



***The 2023 Royal Studies Journal and
Winchester University Press Biennial
Early Career and Postgraduate
Researcher Article Prize***

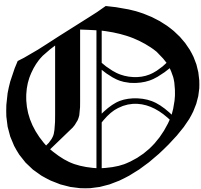
Zita Eva Rohr



**Report on the 2023 *Royal Studies Journal* and Winchester University Press Biennial
Early Career and Postgraduate Researcher Article Prize**

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nce again, I have had the very great pleasure and indeed honour of organizing and convening the *Royal Studies Journal* in association with the University of Winchester Press Early Career and Postgraduate Article Prize for 2023, which we have for some time awarded biennially. While I also convene our other biennial award of the Book Prize (originally conceived of, and convened by, the wonderful Lois Huneycutt), awarded in alternate years, the Article prize is perhaps closest to my heart, focusing upon the research of our early career and post graduate scholars. Indeed, one of the most frequent observations made by our expert external readers was the importance and value of an award such as this to bolstering both the research of our early career and postgraduate scholars and the scholars themselves, who not infrequently find themselves at a precarious point in their early academic careers.

And, what a rich and far-ranging field of nominations we received this year! Fourteen wonderful nominations across various disciplines researching aspects of royal and monarchical studies, including two Spanish language articles variously covering:

- 👑 Tudor memory-making and Tudor portrait collections held in Spain.
- 👑 Tripartite gift diplomacy in the sixteenth-century Holy Roman Empire.
- 👑 Pilgrim relics and the later uses of these.
- 👑 The afterlives of earlier English queens.
- 👑 Jesuit-inspired depictions of Alexander the Great in late Ming China.
- 👑 The literary construction of Christian kings in Arab-Islamic sources.
- 👑 Otto von Bismark's gender anxiety.
- 👑 Tudor christenings and their participants.
- 👑 Queens who took the waters at Bath and Tunbridge Wells to overcome fertility issues.
- 👑 Tudor epistolary secrecy.
- 👑 The power of portraiture in Isabelline and post-Isabelline Spain.
- 👑 Elizabethan representations of Mary I and Felipe II's marriage. And,
- 👑 The dowers of England's medieval queens.

From these splendid nominations, the jury landed upon a final round of eight nominations from its original pool of fourteen. They were (in no particular order):

- 👑 **Matthew Firth & Cassandra Schilling**, “The Lonely Afterlives of Early English Queens.” (Published.)
- 👑 **Yaliang Fu**, “Matteo Ricci's Depictions of Alexander the Great in Late Ming China.” (Published.)
- 👑 **Edward Holt**, “Between ‘Tyranny’ and ‘Gentleness’: The Construction of Fernando III and Christian Kings in Arabic-Islamic Sources.” (Published.)
- 👑 **Claudia Kreklau**, “The Gender Anxiety of Otto von Bismarck, 1866-1898.” (Published.)
- 👑 **Helen Newsome**, “‘for goddes sake kepe my writing secrete for it is my destruction’: Strategies of epistolary secrecy in the letters of Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scots (1489-1541).” (Unpublished.)
- 👑 **Adriana Concín**, “Splendid Gifts and a Florentine Architect for Emperor Rudolf II: Antonio Lupicini at the Imperial Court in Prague (1578–1580).” (Published.)
- 👑 **Susannah Lyon-Whaley**, “Queens at the Spa: Catherine of Braganza, Mary of Modena and the Politics of Display at Bath and Tunbridge Wells.” (Published.)
- 👑 **Melania Soler Moratón**, “Portraits of piety, portraits of power: the devotional representations of Isabel I of Castile and her heir, Juana I, and their public symbolism.” (Published.)

Further discussion and rereading of nominations and expert readers’ assessments determined our final short list of three:

- 👑 **Adriana Concín**, “Splendid Gifts and a Florentine Architect for Emperor Rudolf II: Antonio Lupicini at the Imperial Court in Prague (1578–1580).”
- 👑 **Susannah Lyon-Whaley**, “Queens at the Spa: Catherine of Braganza, Mary of Modena and the Politics of Display at Bath and Tunbridge Wells.”
- 👑 **Melania Soler Moratón**, “Portraits of piety, portraits of power: the devotional representations of Isabel I of Castile and her heir, Juana I, and their public symbolism.”

More intense discussion back and forth between the UK, the US, and Australia was required to whittle down this final and very excellent field to:

Highly Commended: **Melania Soler Moratón**, “Portraits of piety, portraits of power: the devotional representations of Isabel I of Castile and her heir, Juana I, and their public symbolism.” For a well-documented in-depth study with convincing conclusions that builds the connection between devotional practices, devotional representation, and the public sphere.

Runner Up: **Susannah Lyon-Whaley**, “Queens at the Spa: Catherine of Braganza, Mary of Modena and the Politics of Display at Bath and Tunbridge Wells.” For adding a more substantial treatment to the topic and a meaningful elaboration of existing ideas, grounded powerfully within the sources.

Before confirming the winner, the jury wanted to commend the very fine research expressed in the five other nominations contained in our finals round of eight.

Judges’ Commendations:

- 👑 **Matthew Firth & Cassandra Schilling**, “The Lonely Afterlives of Early English Queens.”
- 👑 **Yaliang Fu**, “Matteo Ricci's Depictions of Alexander the Great in Late Ming China.”
- 👑 **Edward Holt**, “Between ‘Tyranny’ and ‘Gentleness’: The Construction of Fernando III and Christian Kings in Arabic-Islamic Sources.”
- 👑 **Claudia Kreklau**, “The Gender Anxiety of Otto von Bismarck, 1866-1898.”
- 👑 **Helen Newsome**, “‘for goddes sake kepe my writing secrete for it is my destruction’: Strategies of epistolary secrecy in the letters of Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scots (1489-1541).”

The ultimate winner of this year’s biennially awarded Early Career and Postgraduate Article Prize is **Adriana Concini**, “Splendid Gifts and a Florentine Architect for Emperor Rudolf II: Antonio Lupicini at the Imperial Court in Prague (1578–1580).”

Adriana’s expert readers scored the article highly for its original contribution, observing that it was a ground-breaking piece of research with no apparent weaknesses. It

explores an original, interesting, and interdisciplinary topic deploying a multifaceted analysis and interpretation of relations between the Duke of Tuscany, Francesco I de' Medici (1541-1587), and the Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolph II (1552-1612), and the engineer, architect, and astronomer Antonio Lupicino as a kind of guide to inter-connected diplomatic relationships.

Reader 1 observed that:

Adriana Concin's article "Splendid Gifts and a Florentine Architect for Emperor Rudolf II: Antonio Lupicini at the Imperial Court in Prague (1578-1580)" is one of the best articles written in this area in recent years and I read it with great enthusiasm. The author presents the topic of the gifts sent from Florence by Francesco I to Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, using information from archives that had not been researched before. This has provided entirely new information that sheds light on the early period of Rudolf II's collecting, when paintings—the medium that would later make the emperor famous as one of the greatest patrons of his time—did not yet play a major role. The reports found here are also of great help to scholars in other fields, such as for the study of Rudolf's architecture. For them, Lupicini's letter of 1579, printed in the article, with its detailed description of the planned alterations to Prague Castle, is a key document on which new research can be built. The article therefore certainly deserves a high evaluation and is an extremely suitable candidate for your prize.

With Reader 2 adding:

The article concerns the original, interesting, and interdisciplinary research topic, for which the term "gift diplomacy" could be the starting point, and which should be placed at a junction of studies on the early modern diplomacy, family rivalries, means of building family position, network of informal influences, cultural transfers, and finally, the European art and architecture history. This is a very interesting combination, which allowed the author to make a multifaceted analysis and interpretation of relations between the Duke of Tuscany, Francesco I de' Medici (1541-1587), and the Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolph II (1552-1612), and chose Antonio Lupicino (1530-1607), an engineer, architect, and astronomer, and his work in Prague and Vienna as a kind of guide to these relations.

With great erudition and academic diligence, the author analyses individual gifts from Francesco to Rudolph, all of which, without exception, were particularly interesting in terms of their artistic rendering, showing in each case both their value as artworks and their significance in the abovementioned 'gift diplomacy'. With an intuition worth emphasising, the author introduces quotations from the sources into the article which perfectly serves the purpose of testimonies as well as elements diversifying the narrative. The hypotheses and conclusion presented in the article are well-argued and convincing. It is worth emphasising that the author has made a few important and new findings and verified a number of arguments in existing studies.

A very worthy laureate indeed! Adriana could not be present at the official announcement during our twelfth annual Kings and Queen's conference jointly hosted by Uppsala Universitat and Stockholm University in the beautiful and historic university town of Uppsala in Sweden. Adrianna did, however, send her very good wishes and the observations to share with those of us who were fortunate enough to be present on the evening for the official announcement of her winning nomination:

I am sincerely grateful and highly honoured to receive the Royal Studies Journal's prestigious early career essay prize. This recognition means a great deal to me and serves as a testament to the dedication and passion I poured into crafting my article. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have my ideas and research acknowledged in such a meaningful way. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to you and the peer reviewers for your time, effort, and expertise in evaluating my submission. It is also a real privilege to read the reader's comments. Once again, thank you for this incredible honour.

Drawn from around the world and across the disciplines, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and to thank all of our amazing expert readers once again for their continuing and quite astonishing scholarly and personal generosity and goodwill. They are as one in their detailed reflections, expert observations, and invaluable promptitude. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow jury members of long standing, Ellie Woodacre and Núria Silleras-Fernández, without whose wisdom, generosity, and of course friendship, the organization of these biennial award campaigns would be very onerous indeed.

So, now we look forward to next year's biennial Book Prize campaign. We will award our biennial book prize for the best monograph or edited collection on any subject, in any geography or time period that falls within royal and/or monarchical studies. The nominations will need to have been published between 2022 and 2024 (prior to the nomination deadline of 15 February 2024). The prize purse for 2024 is valued once again at £100 and will be awarded officially at the Kings and Queens 13 conference to be hosted by the American University of Paris in late May 2024. The theme of the conference will be "Gift Giving and Communication Networks." Do not remain silent—please publicize our prize campaigns. Shout out the good news loudly! We have 'til 15 February next year for the closure of our nomination deadline for the best nominated book in the field of royal and/or monarchical studies. Updated nomination guidelines and links to the nomination form are now available on the *Royal Studies Journal* website.