

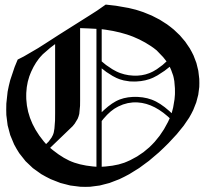


**Report on the 2025 *RSJ* and
Winchester University Press
Biennial Early Career and
Postgraduate Researcher
Article Prize**

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Once again, I have had the very great pleasure and indeed the honour of organizing and convening the *Royal Studies Journal* in association with the University of Winchester Press Early Career and Postgraduate Article Prize for 2025, which we have for some time awarded biennially. We inaugurated both of our prizes ten years ago in Lisbon, where we announced this year's laureate. While I also convene our other biennial award of the Book Prize (originally conceived of and convened by the wonderful Lois Huneycutt) awarded in alternate years, the Article Prize is perhaps closest to my heart, focusing as it does on the research of our early career and postgraduate scholars. One of the most frequent observations made by our external expert readers was the importance and value of an award such as this to bolstering both the research of our early career and postgraduate scholars and in raising the profiles of the emerging scholars themselves who not infrequently find themselves at a precarious point in their early academic careers.

And what a rich and far-ranging field of nominations we received this year! Thirteen wonderful nominations across various disciplines, polities, and eras researching aspects of royal and monarchical studies, including once again two Spanish language articles, covering:

- 👑 Conquests and treasures from New Spain and Tunis during the reign of Charles V;
- 👑 The restoration of Portuguese queenship by embracing the past through symbols, ceremony, and Sintra;
- 👑 A reassessment of the life and afterlife of Anne of Great Britain;
- 👑 An exploration of the origin of Alfred the Great's sobriquet, "The Great";
- 👑 Miltonic diplomacy in Elizabeth II's Golden Wedding Speech;
- 👑 Constructing the imperial image of Charles-Albert of Bavaria as a "zealous defender of German freedom";
- 👑 An investigation of the "mechanics of royal generosity" via the wedding gifts offered to Matthias Corvinus and Beatrice of Aragon;
- 👑 A study of the intellectual history of *cakravartin* "kingship" in southern Asia;
- 👑 The importance of being seen via the itinerancy of Marie-Thérèse-Charlotte of France;

- 👑 Luxury and sumptuary consumption fashioning royal magnificence via the dowries of the princesses during the reign of Isabel I;
- 👑 Botanic recipes to enhance fertility and conception using the examples of Jeanne de Bourbon and Catherine de' Medici;
- 👑 The transformation of the Islamic chess king in Norman Sicily;
- 👑 The dowers of England's medieval queens; and
- 👑 The role played by Dutch gold in Charles I's turn from Spain.

From these splendid and diverse nominations, the Article Prize jury landed on a finals' round of four short-listed published nominations from the original pool of thirteen. They were (in no particular order):

- 👑 Matthew Firth, "What's in a name? Tracing the origins of Alfred's 'The Great,'" *English Historical Review* 139, no. 596 (2024): 1–32;
- 👑 Philippa Earle, "Miltonic Diplomacy in Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Wedding Speech," *Royal Studies Journal* 11, no. 2 (2024): 340–362;
- 👑 Patrik Paštrnák, "Mechanics of Royal Generosity: The Gifts from the Wedding of King Matthias Corvinus and Beatrice of Aragon (1476)," *Speculum* 98, no. 3 (2023): 802–825; and
- 👑 Alicia Sempere Marín, "Conquistas y tesoros de Nueva España y Túnez: La recepción de objetos suntuarios foráneos durante el reinado de Carlos V" [Conquests and Treasures from New Spain and Tunis: The Reception of Foreign Sumptuary Objects During the Reign of Charles V], *Archivo Español de Arte* 97, no. 387 (2024): 1287.

Further discussion and rereading of the nominated articles and their expert readers' assessments determined our final short list of two:

- 👑 Alicia Sempere Marín, "Conquistas y tesoros"; and
- 👑 Patrik Paštrnák, "Mechanics of Royal Generosity."

More intense discussion back and forth between the UK, the US, and Australia was required to agree on our 2025 laureate. But before I announced the winner I paused to acknowledge the jury's commendations from this year's excellent field of nominations:

Highly Commended:

- 👑 Matthew Firth, “What’s in a name?”; and
- 👑 Philippa Earle, “Miltonic Diplomacy.”

Highly Commended and Runner Up:

- 👑 Alicia Sempere Marín, “Conquistas y tesoros.”

So to the winner of this year’s biennially awarded Early Career and Postgraduate Article Prize: Patrik Paštrnák’s “Mechanics of Royal Generosity.”

Patrik’s expert readers had this to say about his study:

Reader 1:

I was very glad to read the study of Patrik Paštrnák, because in the last decade the Early Renaissance in Hungary and its Italian relations got much more interest in international research as before... I think, that this study about the wedding gifts from Matthias and Beatrice’s nuptials has a very high scientific level. The author found unpublished archival source in Milanese archives, which are very important, and with his thorough erudition in the topic evaluates them very well in the both historical and anthropological contexts. It was written in tasteful scientific language... I appreciate that the author knows not only the international publications, but uses also the Hungarian ones (although our language is very difficult)... I propose this excellent study for the Royal Studies Journal Early Career/Post-Graduate Researcher’s Prize.

With Reader 2 adding:

Patrik Paštrnák manages to find an empty spot within the court and royal studies, which are the wedding celebrations. Even though this subject does not escape the attention of historians, the author brings further sources to test partial conclusions from secondary literature against the actual sources of his own. It means the author is not just reiterating what is written in the sources, but clearly analyses and succeeds in drawing conclusions and comparisons

based on the original sources. In this respect, this is crucial in a time when very often theories prioritize source analysis... I believe, this study crucially turns towards regions and areas that are underrepresented in the English language literature. Naturally, Italy is home for Renaissance studies, but it is crucial that the Italian milieu is complemented with this excursion to Hungary, whose king Matthias Corvinus tried to be part of the wider international system of alliances. Also, with his linguistic skills, Patrik Paštrnák very naturally surmounted contemporary scholarship borders instead presenting us with the open borders of the late-fifteenth-century Europe.

While Reader 3 concluded:

The title is very apt: the article promises to investigate not only gifts and dowries of a royal matrimony, but seeks to go deeper into the “mechanics” of a wedding. ...It is a precious finding in the so-called “hungarica-research,” that is, a discovery of new archival material related to the history of medieval Hungary on foreign soil. The inventories from Milan have not been seen in Hungarian scholarship and would definitely be an important contribution to the study of both Matthias Corvinus’ foreign relations and contemporary Hungarian court culture... Patrik Paštrnák has made a significant novel contribution. He strives to have a “fresh” focus on the way wedding gifts served numerous roles. They were a tool for the bride’s integration into a new—in the political sense as well—environment. The distribution also helps in reconstructing the political relationship of the monarch. He has an analytical eye to the most important details in a list of jewellery. The inventories edited here speak much of the “management” of gift-giving, through which their political and representative significance is demonstrated... Pastrnak extends our knowledge in the exercise of Central and Eastern European medieval queenship, also, in a way, in the field of economy and finances, of which, we do not know very much. Pastrnak illustrates how Queen Beatrice could establish her “ladyship.” The article also adds to the scholarship of Corvinian foreign relations.

A very worthy laureate indeed! And, best of all, Patrik was present in Lisbon to receive his award and to share his thoughts with us.

Drawn from around the world and across the disciplines, I take this opportunity to acknowledge and to thank all of our amazing expert readers once again for their continuing and quite astonishing scholarly and personal generosity and goodwill. They are as one in their detailed reflections, expert observations, and invaluable promptitude. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow jury members of long standing, Ellie Woodacre and Núria Silleras-Fernández without whose wisdom, generosity, and of course friendship, the organization of these biennial award campaigns would be very onerous indeed.

So, now we look forward to next year's biennial Book Prize campaign. We will award our biennial book prize for the best scholarly monograph in field on any subject, in any geography or time period that falls within royal and/or monarchical studies. The nominations will need to have been published between 2024 and 2026 (prior to the nomination deadline in 15 May 2026). The prize purse for 2026 is valued once again at £100 and will be awarded officially at Kings and Queens 15, to be held in the beautiful and historic city Prague in September, to be hosted by the Czech Academy of Sciences Institute of History. Do not remain silent—please publicize our prize campaigns widely. You have until 15 May 2026 to nominate a worthy candidate for the best scholarly monograph in the field of royal and/or monarchical studies. Updated and streamlined nomination guidelines and criteria will soon be available on the *Royal Studies Journal* website.

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