

From She-Wolf to Martyr: The Reign and Disputed Reputation of Johanna I of Naples. Elizabeth Casteen.

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Johanna (or Giovanna) I of Naples is without doubt one of the most intriguing and controversial reigning queens of the Middle Ages. However, studies of her reign have been hampered by the damage to the Neapolitan archives in World War II, making Émile Léonard's classic 1930s study the last that could fully engage with the documentary evidence from her reign in Naples. Elizabeth Casteen has overcome this considerable roadblock to research on Johanna's reign by focusing instead on the queen's reputation, or *fama*, using a wide-ranging corpus of contemporary source material to understand both the perception of her reign in her own lifetime and how it has consequently been remembered.

While Casteen moves chronologically through Johanna's life and reign, the author is clear that this is not intended to be a biographical study. However, while remaining focused on an analysis of key periods in the queen's reign, Casteen provides adequate narrative to lead readers through the arc of Johanna's life even if they are previously unfamiliar with her reign. Woven throughout the chapters of the book are two key themes: queenship and *fama*. Casteen highlights the difficulties faced by medieval queens regnant like Johanna in establishing their legitimacy first as successors and then sovereigns, exercising authority, and retaining their power and position vis-à-vis a king consort. Casteen engages deeply with the concept of *fama*, discussing Johanna's attempts to shape her image as ruler and how the queen's reputation rose and fell over the course of her reign and after her death. Ultimately, the queen's reputation was subject to

the turbulent political situation within her own kingdom — division and rivalry within the house of Anjou as well as division within the Church with the advent of the papal schism. Casteen's approach is perfectly suited to an analysis of Johanna's reign as she is the ideal case study to examine the challenges of a female ruler, particularly with regard to relationships with kings consort and to the difficulties of controlling one's *fama*.

The five main chapters each examine a key period and aspect of Johanna's reign. The first two chapters deal with her turbulent relationships with her first two husbands: her Angevin cousin Andrew of Hungary, who was eventually murdered in September 1345, and Johanna's equally disastrous second marriage to another cousin, Louis of Taranto, who effectively supplanted her. Casteen gives a thorough delineation of the events that led to Andrew's murder and its aftermath, as well as analyzing the catastrophic damage to Johanna's reputation through her supposed involvement in her husband's death. In the second chapter, Casteen demonstrates how Johanna's loss of power to Louis of Taranto actually served to repair some of the damage to her reputation, changing her from a murdering she-wolf to a victim of her second husband, who was increasingly viewed as an incompetent tyrant.

The following three chapters shift focus away from Johanna's relationship with her consorts and instead examine her relationship with the Church, including the popes of the period, saints such as Brigitta of Sweden and Catherine of Siena, and finally, her role in the papal schism. Casteen demonstrates the centrality of Johanna's relationship with the Church to both the success and perception of her reign. While she had positive relationships with Urban V and Gregory XI, which led to her being portrayed as a "most devoted daughter" of the Church, Casteen demonstrates that her decision to switch sides in the papal schism from Urban VI to Clement VII not only caused catastrophic damage to her reputation, but led to her own destruction at the hands of her erstwhile heir, Charles of Durazzo.

In summary, this work is an excellent study of the reign of Johanna I of Naples and would be useful for both students and scholars who are interested in queenship and/or the political and religious developments of the fourteenth century. Casteen has developed a very effective approach to surmount the difficulty of a paucity of surviving evidence for particular aspects of Johanna's reign and has given us a work that increases our understanding of this intriguing woman, female rulership in the Middle Ages, and the crucial importance of *fama* during one's lifetime and beyond.

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