



**EDITORIAL: Reflections on the
Tenth Anniversary of the Royal
Studies Journal**

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As the *Royal Studies Journal* (RSJ) marks its tenth anniversary with the publication of this issue, I thought it was an appropriate time to reflect on the history and development of the RSJ and the growth of our field. The impetus for the creation of the RSJ came from the Kings & Queens conference series. Indeed, the conference series itself has been responsible for the genesis of the field of royal studies. It was at the first Kings & Queens conference, held at Bath Spa University in April 2012, where the Royal Studies Network (RSN) was launched, in response to the number of proposals that the call for papers for the conference generated and the general enthusiasm of the participants of the conference to continue to meet and collaborate. The conference generated two edited collections, *The Image and Perception of Monarchy in the Medieval and Early Modern Eras* and *Queenship in the Mediterranean*, but these featured only a small percentage of the excellent papers which were presented at the first Kings & Queens.¹ It soon became apparent that a larger platform for publishing work in our nascent field was needed. The following year, at Kings & Queens 2 at the University of Winchester, I proposed the idea of creating a journal, which was met with another enthusiastic response.

Once we had decided to create the journal, the next step was deciding when, where and how to publish it. At the time, the Winchester University Press (WUP) was looking to expand their collection of journals, and thus I pitched the idea to Professor Christopher Mulvey, one of the General Editors of the press. Making the pitch to WUP meant that some definition of our nascent field and clarification of the scope of the journal was needed. It was important to stress both the interdisciplinary nature of the field and its focus on the history and mechanisms of monarchy. This allayed their concerns that we might be more focused on news stories about existing monarchies than scholarly discourse, and they were keen to support the journal.

One of the guiding principles for the RSJ from the outset is that we wanted the journal to be as accessible as possible which meant that we wanted to do three potentially challenging things: publish electronically; offer the opportunity to publish in several languages to reflect the international nature of our field; and offer “diamond” Open Access, with no charge for readers or authors. The journal mirrors the foundational principles of

¹ Sean McGlynn and Elena Woodacre, ed., *The Image and Perception of Monarchy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Newcastle under Lyme: Cambridge Scholars, 2014); Elena Woodacre, ed., *Queenship in the Mediterranean: Negotiating the Role of the Queen in the Medieval and Early Modern Eras* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

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the Royal Studies Network, that it was as inclusive as possible in terms of discipline, period and place and that it was free of charge—accessible and open to all to join and be part of.

At the time, e-journals were a relatively new area for Winchester University Press. After researching potential platforms, it was decided that the OJS (Open Journal Systems) was ideal for our needs as open-source software which could be used free of charge and could also be tailored to our needs. It was a massive learning curve for everyone: for myself and the growing staff; for the WUP; and for the University of Winchester’s IT department who at the time were providing both technical support and physical server space to host the journal. Charlotte Backerra played an important role in terms of establishing the platform, working with myself, Winchester’s IT department and the WUP on the initial technical set up of the journal. It must be noted that to make the *RSJ* fully open access has required a great deal of support. First, our debt to the WUP and the University of Winchester needs to be acknowledged, in terms of the financial and technical support that they have offered us. The University of Winchester and the WUP have invested significantly in the *RSJ*. In the first instance, Winchester provided the seed funding which covered our initial start-up costs, such as designing the website and online OJS platform. Over the long term, the university played a key role by providing technical support and hosting for the journal, first via our campus IT resources and more recently via Ubiquity Press. Without this support, the journal would never have been able to reach this ten-year milestone. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to the WUP for their financial support and their belief in the *RSJ*, and in what it could achieve, from the outset.

My eternal gratitude is due as well to the staff of the *RSJ* who all work voluntarily, from the Advisory Board members to the Section Editors and our large production team. Given that the *RSJ* operates with no formal budget, apart from the WUP’s funds to cover our hosting and technical support, we literally could not produce the journal without the time generously given by our staff. We operate on the principle of “many hands making light work” and have a very large team of staff members who spread the load, from reviewing submissions through to copyediting, layout and proofreading—everything is done “in house.” Our staff members reflect the very international composition of the RSN itself, with editors and team members in the UK, across Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, and in Asia. I am very aware of the workload issues faced by both academic staff and graduate students, and we try hard to respect the needs of our staff, diverting assignments away from any member of the team who due to personal or professional commitments cannot take on *RSJ* duties for a brief or extended period. While I cannot offer

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monetary compensation for their time and efforts, we have been able to help graduate students and early career scholars gain experience in academic publishing. For some of our staff, this has led to career opportunities in that field; for others, it has helped to build and burnish their CVs. The production team in particular bear the brunt of the work of publishing two issues a year—the fact that we have consistently made the deadlines to publish in June and December set in our contractual agreement with the WUP from the very first issue in December 2014 to the present is a testament to the hard work of our team and their intensive and effective collaboration. Special thanks need to go to those who have led the journal as part of the core editorial team responsible for production over the last ten years: our Chief Copyeditors Tiago Viula de Faria, Jitske Jasperse, Aidan Norrie, and Ella Muir; Layout Editors Sara Wolfson, Danna Messer, Diana Pelaz Flores, Dustin Neighbors, Sanne Frequin, and Rob Runacres; Proofreading Editors Dan Spencer, Janice North, Carolyn Harris, and Shayna Devlin; and our Production Leads Aidan Norrie and Timi Sgouros.

Over the years the content of the issues has continued to expand. One of the key elements of the journal is the book reviews. We wanted the *RSJ* to showcase the latest research in the field, and this would not have been possible without the efforts of Book Review Editors Steve Donnachie and Matthias Range, as well as the many book reviewers who have produced reviews for us. Between issues 1.1 and 11.1, which came out this June, we have featured 250 book reviews in the *RSJ*—an impressive number which Steve, who has been in the role since the *RSJ*’s inception, is due considerable credit for.

One important feature of the *RSJ* which quickly developed from issue 3.2, “Taking Possession,” guest edited by Jennifer Mara DeSilva in December 2016, is special issues. The interest in producing special issues has been so great that we have a list of proposed issues running several years in advance. However, the Advisory Board made the decision early on that we could only produce one special issue a year so that we could continue to accept individual submissions and publish them with reasonable frequency. In 2021 we decided to offer the possibility of “clusters”, which offer the possibility of running a thematic grouping of short articles, coordinated by a guest cluster editor, within one of our “regular” issues. Thus far we have had three clusters: one reflecting on the life of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, edited by Sarah Betts in 2022; one on sexualised bodies and the Tudor court edited by Valerie Schutte in 2023; and in this issue a cluster on cross-confessional queenship, edited by Johanna Strong and Amy Saunders. The advent of clusters reflects our desire to continue to innovate and offer new opportunities for publishing research in the field in both traditional and varied formats.

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Another important development for the journal came in 2016, with the launch of our book prize and the prize for the best article or chapter by a postgraduate student or early career scholar, sponsored first by Canterbury Christchurch University and more recently by our publishers, the WUP. While our book reviews showcase the wide variety of work being published in our field, the book prize offered us an opportunity to highlight and celebrate the best work in the field, culminating in this year’s winner, Matthew Fitzpatrick for his excellent monograph *The Kaiser and the Colonies*—you can read more about its selection in Zita Rohr’s report on the 2024 prize winner in this issue.² Zita Rohr has headed the prize committee for the PGR/ECR article prize since its inception and took over the book prize from Lois Huneycutt in 2019. Winners of our article prize, which were subsequently published in the *RSJ*, include Rocío Martínez López, Alison Creber, Michelle Beer, and Rachel Delman.³ It aims to celebrate the cutting-edge research of emerging scholars who are the lifeblood of the field. Both the *RSN* and the *RSJ* owe a great deal to the contribution of graduate students and early career scholars, and it is important that we recognize the exciting work which they are producing in our field, which helps it to continue to thrive and develop. The prizes have grown to such an extent that in 2020 we made the decision to alternate between the book and article prizes, in order to give each due consideration and in reflection of the huge amount of work undertaken by Zita, the prize committee, and the legion of scholars who have given their time to read the submissions and produce thorough reports on their relative excellence for which we are all profoundly grateful.

Thus far, over the last ten years we have published 123 articles, and the continuing expansion of the size of our issues demonstrates that our field, as well as the *RSJ*, is thriving. While it goes beyond the scope and space allotted to this piece to discuss every article or issue, I wanted to highlight a few key pieces which I think speak to key elements of our field. The first is the inclusive nature of royal studies, something that Cathleen Sarti and I mentioned in our first editorial in issue 2.1, “What is Royal Studies?” In this editorial

² Matthew Fitzpatrick, *The Kaiser and the Colonies: Monarchy in the Age of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

³ Rocío Martínez López, “‘The Infanta will marry the person who provides the peace or the one who gives us the means to continue the war’: The negotiations for the marriage between Infanta María Teresa of Austria and Emperor Leopold I (1654–1657),” *Royal Studies Journal* 3.1 (2016), 6–27; Alison Creber, “The Princely Woman and the Emperor: Imagery of Female Rule in Benzo of Alba’s *Ad Heinricum IV*,” *Royal Studies Journal* 5.2 (2018), 7–26; Michelle Beer, “A Queenly Affinity? Catherine of Aragon’s Estates and Henry VIII’s Great Matter,” *Royal Studies Journal* 6.2 (2019), 5–25; Rachel Marie Delman, “The Queen’s House before Queen’s House: Margaret of Anjou and Greenwich Palace, 1447–1453,” *Royal Studies Journal* 8.2 (2021), 6–25.

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we noted that the term “royal” or what was included in “royal studies” needed to be as broad as possible, to encompass more than the obvious kings and emperors. Several special issues clearly demonstrate this fluid definition of what we include in the field. “Taking Possession” (issue 3.2, December 2016, guest edited by Jennifer Mara DeSilva) included articles which focused on the entries of archdukes, popes, and papal legates, while Glenn Richardson’s special issue “Princes of the Church” (issue 4.2, December 2017) focused on cardinals, including those who sprang from royal families, and on the relationships between cardinals and kings. Most recently Cathleen Sarti has edited an issue on “Defining Aristocracy” (issue 11.1, June 2024) which focuses entirely on early modern European nobility.

Given the depth of work in the wider field on monarchy in premodern Europe, it is not surprising that articles and reviews relating to this geographic and temporal focus have dominated our issues. However, we are beginning to attract more work with a global focus, something that is very important to the wider development of our field as a whole, including articles in the special issue “Gender and Monarchy” (issue 7.2, December 2020, guest edited by Rosalind Dixon) which considered royal women in Brunei and female succession in modern Japan.⁴ Recent articles have also considered the challenge to the Syrian monarchy in the twentieth century and spaces that Nasrid sultanas occupied in the Alhambra.⁵

We also want the *RSJ* to feature research which challenges our field to expand in new directions, something that the special collection on “Royal Sexualities,” guest edited by Katia Wright, Edward Legon, and Matthew Storey (issue 6.2, December 2019), demonstrates. The articles in this collection originated from the Kings & Queens 7 conference co-hosted by the University of Winchester and Historic Royal Palaces and reflected the rich and dynamic papers presented there at the intersection of royal studies with LGBTQ+ histories, gender and sexuality studies. The articles in this issue examined the relationships between monarchs, consorts and favourites—both sexual and chaste—and considered the representation of the sexualities of royal figures, from contemporary

⁴ Ann Black, “Marching to the Beat of a Different Drum: Royalty, Women and Ideology in the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam,” *Royal Studies Journal* 7.2 (2020), 94–116; Masako Kamiya, “Is the Japanese Monarchy in Crisis Due to its Gender Bias?” *Royal Studies Journal* 7.2 (2020), 117–132.

⁵ Sami Moubayed, “Royalism in Syria after Faisal I: The Struggle for the Crown of Damascus, 1920–1958,” *Royal Studies Journal* 9.2 (2022), 41–77; Barbara Boloix-Gallardo, “In the Intimacy of the Dār al-Nisā’: The Residential Spaces of the Nasrid Sultanas at the Alhambra of Granada (Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries),” *Royal Studies Journal* 10.2 (2023), 120–153.

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sources up to modern television series.⁶ This developing area of royal studies is clearly gaining traction, as evidenced by another recent publication, *Premodern Ruling Sexualities*, edited by Gabrielle Storey and Zita Rohr, which grew out of a strand of papers sponsored by the Royal Studies Network at the International Medieval Congress at Leeds.⁷

The question remains, where are we going next? Clearly for the *RSJ* to continue to flourish, your continued support is needed, as readers, reviewers, authors, and/or members of staff. We need to continue to draw in scholars from areas of the globe and disciplines which have been under-represented to date. Reflecting our field of royal studies more broadly, we need to attract more scholars working on global monarchies in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Polynesia. While the number of articles on modern monarchies is steadily increasing, like the special issue on royal tours guest edited by Robert Aldrich and Cindy McCreery (issue 5.1, June 2018), this is another area we would like to develop further. On the other side of the temporal spectrum, we need to bring in more work from specialists in ancient and Classical monarchy. There is excellent research being published in this area in monographs and collections, but we need to encourage Classicists and specialists in ancient monarchy to see the *Royal Studies Journal* as a natural outlet for their research.⁸ Just as we are inclusive in terms of how we define what is “royal,” we are also inclusive in terms of discipline and interdisciplinary work—we want archaeologists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, art historians, and other specialists who work on topics related to monarchy to see the *Royal Studies Journal* as a desirable home for their work.

While we have come a long way in the last ten years, it is important that we do not “rest on our laurels,” and instead stay agile in terms of our development and aware of possible issues that could pose a threat to our continued success. A potential challenge that

⁶ Examples from the issue include Charlotte Backerra, “Disregarding Norms: Emperor Charles VI and His Intimate Relationships,” *Royal Studies Journal* 6.2 (2019), 74–88; Iliana Kandzha, “Virgins on the Throne: The Chaste Marriage of Emperor Henry II and Empress Cunigunde in Medieval Narrative Traditions,” *Royal Studies Journal* 6.2 (2019), 104–126; Amy Saunders, “The Afterlife of Christina of Sweden: Gender and Sexuality in Heritage and Fiction,” *Royal Studies Journal* 6.2 (2019), 204–221; and Sarah Betts, “‘Something as Passionless as Brilliant Administration’: Royal Sex and Sexuality in 1970s British Historical Television Drama,” *Royal Studies Journal* 6.2 (2019), 148–182.

⁷ Gabrielle Storey and Zita Rohr, ed., *Premodern Ruling Sexualities: Representation, Identities, Power* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2024).

⁸ A few examples of excellent work in this area include Elizabeth D. Carney and Sabine Müller, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Women and Monarchy in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (London: Routledge, 2021); A. Azfar Moin and Alan Strathern, ed., *Sacred Kingship in World History: Between Immanence and Transcendence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022); and Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, *King and Court in Ancient Persia 559 to 331 BCE* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

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we may have to address in the not too distant future is wider pressures in the sector—particularly the financial challenges which smaller universities and presses like our own publisher Winchester University Press are facing.⁹ In order to survive and thrive, we need to continually develop, grow and improve by reviewing and reflecting on our processes and procedures at the *RSJ*: whether that is refining the style guide; changing the editorial structure; or our production processes. You can help us continue to grow by recommending the *RSJ* to your colleagues and students, as a place to read the latest and greatest work in our field and as a place to publish research; and by helping us to be listed in more bibliographies and indexes so that others can find our journal and its contents. Please do not hesitate to reach out with your thoughts on how we can continue to grow, expand, or improve the journal or if you would like to be part of the *RSJ* team. As always, I am grateful for your support of our field and of the *Royal Studies Journal*.

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⁹ For more on this, see a special issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* dedicated to this topic: “The Future of the University Press” (June 2017), <https://www.chronicle.com/package/the-future-of-the-university-press/>