Beyond Private Matter: A Prayer Roll for Queen Margaret of Anjou

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Abstract

A prayer roll made for Margaret of Anjou (1430–1482), queen consort to Henry VI of England, has received little attention despite its production for a queen Shakespeare called the "she-wolf of France." Previous descriptions have characterized the roll as a conventional display of female piety and evidence of Margaret's devotion to the Virgin Mary. However, closer attention reveals that, far from being conventional, the roll is an anomalous object on a number of counts. It is the only known illuminated roll devoted to the Virgin; its specific representation of the Virgin and Child is unprecedented; it contains none of the typical instructions to the devotee to place the roll close to the body; and it is nearly twice as wide as the average prayer roll. This article revises our understanding of the Margaret of Anjou roll by comparing it to a range of material beyond the intimate devotional objects to which it has been related previously.

Consideration of the historical circumstances of Margaret's arrival in England, records describing a ceremonial pageant that honored her, and objects associated with her highlights the political stakes attendant on Margaret's assimilation of a Marian exemplar. Embodying features of the genealogical rolls disseminated in support of her husband, the Margaret of Anjou roll asserts a Marian genealogy for the queen tantamount to the monarchic lineages that legitimized her husband. By intertwining both Marian and genealogic discourse, the roll articulates how Margaret of Anjou was integral to the welfare of England.

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1. Margaret of Anjou has been the subject of several biographies, all of which have been critically assessed and revised in Helen E. Maurer, Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003). For the most thorough biography of Henry VI, see Ralph Griffiths, The Reign of King Henry VI: The Exercise of Royal Authority, 1422–1461 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).
Figure 1. Margaret of Anjou prayer roll, Oxford, Jesus College, MS 124, on deposit in the Bodleian Library, detail of Margaret of Anjou kneeling beneath a rota with the Virgin and Child, ca. 1445–55 (photo: The Principal and Fellows of Jesus College, Oxford).
performative qualities. Earlier descriptions of the roll have characterized it as a typical expression of female piety that reflects Margaret of Anjou’s personal devotion to the Virgin. Beyond this assessment, the roll has never been the subject of extended consideration, possibly because, as an ostensible prayer roll, it is considered a known entity, lacking the requisite enigmas that move scholars to the critical act. Yet the roll is a rare object on a number of counts, including its noticeably large width, its depiction of a queen of England, and its dedication to the Virgin. In recent years, as art history has taken an increasingly material turn, scholars who have addressed the physicality and presence of works of art have found that older interpretations require reevaluation, and objects of seemingly little interest offer intriguing possibilities for assessment. The Margaret of Anjou roll affords one such opportunity, through which we stand to gain insights into the participation of objects in formulating ideals of queenship in the later Middle Ages.

As Madeline Caviness, Joan Holladay, Anne Rudloff Stanton, and others have argued, objects made for medieval queens are far from typical aids to female instruction and piety. Rather, they demand analysis from a perspective that is sensitive to the exceptionality of their intended viewers. What a study of the Margaret of Anjou roll adds to our understanding is that objects produced for the queen’s gaze extended beyond the private to participate in the public and political discourse that articulated a queen consort’s role within her husband’s regime. We can only begin to gauge the nature of this participation by attending closely to the physical properties of this object, its material mediation, and its performative valence.

2. Diana Dunn remarks of this roll and another image of Margaret of Anjou that, “at one level these images may be regarded as no more than conventional representations of piety and learning but even so they are neglected by historians who prefer to focus on evidence of Margaret’s less womanly conduct.” Dunn, “Margaret of Anjou, Queen Consort of Henry VI: A Reassessment of her Role, 1445–53,” in Crown, Government and People in the Fifteenth Century, ed. Rowena Archer (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 107–43, at 112. Joanna L. Laynesmith refers to the roll as “an exquisite prayer roll to the Virgin,” which she includes among a list of deeds and objects that attest to Margaret’s Marian devotion. See Laynesmith, “Constructing Queenship at Coventry: Pageantry and Politics at Margaret of Anjou’s Secret Harbour,” in The Fifteenth Century III: Authority and Subversion, ed. Linda Clark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 137–47, at 143. And Elizabeth Danbury writes, “In a Flemish book of hours probably made for her, Anne of Bohemia is portrayed at prayer before the Virgin Mary . . . while in a roll containing a hymn and prayers to the Virgin, Margaret of Anjou appears kneeling in worship . . . These images again underline both queens’ personal devotion to the Virgin Mary, the model for all queens—as for all women.” Danbury, Images of English Queens in the Later Middle Ages, Historian 46 (1995): 3–9, at 8.


4. A great deal of research has been devoted to the dependence of twentieth-century art historical practice on photography and the advancement of reproductions-dependent methodologies by Heinrich Wölfflin and Erwin Panofsky. The first full-length historiographic study to approach this practice critically, and which remains a seminal work, is Michael Ann Holly, Panofsky and the
within contemporary idioms of queenship. An account that is receptive to these features leads to the conclusion that the roll did not operate on an exclusively private or devotional plane. What emerges, instead, is an object that co-opts conventional languages of pious expression for the purposes of issuing a specific, timely, and public statement about Queen Margaret's integrality to the welfare of England.

**Margaret of Anjou as Queen Consort: Ideals and Expectations**

While queenship in the Middle Ages was often expressed in Marian terms, Margaret of Anjou presents a case in which the queen's assimilation of this eternal ideal was promoted explicitly and frequently as the remedy to two contemporary crises: first, the uncertain future of the Lancastrian house, which had no legitimate successor to Henry VI; and second, the Hundred Years' War, which the English had been losing steadily since the death of Henry V in 1422. Margaret's ties to some of Europe's most significant ruling families promised a solution to each of these dilemmas. Of her early life, relatively little is known. She was born on 23 March 1430, the daughter of René of Anjou (1409–1480) and Isabella of Lorraine (1400–1453) and the niece of Charles VII of France. Much of Margaret's youth was spent under the care of her mother and her paternal grandmother, Yolande of Aragon (d. 1442), women who had ruled in their respective husbands' and sons' absences and who acquired reputations for independence and administrative acumen. Her entrée into politics came at the age of nine, when she became the subject of numerous marriage negotiations. Despite a negligible dowry and empty titles to lands over which her father had utterly no control, Margaret was a strategic choice for the English in their pursuit of a conclusion to the Hundred Years' War, and she was betrothed to Henry VI in 1444.

The marriage of Margaret to Henry VI in the following year was therefore exceptional for the symbolic freight it supported and for the formidable promises it was expected to fulfill. While it was entirely typical for a royal marriage to represent and effect political alliances, Margaret's marriage to Henry VI shouldered the added onus of symbolizing the anticipated conclusion to a long-standing war; and while it was a queen's duty to produce an heir to the throne, Margaret's nubility was the single coefficient capable of perpetuating an entire royal house. An exuberant letter to Margaret from Cecily Neville, wife of Richard, duke of York, gives vivid language to the hopes pinned on Margaret's pregnancy in 1453. Sending her best wishes, Cecily prays for the "noble fruit of your said body, for the greate trust and most confortable sverty and wele of this realtime and of the kynges true leige people of the same." What is important for the present purposes is that immediate and desperately desired political ramifications attended Margaret's ability to carry out her main function as consort. Via the lineage from which she descended and the lineage she would extend, Margaret was to be a guarantor of both national stability and international quietude.

Recent biographies have tended to parse the queen's life in two parts, one on either side of significant events that occurred in 1453. Margaret gave birth to a long-awaited son in the same year that the war reached its disastrous conclusion for the English, with the loss of all territories in France except Calais. Exacerbating the tension of this period was Henry VI's mental collapse between August 1453 and December 1454, which—depending on one's point of view—necessitated or provided an opportune alibi for the queen's growing political involvement. Whatever the actual dynamics or motives, Queen Margaret began in this period to defend vigorously her husband's and, by extension, her son's place on the throne from challenges and eventually military attacks by Richard, duke of York, and his growing faction. Her public visibility and involvement in political affairs progressively increased in the years leading up to Henry's deposition in 1461, during their exile and his brief reaccession at the end of 1470, and finally at his death six months later. It is this period that earned her Shakespeare's moniker—the "she-wolf of France" with a "tiger's heart wrapt in woman's hide"—and the repu-

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6. The most extensive recent discussion of Margaret's early life can be found in Margaret L. Kekewich, *The Good King: René of Anjou and Fifteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

7. Maurer explores these expectations in *Margaret of Anjou*, 17–48.


10. For a summary of various perspectives on Margaret's political interventions and entanglements during these years, see Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 77–111. As Maurer has it, Henry's incapacity simply disrupted the fiction that Margaret had been acting on behalf of her husband all along.


tation by which she is most famously known. As a result, a debate that has for years monopolized accounts of Margaret's life considers the extent to which her actions during the early part of her reign as consort preforged her political interventions and ambitions in the latter part. My concern here, however, is not with Margaret's actions and character but, rather, with contemporary notions as to her role within the king's regime and how these notions were expressed in objects associated with the queen. More broadly, I am suggesting that the object under investigation emerged from an overdetermined matrix of perception and expectation and was likewise informed by a range of objects, events, and performances in which such perceptions and expectations found expression. As we shall see, the Margaret of Anjou roll is a devotional object modeled on the personal prayer rolls that were produced in mid-fifteenth-century England, but it is in so many ways discrepant with this corpus—not least in its production for so exceptional a figure (i.e., a queen)—that it resists simple categorization as an object of female devotion.

**The Margaret of Anjou Roll**

Consideration of the Margaret of Anjou roll reveals that, beyond the familiar contours of a devotional roll, it bears numerous anomalies in its illumination, facture, and textual contents—anomalies that all but rule out its function as a private devotional object. The precise circumstances of the roll's commission are unknown, but attestation to its connection with Margaret of Anjou appears on the roll's dorse: a note written in 1681 by Anthony Wood, secretary to the antiquarian Ralph Sheldon. It states, “the picture within drawne was made for Margaret of Anjou, wife of Hen 6 of England, as it appears by the arms joyning to it // 1681 Absoc.” Further, the bookscript and the pictorial illumination localize the production of the roll to London about 1445–55, sometime within the decade following Margaret’s arrival in England and marriage to Henry VI in 1445. The style of the illumination indicates that the roll was executed by an associate of or by William Abell (d. ca. 1474) himself, a figure who, among numerous other works, illuminated a genealogy of Henry VI as well as the charters for Eton College (1440) and King's College, Cambridge (1446). The charters are particularly reminiscent of the Margaret of Anjou roll in their representation of the monarch kneeling below the Virgin of the Assumption (Fig. 2). In terms of its personnel, geography, and date, then, the roll emerged from an artistic milieu closely linked with the court and from what we know to have been the place and time period marking the zenith of prayer rolls' production.

13. Earlier biographers did indeed see Margaret’s aggression (or capacity for it) in these early years; see Mary Ann Hookham, [*Life and Times of Margaret of Anjou*. . . .](London: Tinsley, 1872), 1:279–321; and J. J. Bagley, *Margaret of Anjou: Queen of England* (London: Jenkins, 1948). More recently, revisionist accounts argue that between 1445 and 1453 Margaret acted according to the expectations of good ladyship to which she, as a queen, would have been held. See Dunn, “Margaret of Anjou, Queen Consort of Henry VI”; and Patricia-Ann Lee, “Reflections of Power: Margaret of Anjou and the Dark Side of Queenship.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (1986): 183–217, at 183–91. In yet another revision, Kekewich (Good King, 1:11–12) perceives Margaret to have been a canny political advocate for her Valois family, who actively pursued its interests during the peace negotiations of 1445.


The origins of the twenty-five surviving examples demonstrate that prayer rolls appear to have been a specifically English devotional aid produced in the late fourteenth and throughout the fifteenth century; several extant examples were also produced in the Netherlands, which had a large English population. They are typically constructed from narrow strips of parchment and of two or more membranes pasted or sewn together, sometimes amounting to a length of more than 180 cm (almost 6 feet) and in rare cases many more than that. The illumination and its adjoining text are often composed within numerous short registers that facilitate sectional reading and viewing as the roll is unfurled, a process eased by the pipes of wood, ivory, or some other durable material on which they were originally wound. Of the twenty-five extant rolls, the majority were produced in the fifteenth century, either in England or for English patrons both male and female. Almost all examples feature narrow but sometimes very long rolls, which have been numbered at sixteen; in addition, there are five archival references for rolls now lost. See Hans-Walter Stork, "Reliktkunstliche auf den Tafelbildern des Conrad von Soest, oder: was auf den Bildern zu lesen ist," in Conrad von Soest: neue Forschungen über den Maler und die Kulturgeschichte der Zeit um 1400, ed. Brigitte Bubel (Gütersloh: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2004), 166–94. Stork does not cite the shelfmarks for the sixteen rolls he has located, so it is not possible to know whether our lists correspond. My count brings the number of extant rolls up to twenty-five, the shelfmarks of which are as follows: Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 7–1953; Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 32; Edinburgh, Scottish Catholic Archives MS GB 0240 CB/57/9 (olim Blairs College 9); London, British Library, MS Add. 22029; London, British Library, MS Add. 32006; London, British Library, MS Add. 88929 (olim Durham, Ushaw College Library MS 291); London, British Library, MS Egerton 3044; London, British Library, Harley Rot. 43 A. 14 (this manuscript is housed in the British Library under the shelfmark Harley Charter 43 A. 14 and is described in the Harley Charters catalogue, although the case for the manuscript says Rot., and it is cited as such elsewhere); London, British Library, Harley Rot. T. 11; London, Wellcome Historical Medical Library, MS 632; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 28961; New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, MS 410; New York, Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library, MS Add. 04; New York, Morgan Library & Museum, MS G.39; New York, Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.486; New York, Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.779; New York, Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.1092; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Add. E. 4; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodleian Roll 16 (SC 2975); Oxford, Jesus College, MS 124, on deposit in the Bodleian Library; Princeton University Library, MS 126; Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek, MS theol. 45; San Marino, Huntington Library, HM 26054; San Marino, Huntington Library, HM 39467; Utrecht, Catharijneconvent, ABM h4a; and a roll now held in the private collection of Toshiyuki Takamya but formerly housed in St. John's Seminary in Winnen, Germany (for a description, see Christopher de Hamel's entry in the sale catalogue Sotheby's, London, 24 June 1980, Catalogue of Western Manuscripts and Miniatures, 68, lot 73). This list does not include the many workaday cartellini, narrow but sometimes very long rolls on which charms or amuletic texts were written by professional scribes, local sages, or by laypeople for their own use. Also excluded from this list are Exultet rolls, which appear to have been mainly an Italian devotional accessory that flourished in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. See Guglielmo Cavallo, Rotoli di Exultet dell’Italia meridionale (Bari: Adriatica, 1973); and Thomas Forrest Kelly, The Exultet in Southern Italy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
texts and images that relate to the wounds of Christ (arma Christi). 24

A further feature that occurs in almost every known prayer roll is an explicit call to tactile engagement, which is aided by visual stimuli and attested by traces of physical interaction: 25 The illumination on these rolls runs the gamut of quality, whether, as in the prayer roll made about 1439 for Henry Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, with luscious miniatures, or, as in the roll made about 1500 for a woman of the Lancaster-Fleming family of Westmoreland, with desiccated penwork surrounding a stylized rendering of a kneeling devotee. 26 Reinforcing the significance of tactile religious experience in these rolls are the instructions they include, often in the vernacular (even when the majority of the roll’s text is in Latin), enjoining the worshipper to incline his attention to the images before him. The Beauchamp roll (Fig. 3), for example, repeatedly calls on the reader to “regardes,” while the Prince Henry prayer roll—produced in the late fifteenth century for an as-yet-unidentified patron and given to the prince who eventually became Henry VIII—contains a miniature of the Crucifixion followed by instructions that expressly refer the viewer to its form (Fig. 4): “And then stedefastly behold the sydes & sey. . . . And so behold the handes & sey. . . . And then behold the hed and sey.” 27 Common to all of these instructions

25. Aside from the Margaret of Anjou roll, I know of only one roll (Princeton University Library, MS 126) that does not contain instructions for the devotee to look at or in some manner handle it. See Krochalis, “God and Mammon,” 213. For indexical evidence of physical interactions with manuscripts and rolls, see Rudy, “Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls.”
27. “And then steadfastly behold the sides and say. . . . And so behold the hands and say. . . . And then behold the head and say.” Van der Velden (“Prayer Roll of Henry Beauchamp,” 546–49) includes a transcription of the text on the Beauchamp roll. On the Prince Henry roll (London, British Library, MS Add. 88929), see McKendrick, Lowden, and Doyle, Royal Manuscripts: The Genius of Illumination, cat. no. 44.
is a reliance on sight in order to stimulate an empathic response to Christ’s suffering.

Other rolls encourage physical interaction to solicit divine protection or for more explicitly amuletic and theurgic purposes. A number of the arma Christi rolls, for example, open with some variation on “This cross measures one fifteenth the height of our Lord Jesus Christ. And on the day that you carry it with you or look upon it, you shall have these great gifts.” London, British Library, Harley Rot. 43 A. 14. Quoted from Bühler, “Prayers and Charms,” 274.

28. “This cross measures one fifteenth the height of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And on the day that you carry it with you or look upon it, you shall have these great gifts.” London, British Library, Harley Rot. 43 A. 14. Quoted from Bühler, “Prayers and Charms,” 274.

29. The two might actually be considered the same, according to the theory of extramission. In this medieval theory of optics, eyes emit rays that commingle with rays emanated by the object viewed.
Unlike the rolls just described, the Margaret of Anjou roll contains neither the material, visual, textual, nor residual features to intimate that it was put to personal or amuletic use. Significantly, Margaret’s roll has a much ampler width than all surviving prayer rolls, a feature that is obscured in photographic reproductions (Fig. 5). It is constructed from two long parchment membranes pasted together, for a total length of 158 cm and a uniform width of 22.5 cm. In contrast, the average width of extant prayer rolls is 12.8 cm, a number that accurs even greater importance when we consider that the average span of a modern adult female’s hand, from the tip of the thumb to the little finger, is 18–19 cm. This indicates that Margaret’s roll did not fit comfortably in her hand, whereas the vast majority of extant prayer rolls would almost certainly have done so. Similarly, the pictorial illumination at the top of the roll occupies a vertical space of 33 cm, while the three successive prayers below run in an uninterrupted progression for 65 cm—lengths that almost entirely rule out the possibility of sectional viewing. As my own experience handling the roll has borne out, it must be unfurled in its entirety, using both hands, in order to be both read and viewed in any logical sense. Information on the use of devotional rolls is scarce, but these numbers indicate that Margaret’s roll was intended to be used in a manner different from other surviving examples.

Another unique feature of this roll is its dedication to the Virgin and the form of her representation. There are no known prayer rolls devoted exclusively to the Virgin; many include selected prayers to her, as well as a representation, but in none of these is the Virgin the principal object of the roll’s devotions. Furthermore, the rota at the head of the roll is


30. This average is taken from the measurements of all twenty-five rolls, which range in width from 8 to 13 cm.

31. The roll continues for a further 60 cm without text or illumination. Of these extra 60 cm, 24 contain thirty-four lines of ruling without text.


Figure 5. Margaret of Anjou prayer roll, Oxford, Jesus College, MS 124, on deposit in the Bodleian Library, ca. 1445–55 (photo: The Principal and Fellows of Jesus College, Oxford). See the electronic edition of Gesta for a color version of this image.
unprecedented. Dominating the pictorial portion is a wheel, at the center of which is the Virgin, crowned and haloed, holding the Christ child in her right hand and a flower, probably a lily, in her left (Fig. 1). The wheel itself comprises texts whose orientation changes with the imagined turning of the wheel itself. Leaving aside the utter singularity of this rota, to which I return below, the words that are its structural edifice cannot be read by a stationary viewer unless the roll itself is rotated, a near-impossible maneuver. Furthermore, the depiction of Margaret at the base of the rota decreases the likelihood that the roll was meant to be turned, given the illogically of creating a portrait to be seen upside down (not to speak of the potential offense it might cause). What is more probable is that the texts on the rota were inscribed in the knowledge that they would not be seen or read while being held by a single, kneeling devotee (see the appendix for a transcription of the roll). Instead, it appears that these texts were intended to be sung. The blue sphere that envelops the Virgin and Child contains the versicle and response to the “Ave regina caelorum,” and the gold spokes that radiate from the largest circle contain the entire text of the “Salve regina,” both of which were “among the best known chants of the Middle Ages.” In addition, the little cartellini radiating around the Virgin name all those people (the poor, the faint-hearted, those who mourn, the [lay] people, the clergy, religious women, and all men) who are invited to pray for the Virgin’s intercession in the “Sancta Maria, succurre miseris,” another text that was sung in the English liturgy and that is written in full in golden letters just outside the rota’s hub. Finally, the largest, stanzaic spokes of the rota record the very prayers such petitioners might voice, in the form of seven stanzas of eight leonine verses each to the Virgin: the verses compile conventional constructions (e.g., “Salve regina mater miseris medicina Lux matutina rosa flos et Stella marina”) but were possibly recomposed expressly for this commission. All of them are addressed in the first-person plural and represent the petitions of groups rather than the individual pleas of a single donor or devotee. As variations on the “Salve regina,” it seems highly probable that they, like the other texts of the rota, were composed for vocal performance. Mary and Richard Rouse have shown that poets and lyricists often committed verses to rolls, which they read or sang for their patrons, and there is ample visual material showing figures chanting while holding scrolls and rolls, both with and without musical notation. The textual evidence suggests that the Margaret of Anjou roll may have served a similar function.

In addition, the nature of the texts on the main body of the roll beneath the pictorial register share almost nothing in common with the kinds of prayers found on other surviving examples. Absent from Margaret’s roll are instructions for its use or vouches for its efficacy, elements that occur on every other known prayer roll except one. In contrast, the majority of the Margaret of Anjou roll is occupied by a series of three separate hymns to the Virgin Mary, each introduced by the generic Latin rubric “ad beatam virginem oracio.” The first is “De deliciis virginis gloriosae,” a hymn attributed to the thirteenth-century friar John Pecham (or Peckham), which hails the Virgin and praises her life from conception to her Assumption. According to one scholar, it is a notably


36. “Hail Queen mother, remedy to the wretched, morning Light, rose blossom, and Star of the sea.” I have not been able to identify these verses in any printed or manuscript sources. While they certainly may have existed before the occasion of the roll’s production for Margaret, their rarity suggests that they may have been rather recherché and chosen specifically and very deliberately for this occasion.

restrained composition, lacking the affective qualities of contemporary Marian literature. Following this hymn are stanzas nineteen through twenty-five of “O Virgo splendens,” which open with a hail to the Virgin, this time as instructress and attendant, and then implore that she pray to the king (“ora regem”) to cast a favorable glance on the world. Finally, there is a series of twenty-five “Aves,” most referring to the Virgin with a superlative adjective. Because of the absence of deictics, instructions, and affective language, the texts on the Jesus College roll lack the functional, personal, and emotive qualities that other prayer rolls foster with their exhortations to look and to touch. Rather, the schedule of texts here is chiefly laudatory.

One nuance in particular intimates Margaret’s lack of involvement in the commissioning of this roll. There is a significant discrepancy in the tincture of her heraldic arms, which are supported by two angels in the upper portion of the roll (Figs. 1 and 6). We might compare her arms here with those displayed on the frontispiece to the Talbot Shrewsbury book, a heavily illuminated compilation of romances, political tracts, chivalric treatises, chronicles, and statutes that was produced about 1444–45 on the order of John Talbot, first earl of Shrewsbury and Waterford (d. 1453), and presented to Margaret as a wedding gift (Fig. 7). Other examples of

41. There may be two errors: in the compartment for the arms of Hungary, which should be a barry of eight argent and gules, we see a barry of only six argent and gules. This error could easily be attributed to the lack of space in the minuscule compartment, which forced the illuminator to compromise strict accuracy—and, indeed, a number of other English manuscripts with Margaret’s arms contain only six stripes.

Margaret's arms can be seen in a manuscript of the *Nova statuta Angliae*, which she may have commissioned for her son (ca. 1457–61, with later additions), and in a Psalter made about 1380 to which her arms were later added. These three examples show the consistent portrayal of Margaret's arms: in the lower right quarter, representing the arms of Lorraine, or, on a bend gules three alerions displayed argent. On the roll the colors are reversed, showing gules on a bend or three alerions, which presumably were displayed argent but are now damaged and difficult to see. (In lay terms, the arms should have a red diagonal stripe over a gold ground, but in the roll we see a gold diagonal stripe over a red ground.)

This oversight is conspicuous. It suggests that the roll was commissioned not by Margaret for herself but, rather, by someone else for her. More speculatively, it may be that the roll was produced, possibly in haste, around the time of Margaret's arrival in England, in a period when government officials and members of the aristocracy were preparing for the entry and coronation of a new queen consort. A glitch in communications could easily have resulted in this error, particularly if the specifics of Margaret's arms were transmitted via the monochromatic impression made by a seal or even a further set of irregularities gives the impression that Margaret's robe was to feature an ermine trim, whereas the portion of the banderole outside the rota is painted in white. The banderole emerging from her mouth and pointing to the words “Salve regina” just above promotes Margaret as the queen consort of England through acknowledgment of the Queen of Heaven. This evidence indicates that the rota was not originally planned to incorporate a prayer extending from the queen's mouth but was, at a later stage in the roll's production, altered to capitalize on the serendipity of a hail to the Queen of Heaven from the queen of England.
Close attention to the physical, pictorial, and textual components of the Margaret of Anjou roll reveals so many differences from the corpus of objects to which it has previously been compared that to conceive of it exclusively in terms of a devotional object would be to misrepresent or only partially represent its facture and function. Rather, it appears to have been an improvisation on the roll form, designed as a tribute to its exceptional recipient. All of these ostensibly anomalous features—the error in her arms, the nature of the roll's texts, the apparent modifications to her portrayal—take on even greater significance once we consider a number of objects and events associated with the queen. In the following section I offer a recontextualization of the Margaret of Anjou roll within a material and performative corpus that is, in a number of respects, more fitting to the contours of the roll than the devotional objects to which it has previously been compared.

Salve regina! A Marian Genealogy of Queenship

Given that Margaret's public political interventions and her apparent transgressions have monopolized accounts of her later reign and shaded the perceptions of her behavior in the preceding period, it is curious that the—admittedly sparse—attention paid to the Jesus College roll to date has been directed exclusively at its putatively personal and devotional qualities. Indeed, as evidence of the queen's Marian devotion, it has been mentioned alongside the bejeweled golden plaque that Margaret presented in 1453 to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, as well as the window she commissioned in Westminster Abbey depicting her and the king kneeling before the Virgin. In spite of this tantalizing congruence, the anomalous and otherwise extraordinary features of the Margaret of Anjou roll recommend alternative avenues of inquiry.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the roll format was commonly used for many purposes beyond the devotional. Rolls were used as supports for account keeping, for obits, for charters, for the display of family pedigree, and in numerous other contexts. Within each of these categories, objects conform not only in their textual contents and function but also in physical character, where more granular genre distinctions emerge. Logically, those that had a public function or were intended for display are wide enough to be viewed from a modest distance.

Despite the obvious textual dissimilarities, a specific body of genealogy known as the heptarchy rolls provides an apt

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49. For the plaque, see A. R. Myers, “The Jewels of Queen Margaret of Anjou,” Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 42 (1959): 113–31, at 124. The window no longer survives, but, in the one extant household account of Margaret of Anjou, instructions detail payment to be made to John Prudde, the “king’s glazer” (vitrariator Regis), for “glass and glazing for one window of two lights in the chapel of the Blessed Mary de la Pewe, worked with two images of the King and Queen genuflecting and hailing the Blessed Mary with the arms of the King and Queen flourished with flowers and also with words written by the queen[?]” (vitro et vitriaccione vnius fenestre de duobus luminibus in capella Beate Marie de le Pewe operare cum duobus ymaginibus Regis et Regine genuflectantium et salutacionis Beate Marie cum armis Regis et Regine florished cum floribus necnon verbo Regine scripto). See idem, “The Household of Queen Margaret of Anjou, 1452–3, II,” Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 40 (1957–58): 391–431, at 423–24 (my translation).

50. On the diverse uses to which the roll support was put, see Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, Introduction to Manuscript Studies (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 250–58.

Prayer Roll for Queen Margaret of Anjou
material and genre context for the Margaret of Anjou roll. Produced continuously from 1271 to 1422, these rolls, of which well over twenty survive, contain a chronicle of the kings of England, beginning with the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy; fifteen of these rolls depict, at the head, a diagram of the seven kingdoms. One example, made in the first quarter of the fourteenth century and now in the Royal collection of the British Library, takes the standard, if more elegant and elaborate, form (Fig. 9). It is a roll 27.5 cm wide and 475 cm (more than 15 1/2 feet) long, at the top of which is a schematic map of England in the form of a circle that situates all seven kingdoms with respect to one another and to the cardinal directions. The large circle embraces three rings of smaller circles containing Anglo-Norman texts. Within the central ring, the text describes in general terms the arrangement of England into seven dominions ("Engleterre contient de longe vii rentz"). Surrounding this is a ring of seven slightly smaller circles, each of which encloses a very brief description of one of the seven kingdoms (Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Sussex, and Wessex). Finally, the outermost ring contains small circles that name the kingdoms and label the four cardinal directions. Beneath this diagram is a block of text, the beginning of an Anglo-Norman chronicle of England. The chronicle continues for the length of the roll, positioned beside and around roundels that depict the successive kings of England in a genealogical diagram.

Figure 9. London, British Library, MS Royal 14 B vi, genealogical roll of the English kings, detail of the heptarchy diagram, ca. 1300–1307 (photo: © The British Library Board). See the electronic edition of Gesta for a color version of this image.


54. London, British Library, MS Royal 14 B vi. On this roll and a very similar example (London, British Library, MS Royal 14 B v), see McKendrick, Lowden, and Doyle, Royal Manuscripts: The Genius of Illumination, cat. nos. 117–18.


for these genealogical diagrams, “by virtue of the frequency with which it was employed for transcriptions of royal documents, also conferred on the genealogical material an official status.”57 Moreover, “[t]he similarity in width between the statute rolls and the genealogical rolls would have tightened this analogy.”58 A similar associative transfer appears to be at play in the Margaret of Anjou roll, where a uniquely wide roll of prayers to the Virgin Mary features at its head an unprecedented circular diagram. While modern scholars—hampered by the shortcomings of photographic reproduction and possibly swayed by expectations of gendered behavior—have assumed that the roll fits within a specific genre of private devotional object presumably targeted at women, its physical characteristics and the visual model it incorporates usher its meaning in a more political direction.

The likelihood of this associative transfer is supported further by the revival and revision of the heptarchy rolls as a specifically Lancastrian form of genealogy in the first half of the fifteenth century.59 Several such rolls (with and without the diagram) produced in the fourteenth century were updated in the following century to include Lancastrian kings,60 and at least one genealogy of Henry V, prepared during the minority of Henry VI, employs a diagram modeled on those that appear in the heptarchy rolls (Fig. 10).61 One further example underscores how present the heptarchy rolls were even as late as Margaret's arrival in England: a codex (made ca. 1445–before 1461) containing the Anglo-Saxon genealogy of Henry VI emulates the roll format and contains, at its conclusion, a depiction of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou kneeling in prayer before the Trinity—the first known illumination of a king and queen of England together before a devotional image (Fig. 11).62 Through the purposeful archaism of tinted outline drawing, a specialty of Anglo-Saxon artists, the image visualizes Henry and Margaret as the rightful descendants to the lineage that the preceding branches, rays, and medallions describe.

The reuse and revision of the Anglo-Saxon rolls is logical because the Lancastrians claimed Anglo-Saxon heritage. What gave a further impetus to this revival, however, was the sudden death of Henry VI's father, Henry V, in 1422, following his successful campaigns in France. Concerns about English ability to maintain their claim to France during the long minority


58. Ibid.

59. De Laborderie mentions this revival (“New Pattern for English History,” 48), but he does not pursue its historical context or the motivations behind it. I am unaware of any publications that address this revival in detail.

60. E.g., University of California, Los Angeles, Rouse MS 49 (end of the fourteenth century with additions between about 1399 and before 1406); Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd.iii.58 (continuations after 1431); London, British Library, MS Harley Roll C. 7 (ca. 1288 with additions from the time of Henry VI to Prince Edward of Wales, and further additions after 1461); London, College of Arms, MS 20/5 (ca. 1307–27 with updates from the reign of Henry VI); and the Chaworth roll (private collection; 1320s with additions between ca. 1399 and 1413). In contrast, the Yorkists tended to prefer that the roll begin with Adam and Eve. See Alison Allan, “Yorkist Propaganda: Pedigree, Prophecy and the ‘British History’ in the Reign of Edward IV,” in Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England, ed. Charles Ross (Totowa, N J: Rowman & Littlefield, 1979), 171–92.

61. The roll is incomplete.

The Margaret of Anjou roll was illuminated by an artist—or at least someone very closely allied with this artist—who produced at least one major genealogical roll in support of Henry VI between 1447 and 1455. Therefore, the medium was certainly in his repertoire and within the horizon of his artistic options when executing this devotional oriented roll.64

In assimilating features of the genealogical rolls that re-emerged during Lancastrian rule, the Margaret of Anjou roll coaxes out the genealogical discourse that, by the fifteenth century, inhered in any representation of a queen alongside the Virgin Mary.65 The historical lines of a queen's own descent made far fewer appearances in medieval visual culture than her heraldry, plucked as she was from her own family tree and grafted to her husband's, indeed, there are no known medieval genealogies whose terminal descendant is female.66 A woman's license and, hence, legitimacy to sit beside the king as his consort were encapsulated—again, visually—in the titular capital, inherited from her father, that she brought with her in the moment of her marital transfer. Nowhere is the relevance of this point to Margaret of Anjou made more explicit than in the frontispiece to the Talbot Shrewsbury book (Fig. 12). Facing the image of Sir John Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, presenting the book to Margaret, a lavish depiction of Henry VI's genealogy literally marginalizes the queen: she is nowhere to be seen in this diagram, yet her heraldic arms are quartered with those of Henry in the right-hand margin of the page. The dedicatory verses that accompany the diagram give a temporal dimension to the queen's spatial marginalization, rendering her descent an afterthought: "In this book of Henry VI led to a rash of propaganda, designed to convince the English and French public alike of the child king's right to both thrones. An iconography of unification under English rule is a hallmark of Lancastrian propaganda during this period, and an endorsement for the historic merger that created England is of a piece with the renewed campaign.63


65. Given the ultimate derivation of royal genealogical rolls from Peter of Poitiers' Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi, a female equivalent with the Virgin as its source would have been within the realm of possibility. See Raluca L. Radulescu and Edward D. Kennedy, introduction to Radulescu and Kennedy, Broken Lines, 1–5.

is a figure, called a genealogical table, by which it is shown and demonstrated in full truth that the king, our sovereign, your fiancé (May God protect him!), is descended from the most noble ancestor, the good king Saint Louis, as are you, I am sure. Women within genealogical networks were instrumental rather than focal, the necessary coefficients to propagation.

Nevertheless, the abbreviation of a woman’s own descent in a heraldic display (or endnote) did not entirely bar her from participation in genealogical narrative. The lineage that a queen consort did represent was a specifically Marian one, what Zrinka Stahuljak has referred to as a bloodless genealogy, where “consanguinity is replaced with spiritual affinity.” Unlike the diachronic nature of patrilineal genealogy, which constructed a narrative of agnatic descent through time, a queen’s genealogical worth was synchronic, a heritage of unaltered Marianism that punctuated eternity. What distinguishes Margaret of Anjou’s Marian inheritance from the generic iterations allied with other queens was its pointedly political inflection throughout the first part of her reign as consort. While other queens were held to similar expectations, Margaret’s maternal functions were entirely subtended by the vital repercussions it was hoped they would have.

Paul Strohm has noted that “Marian texts almost invariably exist in complicated dialogue . . . over the conflicting


ideas of Maria Regina, or Mary as victorious queen, and Mary as mediatrix, or humble intercessor with the divine."69 The unusual rota on the Margaret of Anjou roll discloses a creative effort to reconcile the contradictions of this dialogue and to craft a Marian progenitor specifically suited to Margaret’s intended function as consort (Fig. 1). As mentioned above, the image of the Virgin and Child as the axle of a schematic wheel is unprecedented.70 There is, however, an enormous body of imagery showing the two at the center of an aureole of light, including the Virgin and Child in Glory, the Madonna Immacolata, and the Virgin of the Apocalypse: these iconographies collapse into a single image Mary’s royalty and maternity. In this particular case, the issuance of the Virgin’s royalty through her son is accentuated by the lily she holds in her left hand, a reference to the flowering rod of Aaron that likewise recalls the floriate scepter with which medieval queens were often depicted. Enfolded into this single attribute are thus two powerful emblems of maternity and regality,71 which are reinforced by the similarly polysemous loosened and sweeping tresses that fall around the Virgin’s shoulders.72

But the Virgin here is not simply queen and mother; she is also intercessor, a role for which there was no standard iconography as crisp and as pat as, say, the Virgin of Humility or the Virgin of Mercy.73 Positioned at the center of a wheel, the mediatrix Virgin offers a potential antidote to capricious Fortuna, the only female representation seen, consistently, in a correlative position in medieval imagery. The analogy is accentuated by the crown that Fortuna conventionally wears, like the crowned Virgin as she is portrayed on the Margaret of Anjou roll. A reminder of the ephemeral nature of all dominion, Fortuna makes a sobering appearance just above the heptarchy diagram on two genealogical rolls: the Chaworth roll (Fig. 13), made in the 1320s and updated sometime before she shows in vivid detail, there was no standard visual form that encapsulates it.


70. Comparisons might be made to the schematic wheels that accompany the Speculum theologicum, at the centers of which appear God or Christ. See Lucy Freeman Sandler, The Psalter of Robert de Lisle (London: Harvey Miller, 1983; repr., London: Harvey Miller, 1999), 107–15. The only diagrams known to me that contain an image of the Virgin at the axle are those that depict the Mystic Paradise, found in manuscripts of the Speculum virginum. See, for example, London, British Library, MS Arundel 44, fol. 13r.


72. See Claire Richter Sherman, “The Queen in Charles V’s Coronation Book: Jeanne de Bourbon and the Ordo ad Reginam Beneficendam,” Viator 8 (1977): 255–98, at 271–72. The Liber regalis, the book that details all rituals and procedures for English coronations, states expressly that the queen’s hair must be loose: “the queen must be bareheaded and her hair must be decently let down on her shoulders. And she shall wear a circlet of gold adorned with jewels to keep her hair the more conveniently in order upon her head.” Leopold G. Wickham-Legg, ed., English Coronation Records (London: Constable, 1901), 128.

73. See Catherine Oakes, Ora pro nobis: The Virgin as Intercessor in Medieval Art and Devotion (London: Harvey Miller, 2008). Oakes explores images that stress Mary’s intercessory function, but, as she shows in vivid detail, there was no standard visual form that encapsulates it.
between 1399 and 1413, and Cambridge, University Library, MS Oo.7.32, made in 1307, with additions after 1321.74 Surrounding Dame Fortune on the Chaworth roll are verses in Anglo-Norman—the orientations of which change with the imagined turning of the wheel—that caution the reader against trusting so fickle a lady.75 Of course, the opposite recommendation is offered when the object of faith is the Virgin. As is described above, all of the texts on the Margaret of Anjou roll represent either the petitions of those invited to seek the Virgin’s aid or the praise of those who venerate her. The pictorial and textual elements of the rota on the Margaret of Anjou roll thus combine to provide a very specific form of notation: one that stresses the Virgin’s status as queen, mother, and mediator for those who seek her protection from misfortune. Broadened to the national scale, the roll makes the case for Margaret’s integrality to the fortunes of England.

Placed on a support that recommends comparison to official genealogies—and a class of highly politicized ones at that—this traditional female paragon confers a more specific and local meaning than is typically associated with the Marian ideal. This format, reserved for the expression of political legitimacy, validates Margaret’s place in a Marian genealogy, suggesting that there is nothing less official about her spiritual inheritance than there is about Henry’s genetic one. By extension, the roll sanctions Margaret’s activities as an intercessor and grants them a certified place in the English political ecology. In what follows, I propose another genre alignment for the roll: the ceremony that greeted Margaret on her arrival into London in 1445. Like the heptarchy rolls, the pageants featured in this ceremony furnished a language of queenship within which the roll was both produced and understood.

Beyond the Private Devotional Object: Performance and Display

No known evidence details the circumstances of the roll’s presentation, and a lack of documentation on the use of large rolls offers little hope for recovering with certainty the mechanical aspects of its use. However, the very absence of evidence relating to use, such as written instructions on the roll or material traces of physical interaction, may itself be an indication of its function. In addition, between the width that renders the roll difficult to handle, the orientation of its texts, and the continuous layout that makes them impossible to read in small sections, the roll appears not to have been designed with practical purposes in mind. An alternative possibility is that the Margaret of Anjou roll was devised as a gift for the queen, one that issued an expressive statement through the act of presentation. More speculatively, the object might have featured in a performance such as an entry ceremony, although there is no known precedent for the presentation of a roll to a queen in such a context.76 My primary aim is to show that the roll resonates so strongly with the Marian statements issued in the pageants I describe below that it should be considered within the same political context that the pageants explicitly invoke. Only secondarily do I wish to suggest that it might have been incorporated into such an event.

Margaret’s entry into London on 28 May 1445 in particular showcased a series of statements, gestures, and images that resonated with elements of the roll. A formative occasion, the entry ceremony dramatized the process by which the eternal Marian ideal was drafted into the service of urgent preoccupations: specifically, it elaborated on Margaret’s duties to broker peace and to provide an heir.77 The first four pag-
eants figured grace (a word whose repetition forms a counterpoint to the procession) as the peace that Margaret would bring to a war-sick nation. First, at the foot of the bridge at Southwark, Margaret was greeted by the personifications of Plenty and Peace: the former appears to have delivered her speech before a sign announcing the injunction "ingredimini et replete terram" (go forth and fill the Earth), after which Peace pronounced, "So trusteth youre poeple, with aliaunnce, Through your grace and highe benigne, Twixt the re-awmes two, Engleande and Fraunce, Pees shal approche, rest and unite." The implication of this pairing was that the consolidated blood ties between England and France forged by Margaret's fecundity would result in a lasting peace between the two nations. Gordon Kipling has found that in its structure and themes, the ceremony corresponds to Aquinas's formula of the Third Advent, in which Christ first brings grace to humanity and subsequently ascends to glory. This spiritual template does hold, but I would modify Kipling's assessment by remarking that it served to ratify decidedly secular expectations.

The scope of the pageant's ironic comparisons was expanded in the subsequent pageant, in which Margaret's peace brokering was inflected as the intercessions enacted by virgines mediatrices. At Leadenhall, Dame Peace appeared alongside the allegorical figures of Truth, Mercy, Justice, and Peace from Psalm 84. Acting as God's deputy and chancellor (chancelere de Dieu), Dame Peace is recorded to have said:

Four patentes, faire, fresh, and legible, Contenynye iiiii preceptes imperiale, Seales impressed for memoriale, To these sustres fourre thus be directe, Whiche as mynystres further proclamen shalle, Tencresen pees, werres to correcte.

In other words, this spiritual official distributed four mock letters patent to signify the establishment of peace. In her analysis of this event, Rosemarie McGerr observes that while "medieval discourses of queenship often associate queens with peace, prosperity, mercy, and fertility . . . this pageant also depicts Margaret's new role in terms of earthly processes of ratifying laws . . . as if to suggest that divine grace should lead Margaret to earthly negotiations of power, as much as in spiritual matters." If Margaret's later aggrandizement of the queen's council is any measure, she appears to have taken the recommendations of this tableau to heart.

The second half of the triumph turned to the glory prophesied for Margaret. As before, when spiritual grace was re-configured as political peace, in this second act glory was construed as the reward for furnishing dynastic continuity. First, at the Great Conduit in Cheap was narrated the par-
able of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. 25:1–13), the former of whom are said to wait in innocence and perfection for their spouses. As one might expect, the implication was that Margaret would be a Wise Virgin, whose heart burned only “to serve [serve] the Spouse.”86 Proceeding to the next station, at the Cross in Cheap, Margaret was met by a pageant of the Heavenly Jerusalem, which projected the transformation of London on her provision of an heir. Finally, in the culmination of the triumph at the church of St.-Michael-le-Querne, Queen Margaret’s glorious destiny was mirrored prophetically in the vision of the Queen of Heaven, crowned with twelve stars on her head.87 It was here that the Marian metaphors of the entire procession reached their climax, and Margaret was installed before the vision she was expected to emulate.88

Even if Margaret was not proficient in English when she arrived in London, she cannot have failed to detect the expectations being delineated before her eyes. I would go so far as to argue that the visual nature of these pageants did not simply reinforce such messages but was their primary vehicle of expression. Most important about the visions articulated in the pageants were the very real political stakes attendant on Margaret’s intercessory function, whether as a quasi-official mediator between two nations, as a suppliant with privileged access to her lord’s ear, or as a vehicle for consolidating the French and English royal lines.89 It was in this atmosphere that Margaret found herself a “hinge,” the one who “Through [her] grace and highe benigne, Twixt the reawmes two, Englande and Fraunce, Pees shal aproophe, rest and unite.”90 If the Virgin represented the graft that allowed divine spirit to unite with divinely sanctioned body, then, the London pageants declared, Margaret represented the graft that provided a Lancastrian heir to occupy the French throne.91

The London pageants were vital in establishing the identity between Margaret and Mary as a touchstone of the queen’s public persona. However, this equivalence went well beyond the generic in that it was fostered in an environment of dynastic urgency and national insecurity, where politically meaningful outlets existed for Margaret’s Marian gestures.92 Just six months after her coronation, for example, the queen featured as a mediator in the peace negotiations between England and France. A letter from Charles VII to Margaret, urging her to convince Henry to surrender Maine, received a response from the queen. Signed and dated 17 December 1445, the letter expresses her wishes for peace and promises that “we will upon our part, stretch forth the hand and will employ ourselves herein effectually to our power in such wise that reason would that you, and all others, ought herein to be gratified.”93 A subsequent letter in which Henry VI accedes to King Charles’s demands famously cites “our dear and well-beloved companion the queen, who has requested us to do this many times.”94 Similar language was used on a rather different occasion, in 1450, when the king offered amnesty to the participants in Cade’s Rebellion, a monthlong revolt centered on Kent, which stemmed from an assortment of grievances both local and national.95 In the preamble to the text of the pardon, the king claims to have been moved to this gesture of clemency “among others, by the most humble and persistent supplications, prayers and requests of our most serene and beloved wife and consort the queen.”96 Even if Margaret’s

87. MS Harley 3869, fol. 4r. This vision is taken from Revelation 12:1.
88. It may be that, as with the pageant of the Heavenly Jerusalem before it, the expositor of this last tableau spoke in front of an image, in this case of the Virgin in Glory.
90. On a woman’s position as a “hinge” in genealogy, see Stahuljak, Bloodless Genealogies, 123.
91. For a similar argument regarding a manuscript made for Queen Isabelle, see Stanton, “Psalter of Isabelle, Queen of England,” 24–25.
With Richard II in 1392. Over the course of numerous pageants, records were the civic triumph in honor of London's reconciliation with King Richard II, as recorded in the Society for the Study of Manuscripts and Printing History's Early Book Society for the Study of Manuscripts and Printing History. The full text of the preamble and a translation are in Maurer, Margaret of Anjou, 68n4.


98. The Coventry Leet Book: or Mayor's Register, Containing the Records of the City Court Leet or View of Frankpledge, A.D. 1420–1555, transcribed and ed. Mary Dormer Harris, Early English Text Society 134 (1907): 288. The most heavily gift-laden ceremony on record was the civic triumph in honor of London's reconciliation with Richard II in 1392. Over the course of numerous pageants, the king was presented with "keys to the city, a ceremonial sword, three horses, a pair of golden crowns, a pair of golden chalices, and two pairs of sculptured, golden altarpieces." Kipling, Enter the King, 118. The entire text of Richard Maidstone's account of the triumph is translated and edited in Charles Roger Smith, "Concordia: Facta inter Regem Riccardum II et Civitatem Londonie per Fratrum Riccardum Maydiston, carmelitam, sacre theologie doctorem, anno Domine 1393" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1972).

99. The passage of our most drad Soueraigne Lady Quene Elizabeth through the citie of London to westminster the day before her coronacion (1558; STC [2nd ed.] 7590), 15. Similarly, the marriage of Philip to Queen Mary was celebrated in a triumph that included "a skoller of Paules skoole [who] delvered unto the kings highnes a fayre boke, which he receyved verye jentlie." J. Elder, The copie of a letter sent in to Scotiale of the arivall and landynge, and most noble marryage of . . . Philippe, prync of Spaine to the . . . Princes Marye quene of England (1555; STC [2nd ed.] 7552), 19. This book might be what Scott Oldenburg is referring to when he states that "among the adornments of the royal wedding of Philip and Mary was a book revealing that Philip was descended from John of Gaunt." Oldenburg, "Toward a Multicultural Mid-Tudor England: The Queen's Royal Entry Circa 1553, "The Interlude of Wealth and Health, and the Question of Strangers in the Reign of Mary I," English Literary History 76, no. 1 (2009): 99–129, at 103.

100. Brown, Queen's Library, 19.

101. Singing did occur in such ceremonies: in the 1474 entry ceremony for Prince Edward in Coventry, for example, actors playing the children of Israel sang while casting out ("castyng oute") wheat cakes, Jacob and his seven sons engaged in "mynstracyl of harpe and doosemeris" (minstrelsy of harp and dulcimer), and a similar musical accompaniment played in the background for the speech of King Edward. Harris, Coventry Leet Book, 392.
subjects attest to an open collaboration in implementing the kind of protocol visualized on this roll. A key word here is open: in the case of Margaret, the queen's intercessory activity was neither covert nor unofficial, and there is every reason to believe that it was a fully fledged component of the royal political machine. Indeed, objects associated with Margaret from the early period of her reign express the expectation that the queen was to be wholly and openly integrated into her husband's regime. The Talbot Shrewsbury book contains a dense concentration of treatises on government, warfare, and chivalry, which, if these were intended to educate the son it was hoped Margaret would have—and this is by no means a necessary condition—nevertheless formed part of her own early education as queen consort. As such, it authorized her possession of martial, chivalric, and administrative knowledge even in the unlikelihood that it would find practical application. Like many queens and noblewomen before her, Margaret was admitted to the Order of the Garter and was granted an annual allowance of the robes that came with this privilege. Not only did she gain membership to this chivalric order but, much more unusually, Margaret also included the livery of her husband's Lancastrian house in her own seal. To the 1448 foundation charter for Queens' College, Cambridge, in which Margaret is named as founder, is affixed a well-preserved example of her seal; in addition to the more common show of heraldic arms impaled with those of the king and surmounted by a crown there is an encircling collar of Lancastrian SS. A

102. On these letters, see Maurer, Margaret of Anjou, 54–66. The texts of seventy-four of these letters is printed in Cecil Mono, ed., Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou and Bishop Beckington and Others: Written in the Reigns of Henry V. and Henry VI. from a MS. Found at Emral in Flintshire (London: Camden Society, 1863).

103. Specifically, the Arbre des batailles by Honoré Bouvet (fols. 293r–326v), an abridged version of Henry de Gauchi's Li livres du gouvernement des roys et des princes (fols. 327r–62v), Les chroniques de Normandie (fols. 363r–402v), the Bréviaire des nobles by Alain Chartier (fols. 403r–4v), Le livre des fais d'armes et de chevalrie by Christine de Pizan (fols. 405r–38v), and the statutes of the Order of the Garter (fols. 439r–40v).

104. Craig Taylor has argued, further, that the book served in part as a vehicle through which Talbot impressed his own hawkish ambitions on the queen, effectively acknowledging the need for her complicity in his designs to reignite the wars with her native land ("Treatise Cycle of the Shrewsbury Book," 146–50).

105. See James L. Gillespie, "Ladies of the Fraternity of Saint George and of the Society of the Garter," Albion 17, no. 3 (1985): 259–78; and Diana Dunn, "Margaret of Anjou, Chivalry and the Order of the Garter," in St George's Chapel, Windsor, in the Late Middle Ages, ed. Colin Richmond and Eileen Scarff (Windsor: Dean and Canons of Windsor, 2001), 39–56. Margaret was granted the garter in 1447, and wardrobe accounts record the king's order to the Keeper of the Great Wardrobe to issue the Garter robes to the queen (Kew, The National Archives, E101/409/19).

106. William George Searle, The History of the Queens' College of St Margaret and St Bernard in the University of Cambridge (Cambridge: Cambridge Antiquarian Society, 1867), 1:15–16.


token of maintenance, the SS collar declares the queen's status as a loyal member of her husband's retinue.

When repositioned alongside these objects and released from the restrictive confines of the devotional corpus to which it has previously been compared, the Margaret of Anjou roll emerges as a participant in a coherent program that promoted the centrality of the queen's position at court. Medieval queens have classically been differentiated from kings by the unauthorized nature of their power, exercised in the interstices of administration, through such activities as intercession, influence, and patronage. Yet, just as recent historical scholarship has questioned the classic binary that opposes the public actions of the king with the private gestures of the queen,109 so readings of objects made for queens must incorporate the public, political dimensions and contemporary inflections of their imagery. As a devotional object that praises queenship, as a visual complex that co-opts features of highly politicized genealogy, and as a document that remediates the public performances staged before the queen's eyes, the Margaret of Anjou roll welcomes a Marian model of beneficence into the machinery of state and condones its public exercise.

Appendix

Transcription of the Margaret of Anjou Roll (Oxford, Jesus College, MS 124, on deposit in the Bodleian Library)

IHC

Transcription of all the texts on the rota, from the innermost to the outermost

Blue ring around the Virgin and Child

Dignare me laudare te virgo sacrata da michi virtute[m]

White scrolls radiating from the blue ring

o[nn]es ho[nn]es
miseri[s]
pussila[n]i[m]es
fflebiles
pop[u]lus
cler[ic]us
femine

Gold words surrounding the ring with the radiating scrolls

Sancta Maria succure miseris luva pusillanimes refove 
fflebiles ora p[ro] populo interveni pro clero inter - 
cede pro devoto femineo sexu sentient omnes tuum

Gold spokes radiating from the outermost ring

Salve regina mi[sericordi]e vit[a] dulc[edo] & spes nos -
tra safve
Ad te clamamus exules filii Eva
lac[imarum] valle
Eva ergo ad vocata nostra
Illos tuos mi[sericord]e es occulos ad nos co[n]verte
Et ledum b[e]n[d]ictum f[ructum] vent[r]is t[ui]
O clene[n]s opia o dulcis Maria safve

Stanzas in gold within the outermost ring

Salve regina mater miseris medicina
Lux matutina rosa flos et Stella marina
Clavis es ut credo celestis apertio vale,
Vite dulcedo spes n[os]ta piissima Salve
Celi virgo decor assumpta tuis beneficiis
S[an]c[t]a Maria p[re]cor miseris succ[ur]re relictis
Nobis succ[u]rre nobis miseris miserere
Pacis & in turre tecum de virgo manere

Portas pulsam[us] noli largissi[m]a claudi
ad te clamam[us] g[ra]tissima quesum[us] audi
hui[us] in exilio maris h[er]edes sumus Eve
p[ro] pomi p[re]cio su[n]t gaudia vendita ve ve
sed nos clama[n]tis a[l]ia tibi v[i]rgo pusillo
ffac exultantes fore morsu morti[s] ab illo
ffac vos sublimes q[ue] dep[ro]mimus velut una
ergo pusillanimes s[an]c[t]a maria iuva
In pacibus psalle nos co[n] forte[n]do gene[n]tes
et suspiram[us] ut p[er] te pace fruamur
ergo flebilib[us] nos refoveto faveto
I[m]no debilibus da vires corde quieto

109. See Theresa Earenfight, ”Without the Persona of the Prince: Kings, Queens and the Idea of Monarchy in Late Medieval Europe,” Gender and History 19, no. 1 (2007): 1–21. Over the past several years, medievalists working within a feminist perspective have chipped away at the once-cherished methodological boundary between “private” and “public.” Whereas scholars had formerly characterized specifically male authority by its public exercise and female power by its private and even covert sphere of action, scholars such as Earenfight have observed that the two spaces never truly operated autonomously. Like their male counterparts, queens were subjected to a kind of scrutiny that rendered their every activity, no matter how seemingly private or domestic, as public. The most obvious example is the open performance of a queen’s churching, the ritual following the birth of a child. See Caroline Shenton, ”Philippa of Hainault’s Churchings: The Politics of Motherhood at the Court of Edward III,” in Family and Dynasty in Late Medieval England: Proceedings of the 1997 Harlaxton Symposium, ed. Richard Eales and Shaun Tyas (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2003), 105–21.

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mentis amore nove fortes vos effic[e] leto[s]
et flentes refove ia[n]g[e]n te dolore repleto[s]

Ut de[us] est notus nec claro corde videtur
ergo mox eth[er]a virgo lux splendida dia
cecis esto via tu v[est]ra vocata Maria
ora p[ro] populuo ne m[er]gat eos [emi]ne fluve[n]
N[ost]r[i]s nu[n]c oc[u]lo receivabe[?] porrige lumen
Tu[nc] siit aurora nox est O virgo decorra

Qui p[re]beret iter vicis celi quali prece
In fovea[m] pariter cadit heu cec[us] duce ceco
Ergo vias certas ut gra[tia] detur hale[n]di
Ad nos co[n]vertas illos oc[u]los misere[n]di
Ac intervenias p[er] clero virgo venusta
ut mo[n]streare vias studea[n]t per dog[ma] iusta
Omnès he[re]ticas cum cleru dest[ru]e sectas
Quas ad catholicas leges i[n]i me reflecta[s]

The blue text making up the outermost ring
Suscipio vota per vestra pie camina tot
Audio verba bona vobis ero grata patulus
Ad me clamate vel aevi resonat
Et tunc filioli pia vota mee dabo pro
Ille quidem plene vos diligent atque sereit
Ergo relativo sibi corde placete que vin[?]?
Omnès esse satis salvos volumus valeati

The texts below the depiction of Margaret kneeling
Ad beatam virginem Oracio
Salve sancta mater dei radix vite robur spei mortis in
angustiis per te queso co[n]solari
da sincere meditari de tuis deliciis.
Salve deo consecrata priausqu[am] huic mundo nata
intra matris uterum. Do[mi]no fixa speciali ut nec
lapsu veniali peccares in posterum.
Salve stella principalis tui namq[ue] lux natalis finem
fert errorib[us] virginalis flos illuxit vita tota for-
mam duxit vite nove moribus.
Salve tante pietatis vas ut regem maiestatis de sup[er]nis
tra[he]ris. Gabriele nuntianti inaudita post & ante
nuntia susceperes.
Salve nutrix castitatis nec adhaer[n]s nu[n]tiatis
don[ec] certa fieres. Salve virginali flore quod celesti
fusa rose concip[e]r[es].
Salve casta sunamitis fide credens inaudita dei plena
gaudio. Salve lux humilitatis te ancillam vocans gra-
tis dato regni solio.
Salve spiritu lustrata salve carne repurgata celi refri-
gerio. Salve deo sup[e]rusasa salve generans conclusa
cordis & incendio.
Salve deum ventre genues qua humanu[m] genus me-
rens per te sic letificat O q[uam] gaudens cecinisti
alvo [Christum] cum sensisti canticum[m] magnificat
Salve partu singularis virgo gignens virgo perficere
nu[m] purissimi[m]. Gaude tanti vultu[m] regis regiens
suis pannis regis me[m]bra sincerissimam.
Salve tantam gerens prolem fructum vitae leges
sinebratis p[re]ser visionem pastoralem stellam
visamq[ue] regale corde puro conferens.
Salve lege volens regi non astricta talem purgande
puerp[er]e nam impurum nil sensisti nec de vire
concepiisti si de dei munere.
Salve templo fiquali finem cultui legali ferens tuum
finem cultui legali ferens tuum
Salve tutrix Nazaraei qui ens omnus rei regis
et tibi co[m]minante sue mortis gladiu[m].
Salve tutrix Nazaraei qui ens omnus rei regis
et tibi co[m]minante sue mortis gladiu[m].
Salve gratulantes ex egipto rememem galilee
civibus. Sic stans extra nunc iudeam tandem visita-
biet eam venientes ex gentibus.
Salve Charismum qui[ae] lactentem repperisti disser-
remitrum tridui[m] post reditum leta natu[m] redu-
xit leta tecum tenuisti regem regum subjuturn.
Salve cernens choruscantem misirs facti[s] & mostran-
mentem deitatis g[or]iam operando potestatem predic-
cando veritatem vita sanctimoniam.
Salve grandi cum dolore [Christum] madidum cruore 
cernens in patibulo sed hinc minies doluisse quod 
hunc pati credidisti pro salvando seculo.
Salve salutis alumna salve fidei columna in qua fides 
floruit quando p[er]cussus pastore greg[us] est timore & in fide corruit.
Salve [Christum] triumphantem & infernum spoliantem 
cognosce[n]s cum gaudio et post mortem vite 
datum viq[ue] susscitatum gaude tali filio.
Salve virgo videns leta mundi post deleta concendentem 
fiuum supra solium ce celeste concurrere turba teste civiu[m] celestum.
Salve gaudens cotemplata de supernis destinata mun[n]a discipulis iuxta filii promissum sp[iritu]m de 
celis missum igneis & linguis.
Salve celitus assumpta non[s] sola sed resumpta 
corporis substancia ibi sola te transcendent olim in te 
q[ue] descendit incarnati gloria.
Salve iubare singulari cit[m]i luminare toti mundo 
radians universum restauratum per te videns & sub-
stratum tibi digne glorians.
Salve virgo tam sublimis carceratos nos in ymis prece 
tua libera. In te iuva confidentes & devote recen-
entes data tibi munera.
Salve sola spes salutis nos in valle servitutis pressos tot 
miseris iuva pia potestate tabescentes egestate tuis 
reple copiis.
Hoc in fine mater oro votis totis hoc imploro virginum 
piissima A me diligere & me digne fac amare 
te virgo dulcisima.
Cessent alii amores tu trahant me odores & intendant 
gracie h[oc] detinear languore hoc nutriti da 
dulcore ad obtentum glorie. AMEN

Ad beatam virginem Or[acio]
O magistra & ministra vere sapientia ffac me rectum & 
p[er]rectum in viam iusticie.
Posce natum ut rectum meum ip[s]e diluat et implora 
ut in hora mortis nil me terreat.

Ora regem ut sic legem ip[s]ius custodia[m] ut ex 
mundo transeundo letus hunc aspiciam.
O beata sic p[e]ccata tu tuis dele precibus que co[m]-
misi paradisi ut quiescam sedibus.
Te colentes fac gaudentes cuncta pellens noxia et pro-
cura ut mansura p[er]ruamur gloria.
Maris stella sic compella aures su[m]i iudicis ut nos 
festis rex celestis societ angelicis.
Ut in sorte et cohorte su[m]i et su[m]i nume-
remur & letemur in terra viventium. AMEN.

Ad beatam virginem[ ]Or[acio]
Ave amantissima virgo maria
Ave benignissima virgo maria
Ave clementissima virgo maria
Ave devotissima virgo maria
Ave electissima virgo maria
Ave felicissima virgo maria
Ave gloriosissima virgo maria
Ave honestissima virgo maria
Ave iocundissima virgo maria
Ave carissima virgo maria
Ave lucidissima virgo maria
Ave mitissima virgo maria
Ave nobilissima virgo maria
Ave officiosissima virgo maria
Ave purissima virgo maria
Ave quies deo castissima virgo maria
Ave reverentissima virgo maria
Ave sci[enti]ssima virgo maria
Ave tutissima virgo maria
Ave venustissima virgo maria
Ave excellentiissima virgo maria
Ave pudica virgo maria
Ave zelus iusticie virgo maria
Ave titulus genere virgo maria
Ave thalamus pudicicie virgo maria

Ave virgine[m] Or[acio]
Ave amantissima virgo maria
Ave benignissima virgo maria
Ave clementissima virgo maria
Ave devotissima virgo maria
Ave electissima virgo maria
Ave felicissima virgo maria
Ave gloriosissima virgo maria
Ave honestissima virgo maria
Ave iocundissima virgo maria
Ave carissima virgo maria
Ave lucidissima virgo maria
Ave mitissima virgo maria
Ave nobilissima virgo maria
Ave officiosissima virgo maria
Ave purissima virgo maria
Ave quies deo castissima virgo maria
Ave reverentissima virgo maria
Ave sci[enti]ssima virgo maria
Ave tutissima virgo maria
Ave venustissima virgo maria
Ave excellentiissima virgo maria
Ave pudica virgo maria
Ave zelus iusticie virgo maria
Ave titulus genere virgo maria
Ave thalamus pudicicie virgo maria

AMEN

AMEN