. 36–37.
41. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:549.
42. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:681.
43. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:697.
44. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:722.
45. Cf. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:725: Memorial signed by Wingfield, stating it was Wolsey's option whether the ladies attend or not.
46. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:721. Calig.D.VII.107. Blois, 4 April, signature burnt off. Mutilated. This manuscript is not yet digitised.
47. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:721.
48. Catherine's reproductive history was comparable to Claude's mother, Anne, who gave birth to over 10 children over the course of her two marriages, with only Claude and her sister, Renée surviving into adulthood. For another discussion of the letter, see Beer, 'Between Kings and Emperors', pp. 35–36.
49. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:728. The calendared edition of this letter is a translation from the French.
50. Beer, *Queenship at the Renaissance Courts*, p. 17: '... Catherine played a large part in the diplomacy between her father Ferdinand and her husband'; Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 539.
51. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:728.
52. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:740; and 741.
53. Beer, 'Between Kings and Emperors'.
54. On the eyewitness source, see: Karen Watts, 'The Field of Cloth of Gold: Arms, Armour and the Sporting Prowess of King Henry VIII and King Francis I', in Alan V. Murray and Karen Watts (eds), *The Medieval Tournament as Spectacle* (Boydell & Brewer, Boydell Press, 2020), pp. 208–37.
55. See, for example, Will Fisher, 'The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001), pp. 155–87; Lisa Mansfield, 'To beard or not to beard', in *Representations of Renaissance Monarchy: Francis I and the Image-Makers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 64–67.
56. *LP*, Henry VIII, 3:514.
57. Robert J. Knecht, 'The Field of Cloth of Gold', in Roger Mettam and Charles Giry-Deloison (eds), *François Ier Et Henry VIII: Deux Princes De La Renaissance (1515–1547)* (Online; Lille: Publications de l'Institut de recherches historiques du Septentrion, 1995), pp. 37–51. <http://books.openedition.org/irhis/1473>.
58. Scott Lucas, 'From Perfect Prince to 'Wise and Pollitike' King: Henry VIII in Edward Hall's Chronicle', in Thomas S. Freeman and Thomas Betteridge (eds), *Henry VIII and History* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), pp. 51–64, here p. 51, citing S. T. Bindoff (ed.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1509–1558*, 3 vols, vol. 2 (London, 1982), pp. 279–82.
59. Lucas, 'From Perfect Prince', pp. 51–52, citing Bindoff (ed.), *The History of Parliament*, pp. 279–82: Lucas notes that when Hall reached Henry's 'twenty-fourth year in power (April 1532–April 1533)' he put his account aside, 'and the text remained unfinished at the time of his demise' (p. 52); Scott Lucas, "'The Consent of the Body of the Whole Realme": Edward Hall's Parliamentary History', in Paul Cavill and Alexandra Gajda (eds), *Writing the History of Parliament in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), pp. 60–76, see especially 60–61.
60. Janet Dillon, 'Hall's Rhetoric of Performance', *English Literary Renaissance* 34 (2004), pp. 3–21, here p. 4.
61. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 601.
62. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, Chapters 6–8.
63. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 610.
64. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 609; p. 610.
65. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, esp. Chapter 6 'The Repudiation of the Habsburgs'.
66. Hall, *Chronicle*, pp. 598–99.

67. Hall, *Chronicle*, pp. 598–600. On the masque: Sydney Anglo, ‘The Evolution of the Early Tudor Disguising, Pageant, and Mask’, *Renaissance Drama* 1 (1968), pp. 3–44.
68. Richardson, *The Field*, p. 35.
69. Hall, *Chronicle*, pp. 601–603.
70. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 604.
71. Hall, *Chronicle*, pp. 604.
72. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 611. The second queen of England is Mary Tudor.
73. On women as spectators to the tournament, see: Ruth Mazo Karras, ‘Young Knights under the Feminine Gaze’, in Konrad Eisenbichler (ed.), *The Premodern Teenager: Youth in Society 1150–1650* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2002), pp. 189–205.
74. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 611–16.
75. Watts, ‘The Field of Cloth of Gold’, in Murray and Watts (eds), *The Medieval Tournament as Spectacle*, p. 213; Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 611–16.
76. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 616.
77. Sarah A. Bendall, ‘Feminine Personification and Masculine Forms: Gender, Armour and Allegory in the Valois–Habsburg Conflicts of Sixteenth-Century Europe’, *Gender & History*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0424.12592>. I am grateful to Dr. Bendall for sharing this article prior to publication.
78. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 602.
79. Daisy Delogu, *Allegorical Bodies: Power and Gender in Late Medieval France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), pp. 128–29.
80. By 1522, Mary’s betrothal was repudiated in favour of one with Charles V, also eventually broken off.
81. On representations of Margaret’s dangerous influence, see, for example: Hall, *Chronicle*, pp. 208–13.
82. On Anne of Cleves (as the second of Henry’s foreign-born consorts), see: Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp. 368–75.
83. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 619.
84. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 619.
85. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 619–20.
86. Although outside the bounds of this article, the exchange of gifts was another form of diplomatic practice in which the queens consort engaged in at the Field. See, for example: Tracey Amanda Sowerby, ‘Early Modern Queens Consort and Dowager and Diplomatic Gifts’, *Women’s History Review* 30 (2021), pp. 723–37, esp. p. 728.
87. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 619.
88. Anglo, ‘The Hampton Court Painting’, p. 307.
89. Anglo, ‘The Hampton Court Painting’, p. 307, citing Charles Wriothesley, in W. D. Hamilton (ed.), *A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the Tudors from 1485 to 1559* (Camden Society, 1875, 1877), i, 173; Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 867.
90. For an analysis of this representation of Henry, see: Anglo, ‘The Hampton Court Painting’, pp. 297–98.
91. On the symbolism of the dragon, see: Juliana Dresvina, ‘The Significance of the Demonic Episode in the Legend of St Margaret of Antioch’, *Medium Aevum* 81 (2012), pp. 189–209. I have another article in preparation on the dragon, fertility, and Tudor rule.
92. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 799: ‘... a great Dragon continually mouyng, & casting wyldfyer’.
93. *Francisci Francorum Regis Et Henrici Anglorum Colloquium* by Jacobus Slyvius (Jacques Dubois), Paris, Josse Badius 1521, Jean Dupèbe and Stephen Bamforth (eds), *Renaissance Studies* 52 (1991), pp. ii–237.
94. Steven Bruso, ‘Bodies Hardened for War: Knighthood in Fifteenth-Century England’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 47 (2017), pp. 255–77, here p. 266, referring in this instance to *Secreta Secretorum*.
95. Bruso, ‘Bodies Hardened for War’.

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