

marriages and determined to keep her titles and lands long after her own formal dethronement.

Graham-Goering's book sheds new light on Jeanne's later career, when she managed to have some of her outstanding debts covered by the French king. She would soon spectacularly break diplomatic relations with him, when France again threatened Brittany's proud but perilous political autonomy. In their joint opposition to France's deadly embrace, the two Jeanne's were eventually forced to bury the hatchet. The formerly competing dynasties of Jeanne de Penthièvre and Jeanne de Montfort would henceforth have to coexist until the inevitable demise of the Breton duchy.

Joanna Milstein, *Medici Archive Project*
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The Creation of the French Royal Mistress: From Agnès Sorel to Madame Du Barry.
Tracy Adams and Christine Adams.
Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020. xii + 236 pp. \$89.95.

This book constitutes the first comprehensive, scholarly account of the rise of the French royal mistress. Other royal women—the queen and the queen regent—have been analyzed. But the official mistress has been treated as a scandalous creature, interesting only because of her bad press and public sexuality. *The Creation of the French Royal Mistress* takes a different approach, emphasizing the cultural and political importance of the mistress and aiming to explain the birth of the position. The authors define the royal mistress as “an extra conjugal alliance of the king,” who was a “constituent element” of his grandeur and a “politician.” The royal mistress, the authors stress, “rivaled in power even the king's closest advisors.” She became, they assert, “an institution” (5).

The book explores the development of this institution through biographies of nine mistresses, from Agnes Sorel (1422–50), the mistress of Charles VII, to Madame Du Barry (1743–93), the mistress of Louis XV and the last woman to be a publicly recognized royal mistress. Given the chronological scope of the project, it is understandable that the authors rely on secondary sources. Still, each chapter “examine[s] the intellectual, emotional, and physical environment” that facilitated the woman's rise to power and assesses her political and cultural influence (2). Special attention is paid to each mistress's self-representations, be they appearances at royal entries or in court pageants, commissioned portraits, or the decoration of the mistress's castles and estates. The longest chapters deal with the lesser-known mistresses of the sixteenth century, women like Anne de Pisseleu d'Heilly, Duchesse d'Etampes, mistress of Francois I, and Diane de Poitiers, mistress of Henri II, who benefited from the mixture of informal and formal politics in these early courts to gain a power that was probably never surpassed by subsequent royal mistresses.

“Why France?” the authors ask in the first chapter. Only in France, Adams and Adams argue, did the royal mistress become a “tradition, a quasi-institutionalized political position, generally accepted if always vaguely scandalous” (15). French notions of gender, they claim, contributed to the creation of the royal mistress. Paradoxically, the Salic Law that banned women from the throne “created opportunities for female authority” (5). Because the royal mistress could not usurp the throne, she was allowed to wield some power as an “open secret.” At the same time, the “theatricalization of the court” in the first half of the sixteenth century made it possible for the mistress to publicize her power and assert her personality. The authors also credit another court institution—the male favorite, or *mignon*—with paving the way for the royal mistress. Both *mignon* and royal mistress subverted the traditional gatekeepers of the court, the high nobility, and depended only on the king. By virtue of her sex, however, the royal mistress exercised limited power and posed less of a threat to other courtiers. Consequently, she survived, while the *mignons* disappeared at the end of the reign of Henri III.

For the next two hundred years, the French kings conferred the official title of royal mistress on six women. These women had different ambitions: Madame de Maintenon sought to influence the composition of the clergy, while Pompadour concentrated on state appointments. These women also exerted different degrees of power. Pompadour worked tirelessly for her supporters, sometimes intruding into the area of foreign affairs. Du Barry found it harder to ward off opposing factions and had much less influence on matters of state. The authors make few comparisons between the different mistresses, and one misses a concluding chapter that might have brought together all the threads of the argument and provided answers to some general questions. Why did kings elevate these women who were lightning rods for criticism? How did the royal mistress enhance the monarchy or contribute to its functions? *The Creation of the Royal Mistress* tells us how the mistress was created, but not why. Still, this is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the French monarchy and the changing roles and relationships of women at the royal court.

Kathryn Norberg, *University of California, Los Angeles*
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A Companion to Late Medieval and Early Modern Augsburg. B. Ann Tlusty and Mark Häberlein, eds.

Brill's Companions to European History 20. Leiden: Brill, 2020. xviii + 596 pp. \$274.

Augsburg was one of the largest and most influential cities in Germany in the early modern period: a major political, economic, and cultural center, and home to the Fuggers, the wealthiest family in Europe. This volume offers a detailed look at the imperial city from the founding of its guild-based government in 1368 through Augsburg's