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Elizabeth Casteen. *From She-Wolf to Martyr: The Reign and Disputed Reputation of Johanna I of Naples.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015. 312 pp. \$49.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8014-5386-1.

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As its title indicates, Elizabeth Casteen's history of Johanna of Naples (ca. 1326-82) is a double narrative, the story of this queen's tumultuous reign but also that of the development of her reputation, during her life and after her death. Both are fascinating. The Countess Jeanne of Provence and Forcalquier was âpious, beautiful, courtly, wise, and committed to her subjectsâ (p. 1); Queen Giovanna of Sicily and Jerusalem was âdebauched and voraciously lustful,â âsquander[ing] her kingdom's resources until she met a fitting end, murdered by her heir to avenge decades of misruleâ (p. 1). What accounted for such a disconnect? In this richly detailed and carefully documented study, Casteen lays out the relationship between the events of Johanna's reign and the stories that circulated about it, highlighting the extent to which the queen managed to shape her own reputation, her *fama*, during periods of calm but fell victim to the discourses of her enemies during turbulent times. In other words, the queen's mixed afterlife is less a function of her actions than her opponents's capacity to control how her actions were recounted at certain points during her reign.

In the introduction, Casteen situates Johanna historically and dynastically. The history of the territory over which she reigned is particularly complicated and the names by which she was known are confusing. Johanna's realm, referred to as the Kingdom of Naples by modern historians and the Kingdom of Sicily (even when it no longer included Sicily) and also the Regno by contemporaries, comprised the Italian peninsula's southern half. The Regno had its roots in the twelfth-century Norman conquest of southern Italy, including Sicily. Under the

Sicilian Frederick II (1194-1250) the entire area was attached to the Hohenstaufen Empire, becoming the jewel in its crown. The Regno came under the rule of Johanna's ancestors after the pope deposed Frederick. Frederick did not go quietly, and his illegitimate son Conrad kept up the struggle as did Conrad's son Conradin, who was executed in 1268. Charles of Anjou (Johanna's great-great-grandfather) then assumed the throne. Under Charles, the Regno was forced to give up Sicily following the rebellion known as the Sicilian Vespers of 1282 to Peter III of Aragon. However, Charles's Angevin successors refused to abandon their claim to the island, setting up a centuries-long dispute between France and Spain for it. A further complication, particularly for Johanna, was that the senior branch of the House of Anjou, which controlled Hungary, cast its eye on the Regno when she ascended the throne. The succession of Johanna's own grandfather, Robert, had been disputed: the heir of his older brother, Charles Martel of the Hungarian Angevins, had been just a child when Charles Martel died, and, for the sake of stability, the decision had been made to remove the boy from succession. When Johanna's own father died prematurely, her grandfather named her his successor. Outraged at what they perceived as a usurpation, the Hungarian Angevins sought to take control of the Regno throughout Johanna's reign. When she decided in 1378 to support the Avignon pope Clement VII against the Roman pope Urban VI, Urban excommunicated and deposed her, supporting, along with the Hungarian Angevins, Johanna's cousin Charles of Durazzo as king. Childless, Johanna adopted Louis I, Duke of Anjou, as her heir, to convince him to come to her aid. This in turn motivated Charles of Durazzo to have Johanna mur-

dered in 1382 and seize the throne. As Casteen makes clear, Johanna's gender rendered her especially vulnerable, and it accounts for much of the scurrilous writing against her, but her situation was also extremely fraught, indeed, her reign so contested, that it is not clear that she would have been left to govern in peace even had she been a man.

Johanna married four times. Chapter 1, "The Murder of Andrew of Hungary and the Making of a Neapolitan She-Wolf," deals with her first husband, Andrew of Hungary, whose murder was the reason for her early bad reputation. The brutality of this young prince's death—he was only seventeen—magnified the horror of the crime: he was "suffocated and strangled, mutilated, and defenestrated" (p. 29). Although Johanna was never officially found guilty of the crime, which was attributed instead to members of her inner circle who were tried, tortured, and executed, the majority of her contemporaries believed that she had instigated it. The marriage between Johanna and the younger of the Hungarian Angevins had been arranged by Robert specifically to reconcile the opposing houses. But the queen, supported by the pope, refused to cede any power to her husband, and the court dissolved into factions. Shortly after the murder, Johanna married her cousin, Louis of Taranto, whom many claimed had been her lover. Andrew's older brother, Louis of Hungary, invaded and seized the Regno, while the newly married couple fled to Avignon. Casteen sees Andrew's murder, which put a cloud over the early years of the queen's reign, as one of the reign's bookends: stories of the queen would focus on this opening murder and the queen's own assassination, telescoping the intervening years. This pattern would prevail from shortly after the queen's death into the present.

Chapter 2, "From She-Wolf to Radiant Queen: The Reign of Louis of Taranto and the Rehabilitation of Johanna of Naples," traces how Johanna recovered her positive *fama* between 1345 and 1362. This was partly a result of Louis of Hungary's vendetta against the queen. Although viewed as a righteous avenger when he first took power, Louis showed himself to be so cruel that he soon turned Johanna's former subjects against him. When Johanna returned to Naples with Louis of Taranto in 1348, they were greeted with joy. But once back in power, Johanna vanished from view for several years, which modern historians have often taken as a sign of her marital bliss. As Casteen's careful analysis of the contemporary documents reveals, however, Louis managed to erode Johanna's authority to the point that she was a prisoner in her own kingdom. The pope, alerted

to the fact, supported an invasion under Hugh des Baux, who rescued the queen and helped her reassert power. The triumph was short-lived: Louis had Hugh stabbed. Louis himself died in 1362, freeing Johanna to reign on her own. Casteen devotes the second half of the chapter to an analysis of contemporary chronicles, following the transformation of the queen's *fama*.

Her reputation rehabilitated, Joanna re-entered the stage of European politics after Louis of Taranto's death, Casteen observes in chapter 3, "A Most Loving Daughter: Filial Piety and the Apogee of Johanna's Reign." True, she notes, the apparent success of this portion of the reign must be understood to some extent as historical accident, as a lucky lull in the midst of a troubled century. Still, by working closely first with Pope Urban V and then Gregory XI and then Urban, Johanna helped to create peace between Naples and Sicily, reintegrating the two at least to some extent, and returning the latter to papal obedience. Perceived as a humble servant of the pope, Johanna, the very image of female power, was less threatening to her contemporaries than earlier. Even though she marginalized her third husband, James of Majorca, a man prone to furious outbursts and inappropriate behavior, many chroniclers describe her subjects as filled with reverence for their queen. In her reading of the visual program of Johanna's book of hours, Casteen lays out how Johanna sought to articulate her sovereignty.

Chapter 4, "An Especially Good Friend to Saints: Friendship, Politics and the Performance of Sovereignty," revises perceptions about Johanna's relationship with Saint Birgitta of Sweden. Using the fifteenth-century biography of the saint by Swedish abbess Margareta Clausdotter as a point of entry, Casteen explains that Margareta's assertion that "through her lust and willfulness" (p. 157) Johanna was responsible for the death of Birgitta's son requires reinterpretation. Birgitta and her daughter Katherine visited Naples on their way to Jerusalem in the early 1370s. When Margareta described the visit one hundred years later, she had to explain how the saint could have been friends with a queen of Johanna's reputation. Casteen points out that abundant evidence of the women's mutual regard exists and that Johanna was an early proponent of Birgitta's canonization. True, Birgitta pronounced on the depravity of Naples and preached to Johanna on the dangerous condition of her soul. However, it was common practice for spiritual advisers to push their charges to repent. Most interesting, Casteen revises a popular story that Birgitta's son fell into an adulterous relationship with Johanna, which so frightened the pious mother that she prayed for and thereby

brought about the fatal illness of her son, allowing him to confess and then die, safe from eternal damnation. The story actually originates with Margareta, Casteen demonstrates.

The final chapter, "The Schism of the Western Church and the Division of Johanna of Naples," reveals the fragility of Johanna's carefully restored reputation. When Johanna became the first monarch in Europe to recognize anti-pope Clement VII as legitimate, Catherine of Siena and Birgitta turned ferociously against her, as did much of the Regno. Casteen writes that the schism "was nothing short of catastrophic for Johanna's realm and reputation" dividing them as it divided Western Christendom, leaving them splintered even after the reconciliation of the Church (p. 197). Although Johanna had initially accepted Urban VI, after the defection of the cardinals and election of Clement VII, she finally declared for Clement. Urban reacted by replacing Johanna with Charles Durazzo, summoning him from Buda to Rome. Bologna, Florence, and Siena all sided with the pope in urging Charles to take the throne. Johanna named Louis of Anjou her heir in response and waited desperately for his arrival with troops. On July 16, 1381, Charles took Naples. Louis of Anjou gathered men and funds, but failed to arrive in Naples in time. Almost exactly one year after the taking of her throne, Johanna was murdered in prison. Louis of Anjou himself died in 1384 and Charles of Durazzo was assassinated in 1386. Although the struggle for control of the Regno was continued by the wives of the Louis and Charles on behalf of

their minor sons, with Johanna's death, Provence, under the Angevins, was permanently divided from the Regno, which would fall to Aragon in 1442.

Casteen concludes with an epilogue reflecting on the invention of Johanna's positive reputation in Provence, due in large part to the romanticizing of nineteenth-century Provençal literature. But it was also a product of Marie of Blois, wife of Louis of Anjou, who found in Johanna's story a way of validating her own claims on behalf of her young son.

This study, with its attentive analysis of contemporary documents, official and literary, is an important addition to the ever-increasing corpus of revisions of the lives of powerful women of the medieval and early modern periods. It lucidly describes a reign that is even more complicated than most and, although Casteen of course makes no claim to bring the subject of her attention to life, Johanna emerges at times from the readings offered here. If I were to offer just a couple of minor critiques I would note that on the first page of the study Casteen refers to an eighteenth-century historian, who, when we follow the footnote, turns out to be Brantôme. This is a bit of shock, Brantôme being neither of the eighteenth century nor much of a historian. Second, I would note that it would have been useful to see this study contextualized with reference to recent scholarship on the *fama* of medieval and early queens. But neither of these points diminishes the importance of this thorough and well-researched history of a maligned queen's reign and reputation.

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