



**The RSJ and Winchester University
Press 2024 Biennial Book
Prize Report**

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Anew, I have the very great pleasure to report upon the outcome of the *Royal Studies Journal* and Winchester University Press Biennial Book Prize for 2024. To avoid the crush and excitement of the Olympic Games, the thirteenth edition of our Kings and Queens conference series was hosted in late May by the American University of Paris, meticulously organized under the leadership of Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier. It was there during the final wine reception that I had the very great honour to announce the winner of this year's prize campaign.

The nominations we received this year have again shown how productive and creative our scholars have been since the last award of the prize in 2022. We received a bumper crop of ten monograph nominations from early career researchers to significant late career scholars and emeriti; two multi-volume edited collections; two single volume edited collections; and a trade publication—eighteen volumes in all. As you might imagine, this presented us with a mighty task to find sufficient readers of sufficient expertise and knowledge across a vast area of research output. We managed this, securing the scholarly generosity of almost forty individual readers. The expert readers of our nominations who continue to give so generously of their time and scholarly expertise to ensure the success of our awards each year must be thanked unreservedly for their continuing assistance in ensuring the ongoing development, expansion, and visibility of royal and monarchical studies. I would also like to thank my fellow jury members, Jonathan Spangler and Lois Huneycutt who stepped in this year to fill the places of Núria Silleras-Fernández and Ellie due to their respective conflicts of interest in this year's campaign.

The topics covered by this year's nominations ranged across a wide area of time, space, and geographies with studies of:

- 👑 A twelfth-century royal sibling;
- 👑 Early English queens;
- 👑 Kaiser Wilhelm II and imperial colonies;
- 👑 Childless consortship and court life;
- 👑 Elizabeth I's reign and life;
- 👑 The house of Dudley;
- 👑 The politicization of emotion in medieval and early modern Iberia;
- 👑 The power, majesty, and display of queens' jewels.

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- 👑 Elizabeth I and the biblical analogies deployed to reinforce her sovereignty;
- 👑 Later Stuart Queens
- 👑 A four-volume collection examining consorts from the Normans to the Windsors;
- 👑 A two-volume collection examining Mary I via the lens of writing and her legacy in history, historiography, and fiction;
- 👑 Mid-Tudor queenship; and
- 👑 Wedding journeys.

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

- 👑 Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, *The Kaiser and the Colonies: Monarchy in the Age of Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2022);
- 👑 Kristen L. Geaman, *Anne of Bohemia* (Routledge, 2022); and
- 👑 Patrik Pastrnak, *Dynasty in Motion: Wedding Journeys in Late Medieval and early Modern Europe* (Routledge, 2023).

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

Highly Commended:

- 👑 Kristen L. Geaman, *Anne of Bohemia*; and
- 👑 Patrik Pastrnak, *Dynasty in Motion: Wedding Journeys in Late Medieval and early Modern Europe*.

The Winner of the 2024 *Royal Studies Journal* and Winchester University Press Book Prize is:

Matthew P. Fitzpatrick for his wonderful monograph, *The Kaiser and the Colonies: Monarchy in the Age of Empire*. Congratulations, Matt!

The expert and highly distinguished external readers of Matt's prize-winning nomination had this to say.

Reader 1:

Fitzpatrick's impressive book makes a twofold contribution to the growing number of studies exploring the imperial and colonial dimensions of the Kaiserreich. On the one hand, the author gauges the depth and reach of Kaiser Wilhelm's personal agency in the wider field of Weltpolitik through a cogent analysis of the monarch's involvement in imperial decision-making. He explores the (few) moments when Wilhelm actually determined the course of events and the (rather more frequent) instances when His Majesty either did not care, was not consulted or was simply overruled. In the longer second part of the study, Fitzpatrick inverts this analytical gaze. He explores the fate of an array of indigenous monarchs who found themselves confronted with the power and interests that German soldiers, officials, traders, missionaries and explorers projected into their world—often to ruinous effect.

Fitzpatrick is to be congratulated on his choice of monarchy as a prism through which to analyse the exercise, manipulation, generation and destruction of power in the Age of Empire...It is the mark of thought-provoking scholarship that it leaves the reader looking for further answers to the questions it raises. By exploring how they fared during their imperial encounters, Fitzpatrick implicitly suggests a comparison between European and non-European monarchy.

Reader 2:

Fitzpatrick has made this study not just about Kaiser Wilhelm II himself, but more broadly about monarchy and empire in German colonialism, of royal encounters and relations between the Kaiser and leaders in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. In this way he shows how a profoundly ambiguous, yet also ambitious, part monarchy had to play in the workings of empire. Moreover, this book displays a fascinatingly human Kaiser Wilhelm II operating in the intersections of complex power dynamics of domestic forces, other great powers, and the colonized leaders. Wilhelm II comes out as an energetic, yet volatile, ambitious yet unimpressive, capable yet flawed player seeking to use his agency and express his authority in different colonial situations. Also importantly, Fitzpatrick's reach is truly global.

Foremost, this work exposes the nuances and the limitations of royal role and power, showing the vortex, layers, and intersections of power where monarchy functioned, simultaneously proving active participation in the shaping of German colonialism, but also that this role, ambition, and possibilities were severely curtailed. This book is based on superb research in archival and other sources, and the author's command of his subject is highly convincing. The result is a captivating treatise that opens fresh perspectives onto the workings of German colonialism, making a very valuable contribution to the field of colonial histories in general.

Reader 3:

My rating is based on the important contribution it makes to the history of Germany and its empire by considering this topic through the lens of the transnational history of royalty, as well, conversely, as its contribution to the transnational history of royalty through the lens of the history of Germany and its empire. I also base my rating on the craft of *The Kaiser and the Colonies* as a work of history, both its engaging, persuasive, and well-structured writing and the skill with which Fitzpatrick works with multiple archives.

Writing a global history of multiple monarchies, whose intersection is only partial, limited by the period and scope of colonial rule, presents a serious challenge of narrative and presentation. No reader will be a specialist in every region discussed in this book, and Fitzpatrick does an extraordinary job of bringing readers into histories with just enough detail to follow his argument, but not so much to make it an encyclopaedia. It is not something that stands out in reading the text, and this is precisely because Fitzpatrick does such an excellent job at it.

Matt, based at Flinders University in South Australia where he is a Future Fellow and the Matthew Flinders Professor of International History, was unable to join us for the official announcement of the award. He might have done, having only left Paris the weekend before where he had been participating in a German Historical Institute conference. He did, however, have this to say on learning of his award:

I'm greatly honoured and humbled by the award. To have a panel of fellow researchers in your exact field mark out your work as prize winning research is something very special and rare. I'm very grateful that the book has been so highly valued in what is a very dynamic and truly global field of research. My

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sincerest thanks go to the jury, to the *Royal Studies Journal*, and to Winchester University for this honour.

In 2025, to shed light upon excellence in new research from post-graduate students and early career scholars, we will award our biennial Post-Graduate and Early Career Researcher Article Prize for the best published or unpublished article or book chapter in the field of royal and/or monarchical studies. The nominations will need to have been published or authored between 2023 and 2025 (prior to the nomination deadline of 1 March 2025).

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