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King Richard III



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In this issue:

The Edward IV Roll and the Shocking Origins of Albion: A Tantalizing Yorkist Mystery”

A Portrait of Juana I of Castile: Part 2

Branch Members Involved in Historical Grant of Richard III
2024 General Membership Meeting

Inside Cover

Not printed

In This Issue

The Edward IV Roll and the Shocking Origins of Albion: A Tantalizing Yorkist Mystery”	2
A Portrait of Juana I of Castile: Part 2	8
Branch Members Involved in Historical Grant of Richard III	13
2024 General Membership Meeting	17
Reviews	20
Board, Staff, and Chapter Contacts	27
Submission Guidelines	28
New Printer and Color	28
From the Editor	28
Membership Application + Renewal Dues	29

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Richard III Society, American Branch
C/O Wayne Ingalls
704 NW Euclid Ave.
Lawton, OK 73507
membership@r3.org

The Edward IV Roll and the Shocking Origins of Albion: A Tantalizing Yorkist Mystery”

Susan Troxell

The “Edward IV Roll” or “Edward IV Coronation Roll” is housed at the Free Library of Philadelphia (shelf-mark MS Lewis E201), and the American Branch has had a long association with its preservation and public exhibition as a significant Yorkist genealogical manuscript from Edward IV’s early reign. It can be dated between 1461-1464, most certainly after the king’s coronation and before his marriage to Elizabeth Woodville as neither she nor her heraldry appear within it. Many scholars have commented on the imagery and heraldry in E201, but none have ever sought to transcribe and translate its vast sections of Latin text.



Screenshot of E201 (first section), showing where the Albina story starts (6th line from top, where it says “Albion ab Albina”

In 2023, the American Branch sponsored a transformative and innovative project involving E201: it would recruit a team of young scholars in medieval literature and Latin to transcribe and translate the text in its lengthy paragraphs, banderoles, roundels, and illustrations. With the assistance and connections developed by member Laura Blanchard, formerly with the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collection Libraries, three doctoral students and a supervising professor were recruited from the University of Pennsylvania with expertise in Latin and medieval literature.¹ After cross-checking, their transcription and translation of E201's text would then be added to a digital mapping of the scroll using Digital Mappa software, allowing any user to read it in modern English and to navigate through the document and interact with it online.

One of the first surprises encountered by the team was the inclusion of a story in E201 about the origin of the name "Albion" for the island we now call Britain. This story appears very early in E201; in fact, it's in the very first paragraph and runs to almost 1,300 words in Latin. The importance of the "Albion origin story" is further highlighted by its position immediately adjacent to large illustrations of Adam and Eve, and Noah's ark – metaphorically and literally setting it within the context of the origin of our universe and species.

Albina and Her Sisters: The Original Settlers of Albion



Detail of a miniature of Albina and other daughters of Diodicias disembarking from a ship in Britain, with two giants and Brutus and his followers arriving in another ship (Brit. Lib. Catalog of Illum. mss.), French Prose Brut, in BL Royal 19 C IX), f. 8. Held and digitized by the British Library.[1] In the public domain.

¹ The doctoral students are Emily Bates, Emma Dyson, and Noa Nikolsky, from the English and Classics Departments at University of Pennsylvania. Professor Emily Steiner, a specialist in medieval literature, is supervisor of the students' work. Dot Porter, Curator of Digital Humanities at the University of Pennsylvania's Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies, is supervisor of the digital mapping of E201 using the open-access software program, and she is being assisted by American Branch members Laura Blanchard and Cheryl Greer. The Branch would like to thank and publicly recognize Laura Blanchard for her generous and substantial contributions, financial and otherwise, towards this special project.

In all versions of the Albion origin story, the central character is Princess Albina and it is her name which is modified to “Albion” to give a name to the island. The story told in E201 goes as follows: Long before the time of Brutus and the fall of Troy, there was a great king of Greece who had 30 very tall and beautiful daughters, all of whom he married to famous kings. Albina was the eldest of these daughters. Because they were the daughters of a king so great as to be subject to no master, the sisters came together and agreed that none would allow her husband to have sovereignty over her. Each took a solemn oath to kill their husbands in an embrace if they didn’t submit to their wives’ will in all things.

The youngest sister, however, was secretly in love with her husband; even though she took the oath, she harbored regrets about the scheme and ultimately revealed it to her husband, and then to her father. Her confession was so compelling that she was spared the punishment meted out to Albina and the other sisters: they were arrested, convicted, forced into exile on a great ship without a rudder, and put out onto the open seas. There, they suffered extreme storms and deprivation of food and water, and nearly died. Their ship eventually ran aground just off the coast of a verdant, deserted isle. Albina was the first to alight from the boat and to set foot on land, and the sisters agreed to call the island “Albion” in recognition of this event.

Soon, the story goes, the sisters on Albion learned to hunt and trap prey by weaving baskets to ensnare animals. After sustaining themselves this way for a while, they began feeling amorous. Evil demons took note of their lustfulness, disguised themselves as men, and impregnated the sisters. Each gave birth to a giant, and the island was populated by mothers mating with their own giant-sons, and daughters mating with brothers. The offspring of these unnatural unions was a race of giants who occupied Albion until Brutus arrived and conquered them 260 years later.

Brutus is Upstaged as the First Founder of Britain

Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britannie*, written in the 12th century, was the prevailing national origin story told in late medieval England. Claiming to be a history of all the British kings over the past 2,000 years, Geoffrey described how Brutus (grandson of the Trojan Aeneas) and his three sons arrived on the shores of Albion², around the year 1136 BC, and christened the island “Britain” after himself. There, he encountered and defeated the native race of giants who inhabited the island, and established his capital, New Troy, on the banks of the Thames river.³ Geoffrey never explained why the island was known as Albion⁴ nor

² Brutus allegedly first landed at Totnes in the modern-day county of Devon. There is an inscribed boulder memorializing the pseudo-historical event of Brutus’s arrival on Fore Street. The memorial stone was described in the 17th century and is probably not of great antiquity.

³ In Geoffrey of Monmouth’s narrative, the last surviving giant (Goemagog) was killed in a wrestling match with Corineus, an ally of Brutus and eponymous founder of Cornwall.

⁴ The origin of the name “Albion” as a toponym to describe the British island can actually be traced to the Greek language, and was used by Romans such as Pliny the Elder (1st century AD) in the 4th book of his *Naturalis historia* (Natural History) which has been translated into English: “Opposite to this region lies the island of Britain, famous in the Greek records and in our own; it lies to the north-west, facing, across a wide channel, Germany, Gaul and Spain, countries which constitute by far the greater part of Europe. It was itself named Albion, while all the islands about which we shall soon briefly speak were called the Britains.” Naturalis historia [*Natural History*]. Vol. II. Translated by Harris Rackham, Harvard University Press. 1942, pp. 195–196. Ranulph Higden’s universal history *Polychronicon*, composed around 1327, posits the theory that “Albion” came from the word “white” and referred to the white chalk cliffs along its southern coastline. C. Babington and

why it was inhabited by giants. But the idea of Brutus being the first founder of Britain became part of the established national origin story (known as The Brut) and E201 shows in several places the heraldic shields and banner of arms attributed to him.

In the early 14th century, the Princess Albina “prequel” circulated widely in England, in prose and verse versions, essentially upstaging Brutus as the country’s first founder. James Carley and Julia Crick have studied the complicated origins of the Albina story and its historical context, using the earliest Latin version known as *De Origine Gigantum* (About the Origin of the Giants).⁵ However, the first known rendering of the story appeared in the late 13th century in an Anglo-Norman poem under the title *Des Grantz Geanz*, and was then translated into English and Latin in various texts and books. Carley and Crick determined that their version of *De Origine Gigantum* was produced at Glastonbury Abbey in the 1330s, during the reign of Edward III.⁶

The Story of Albina Justified English Overlordship of Scotland

In examining the historical context of *De Origine Gigantum*, Carley and Crick note that it was fashionable for countries in the Middle Ages to name themselves after a mythic female founder. Scotland, for instance, was believed to have been named for *Scota* or *Scotia*, the daughter of an Egyptian pharaoh who became the legendary ancestress of the Gaels and founder of that nation.⁷ Indeed, it is no coincidence that *De Origine Gigantum* was probably composed at the time of a heated dispute over the constitutional status of Scotland and whether it was a vassal state of the English crown or a fully independent and sovereign nation.

In 1290, the heir to the Scottish throne - Princess Margaret - died at age 7, leaving succession of the Scottish crown uncertain. King Edward I of England was invited to arbitrate the succession question. He initiated a famous inquisition into the matter by sending letters to the monasteries of England instructing the monks to search their chronicles and archives for evidence about the status of the two kingdoms. What ensued was a full-scale historical debate between England and Scotland about their national origins and first founders, and eventually the matter was referred to the Pope for adjudication.⁸

Edward I sent a letter to the Pope in 1301, which Carley and Crick say was the first to argue this remote history in public. According to the English perspective, Brutus had conquered the entirety of the island of Albion, and put his eldest son Locrinus in charge of the younger sons Albanactus and Kamber who had lordship of Albany (Scotland) and Kambria (Wales). Later, King Arthur conquered Scotland and the Scottish King Augustus paid homage as a vassal to the British king. All this proved that the English crown had overlordship over the Scottish crown since the days of Brutus and King Arthur.

The Scots retaliated with their own historical arguments. They argued that the sons of Brutus were equals, and that *Scota* conquered the land of Albany and chased out the Britons, setting up her own sovereign nation in its place. King Arthur may have later conquered Scotland but left no heirs surviving after the

J.R. Lumby eds, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden*, 9 vols. Rolls Series 41, London: Longman & Co., 1865-86.

⁵ James P Carley and Julia Crick, “Constructing Albion’s Past: an Annotated Edition of *De Origine Gigantum*”, from J. Carley (ed.), *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition*, 2001, pp. 347-418.

⁶ The stemma created by Carley and Crick, at p. 395, shows the complex relationships between the various surviving manuscripts of the Albina story in *De Origine Gigantum*.

⁷ Carley and Crick mention that King Alexander III of Scotland heard a recitation of his royal genealogy going back to *Scota* on his coronation day in 1249.

⁸ Carley and Crick, pp. 362-365.

death of Mordred. At that time, Scotland returned to an independent state, enjoying unity and sovereignty ever since. In the 1320 Declaration of Arbroath, the Scots again referred to their founding ancestress Scota as justification for Scottish independence.

Carley and Crick note that Edward I never explicitly cited the tale of Albina during his legal dispute over Scotland, even though the story was circulating as *Des Grantz Geanz* during his later reign. They point out this was possibly a missed opportunity since the tale contains a narrative tension between sovereignty and subordination, with Albina and her sisters shown to have resisted their husbands' dominance and to have occupied and made a single nation out of the entire island.

It was Edward I's grandson, Edward III, who appears to have given new life to the Albina tale in service of his propaganda war against Scotland and his claim to overlordship over it. Rejecting the treaty of Northampton in 1328, Edward III led a major campaign against the Scots in 1335 to establish English dominance over Scotland and it was during this time that the Latin version of the Albina tale, *De Origine Gigantum*, surfaced at Glastonbury Abbey where the tale was being produced in manuscript form. Carley and Crick believe that the monks of Glastonbury Abbey would have used it to show Edward III that there was a historical foundation for English dominance over the entire island, as Albina preceded Scota and any other progenitor of the Scottish people.⁹

The Albina Story Raised Questions about Female Authority

Another scholar, Dr. Neil B Weijer, has offered a different perspective about Albina and her sisters. "Albina's story," he says, "tapped into currents of uncertainty about the influence of women on England's monarchy, as well as concerns over civil unrest, evil counsel, and improper influence already present in Britain's legendary history and in the political climate of early fourteenth-century England."¹⁰

Weijer studied how the Albina tale was told in the Anglo-Norman versions of *The Brut* chronicle and compared them alongside other English and Latin historical works composed during the first decade and a half of Edward III's reign, paying special attention to the roles that Albina plays within the texts. Weijer noticed that the compilers of each of these histories did not simply copy or translate the story from a single pre-existing text. Rather, they drew upon different, and sometimes multiple influences, recombining those narratives to produce the story that best suited their texts. "Influences" included those contemporary issues dominating national politics when the compiler was writing his text.

In the case of the Albina tale and its emergence in the 1330s, Weijer believes one of the most urgent issues pressing on the national conscience was the deeply unpleasant 1327 deposition and presumed murder of Edward II and the appropriation of Edward III's minority government by his mother, dowager Queen Isabella and her lover/political ally, Roger Mortimer:¹¹

"While the misrule and favoritism displayed by Edward II [towards Piers Gaveston and Hugh Despenser the Younger] was nothing new in English history, the manner in which this crisis was resolved was novel indeed. A parliament held in London in January of 1327 deposed Edward II in favor of his son, who was still a minor.... Never before had the barons, through parliament or otherwise, deposed a sitting king. Even though the barons and Londoners succeeded in declaring Edward III the king, and in placing Isabella in charge during his minority, the short span of time

⁹ Carley and Crick, pp. 366-372.

¹⁰ Neil B Weijer, "How England was Called Albion: the Legendary History of Britain in Script and Print, c. 1330-1575", PhD. Dissertation 2017, Johns Hopkins University, pp. 71-73. Available online at <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/>

¹¹ Weijer, pp. 74-76.

between Edward II's deposition and [his] shocking murder in Berkeley castle demonstrates how tenuous the arrangement actually was.

"Isabella's minority government was no less perilous, and her lover's blatant self-enrichment combined with reversals in Scotland brought the experiment to an abrupt end. Less than three years had elapsed before the eighteen-year-old Edward III, in what was to be the first of many displays of boldness in his reign, broke from his confinement in Nottingham castle and, with the help of a few conspirators, captured Mortimer. With the execution of his guardian, he assumed the kingship of England for himself. While England's military position in Scotland soon improved with the English success at Halidon Hill in 1333, the first decade of Edward III's reign looked back onto the uncertainty of his fathers' rule as well. Isabella remained alive and in the country, and hostilities mounted across the Channel with the French."¹²

Noting the sudden proliferation of the Albina tale in Edward III's minority, Weijer rejects it as a mere "romance" in the Arthurian tradition. He opines that it acted as didactic history and allowed the reader to work out contemporary concerns about power, the tensions of succession, and usurpation in a specifically female light. In particular, he quotes the scholarship of Julia Marvin who has commented that Albina and her sisters' "attempt at self-government has literally monstrous consequences. The headship of [the] husband over even the most nobly-born wife is reasserted."¹³

Conclusions

This article has shown that the story of Albina and her sisters has been interpreted by historians in at least two ways. The first is to see its emergence and popularity as a reflection of England's desire to establish sovereignty over the entire British island, especially over Scotland. England needed to counter Scotland's mythical foundress, Scota, with its own mythical foundress. Not only did the Albina tale involve a sisterhood who established an ancient society occupying the entire island, but it also communicated something about the very essence of being English: indomitability.

The second way that Albina has been interpreted is to see it as a warning against a female-led regency government during the king's minority or incompetency. Like Queen Isabella, Albina and her sisters asserted power directly and acted outside the bounds of behavior established for medieval women. The consequence of their cupidity for power and domination is a race of unnatural creatures who are ultimately destroyed by history's destined victor (Brutus).

Whether these interpretations can be applied to E201 will take further research into its place of manufacture, its source materials, its patron, its contemporary historical context, and its intended purpose. There are surely more ways in which the Albina tale was used in 15th century England beyond the two identified here. Future scholars may find E201's inclusion of the story to offer fascinating implications for the newly-crowned Edward IV and his pursuit of a Yorkist dynasty. But for now, it remains a tantalizing mystery.

¹² Weijer, pp. 76-77.

¹³ Julia Marvin, "Albine and Isabelle: Regicidal Queens and the Historical Imagination of the Anglo-Norman Prose Brut Chronicles," *Arthurian Literature* 18 (2001): 143-192.

A Portrait of Juana I of Castile: Part 2

Maria Elena Torres

With almost every stage of Juana's life, legend has wrapped itself around her. She fell instantly, volcanically in love with Philip the Handsome. "It is impossible to overemphasize the carnal in this marriage," the sympathetic Townsend Miller says, in *Castles and the Crown*. "It was all they had; all they were ever to have."¹ Juana's obsession with Philip drowned out interest or concentration in anything else, governing and politics included. Legend tells us that Philip may or may not have returned this passion, but that he began to stray early on and that Juana responded violently. Her obsession is fuel to the fire of the instability that has branded her as "Juana la Loca."

NEW ARCHDUCHESS

When looking at the evidence in the timeline, the result is a little different. The marriage itself, for the first few years, seems to have been successful. It is true that ambassadors' letters to and from Spain at this early stage are full of complaints. They expound upon finances, Juana's lack of correspondence with family and friends, a general and specific religious laxity in the Low Countries and how all of that could be affecting Juana, and Juana's lack of control over her household. What they don't expound upon is Philip's philandering, Juana's reaction to it, or Juana's unstable behavior. None of these factors comes into any kind of focus until after deaths in the family catapulted Juana into position as heiress to her parents' kingdoms. It's fair to guess, then, that jealousy and insanity weren't concerns at this point. And it's possible to peek past this image to see what Juana may actually have been doing, and why.

Juana had a fairly clear mission as the Archduchess of Burgundy: it was mainly help cement an Iberian-Burgundian alliance against France. It was a mission of which she was more than likely aware. And it was a mission which was destined to fail. Of several causes for this failure, one is the agreement about her dowry, and another is Philip's own situation:

Philip's upbringing had been complicated. His mother, Mary of Burgundy, died young in 1482, as the result of a riding accident. She left behind her husband Maximilian, four-year-old Philip, two-year-old Margaret, and a host of troubles both domestic and international, many of them hinging on Louis XI and his immediate successors claiming rights to Burgundian territories, basing their claim on Mary's gender and lack of right to rule. Several of the towns and cities also strongly objected to Maximilian, viewing him as an outsider with no rights to his wife's authority. As a result, Philip was generally brought up separately from his father, both physically and politically. His sister Margaret left the family for France at the age of three as virtual hostage and promised bride to Charles VIII.

Philip came into power as Archduke at the age of four, under the tutelage of Francophile adherents. He did have the companionship of Margaret of York, widow of his grandfather Charles the Bold, but a measurable portion of his childhood was spent bereft of family ties. He was accustomed to thinking in opposition to his Francophobe father. He would have become reliant on his circle of advisors, all of whom profited from this reliance. He would be relatively ill-equipped to empathize with, or to understand the sort of family situation Juana knew, and may even have been wary of such attachments. He would be ill-equipped to think of a wife as someone to rule with or listen to, not when he already had all the advisors he needed and had trusted all his life. Juana did, indeed, have a rival for Philip's attention, but it wasn't another woman: it was François Busleydon, Bishop of Besançon.

All this fed into the second insurmountable obstacle to Juana's success:

¹ Miller, page 184.

As Juana and Philip were to be married, so was Philip's sister Margaret of Austria to Juana's only brother Juan. One of opportunities this double marriage offered was an interesting handling of the dowries: neither bride would bring one. Neither groom would pay a dower in the usual sense. Instead, both brides would receive a yearly stipend of 20,000 gold ecus from their new home kingdom. This would be for their expenses and maintenance of their household. There would be no towns or cities to provide rents and other revenues, nothing to which either bride could claim ownership or authority except this stipend.

To the end of her long life, Juana saw barely any of this money. Immediately put into the control of Philip and his advisors, most of these golden ecus went back to the coffers, were paid to personnel in Juana's household who owed their allegiance to Philip, or used to buy the loyalties of those Spaniards who remained with Juana's household. In a place and time in which building coalitions was vital to gaining power and achieving agency, Juana was almost literally robbed of the means by which to do so. This was a fundamental undermining of her entire career: she was never going to be able to extend her influence beyond the authority of her husband or her father-in-law; she was never going to be able to finance allies able and willing to speak and act for her, to dedicate chronicles and propaganda in her favor. When the inevitable question is asked: why Juana failed where other women, like her own mother, managed to succeed, this was one of core reasons.

Added to this obstacle was the open hostility of Philip's councilors to the Spanish contingent, which led to a rapid desertion of the people who had come with Juana to Burgundy. Very early in Juana's career the pattern of surround and isolate manifested and was to be repeated.

It is possible catch glimpses of Juana during this early period of her marriage and compare the legendary figure of the jealous, love-starved young woman with what may have actually been the case.

On the purely personal side of things, the marriage seems to have been successful during this time. Philip seemed to enjoy having a wife, jostled in her honor, choosing green and yellow ("jaune" for "Jeanne") and including her in many public events. Juana seemed to want to adapt to her new home: becoming familiar with French; linking Philip's motto of "Qui Vouldra" "Who wants it?") with her own "Je le Veux" ("I Want It")². During a series of difficult conversations with Tomas de Matienzo, a representative sent over to Juana by her concerned parents, Juana informed him that Philip was willing to listen to her financial concerns because "she knew he loved her", though things changed as soon as he went back to his advisors.

She "enchanted" Maximilian.³ Margaret of York and Juana appear to have formed a bond. It was strong enough for Juana to forcefully insist on deleting the censorship of Margaret from the 1499 treaty between Philip and Henry Tudor.⁴ It's interesting that the report specifically notes that it's "the Archduchess", not "the Archduke" who insists that Margaret not be censured for her role in challenging Henry's throne. This might hint at both the strength of Juana's personal loyalties and Philip's valuing political necessities above personal ties: Margaret of York would have been the only relative near him during a difficult childhood, but it was Juana who was her champion.

Very clearly, too, Juana was aware of her disadvantages in this new position, and was attempting to rectify them. Her conversations with Philip are evidence for at least one strategy. She may not have access to many more: she must also have been aware of the situation in her household, populated by

² Fleming, page 47.

³ Fleming, page 46.

⁴ CSP () insert link.

Flemish strangers. She was probably aware of the eyes and ears on her, and this may have a lot to do with her disinclination to write personal correspondence. Isabel and Fernando complained about this, and so did others:

Juana kept at least three personal letters from this early time in her married life. Each was from a close contact in Spain and each complained about not hearing from her.⁵ These letters were found in the archives at Simancas. They were sent to Juana in the Netherlands before 1499: she kept them; she must have had them with her during either of her two returns to Spain; they survived during her long captivity in Tordesillas, down the centuries. This doesn't seem like the tendency of a person who has no connections to her family and friends. It seems clear that she treasured these connections. If a person like this, a person who was known to like composition, is not composing correspondence or answering correspondence, there's a reason. Two feasible possibilities are that she may have understood that her correspondence might come under surveillance; or, it may be possible (though unlikely) that she did correspond and that her letters were stopped.

At this stage, then, it's possible to see Juana as successful in her union with Philip; forming friendships, notably with Margaret of York and using her influence to shield what she can; more than likely aware of the various forces opposing her and her mission, and attempting to tread carefully in order not to alienate her surest ally, her husband Philip. Though she may have had friendships, it's possible she lacked confidants. She may have begun to understand that she had to be wary of what she said or wrote and how this was done. She may have understood that her parents would have been of very little assistance in her situation (much as they would have limited influence to help Catherine after Arthur's death).

Had things continued in this way, there may have come a time when Juana and Margaret of York, or Maximilian, could have formed a stronger alliance. Juana may or may not have been able to increase her influence with Philip. But things did not continue in this way.

HEIR TO CASTILE AND ARAGÓN

Juana and Philip were married in October 1496. In early 1497, Philip's sister, Margaret, sailed to Spain. She and Juan, Juana's only brother and her parents' heir, married in April 1497. By the end of September, Juana's eldest sister, the widowed Isabel, re-married, in Portugal. And in October of 1497, Juan, aged 19, died.

Isabel and Fernando, devastated both as monarchs and as parents, pulled themselves together, summoning their daughter Isabel and her husband Manuel of Portugal over the border to be declared heirs to Castile and Aragón. In August of 1498, during draining negotiations with Aragón's cortes about female rights of inheritance, young Isabel gave birth to a son, Miguel, and died. And in July of 1500, Miguel also died. As a political result, Juana became the heir to her parents' kingdoms.

There doesn't seem to be any documentation on Juana's reaction to this decimation. There's evidence on how brutally it hit Isabel: Gillian Fleming examined how much of Isabel's vital energy toward work dissipated, letting a great deal fall into Fernando's hands, and unwittingly sowing the anti-Fernandine seeds in Castile that would sprout after her death. Her state is illustrated by the fact of her dressing in mourning for the rest of her life, and that she kept Juan's dog by her side.⁶ If the siblings were as close as it appears, and if Juana had keepsakes from home, her reaction must have been powerful. She was now heir to Castile and Aragón, at a horrendous cost.

⁵ Fleming: pages 64-65; Zalama, "La huella documental de unareina sin gobierno"

⁶ Fleming, pages 61-63.

Almost immediately after Juan's death, and before the death of young Isabel, Philip was proclaiming himself King of Castile,⁷ even though it was very clear that young Isabel's claim came before Juana's. It might be possible that young Isabel's physical condition was severely undermined and that it was an open secret. Pedro Martir, who witnessed a lot of what was happening in Castile during this time, mentioned that young Isabel was very thin and not strong.⁸ The news of Juana's fate may have been understood as a matter of time, and not much time at that.

Juana may have begun to understand this herself: As early as April 1498, after Juan's death but before her sister's Juana demonstrated her allegiance to Castile by placing herself in opposition to Philip, refusing to pay homage to newly-crowned Louis XII.⁹ This stance wouldn't have assured Philip or his advisors. From around this time, and moving forward to the end of her life, there came an increase of surveillance on Juana, and efforts of control from both her parents and from Philip and his advisors.

Not long before the death of her eldest daughter, Isabel sent a representative, Tomás de Matienzo to speak with Juana and try to gauge the situation and Juana's position in the Netherlands. Juana, pregnant with her first child, and Matienzo held a series of conversations which began badly and degenerated to the point that Matienzo accused Juana of being heartless and cold, and irreligious, though after Juana's daughter was born, Matienzo admitted matters had improved as far as Juana's religious conduct was concerned¹⁰ Juana also admitted to being homesick and longing for her mother.¹¹ None of the representatives report a hint of instability. In fact, Gutierre Gómez de Fuensalida, who got to know both Juana and Philip well, told Isabel and Fernando that he was aware of the mounting pressures on Juana during this transition, and was impressed with Juana's fortitude and capacity.¹²

Far from the jealous, passion-possessed woman, we see, at this stage, a young woman trying to adjust to very difficult situations, for which she was not prepared: financial, political and emotional. Under these pressures, she seems to be relying on several strategies: tact and patience with Philip; a focus on her developing friendships; caution between keeping her older friendships and the possibility of betraying information to the people surrounding her. And a specific strategy: silence; negation; refusal to confide or communicate. She would come to rely on this last strategy increasingly throughout her life. In the end it would work against her, including in view of our getting to know her. But considering the number of eyes and reporters on her, this strategy is understandable.

The studious and slightly mischievous girl with the streak of daring has evolved into a focused and guarded young woman aware of the sudden and strenuous responsibilities thrown onto her shoulders. She and Philip would travel to Spain in November 1501. The journey and its aftermath would later be used to stock up the legend of Juana la Loca. Examination of this period throws this legend into doubt, and deserves a space of its own.

⁷ Miller, page 174.

⁸ Liss, page 367.

⁹ Fleming, page 64.

¹⁰ Fleming, page 64.

¹¹ Fleming, page 65.

¹² Fleming, page 69.

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Illustrations

(to accompany Part I)

- Isabel and Fernando with Juana. "Rimado de la conquista de Granada", by Pedro Marcuello
- Isabel with her daughters. "Rimado de la conquista de Granada", by Pedro Marcuello
- Isabel of Aragón. Detail from the Royal Convent at Las Heulgas. Anonymous
- Juana about 1496, by Juan de Flandes

Branch Members Involved in Historical Grant of Richard III

Susan Troxell

In December 2023, the UK Richard III Society purchased at auction in Fairfax, Virginia a significant item of Ricardian history: a 1485¹ grant making James Tyrell the king's lieutenant of Guînes Castle in Calais. The Great Seal of Richard III is still attached to the grant, making it even more valuable. Two American Branch members, Liz Bateman and Erik Michaelson, got involved in retrieving and translating the grant for future posterity.

The Chair of the UK Society contacted the Chair of the American Branch in the first week of December to advise that it had just acquired the rare piece of history and was looking for a permanent home for it in a UK museum or archive, a process that can take weeks, even months, to arrange. Until then, the UK asked if the American Branch would be interested in having the item displayed at a local museum or institution, but inquiries to libraries and museums in the Fairfax area (including the Folger Shakespeare Library) proved fruitless as they all turned down the opportunity.

The problem was: how was the medieval object going to be kept in America until the UK determined where its final home would be? Fortunately, Liz Bateman, Chair of the Tidewater Chapter, has a residence in the vicinity of Fairfax and volunteered to act as the UK's agent for retrieving the item from the auction house. She also volunteered to store the grant in a safe deposit box at her bank, where it is currently in safe keeping. The American Branch would like to thank Liz for undertaking this significant responsibility, which has helped the UK Society avoid storage fees.

Not content with just having the item kept safe in America, Erik Michaelson—who volunteers with translating Latin wills in the UK's *Milles Register* project—decided he would take a crack at interpreting the grant. We are now able to share his transcription and translation, as it has been proofread and checked by Marie Barnfield, the UK's Research Officer, and Livia Visser-Fuchs, a specialist in Medieval Latin. Please see Addendum A below.



In summary, the grant transfers the offices of Warden, Governor, and Overseer of Guînes Castle, and its Town and County, from John Blount, 3rd Baron Mountjoy, to Sir James Tyrell effective 22 January 1485. Prior to that time, John Blount had become ill and had deputized his responsibilities to his younger brother James and another nobleman - both of whom turned traitor to Richard III and became part of Henry Tudor's faction in France. Guînes Castle was a particularly important post as it was one of two castles protecting the English territory in Calais, an extremely

¹ In the medieval calendar, the New Year did not begin until Lady Day, March 25, so technically January 22 - the exact date of the grant - would have been considered to be in the year 1484 AD. When the UK adopted the Gregorian Calendar in 1752 they adopted January 1 as the official start of the year in England, Wales, and Ireland. To avoid confusion, most historians of medieval history use the modern system for identifying the calendar year in question.

sensitive and strategic position in northern France from which England conducted commerce and military maneuvers. No wonder Richard III wanted to make a personnel change to a faithful servant!

Being processed through Richard III's chancery department², the grant of Guînes Castle bears the king's Great Seal. The Great Seal was very special as it belonged to that particular monarch and was attached to all important documents which specifically came from them. If a document had this seal on it, it had the monarch's 'seal of approval' and reflected their wishes or commands. The keeper of the Great Seal was usually the Chancellor, in this case Bishop John Russell, unless other arrangements had been made for it. For a description of Richard III's Great Seal and what it says and shows, see Addendum B below which was written by the late John Ashdown-Hill.



ADDENDUM A

LETTERS PATENT GRANT OF GUÎNES CASTLE LIEUTENANCY TO JAMES TYRELL, DATED 22 JANUARY 1485, IN THE REIGN OF RICHARD III

Transcription & Translation by Erik Michaelson

(Potomack Company Lot # 1088, European & American Fine Arts, Decorative Arts, Russian Icons & Books, November 30, 2023)

Ricardus dei gra[tia] Rex Angl[ie] & Francie & Dominus Hib[er]nie • Om[n]ib[us]
ab quos p[re]sentes l[itte]re p[er]ven[er]int sal[ut]em Sciatis q[uo]d nos p[ro]
div[er]sis causis & considerac[i]o[n]ib[us] nos
sp[eci]alit[er] moventib[us] ac de fidelitate circumspect[i]o[n]e & industria dil[e]c[t]i
& fidelis Consiliarij n[ost]ri Jacobi Tirell' Militis p[ro] corpore n[ost]ro plenus
confidentes assignavim[us] deputavim[us] &
ordinavim[us] ac p[er] p[re]sentes assignam[us] deputam[us] & ordinam[us]
ip[su]m Jacobum Custodem gub[er]natorem & sup[er]visorem Castri n[ost]ri de
Guysnes in partib[us] Picardie ac Ville & Com[itat]u de

² Thanks again to Erik Michaelson and Marie Barnfield, we are also able to identify that Richard Skypton (d.1496) was the clerk of chancery who inscribed and/or witnessed the grant, and his name appears at the end. Skypton was Oxford-educated, and later canon of the royal chapel of St Stephen's Westminster and Master of Chancery in 1488.

Guysnes p[re]dict[i] h[ab]end[is] occupand[is] & exc[er]cend[is] officium
p[re]d[i]c[tu]m q[ua]mdu nob[is] placu[er]it in absencia Dil[e]c[t]i & fidelis
Consiliarij n[ost]ri Joh[ann]is Blount d[omi]ni Mountjoye Dantes &
concedentes eidem Jacobo plenam potestatem & auctoritatem ad ea om[n]ia &
singula que ad officium Custodis Gub[er]natoris & Sup[er]visoris Castri Ville &
Comitatus p[re]dict[orum] p[er]tinent seu
p[er]tinere pot[er]unt in tam amplis modo & forma prout aliquis alius vel aliqui alij
idem officium ante hec tempora h[ab]uit & occupavit aut h[ab]uerunt &
occupaverunt necnon ad t[er]ras
de salvo conductu quibuscunq[ue] p[er]sonis concedend[is] dand[is] & faciend[is]
tam p[er] t[er]ram q[ua]m p[er] mare Eo q[uo]d exp[re]ssa mencio de vero valore
annuo officij p[re]d[i]c[t]i aut de aliis donis sive
concessionib[us] p[er] nos eidem Jacobo ante hec tempora fact[is] in
p[re]sentib[us] minime fact[a] existit aut aliquo statuto actu ordinac[i]o[n]e
p[ro]visione sive restrict[i]o[n]e inde incontr[ariu]m fact[is] non
obstant[e] In cuius rei testimoniu[m] has l[itte]ras n[ost]ras fieri fecim[us] patentes
T[est]e me ip[s]o apud West[monasteriu]m xxij die Januarij Anno r[egni] n[ost]ri
s[ecun]do
Skypton'
p[er] br[ev]e de privato sigillo & de dat[o] p[re]d[i]c[t]a auctoritate
parliamenti

Richard, by the grace of God, King of England and France, and Lord of Ireland.
To all to whom the presents shall come, greeting. Know that we, for various
causes and considerations especially moving us, as as well as the faithfulness,
circumspection, and diligence of our dear and faithful counsellor, James Tirell,
Knight of our body, have in full confidence assigned, appointed, and ordained,
and by the presents do assign, appoint, and ordain, James himself as Warden,
Governor, and Overseer of our Castle of Guysnes in the lands of Picardy as well
as the town and county of the aforesaid Guysnes, to have, occupy, and exercise
the aforesaid office as long as it shall please us, in the absence of our dear and
faithful counsellor John Blount, Lord Mountjoye, giving and granting to the same
James full power and authority to all and singular of those things to which the
office of Warden, Governor, and Overseer of the aforesaid Castle, Town, and
County pertain or will come to pertain, in such ample manner and form as any
other, or any others, have held and occupied the same office before these times,
and also, safe passage to the lands be granted, given, and made by whatever
persons, whether by land or by sea. On the understanding that express mention
of the true yearly value of the aforesaid office or of other gifts or concessions
made by us before these times to the same James is not at all made in these
presents, and any statute, act, ordinance, provision, or restriction made to the
contrary thereof notwithstanding. In testimony of which we have caused these
our letters patent to be made. Witnessed by myself at Westminster on the twenty-
second day of January in the second year of our reign.

Skypton

By writ of Privy Seal, and of the date aforesaid, by authority of
Parliament.

ADDENDUM B

The following is taken from the late John Ashdown-Hill's article on the UK Society's website about the seals used by Richard III during his life. The full article can be found at <https://richardiii.net/research/articles/seals>

The Great Seal of Richard III

Both obverse and reverse of the Great Seal are those used earlier by Richard's brother, King Edward IV.

For Richard's use, the name RICARDUS was substituted. The same matrices were probably also used during the short reign of Edward V. As is usual with great seals, the impression is double-sided and show:

Obverse: the king enthroned, robed and crowned, seated in a trefoiled gothic compartment. The royal arms are held by lions to the left and right of the throne, and there is a Yorkist sunburst to the left and right of the king's footstool.

Reverse: the king, mounted, in armour, gallops towards the right over broken ground. There is a diapered background of lozenges enclosing roses, with fleurs-de-lys and lions' head[s] at the knots of reticulation. Both obverse and reverse bear the inscription:

RICARDUS DEI GRA REX FRANCIE ET ANGLIE ET DOMINUS HIBERNIE

See also:

● *Catalogue of Seals in the British Museum*, vol. 1, Birch, London 1887, pp. 37; 39, nos:

- 319 Add. Ch. 16, 964
- 320 Harl. Ch. 83, C.16
- 321 Harl. Ch. 51 H. 15 (very incomplete)
- 322 Harl. Ch. 43 F.6 (very incomplete)

For further information about the Great Seal of the British monarch, please go to the UK's National Archives website at: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/the-great-seal/>

2024 General Membership Meeting

**2024 Richard III GMM in Santa Fe, New Mexico
November 1-3, 2024**

GMM details as of January 2024:

Our special guest speakers:

Dominic Smee

Renowned for proving that Richard III could have ridden a horse into battle since he has the same spinal curvature as Richard (see <https://www.pbs.org/video/secrets-dead-richards-body-double/>). Dom has had a complete Richard III costume created for him and will show us that and talk about his activities since the 2016 GMM.

Christina Smee

The author of *The Rose of Middleham* talks about her new book.

Philippa Langley

Discusses her books, television shows, and projects. At the time of this publishing, Philippa will at least have a Zoom call with us, but there is a possibility that she will attend IN PERSON! The board is working on that.

Other speakers TBD.

GMM Schedule:

- Friday evening registration and “meet and greet” in the Lamy meeting room.
- Saturday morning breakfast provided by the Drury for hotel guests on the hotel 2nd floor.
- Saturday morning speakers in the Lamy meeting room.
- Lunch will be provided in the Lamy meeting room.
- Saturday afternoon business meeting.
- Saturday afternoon free time.
- Saturday evening banquet with entertainment in the Lamy meeting room.
- Sunday morning breakfast provided by the Drury for hotel guests on the hotel 2nd floor.
- Sunday morning speaker in the Lamy meeting room.

We will also make available an historic walking tour of downtown Santa Fe by a local historian who has deep roots in the area and was once the city historian.

Drury Plaza Hotel in downtown Santa Fe

828 Paseo de Peralta
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 424-2175

To make reservations:

<https://www.druryhotels.com/bookandstay/newreservation/?groupno=10088958>

or call 1-800-325-0720 and refer to our group number: 10088958.

Book your reservations by September 30, 2024, to receive the group rate.



Hotel Details:

The Drury Plaza Hotel is an historic property located just two short blocks from the Santa Fe Plaza, which is the heart of downtown.

Our group room rate will be \$199 per night, which includes a hot buffet breakfast and their trademark KICKBACK®, which is a happy hour buffet from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. (it includes hot food, salads, etc., plus soft drinks and two alcoholic beverages per person per evening). This is the best hotel deal in downtown Santa Fe since it includes two meals per day! Valet parking at the hotel is \$18 per night discounted from \$28 per night.

The Drury Plaza will honor our group rate for extended stays before or after the GMM. This includes the buffet breakfast and KICKBACK®.

Travel and Transportation:

There are several options for getting to Santa Fe:

Santa Fe airport (SAF) is a small facility with limited airlines and flights. To get to the hotel from SAF:

- Usually there are taxis awaiting flights
- Book an Uber
- Make a reservation with a car service:
 - Peak car service (505) 316-2114
 - New Era car service (505) 913-0080

Albuquerque airport (ABQ) is a larger airport—only 1 hour drive to Santa Fe.

Shuttle Services from ABQ to downtown Santa Fe hotels:

- Groome Transportation: 505-474-5696 <https://groometransportation.com/santa-fe/>

Denver airport (DEN) is a large international airport—5 ½ hour drive to Santa Fe

About Santa Fe and New Mexico:

Santa Fe is the capital of New Mexico, and is the oldest capital city in the U.S. (established in 1609). Santa Fe also has the oldest church in the U.S. Our hotel is only two short blocks to the Santa Fe Plaza, which is the heart of the city and marks the end of the historic Santa Fe Trail. The Santa Fe Plaza is also the location of the Native American Market, which is where local Native Americans sell their artwork and handmade jewelry. No need to shop in the local jewelry stores, since buying directly from the artists provides the best deals.

Santa Fe's Cathedral Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi was built between 1869 and 1886 by Archbishop Jean Baptist Lamy. Archbishop Lamy was the first Archbishop of Santa Fe, and Willa Cather's novel, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, is based on his life.



Santa Fe is world-renowned for its art galleries—even the state capitol building has an art gallery. After New York and Los Angeles, Santa Fe has the next highest number of art galleries in the United States. If you're interested in art, this is the place to be. Some examples:

- The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, dedicated to the iconic artist who lived and worked near Santa Fe.
- Canyon Road art galleries include more than 100 galleries, restaurants, and boutiques in a half-mile area.
- IAlA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts is a museum and educational center dedicated to Native American art, history, and culture.
- Meow Wolf, an immersive art experience sponsored in part by longtime local resident George R.R. Martin.

Other Site-Seeing Opportunities:

- Los Alamos (a 30-minute drive away). Did you see the movie *Oppenheimer*? This is where it all happened. Tours are available. And while you're in Santa Fe, visit the bar in the La Fonda Hotel and Oppie's Coffee, both of which Oppie is said to have frequented. <https://visitlosalamos.org>
- Taos. This famous ski town also home to the Taos Art Colony and Kit Carson's house.
- Albuquerque. Did you love *Breaking Bad* and *Better Call Saul*? You can find tours that visit filming sites. Hot air balloon rides are also very popular.
- Sandia Peak Tram. Once the world's longest tramway, it provides a 15-minute ride to Sandia Peak. The restaurant at the top provides panoramic views. This is located near Albuquerque. <https://sandiapeak.com/>
- Bandelier National Monument. Known for its cliff dwellings, rock paintings, and petroglyphs, the monument preserves the homes and archeological sites of the local native inhabitants dating from between 1150 and 1600 AD. <https://www.nps.gov/band/index.htm>
- Pueblos. There are several Native American pueblos near Santa Fe. Some have tours and/or museums.
- Roswell, N.M. The location of the supposed crash of a UFO in 1947. Home to the International UFO Museum and Research Center, and several UFO-related shops.



Reviews

Myrna Smaith, Pauline Calkin

The Mists of Middleham: An Alianore Audley Novel— Brian Wainwright, Kindle Edition, 2023

Readers may remember Alianore Audley as the wise-cracking, no nonsense Yorkist Intelligence operative who gave us her first-hand account of the reigns of Edward IV and Richard III in *The Adventures of Alianore Audley*. Since its publication, additional writings by Alianore have been uncovered in which she recounts some rather strange happenings that occurred while performing a commission for King Edward. At the time Alianore and her husband, Sir Roger Beauchamp, were in the household of the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester at Middleham. Alianore was officially a lady-in-waiting to the Duchess, Anne Neville, but also served with some reluctance as an intelligence officer, keeping Duke Richard and the king apprised of developments along the Scots border.

It is during the Christmas season, 1478 (a particularly boring one according to Alianore) that she and Roger receive a commission from the king to search for the Holy Grail. Alianore doubts it exists, or can be found, but she and Roger embark on the search—it is a royal command, after all. Besides, she plans to submit a detailed and padded expense account.

They hadn't even gotten as far as Doncaster when Roger and Alianore have their first adventure; they are abducted by Robin Hood and his Merry Men. Not the "historic" Robin who was supposed to have lived two centuries before, but a group of re-enactors who see themselves not so much outlaws as caterers. Alianore and Roger are eventually released without being charged for lodging or their gourmet meals after Alianore mentions her particular friend is the Duke of Gloucester and her cousin, King Edward.

Their journey is plagued by more than inept outlaws. Alianore has begun to have visions—the first one seems to be a sort of shrine to Richard but without candles or offerings, or attendant monks— and Roger says some strange things, such as asking an innkeeper for a Bacardi and Coke, whatever that is, and mentioning something about a space-time continuum. By the time they reach London, Alianore is so concerned that dark forces are at work that she consults Bishop Russell, who with the assistance of Bishop Morton (to Alianore's horror and over her objection) performs an exorcism on Roger.

However, Alianore and Roger are not pleased when Lord Hastings explains that the quest for the Grail is a cover story in order for them to travel into Wales and Cornwall to learn about a rumored landing by Jasper Tudor in the summer. Roger is disillusioned that the noble quest for the Grail (an ultra-knightly goal) is merely a dirty spying mission. He feels like seeking an audience with the king and telling him to "stick the whole thing where the Sun in Splendour doesn't shine." Edward charms him instead, and the couple set off on the quest which takes them to Wales and to Warwick and Guy's Cliff where they encounter not only John Rous and a boggart but Ursula Plantagenet. That's right, Edward and Richard's younger sister who was thought to have died in infancy. She is much into mysticism and insists on being called Crystal Plantagenet.

Alianore gets homesick for Middleham. Keep in mind that she has always disliked the place—bone chilling cold and boring, but she tells Roger that is irrelevant now. She needs Middleham. She needs Richard and Anne, for reasons

she can't explain. And she has another vision that she is at King Arthur's court, where Guinevere bears a striking resemblance to Anne Neville, and the more she looks at Arthur the more he seems to resemble Richard of Gloucester.

I won't bother to relate all the twists and turns the plot takes, but, eventually, the search for "Uncle" Jasper and that for the Holy Grail merge, with powerful, unseen forces influencing the characters' actions. Alianore and Anne lead a rescue party that includes the Robin Hood re-enactors when Richard and Roger are both put under spells, spells that can only be lifted by the Grail's power. This is an immensely entertaining work, which can be enjoyed on several different levels. Filled with humor and memorable one-liners, it has an intriguing plot and plenty of adventure. On another, more serious level the ever skeptical Alianore discovers a need in herself to believe in something or someone; she finds it in Richard. Some may think that the comparison between Richard and King Arthur is over the top. Not me; I lapped it up! -P.C.

The Lost Prince— Ethan Bale, Canelo Adventure, 2023

After King Richard III's defeat at Bosworth, Sir John Hawker embarked on a mission to Venice, intent on fulfilling two promises he made to the king: return a precious ruby to the Doge of Venice and protect the dead king's illegitimate son, Sir Giles Ellingham. By the the end of *Hawker and the King's Jewel* (The Swords of the White Rose #1), the aging knight and his rag-tag group of adventurers narrowly escape Venice with their lives— with the help of the mysterious, perhaps mad Maria who claims to be the daughter of Vlad Dracula. The world may think that Vlad has been dead these nine years past, but Maria claims that he survived and is being held prisoner in Wallachia. She offers them fame and fortune if they help her to free him. The decision is left to Sir Giles and he decides to aid Maria in her quest.

Thus, the group embarks on a journey across Croatia and Bosnia to Wallachia and Saxon Transylvania. (It is somewhat unfamiliar territory so I do wish a map of the area had been provided.) Three others join the company: a former comrade of Hawker who shares a secret with Maria, and two soldiers, a Christian and a Muslim, formerly in the employ of the sultan. While the latter pair claim they are mercenaries in need of employment, one of them has sought out Maria in order to kill her in revenge for the killing of his brother. As the trek proceeds, we see various suspicions, rivalries, and ambitions at play. A band of brothers it is not. They all question whether Maria is who she says she is and whether she may be seeking something more than her father.

Hawker is increasingly feeling his age with each battle scar he receives, and is a bit melancholy when he watches his young squire Jack turn into a hardened soldier, inured to killing. He also warns Sir Giles about being ensnared by Maria's charms. But ensnared Giles becomes. When she convinces Giles that they must pose as man and wife and share a bed, she becomes even more enticing with her chaste (up to a point) behavior. And she plays upon his unease about his new found status by emphasizing the bond they share as royal bastards, always referring to him as "son of Richard." Maria doesn't realize that there is another in the group who has designs on Giles for both personal and political reasons, Gaston Dieudonné, the French spy claiming to be Burgundian.

Everyone seems to be sizing one another up in the first part of the novel, but the action gets rolling thereafter. Do they free Vlad? Is Vlad even alive? Let's

not forget about those two mercenaries. And, finally, does Giles end up following Maria, Dieudonné or does he find his own path? I won't spoil the fun by telling you. As in *Hawker and the King's Jewel*, there is plenty of adventure and intrigue, and the characters and their relationships are believable. If you are like me, you'll grow fond of the two mercenaries and find their unlikely friendship appealing. Added to all this, the author is effective in evoking what is to me an exotic time and place. I'll try not to be too impatient waiting for the third installment in the series. -P.C.

Wheel of Fortune—C.F. Dunn, Resolute Books, 2023

A young Isobel Fenton comes face to face with the brutal reality of the Wars of the Roses when two Lancastrian rebels are hunted down and brought to her father's manor by the Earl. Her father, Sir Geoffrey Fenton identifies one of the two as Ralph Lacey, the man who, at Sandal Castle, killed the Earl's father. The Earl orders the beheading of both rebels, but when Sir Geoffrey intercedes, he allows the other, Lacey's young nephew Thomas, to live after he swears fealty to King Edward IV.

Now, four years later, in the spring of 1469, Isobel is living contentedly with her father at Beaumancote manor, attended by a beloved servant, the mute Buena. She has taken over her late mother's role in overseeing the gardens, becoming quite expert in the use of herbs. Her father has taught her Latin and she enjoys many an hour either reading to him or hearing him expound on matters of politics, honor and loyalty to one's king. An old warrior, having lost an eye and the use of a leg at Sandal Castle, Sir Geoffrey is a kind and thoughtful man. His justification for withdrawing his loyalty from King Henry VI and supporting the Duke of York's claim is succinct and compelling—as good as I have read. He describes the bonds of fealty his servants owe him, and which he, in turn, owes the Earl, and King Edward. In return, they owe a duty to protect those who have sworn loyalty to them. King Henry was no longer fit to rule because he was weak and unable to protect his people and ensure peace within his kingdom.

Thomas Lacey has been courting Isobel, and eager to wed her as their families had long planned. He is smitten with her for certain, but he is also ambitious and sees nothing wrong in using her father's name and status as the King's officer for collection of fines and duties to acquire a small bit of ribbon for Isobel from a consignment reserved for the Queen. Cool to the whole idea, Isobel wants to put off any marriage until she turns eighteen, as her mother had wanted. Her father, however, explains to Isobel that the marriage is in her best interests because, in the event of his death, he has no male heir or other male relative to protect and guide her. She must have a husband of status with prospects of advancement and Sir Geoffrey wants her settled before his death. Otherwise, he tells her, "I cannot face it without knowing you have a position of standing." Michaelmas, September 29 is set as the marriage date, but Thomas is going to spend the intervening months in Calais. Sensing that he will die before Isobel can be married, Sir Geoffrey begs the Earl to protect her and see her safely married in the event of his death, reminding the Earl that he owes him a favor. The Earl explodes in anger when he learns that Thomas Lacey is the prospective bridegroom, but he gives his word.

By late August Sir Geoffrey is dead and Isobel is sent to the Earl's castle. There, she will soon learn some hard truths—the vulnerability and powerlessness of a woman without a male protector. First, her standing as the daughter of a noble

lady and a knight is ignored and she is treated as a servant in the nursery of the Earl's two younger daughters, the prepubescent Meg and the much younger Cecily, a holy terror if there ever was one. Then, she is robbed of her innocence when the Earl takes notice of her and becomes so obsessed that he rapes her.

Isobel just wants to return home, marry Thomas and be the lady of the manor, taking care of her people. The Earl will not allow her marriage to Thomas, of course, but he will not allow her to marry anyone. He installs her as his mistress in a tower chamber next to his, attended by the crone Ursula, because she has been shunned by every other castle inhabitant, even Meg and the Earl's younger brother, Robert, who has been somewhat sympathetic to her plight. She now has standing, the exalted position of the Earl's mistress, as she bitterly remarks.

One reason—but not the only one—that the Earl does not allow Isobel's marriage to Thomas is that he suspects (rightly) that the latter is in league with the Earl of Warwick and the King's brother, the Duke of Clarence, in rebellion against the king. To draw Thomas out, he orders Isobel to write a letter to him and, in a deeply symbolic act the morning after the rape, he demands that she deliver her father's seal to him to affix to the letter. He then sends Isobel, guarded by Robert, back to her estate to spring the trap. When things go awry, he comes to their rescue proving he is a good lord, ensuring Isobel's safety and governing her estates. A good lord, but not a husband whom she will never have if he has his way.

So much more happens to Isobel than I cannot possibly describe it all here, including ending, quite literally, on a knife's edge. In any case a simple plot synopsis cannot do justice to this novel: it is excellently written with powerful dramatic scenes and characters who are vividly brought to life, ranging from the spiteful Joan, Isobel's fellow nursery maid, to the ugly duckling Meg. I even came to feel a small modicum of sympathy for one of the more unlikeable characters, the haughty Countess. There are no long boring history lessons here; the characters live the events. Ricardians will enjoy Isobel's encounters with the young Richard, Duke of Gloucester, whom she describes as "clever, funny —kind when he had no need to be."

With a less talented author, Isobel's story would have become a banal historical romance. Certainly, it has some elements common to that genre: a spirited and attractive young heroine, and a troubled man (but not exactly a "hero") whose past may hold some dark secrets. Isobel is no Mary Sue, however, if for no other reason than the fortitude with which she confronts her degraded status. "I am nothing" she tells the Earl, "I am no man's daughter, sister, wife, mother . . . What I had my—my estates, my servants, my . . . *virtue*—you have taken from me, and I am left with nothing." She fears that she will eventually become invisible—like the crone Ursula.

As for the Earl, time and circumstances have made him a hard and unforgiving man. Was it the death of his son and heir, the killing of his father, or something else that forged his iron exterior? Sir Geoffrey hints that a tale—one better left untold—may hold the answer. And, yes, he does care for Isobel and will keep her safe and manage her estates, as a good lord should. He doesn't quite understand, though, why that is not enough for her nor why she doesn't seem to need him, because he needs her—he needs her very much. He sees himself as her prisoner who can only be freed from her spell by death. As he tells his brother, "When has woman

ever been without fault since Eve beguiled Adam and sowed the seed of our downfall.? When is any woman truly innocent? They deceive us all, knowingly or unwittingly, Rob; they are a trap into which we must fall.”

This is the first in a series so we can anticipate some revelations in future volumes. The untold tale about the Earl may be told, and questions answered about his connections with Isobel’s mother and the reason why the attendant Buena fears to show herself to him. Maybe, we’ll even learn his given name. Complicating things further is the love that has grown between Isobel and Robert. (Incidentally, Robert has sworn allegiance to the young Richard, Duke of Gloucester, which must mean one thing—that Rob is a good guy. Right?) We also know that the wheel of fortune will soon turn against the Yorkists so we can expect many changes to come for all the characters.

This is a brilliant work that weaves together the politics of the time with Isobel’s personal drama to create a rich tapestry. If you have any interest in historical fiction, do yourself a favor and read it. -P.C.

The Ballad of Crookback & Shakespeare - Clive Greenwood and Jason Wing, TSI Drama, 2021

*“Brush up on your Shakespeare
Start quoting him now.
Brush up on your Shakespeare
And the women you will wow.”*
Cole Porter, “Kiss Me Kate”

This was more than adequately reviewed by Pauline in our last, so I will only add a few remarks. The authors never really get around to proving “Crookback” didn’t do it. The main attraction is the insult-fest, between Shakespeare and Edmund Tilney, Master of the Revels; between Shakespeare and Marlow, Shakespeare and Kyd, Shakespeare and Henslowe, Greene, etc et al. And all of the above reciprocally and contra each other. And occasionally coming to one another’s defense. Except nobody goes after Richard Tomcliffe, Chief torturer, who invents his own racks - or comes to his defense either.

Here is Our Will, having found out that Edmund Tilney has written a ‘learned book’ on marriage:

Your wife, Dame May, you are her fourth husband, are you not? She gets through them, doesn’t she?

Like a fire. Ship through the Armada. You want to watch her.

Oooh, catty! But men can’t be catty, can they?

Which leads me, roundabout, into a Shakespeare review, and a sidebar on drama in general. Last summer, I picked up a book at a thrift shop, as follows:

No Fear Shakespeare: The Taming of the Shrew

(Shakespeare Side-by-side with plain English. The play plus a translation anyone can understand.) SparkNotes, 2005

I could have gotten Hamlet. Or I could have done both, at those bargain prices. Why I picked this play instead, I can’t say. Maybe a whim, maybe a leaning towards comedy in general, rather than tragedy. Now that I think it over, maybe it was

Howard Keel, of the big, impressive voice, and the big, impressive chest it came out of. I was at a very impressionable age then. (Sigh)

W.S. was not above using gimmicks, and in "Taming" he used one that was a bit shopworn even then. But then after setting up the elaborate practical joke on the drunken Sly, he pretty much forgets about it, except for one brief reprise. One of the first examples of this plot device in English is Fulgens and Lucrece, by Henry Medwall, dating from the 1490's. The author was a protege of Bishop Morton, but don't hold that against him. The play has the distinction of being one of the first secular dramas in English Lit, as well as one of the first credited to an individual author. The theme of what might be called the main play is the courtship of the senator's daughter, Lucretece, by two suitors, one of noble birth, the other a Tudor 'new man.' This is paralleled and travestied by the courtship of Lucrece's maid by the two clowns, A and B, not otherwise named. Of course, the young lady eventually picks the rich but striving suitor of no particular birth, though the playwright keeps assuring his audience that this is not to be used as a general rule, and it's all fiction anyhow,

To return to our 'shrew,' I feel I should include a sample of the 'translation' here. Unlike 'Hamlet,' the comedy does not include very many famous quotations. Here is a sample of a slanging-match, or insult -fest, which is more or less where we came in. From Act 4, Scene 1, Petrucio is getting on the case of a hapless servant, whom he has just tripped up:

A whoreson, beetle-headed, flap-eared knave! - Come, Kate, sit down. I know you have a stomach.

The translation:

He's a son of a bitch, a moron, a total jerk! - Come sit down Kate. I know you must be hungry.

Message to readers: Have fun, and broaden your vocabulary of invective. A win-win situation! - M.S.

The Traitor's Tale— Margaret Frazer, Berkley Prince Crime, 2008

There seem to be few historical fiction novels that even mention Richard, Duke of York, and those that I've read usually dismiss him as a mediocrity. Thus, I was pleased when I read the penultimate *Sister Frevisse* mystery that takes place in 1450, from Cade's Rebellion to the return of the Duke of York from Ireland. It's a tumultuous time in the aftermath of the downfall and murder of several of the king's favorites including the Duke of Suffolk. Alice Chaucer, Duchess of Suffolk has requested her cousin Dame Frevisse to stay with her for a time; the reasons are unclear but perhaps just as a calming influence as well as acting as a sounding board for her anger at her late husband, whom she came to view as a powerful but small-minded, grasping man. The Duchess becomes alarmed for the safety of her young son when several of her husband's servants, among them his clerk, priest, and steward disappear and some are murdered. Frevisse is joined in her investigation by Joliffe, the player who has appeared in earlier novels in this series as well and in his own series of mysteries. Here, he is one of the Duke of York's spies.

Frevisse and Joliffe discover a secret about England's recent loss of Normandy. It wasn't due to Suffolk's and Somerset's incompetence; they actively sought its loss. The murders were motivated by the need to keep this nasty little

fact quiet, and Frevisse and Joliffe search for a letter in which Suffolk disclosed the identity of the person or persons behind this plot. Also, Joliffe must warn the Duke of York before he leaves Ireland of a plot to arrest him on a false charge of treason. There are lots of twists and turns and even at the end we are left in doubt as to whether one character is friend or foe. The ending is, perhaps, too drawn out—the author does have a tendency to do this, but both Frevisse and Joliffe are philosophical characters whose thoughts I enjoy reading. Although the Duke of York is an off-stage character until the very end, his presence looms large—and he is favorably viewed by Joliffe and the common people. (Another plus for me.) One of, if not my favorite novels in both series—perhaps the Duke of York effect.

The author has the rare ability of seamlessly weaving historical events into the fabric of the narrative as demonstrated in this novel, *The Bastard's Tale* reviewed below, and several short stories including *The Simple Logic of It* (wherein Bishop Pecock aids the Duke of York in defending against false charges brought by Bishop Moleyns), and *Neither Pity, Love, Nor Fear* (featuring a passive aggressive Henry VI). Not all the author's novels and short stories feature political figures—in fact most do not—but they all are wonderful evocations of medieval life in England, and have solid mysteries. I couldn't ask for more. -P.C.

The Bastard's Tale—Margaret Frazer, Robert Hale, 2004

Dame Frevisse becomes involved in political intrigue when she attends her cousin Alice, Duchess of Suffolk, at Bury St. Edmunds during the time of the 1447 Parliament. The ailing Bishop Beaufort has requested her (required, as the Bishop has made her presence there a condition of granting largesse to her priory) to observe and render aid to another of his agents when requested. That agent is Joliffe the play actor with whom she has been previously acquainted.

The king's uncle, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, has not been active in national politics for a few years after the imprisonment of his beloved wife Eleanor Cobham on charges of witchcraft. Now, he is lured to attend this Parliament with the king's promise of a pardon for Eleanor. He goes to Parliament attended by some 80 knights, including his bastard son, Arteys ("Arthur" in English.). The Duke of Suffolk, the king's favorite, has trumpeted that Gloucester is planning to commit treason and has brought thousands. As history tells us Gloucester is arrested and dies in custody. While his death may be due to natural causes, Arteys witnesses an attempt on his life which precipitates a stroke. Who ordered the attempt? Probably Suffolk. Frevisse, Joliffe, and Bishop Pecock join forces to find out, but more importantly to save young Arteys from being hanged, drawn and quartered. Pecock thinks of a clever ploy to do this, but it requires Frevisse to lie to Suffolk—and she does tell a couple of whoppers.

The reader accompanies Arteys as he is placed on the hurdles and drawn to the place of execution, feeling his anguish every step of the way. This is a very engaging tale which is based on historical fact—the only mention of Arteys is in connection with the happenings of 1447 and he disappears from the historical record after that. For Ricardians there are several favorable mentions of the Duke of York who also helps out in the end.—P.C.

Board, Staff, and Chapter Contacts

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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TREASURER: **Deborah Kaback**
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Charlotte NC 28277
treasurer@r3.org

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR: **Wayne Ingalls**
704 NW Euclid Ave.
Lawton, OK 73507
membership@r3.org

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR:

A. Compton Reeves
1560 Southpark Circle
Prescott, AZ 86305
immediate_past_chairman@r3.org

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE: **Carole Bell, Mary Miller, Joan Szechtman**
director-at-large@r3.org

COMMITTEES

CHAPTERS ADVISOR: Open

• chapters@r3.org

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1132 Country Place
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fictionlibrary@r3.org

LIBRARIAN: Research, **Susan Troxell**
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researchlibrary@r3.org

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Library: **Andy Hart**
267 Philadelphia Ave
Chambersburg, PA 17201
articlesavlibrary@r3.org

RESEARCH OFFICER: **A. Compton Reeves**
1560 Southpark Circle
Prescott, AZ 86305
research_officer@r3.org

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER: **Wayne Ingalls**
public_relations_officer@r3.org

SALES OFFICER: **Open**
• sales@r3.org

WEB CONTENT MANAGER: Open
webcontentmanager@r3.org

WEBMASTER: **Cheryl Greer**
webmaster@r3.org

EDITOR: **Tara Kolden, Joan Szechtman**
info@r3.org

ASSISTANT EDITOR: **Diana Rubino, Colleen Goos**

assistant_editor@r3.org

RICARDIAN READING EDITORS:

ricardian_reading_editor@r3.org

Myrna Smith • 361-415-1119

401 Northshore Blvd, #109, Portland, TX
78374

Pauline Calkin

1132 Country Place, Redlands, CA 92374

Note: If you are submitting a physical book for review, please email the reviewers first to determine who and where to mail it.

CHAPTER CONTACTS *

FLORIDA: William Gouveia

wgouveia@cfl.rr.com

ILLINOIS: Janice Weiner

6540 N. Richmond St. • Chicago, IL 60645

jlweiner@sbcglobal.net

MICHIGAN AREA: Larry Irwin

5715 Forman Dr • Bloomfield Hills, MI 48301

(248) 626-5339 • katycdc@yahoo.com

NORTHWEST: Jim Mitchell

ayorkist@yahoo.com

NEW YORK-METRO AREA: Maria Elena Torres

3216 Fillmore Avenue • Brooklyn, NY 11234

ejbronte@gmail.com

Tidewater (VA): Elizabeth Bateman

concordiaerb@aol.com

Arizona: Marion Low

dickon3@cox.net

Rocky Mountain (CO): Dawn Shafer

dawn_alicia_shafer@yahoo.com

*Notes:

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- Copy deadlines (submissions may be accepted for each issue after stated deadline, but not guaranteed):
 - March issue is January 1
 - September issue is July 1

New Printer and Color

A few weeks ago, the printer we had used for the past twelve years notified us that they are no longer printing short run jobs. Unfortunately, we fall into that category.

We are testing PrintingCenterUSA for the March issue of the Ricardian Register. One benefit from this printer is the cost to print a full color interior is affordable (about an additional 60 ¢ a booklet), so we are testing this as well. Therefore, we would love to get your feedback (email to info@r3.org).

From the Editor

I am honored to have been the American Branch's editor since 2011, when we suddenly lost our editor (and printer as she was both). About a year ago, I thought I should look for my replacement to get fresh eyes and avoid having to find my replacement in an emergency. Tara Kolden responded to the email blast for editor, and she has been our co-editor starting with producing the December Ricardian Chronicle.

Starting with the Chronicle, Tara and I have collaborated, with Tara assuming the lead role with this publication. I will continue to be available for consultation for a period of time. However, I don't think the entire responsibility should rest on one person, so if anyone reading this is interested in getting involved, please contact the editor(s) at info@r3.org.

Joan Szechtman

I'm very excited to be taking on the role of editor, and have greatly enjoyed learning the ins and outs of bringing both the Chronicle and the Register into being. I look forward to working with you all and helping publicize the wonderful history, scholarship, and sense of community that makes the American Branch so great.

Tara Kolden

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