JOAN DE MOHUN:
A POWERFUL COURTIER DURING THE REIGN OF RICHARD II

A DISSERTATION IN
History
And
English

Presented to the Faculty of the University of Missouri-Kansas City in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines English court culture and court politics through the life of Joan de Mohun (d. 1404). A member of the Burghershes, a socially aspirational family in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Joan benefitted from an advantageous marriage to the higher-ranking John de Mohun V (1320-1375). Although possessing status, the Mohuns struggled financially and experienced political marginalization from their seat at Dunster Castle. Lady Mohun, however, continued the social aspirations of her natal family and formed personal friendships with England’s most powerful individuals, including John of Gaunt, Richard II, and Queen Anne. Through her efforts, she successfully negotiated for a place at court.

This dissertation explores how Joan orchestrated a move from the periphery of the elite to a prominent position in the court of Richard II. Surviving evidence, like the Mohun Chronicle, suggest the methods that Lady Mohun employed to fashion her image as an ideal courtier whose family was chivalrous. This reputation as the ideal courtier enabled Joan to both serve at court while also improving her personal social standing. Through examining primary evidence that document gift exchanges with Edward III, John of Gaunt, Richard II, and Queen Anne, this dissertation traces both the relationships that Lady Mohun cultivated
and the closeness of such interactions. Joan became a confidante of John of Gaunt, Richard II, and Queen Anne, as suggested by the nature of the gifts exchanged, and through the patronage and the honors that Joan received.

This dissertation additionally explores similar courtiers and suggests that the methods employed by Lady Mohun were used by others seeking favor and a place at court. Joan used these methods to great success, and a comparison of her actions with others provides insight into the politics of favor at the court of Richard II. Known for his inclusion of non-traditional players at court, Richard II honored a number of newcomers and women. The life of Joan de Mohun serves as a case study of court culture during the reign of Richard II, and an examination of her life demonstrates the factors that influenced a courtier’s rise.
APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, have examined a dissertation titled “Joan de Mohun: A Powerful Courtier During the Reign of Richard II,” presented by Melissa M. Morris, candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worth of acceptance.

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCR</td>
<td>Calendar of the Close Rolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIPM</td>
<td>Calendar of Inquisitions Post-Mortem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR</td>
<td>Calendar of the Patent Rolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODNB</td>
<td>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNA</td>
<td>The National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writing of this dissertation has been a process, at times both difficult and long, but also rewarding in that I had the opportunity to research a topic that I am passionate about. I am incredibly lucky to have the support of a number of colleagues, friends, and family members who have continued to encourage and support me throughout this process. This journey was only possible with the help and support of those around me.

I am first and foremost grateful for my advisors at UMKC. Dr. Linda Mitchell encouraged me to take a small idea and do a deep dive into the sources, searching for evidence overlooked or previously ignored. I learned from her how to discover the lives of medieval women by using the available evidence, re-examining to find the female experience. Many of the ideas for this dissertation come from conversations in Dr. Mitchell’s office, discussed over a cup of coffee. Dr. Virginia Blanton introduced me to the benefits of literary analysis, expertly showing me how using literary sources add depth and understanding to an examination of medieval women. I started this process with a history-focused background, and adding this literary analysis was eye-opening for me, encouraging me to reconsider how to use additional sources to inform my research. I grew to love medieval manuscripts and romance from my conversations with Dr. Blanton. I am eternally grateful to both Dr. Mitchell and Dr. Blanton for their continued patience with me and for always encouraging me to carry on.

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Our collaborative research on medieval manuscripts was both enjoyable and informative to my research. It has been an honor working beside such a scholar, and I am lucky to have Chainy as a friend.

The support of my family has been incredibly important during this process. My grandparents, Jerry and Janet Pfeiffer, remained confident in me and that I would complete this task. My parents, Larry and Cheryl Morris, always encouraged me to keep going and complete the dissertation, while remaining proud of my progress. This moral support made the difference in completing this project and making it to the finish line.

Through it all, my husband Chris Mitchell has remained my rock, pushing me to continue and overcome the challenges, while always believing in me. His commitment to proofreading and a willingness to discuss historical research is admirable. Without the love, encouragement, and support of my husband, this dissertation would not have been possible.
<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
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<td>Wardship and person of John V granted to Bartholomew Burghersh</td>
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<tr>
<td>1341</td>
<td>John de Mohun V received his inheritance</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1341</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1346-1348</td>
<td>John de Mohun V on campaign with the Black Prince</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1348</td>
<td>John de Mohun V elevated as a founding member of the Order of the Garter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely 1350s</td>
<td>Birth of Philippa de Mohun</td>
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<td>17 November 1374</td>
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15 September 1375  Death of John de Mohun V

20 November 1376  5,000m. payment made by Elizabeth Luttrell to Joan de Mohun for Dunster Castle

1382  Philippa de Mohun married Walter, Lord Fitzwalter (d. 1386)

1384-1390, 1399  Joan de Mohun received garter robes as a Lady of the Garter

1388  Joan de Mohun banished from court of Richard II

By 1390  Joan de Mohun returned to court of Richard II

By November 1389  Philippa de Mohun married John Golafre (d. 1396)

1397  Maud de Mohun married Sir Nicholas Hauberk

1397  Philippa de Mohun married Edward, duke of York (d. 1415)

2 October 1404  Joan de Mohun wrote her final will

4 October 1404  Death of Joan de Mohun
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In January 1380, an order was given to Joan de Mohun, Lady of Dunster (d. 1404), following a petition by Genoese and Milanese merchants.¹ In the petition, the merchants request that Joan return a bale of cassia which was a part of the cargo on the ship the Seint Cristofore.² Unfortunately for the Seint Cristofore, the ship unintentionally arrived in Dunster during a storm. Once in Dunster, the ship and its goods were seized by Lady Mohun and her associates.³ A further order in February 1380 provides additional details, as Joan is ordered to return a lengthy list of goods taken from the Seint Cristofore, including two pots of ginger, thirteen pipes of raisins, one hundred seventy-two bales of woad, two bales of writing paper, a case of sugar candy, and thirty-eight bales of rice, in addition to assorted other confiscated goods.⁴ Seized during a resurgence of fighting between England and France during the Hundred Years War, the question over the seizure of the Seint Cristofore revolved around the issue of whether the ship belonged to merchants that were enemies of the king of England, as Castile was a key ally of France.⁵ French and Castilian efforts in England

² Ibid. The Oxford English Dictionary defines cassia as the bark from Cinnamomum Cassia. It is inferior in quality and cheaper than true cinnamon. See: https://www.oed.com/dictionary/cassia_n1.
⁴ Ibid., 291.
⁵ Ibid.
intensified during the 1370s, as they actively attacked coastal towns in Southern England.\(^6\) Recognizing such contemporary events, it appears that Joan decided to seize the ship while it was docked in the port at Dunster and ask questions about its origin later, assuming that the ship and its goods belonged to the enemy. Through such actions, Joan might have been acting in the interests of the current king Richard II (r. 1377-1399) by stopping the transfer of goods to the opposition. Conversely, it is also possible that Joan recognized an opportunity and took it. The Castilian aid at sea being provided to the French made it a plausible excuse for her to confiscate the ship’s goods while its port of origin and allegiances were debated. Ultimately, the ship and its masters were determined to be under the purview of the king of Aragon in January 1381, and the goods did not belong to one of the king’s enemies, but not before Joan and her associates brought further strain on the relationship of England with spectator nations of the conflict between England and France.\(^7\)

This seizure of the *Seint Cristofore* provides a vignette of the life of the Lady of Dunster. Ambitious and skilled, Joan recognized opportunities and used situations to her advantage. She developed connections with those around her, particularly those in the upper echelons of court society, and capitalized on these interactions to benefit herself and her family. As evidenced above, Joan often defied convention and forged her own way in life, based on her attitudes and preferences. Although Lady Mohun created a distinct existence for herself, her life also exemplifies many more conventional social and cultural elements of fourteenth-century England. It is the intersection of Joan’s life and the English court that is the focus of this dissertation. Through an examination of Joan de Mohun, trends and patterns

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\(^7\) *CCR, Richard II*, vol. 1, 492-493.
emerge, providing glimpses into elite lives during the reigns of Edward III (r. 1327-1377) and Richard II. Joan herself might have behaved in unorthodox ways, but her general experiences were not unique.

This dissertation focuses on the life and career of Joan de Mohun, examining her ambitions for herself and her family. It explores the ways that a woman used her connections, both familial and interpersonal, to create a comfortable position at the royal court of England. Lady Mohun participated in social and political maneuverings available to fourteenth-century women, mastered the techniques, and used them to her advantage. Joan played the game, and she played it well. These machinations, however, demonstrate larger issues at work during the reigns of Edward III and Richard II. Especially during the reign of Richard II, women at court possessed more power and agency than they held during previous reigns. Female courtiers occupied positions at court close to Richard II, receiving both royal patronage and favor. Richard II also rewarded female subjects for their loyalty and service to the crown through an expansion of the Ladies of the Garter, the highest honor that a woman could receive in fourteenth-century England.

The population of women who participated in court and interacted with the king in the late fourteenth century represented a socially diverse group. While women from the most powerful and elite families continued to hold positions at court, women outside this traditional circle also found success and favor at court during the reign of Richard II. The king considered more than pedigree when bestowing favor and honors to female subjects. Thus, women outside the upper echelons of the English elite gained a level of prestige previously unavailable to them.
Lady Mohun represents one such woman outside the traditional elite who was able to secure a position of favor at court. Her life is an example of how a woman could participate in improving the social standing of herself and her family. Although Joan achieved great success from her calculated efforts, her methods illustrate the tactics available to women to gain beneficial patronage. This favor enabled Joan to gain independence, near the end of her marriage but also during her lengthy widowhood. Through securing patronage, Lady Mohun achieved her personal goals, establishing a life of service at court and at Canterbury, but one decidedly separate from her husband’s family seat at Dunster Castle. Joan knew what she wanted to achieve in life and used available methods to succeed. Lady Mohun’s efforts, then, demonstrate how women gained positions of prominence at court in fourteenth-century England.

**Historiography**

Joan de Mohun serves as an example of how women in fourteenth-century England experienced court culture, interacted with it, and how they used benefits received at court to their personal advantage. This dissertation examines the life and experiences of a female courtier, how she fit into the culture of the royal court, and the ways that this position influenced her and her family. Developments in the field of medieval women’s history provide the foundation for such a study of Lady Mohun.

The development of women’s history as a field encouraged looking for and including women in the historical narrative. Scholars researching the Middle Ages incorporated many of the developments in the general field of women’s history into their studies, while also developing techniques unique to researching medieval women. Early examinations on
medieval women focused on broad descriptions of female experience, with the intent to introduce women as worthy historical subjects. In one such study on women during the Middle Ages, Eileen Power provided a brief overview in her 1926 article, “The Position of Women.” Power began by describing the juxtaposition of women, noting the prevalence of medieval theory about women as defined by the Church and the aristocracy. Women were alternately placed on a pedestal or put in the pit, with few attitudes about women occupying the space between. Both the Church and the aristocracy agreed on the subjection of women, while a conflicting opinion of the superiority of women, as evidenced by the cult of the Virgin and the rise of chivalry, grew. As society itself had contradictory views of women so too did the experiences of women vary based on her social position. Power expanded to briefly describe the lives of women from differing social positions, focusing on the feudal lady, the bourgeoise, and the peasant. Women from each of these three groups were presented as the “typical woman,” explaining their experiences based on generalities, offering little distinction between geographic region or time.

Power describes a difficulty in studying women of the Middle Ages because of the surviving evidence. Male writers dominate, while few women wrote about their opinions on themselves as women. Those women that did write, like Heloise, female mystics, and Marie de France, wrote within “the poetic convention of their day.” It was only the writings

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9 Ibid., 401-404.
10 Ibid., 401-402.
11 Ibid., 404.
12 Ibid., 410.
13 Ibid., 410-433.
14 Ibid., 408.
15 Ibid.
of Christine de Pizan at the end of the fourteenth century that introduced a more direct opinion on the position of women from a female perspective. Power included data from governmental documents, including poll-tax statistics and manorial records, to describe the general experiences of the typical woman. Yet she also used notable women like Blanche of Champagne, Blanche of Castile, and Eleanor of Aquitaine, in addition to de Pizan, as examples.

In this short work on women in the Middle Ages, Power thus examines contemporary theories about women while balancing descriptions of the daily experiences of women. Power concluded that “the medieval woman played an active and dignified part in the society of her age.” Power introduced the challenges to studying women in the Middle Ages, while also demonstrating how to approach the sources to find women and extract data about their lives.

Power provided a general overview of women in the Middle Ages, while targeting a popular audience, showing how the study of women is interesting. While she focused on women as a general group, other early scholars introduced noteworthy women of the Middle Ages, highlighting their achievements as the “great women” of their time. Queens proved worthy subjects for a variety of reasons. Information survived on them due to their royal status and many had unique experiences, for example, assisting during a young king’s minority or ruling in her own right. Early studies on Eleanor of Aquitaine, including the 1976 study *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Patron and Politician*, edited by William Kibler, and article

[16] Ibid., 409.
[17] Ibid., 417.
[18] Ibid., 433.
length examinations, like June Hall McCash’s 1979 article on the relationship between Marie de Champagne and Eleanor of Aquitaine, began to detail specifics about an individual queen’s life, friendships, and experiences.\textsuperscript{20} Pauline Stafford compiled information on several queens and women close to the royal family in \textit{Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King’s Wife in the Early Middle Ages}, expanding beyond the popularly known queens of the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{21} Female writers, too, garnered early attention, as they left written records for scholars to examine. The edited volume \textit{Medieval Women Writers} introduced a variety of women writers, including Hrotsvit of Gandersheim, Marie de France, Saint Bridget, and Christine de Pizan, among others.\textsuperscript{22} Such studies on queens and women writers highlighted those who were considered unique or extraordinary, recognizing their worth as topics of study, while encouraging deeper examinations of women and placing them in the historical narrative.

As the field developed and grew, edited volumes allowed scholars to collectively approach the overarching topic of medieval women while providing individual discussions on the female experience. One such edited volume, \textit{Women in Medieval Society}, introduced issues faced by women in various parts of Europe.\textsuperscript{23} Here, Susan Mosher Stuard encouraged the use of social history in the study of medieval women, noting that “it deals with the position of women, the roles assumed by women, and their importance within their social


\textsuperscript{21} Pauline Stafford, \textit{Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King’s Wife in the Early Middle Ages} (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983).


context. The focus was not on the extraordinary women, but instead, on those issues that influenced women more generally. Women throughout Europe were discussed, covering varied locations like England, Germany, Spain, and Dubrovnik. As a result, the volume does not present a coherent view of medieval women, but it instead introduces the varied topics related to women’s history that can and should be examined. In her included article, “Widow and Ward: The Feudal Law of Child Custody in Medieval England,” Sue Sheridan Walker discussed inheritance to feudal lands from the perspective of a widow but also as the mother of an heir. Through legal records, Walker discussed custody issues for the heir, the right to arrange the marriage of the heir, and property rights. Here we are introduced to the issues faced by a woman regarding her rights and the family dynamics presented by such a situation as both a mother and widow. A medieval woman was defined not only by her gender, but also by the roles that she had and the multiple groups to which she belonged.

Recognizing that “medieval women” was too vague of a group, scholars began to explore the other identifiers that defined the female experience. Margaret Wade Labarge approached medieval women from varying social groups in western Europe in *Women in Medieval Life: A Small Sound of the Trumpet*. Like Power, Labarge focused on an overview of women, however, she expanded the groups discussed, including the traditional subjects of queens, noblewomen, nuns, and mystics, while incorporating the experiences of townswomen, peasants, nurses, and those on the fringe of society, like prostitutes. Labarge

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described the daily lives of women from the listed social groups, noting their achievements and the experiences of the group as a distinct unit. By their inclusion, Labarge demonstrated how women from previously ignored groups could be examined and added to the historical narrative.

Many early volumes and articles thus focused on bringing medieval women in general to the forefront, providing sweeping overviews of women as a group. Such efforts were important and ground-breaking, as they established a basis for additional research. Further growth of the field allowed for the development of texts dedicated to a specific topic related to medieval women. For example, Walker’s 1976 discussion of widows and inheritance issues represented one chapter of the edited collection in *Women in Medieval Society*. Marital status became recognized as one factor influencing a woman and her life, encouraging more research by scholars. Examinations of women as wives and widows emphasized the legal issues of those who belonged to these two groups. Sue Sheridan Walker’s 1993 edited volume, *Wife and Widow in Medieval England*, narrowed the scope by addressing the legal status of married women and widows in England. Using charters, court records, and land transactions, the scholars in this volume highlighted the choices made by wives and widows, particularly those surrounding land and remarriage. In their chapters, Janet Loengard and Charles Donahue, Jr. explored both dower law and how women and

27 Ibid., xiv.
widows used the court to argue for the property that they had been promised.\textsuperscript{31} Such discussions not only increase the understanding of how women used the courts to ensure that they were provided for, but also how women behaved, persistently using the court to achieve their personal objectives.

Joan de Mohun spent significant periods of her life as either a wife or a widow, and such studies served as exemplars from which to approach her life. To understand the unique aspects of her life, we must also understand the societal and legal pressures that she faced. Lady Mohun occupied a place in the Burghersh and Mohun families. Related to the experiences of a woman as a wife or widow, scholars additionally researched her position as a member of a family. The family represented a social, economic, and political entity, and a woman’s role in this unit was a key part to understanding it. Joel Rosenthal focused on the family and the relationships between its members in \textit{Patriarchy and Families of Privilege in Fifteenth-Century England}.\textsuperscript{32} Through a series of related essays on various relationships in the family, including those between fathers and sons, family networks, and widows, Rosenthal examined family dynamics for those of the upper class. With an emphasis on a distinct social class, Rosenthal argued for the variety of shapes of the family rather than one overarching organization that was the same everywhere.


Social class was one defining factor through which to examine women as a group. Yet women belonged to multiple, intersecting groups during their lives. The growth of regional studies, examining a geographic region and the women who lived there, demonstrates the similarities and differences of women who were neighbors. P. J. P. Goldberg examined the economic opportunities for women in York and Yorkshire in *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire c. 1300-1520*, while Louise Wilkinson presented women from a variety of social groups, including noblewomen, gentlewomen, townswomen, peasants, women who were criminals, and religious women who lived in Lincolnshire in *Women in Thirteenth-Century Lincolnshire*. The introduction of geographical region demonstrated how women were influenced by location, adding further depth to the discussion of medieval women.

Sourcebooks, too, gathered primary evidence for students to approach women’s experiences through their lens and voices. Emilie Amt’s sourcebook, *Women’s Lives in Medieval Europe*, gathered texts related to the everyday lives of women, including on topics like marriage, female religious life, and noble life. Public and private documents presented intimate images of women, while information on women in minority groups, like Jews and Muslims, demonstrated the variety of experiences of women in the Middle Ages. The presentation of sources, although valuable on their own, remind of how information, when pieced together, can provide a picture of a larger group.

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New methodologies and approaches to historical concepts and documents needed to be developed to fully address the plethora of topics being uncovered regarding women. Approaching sources written from the male perspective, encompassing the male experience, required new ways to read and reexamine them, looking for the female experience.\(^\text{35}\) Scholars both incorporated new methods to approach historical sources and increasingly utilized concepts from a variety of disciplines to inform their discussions of women and gender. The introduction of anthropology and its techniques especially broadened examinations of women in the past. Clifford Geertz theorized how thick description pushes an examination of culture further, providing deeper value with additional analysis.\(^\text{36}\) Thus through such an examination “the aim is to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics.”\(^\text{37}\) Looking at smaller, factual evidence, can allow for extrapolation. The seemingly small can then be used to explain a larger phenomenon through analytical work performed in a targeted manner.

The work of these scholars demonstrated how women can be examined and incorporated into historical research. They also argue that women should not be treated as supporting characters, pushed to the background. Instead, women should be studied on their


\(^{37}\) Ibid., 321.
own merit as main actors. The foundational research established in these prior works thus present a framework to create an in-depth study of a woman like Joan de Mohun.

Lady Mohun is not unknown to the annals of history. Pieces of her life have been examined previously, particularly focused on her actions surrounding the sale of her husband’s *caput honoris*, Dunster Castle. Joan figures prominently in an early examination of Dunster and its governing families by H. C. Maxwell Lyte. Here, Maxwell Lyte chronicles the founding of Dunster by the Mohun family, with the eventual change of hands to Hugh Luttrell (c. 1364-1428) and his descendants. Joan, however, is an infamous player in Maxwell Lyte’s examination. She is primarily associated with her actions to sell Dunster Castle to Elizabeth Luttrell (d. 1395), Hugh’s mother. Her efforts are viewed as manipulative and serving her own interests. As such, she is the villain in this study of the Mohun family and Dunster Castle.

This image presented by scholars of family history of an independent and decisive female member as overbearing and manipulative of the men around her is one that this dissertation directly confronts. Rather than seeing evidence of female agency as a negative, the actions are approached from a non-judgmental stance, searching instead for the reasons why a certain action was taken, or behind why a decision was made. Those family histories that villainize or marginalize the experiences of female members are also challenged. Michael Altschul’s 1965 study of the Clare family focused directly on the male family members, largely ignoring female members unless describing them as wife, widow, or

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39 Ibid. 46-53.
heiress.\textsuperscript{40} Similarly in his research on the Cobham family, Nigel Saul emphasized the
pursuits of male members, mentioning female members as extensions of their male
relatives.\textsuperscript{41} Colin Veach’s 2014 study on the Lacys told the family history through only the
actions of father and son, Hugh and Walter de Lacy.\textsuperscript{42} Although such studies focus on male
members, ignoring the female members in a history of a family misses the depth that
including their stories could provide. This dissertation both examines the life of Joan de
Mohun as an individual, but it also incorporates her into the family history of the Mohuns
and Burghershies.

Maxwell Lyte’s discussion of the Mohuns and Dunster Castle serves as the
introductory text to this family. Later scholars built on his research, reexamining the legal
maneuverings surrounding the sale of the \textit{caput honoris} and placing this event in the context
of familial and political events. In 2011, Simon Payling focused on the sale of Dunster, while
contextualizing the actions of both Joan and her husband John V (1320-1376).\textsuperscript{43} The
inclusion of contemporary events, like decisions made around the instances when John V
prepared to go on campaign in France, demonstrate why particular actions might have been
taken.\textsuperscript{44} Lady Mohun remains primarily connected to her part in the Dunster sale; however,
Payling focuses more on the shortcomings of John V rather than marking Joan as a

\textsuperscript{40} Michael Altschul, \textit{A Baronial Family in Medieval England: The Clares, 1217-1314}
(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965).
\textsuperscript{41} Nigel Saul, \textit{Death, Art, and Memory in Medieval England: The Cobham Family and Their
\textsuperscript{42} Colin Veach, \textit{Lordship in Four Realms: The Lacy Family, 1166-1241} (Manchester:
Manchester University Press, 2014).
\textsuperscript{43} S. J. Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England: The Sale of
the Lordship of Dunster,” \textit{English Historical Review} CXXCI, no. 518 (Feb. 2011).
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 18.
manipulator. Legal maneuverings constitute the primary focus, while the motives of John V and Joan are grounded in context and not supposition like those pushed by Maxwell Lyte.

Apart from her participation in the sale of Dunster Castle, Joan has been briefly examined regarding her role as a patron. In 1907, Ethel Lega-Weekes briefly described the *Mohun Chronicle* as “the remnant of an old vellum book” that contains a history of the Mohun family.\(^{45}\) This, however, is only a short description of the text, and provides a copy and translation only of the first pages of the manuscript. In the same journal and volume, H. C. Maxwell Lyte added commentary on the *Mohun Chronicle*, including prior discussions of the text, while attempting to date its production.\(^{46}\) Such descriptions of the *Mohun Chronicle* introduce it, while providing only cursory details on the text and its content. It was not until John Spence’s 2011 examination of the *Mohun Chronicle* that we get an expanded discussion of this document. Spence provides a translation of the *Mohun Chronicle*, while also discussing details about the text’s contents and provenance.\(^{47}\) Using the prologue, Spence established the content of the *Mohun Chronicle*, although the surviving copy is incomplete.\(^{48}\) The entirety of the document was to include a tale on the world’s origins, the populating of England, a list of the emperors and popes of Rome, the archbishops of Canterbury, the kings of France and England, and a history of the Mohun family.\(^{49}\) Spence argued that Lady

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\(^{48}\) Ibid., 150.

\(^{49}\) Ibid.
Mohun is the likely patron, or at least inspiration, for the text.\(^5^0\) Also in 2011, Jocelyn Wogan-Browne reiterates the connection of Joan to the *Mohun Chronicle*, demonstrating through a close reading of the text the ways in which she influenced the content of the text and how this connects to the family’s succession concerns.\(^5^1\) Furthermore, the information included in the *Mohun Chronicle* highlights how Joan might have used this document to construct a family history that emphasizes female agency, a topic particularly relevant to a family with three daughters.\(^5^2\) Such a deep reading of the source, combined with contextualization of Joan’s life and her actions as a patron, began the process of expanding a discussion of her life and career as a courtier.

The *Mohun Chronicle*, however, is not the only surviving text associated with Joan and her family. In 1993, Ruth E. Harvey examined a poem from the *Mohun Register* that survives as London, BL MS Egerton 3724.\(^5^3\) Described as a courtesy text, Harvey suggests that the poem might have been written for John V before delving into the content of the text.\(^5^4\) Harvey includes a transcription of the poem.\(^5^5\) Such discussions focus on evidence connected to Joan de Mohun and her family, including only the relevant information from her life and experiences to contextualize the provided content. The focus largely remains on the literary elements of the *Mohun Chronicle* and the *Mohun Register*.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 164-167.  
\(^{52}\) Ibid., 316.  
\(^{54}\) Ibid., 161.  
\(^{55}\) Ibid., 168-177.
As evidenced by such discussions, Lady Mohun left artifacts that have survived, and which provide opportunities for research. In 2019, Diane Heath examined material evidence in the form of Joan’s tomb at Canterbury Cathedral.\textsuperscript{56} Here Heath examines Lady Mohun’s tomb in its current condition, while including historical descriptions prior to any destruction. Through the cathedral records, we see that Joan actively planned for, built, and paid for the construction of her tomb.\textsuperscript{57} Although focusing on one aspect of Joan’s life, Heath presents her as an active participant, making choices on her burial location and taking the needed steps to get her desired result. Such a discussion illustrates how Lady Mohun can be examined in the context of fourteenth-century England and how her experiences can inform larger discussions of medieval women.

**Methodology**

These prior examinations of Joan de Mohun, however, focus only on small pieces of her life. Such discussions, although useful, carve out some of her experiences while missing out on the additional context provided through a deeper examination of the Lady of Dunster’s life. This dissertation considers the life and experiences of Lady Mohun as a whole. It examines the primary sources and uncovers her activities that did not factor into the extraordinary aspects of her life. These elements, including the sale of Dunster and the creation of the *Mohun Chronicle*, are studied, but they are placed in the context of Joan’s entire life and career as a courtier.


\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 190-193.
This dissertation approaches the experiences of Joan de Mohun first from a biographical perspective. She is recognized as a member of the Mohun and Burghersh families. Close and more distant relatives are examined, suggesting her personal network and how she was able to achieve her social goals through using her familial relationships. Her actions, too, are recounted and used as a way to demonstrate what was important to Lady Mohun and how she interacted with society around her. Biographies that highlight the lives of medieval women provide foundational examples for this research on Joan de Mohun. The 2012 volume *Writing Medieval Women’s Lives* demonstrates how pictures of women outside the traditional elite can be constructed by adapting methods utilized by historians of women during the early modern period who left sparse documentation.\(^{58}\) Particularly relevant is Linda Mitchell’s *Portraits of Medieval Women: Family, Marriage, and Politics in England, 1225-1350*, which used prosopographical descriptions to create pictures of several individual women.\(^{59}\) Through a case study of specific women, we gain a better understanding of English noblewomen. Expanded biographies of individual women, too, like that of Elizabeth de Burgh by Frances Underhill, used the available sources to describe the life of an individual woman, while recognizing her role in her family and society.\(^{60}\) In such a review, an individual woman showed how she influenced issues like politics and patronage, but also how she was shaped by these issues. Adapting many of the methodologies described in these biographical works aid in the construction of this biography.

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Yet this dissertation is not simply a biography of Joan de Mohun. Instead, it draws on the historiographical elements that expanded women’s history and adds to it. Microhistory particularly informs this study of Lady Mohun, as details of her life are examined, reviewing, for example, the texts that she would have read, known about, and imitated. Her use of and internalization of such texts also speak to society, demonstrating the culture of socially aspirational individuals and courtiers. Like Carlo Ginzburg’s discussion of Menocchio, “what we do know permits us to reconstruct a fragment of what is usually called ‘the culture of the lower classes’ or even ‘popular culture.’” Joan was not a member of the highest level of the elite, and a review of the texts and items with which she interacted speak to the social elements that influenced her. Joan, however, also existed on the fringe of the elite, with social aspirations to participate as a member. Natalie Zemon Davis’ use of the unique as an example of a larger group in The Return of Martin Guerre is particularly useful here. Through this microhistory, Zemon Davis used accounts regarding an extraordinary situation, extrapolating how those involved used and were influenced by contemporary social values and traditions. Zemon Davis admits that “an unusual case serves me well, for a remarkable dispute can sometimes uncover motivations and values that are lost in the welter of the everyday. My hope is to show that the adventures of three young villagers are not too many steps beyond the more common experience of their neighbors.” Although the events might not be typical, a single case study can serve as an exemplar, providing valuable data about individuals and society at large. Individuals considered to be unique exist in and are

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63 Ibid.
influenced by the world around them, and such details can be discerned through a careful examination of the surrounding sources. Lady Mohun is an example of those with social ambitions. Although Joan created strong connections with the court and the royal family, her general experiences provide comparisons to others with similar aspirations. These other individuals might not have left the sources that Joan did, and they might not have succeeded as well as she did. Joan’s life, however, provides context for similarly ambitious courtiers. Joan de Mohun is a model fourteenth-century courtier, but her existence explains larger issues and social groups associated with the royal court.

Sources

This dissertation, thus, places Lady Mohun in the social groups in which she participated. Tracing those with whom she interacted provides a wider range of sources to trace her activities, particularly those close to the royal family and court. The Register of John of Gaunt provides a wealth of information, showing Joan’s personal interactions with the duke of Lancaster, suggesting a close relationship between the two. Furthermore, by reexamining the patronage and gifts awarded to her, the Register suggests the level of regard that Gaunt had for Lady Mohun. A household listing of expenses and items given to an individual takes on additional meaning when considered in regard to the value and frequency that these items were provided.

In addition to John of Gaunt, Joan interacted with other members of the royal family, including Edward III, Richard II, and Queen Anne (1366-1394). Her relationship with these individuals can be extrapolated from calendared sources, including the Close Rolls and the Patent Rolls. Through these, we see that Joan actively submitted requests to the king and
received various forms of favor and patronage. Similar to the household information found in Gaunt’s Register, the date, type, and frequency of things given to Joan informs both her personal movements and the tenor of her relationships with such individuals.

A deeper examination of sources associated with those with whom Joan interacted, but not directly associated with the Mohun family and their accounts, provides further context for her life. Socially, Lady Mohun was close to those in England’s upper echelons through distant family relatives or from a position of service occupied by a close family member. Her personal background, however, was more modest, hailing from the socially aspirational Burghersh family. Joan clearly used her connections to request support from powerful individuals, utilizing such opportunities to improve her social standing and financial situation. Courtesy texts and conduct manuals are particularly important to this discussion. Instructions on the kinds of behavior considered to be ideal by society and at court inform the behaviors which Lady Mohun would have exhibited to demonstrate that she belonged in an elevated social position. Since conduct manuals provided instructions to those aspiring to more elite status to learn the actions that could be used to improve their social standing, Lady Mohun would have used the content contained in such texts to support her personal advancement.

Texts belonging to the Mohuns demonstrate contemporary values embraced by the family. Family genealogies provide insight into the family history that individuals prioritize. The survival of a portion of the Mohun Chronicle suggests the details and images that were important to Joan. The decision to include certain tales over others, too, shows both personal preference and the image that her family cultivated. When compared with contemporary events, the content of such works provide insight into a family’s identity.
Contemporary chronicles, too, provide context for the larger political events occurring in fourteenth-century England. Although generally the most distant sources from Lady Mohun herself, these texts establish details like the structure of court and court culture. The attitudes of the chroniclers might not accurately reflect the situation and events, but they do provide insight on what some thought of these institutions. Such ideas are particularly useful in establishing the situations faced by those at court and how they fit into the larger political events of the time.

Joan de Mohun also actively contributed to the production of material goods, serving as the presumed patron of the *Mohun Chronicle*. More certain is her patronage provided to Canterbury Cathedral and her efforts to secure her desired burial location. Canterbury Cathedral records establish gifts that Joan provided, while royal petitions supported such gifts through granting of permission. The tomb and effigy that Lady Mohun constructed allows for a personal analysis of her preferences, particularly those related to fashion and religious observances. The involvement that Joan had in the decisions related to her final resting place make these particularly relevant sources as they enable us to uncover personal details about her not found elsewhere.

**The Road Ahead**

The following chapters examine the life of Joan de Mohun and her career as a courtier. Where pieces of her life have been previously studied, this dissertation connects the formerly disparate parts, demonstrating how they fit together and how they shaped the experiences of an individual woman. Lady Mohun is described by recognizing her unique aspects, while also demonstrating the characteristics that she shared with contemporary
women who served as courtiers and who hailed from socially aspirational families. Life events might have varied, but the general social and political experiences of these women remained similar.

To proceed we must understand both the biography of Lady Mohun and the context of fourteenth-century England. Chapter Two establishes the history of Joan’s natal family, the Burghersheshes, and that of her husband’s family, the Mohuns. Although the Burghersh family is generally recognized for the social climbing actions of Joan’s father, Bartholomew Burghersh (d. 1355), Chapter Two explores the relatives and connections that her family had to England’s elite, as such connections provided a springboard from which to approach the royal court. The Mohun lineage is also examined, providing context for their fortunes by the time that John V inherited his holdings. The sale of Dunster Castle figures into this biography of Joan’s life, although it does not dominate it.

These biographical details set the stage for further analysis of Joan’s life as a courtier, apart from her husband and Dunster Castle. Chapter Three explores how Lady Mohun participated in self-fashioning activities to construct herself as an ideal courtier. Contemporary courtesy texts demonstrate the types of behavior that Joan would have been aware of, while suggesting the image that she presented to others. This chapter further explores how Joan was rewarded by England’s most powerful individuals for establishing herself as the ideal courtier. Courteous behavior, then, provided a means for a woman to distinguish herself from her peers, receiving valuable favor due to these actions.

Building on this image of ideal behavior, Lady Mohun participated in court and developed relationships with the royal family. Joan chose to spend much of her time away from Dunster Castle, and Chapter Four examines her career as a courtier. To fund her court
lifestyle, Joan needed the favor and patronage of members of the royal family. This chapter reviews the types of patronage that she received from the king, and the other forms of favor that she enjoyed from additional members of the royal family. Yet such gifts demonstrate more than a transactional relationship. Instead, they also demonstrate the strength and closeness of a relationship. The items that Joan gave and received are reviewed to determine the tenor of the relationship that she had with members of the royal family. Such items demonstrate that Joan was a trusted member of the Lancastrian affinity while also being a loyal friend to Richard II and Queen Anne.

As a courtier, Joan was part of the inner circle of Richard II and Queen Anne. Chapter Five looks at the reward that she received for this service. Joan received invitations to the Ladies of the Garter and several feasts of Saint George, the highest honor that a woman could receive in fourteenth-century England. This chapter describes the establishment and growth of the Ladies of the Garter, and how Richard II used this honor during his reign. Lady Mohun was not the only woman outside the traditional elite to receive the honor. This chapter explores such women similarly elevated to the Ladies of the Garter and suggests why Richard II might have decided to include them in such festivities.

Up to this point, Lady Mohun is primarily viewed as a courtier and receiver of patronage. Chapter Six introduces her activities as a patron. Joan provided funds to Canterbury Cathedral, likely as a result of her religious devotion. She did, however, use such gifts to cement her connection to the cathedral’s leadership. The resulting goodwill allowed her to request and receive a desirable burial location in the cathedral. After approval, Joan commissioned a personal tomb and effigy, establishing a lasting image for herself.
This is a thematic examination of Joan de Mohun’s life. She is considered as a wife, widow, mother, friend, patron, and courtier. Reviewing these elements in tandem creates a holistic account of the life of an extraordinary woman. By studying Joan’s experiences, we gain a better understanding of her life, but also of court culture and of the experiences of other courtiers in fourteenth-century England.
CHAPTER 2

JOAN DE MOHUN: HER LIFE, LINEAGE, AND FAMILIAL CONNECTIONS

Joan de Mohun, daughter of Bartholomew Burghersh, the elder (d. 1355) and Elizabeth de Verdon (1306-1360), existed at the periphery of elite society at birth.¹ The Burghersh family originated from a largely modest background, exhibiting ambition but no great means in the early fourteenth century.² The actions of Joan’s father, Bartholomew, instigated the rise of the Burghersh family through his skill in warfare, government, and politics. Joan continued the efforts of her father, and through her social maneuverings, she capitalized on her connections at the periphery and propelled herself into an influential position in the Lancastrian affinity and the court of Richard II. Evidence of the social and economic manipulations undertaken by Joan during her lifetime remain in the primary sources. As such, Lady Mohun’s life and actions provide a distinct example through which to examine the atmosphere of politics and patronage during the reigns of Edward III and Richard II.

Joan’s position in English society must be considered first in the context of the lives and ambitions of her immediate family members and the foundations that they established. The likelihood of social advancement for the Burghersh family remained uncertain at the beginning of the fourteenth century, although military prowess and social acumen benefitted the family’s position. The decision of Edward III to pursue his claim to the French crown laid the foundations for war between England and France, which was solidified after Philip VI’s

² Barber, Edward III and the Triumph of England, 313.
(r. 1328-1350) seizure of the duchy of Aquitaine for the French crown in 1337.³ This outbreak of war altered the fabric of English society and government. Knights were needed to campaign for the king while the government required talented individuals to manage the daily business of administration of government, chancery, and exchequer, and attending parliament.⁴ Individuals skilled in war, governance, or both, stood to profit by distinguishing themselves through loyal service to the crown during the conflict with France.

**The Burghershes**

Lady Mohun’s ancestors recognized the benefit that could be obtained from military pursuits and placed themselves in positions of service. Joan’s grandfather Robert Burghersh (d. 1306) held the position of constable of Dover Castle and lord warden of the Cinque Ports during the reign of Edward I (r. 1272-1307).⁵ Following the renewal of these commissions in 1297/1298, Robert was summoned to and attended Parliament.⁶ Robert had a large family, with seven sons and five daughters.⁷ Of these sons, Henry (c. 1290-1340) and Bartholomew survived their five brothers.⁸ Henry was likely an older brother of Bartholomew, although Henry was not the firstborn son and was born after at least two of his brothers.⁹ Although not

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⁶ Ibid.
⁸ Ibid.
⁹ Ibid.
the eldest son, Joan’s father Bartholomew inherited the lands and title of his father Robert following the death of his older brother Stephen.\(^{10}\) As the Burghersh heir, Bartholomew married Elizabeth de Verdon (1305/6-1364), a coheiress to the Verdon estate.\(^{11}\) Not only an heiress, Elizabeth de Verdon also brought political connections. The Verdons held property in both England and Ireland, with Elizabeth’s father, Theobald II (d. 1316) being appointed as justiciar of Ireland in 1313.\(^{12}\) Elizabeth had important and powerful relatives, including the Mortimers, as her mother was Maud Mortimer (d. 1312), sister of Roger Mortimer (1287-1330).\(^{13}\) Elizabeth’s stepmother, Elizabeth de Burgh (1294/5-1360), was a member of the Clare family and was a coheiress of their estates.\(^{14}\)

As members of the barony, the Burghersh family demonstrated their loyalty and usefulness to the crown, although bolstered by a bit of luck. Extended family, particularly the Badlesmeres, became important in the initial rise in the status of Bartholomew and his brother Henry Burghersh. Their mother, Maud Badlesmere, connected her sons to her brother Bartholomew Badlesmere (d. 1322), an especially close ally of Bartholomew and Henry

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
Burghersh. Bartholomew Badlesmere campaigned during the reigns of Edward I and Edward II (r. 1307-1327) and served as one of the king’s household knights.\textsuperscript{15} His career especially progressed during the reign of Edward II, and he eventually held the position of steward of the royal household while also acting as a councilor to the king.\textsuperscript{16} These positions at court demonstrate that Badlesmere earned the favor of the king, which he used to further his personal career and that of his close family, including his Burghersh nephews Bartholomew and Henry. The familial connections between Burghersh and Badlesmere were quite strong, as they were related through both Bartholomew Burghersh and his wife Elizabeth de Verdon. The wife of Bartholomew Badlesmere, Margaret de Umfraville (\textit{née} de Clare), was a first cousin of Elizabeth de Burgh (\textit{née} Clare) (1294/5-1360), stepmother to Elizabeth de Verdon.\textsuperscript{17} Such intersecting relations made the Badlesmeres particularly close allies of Elizabeth de Verdon and Bartholomew Burghersh, which benefitted the family’s social and financial prospects. See Figure 1, Burghersh Lineage.

While Bartholomew pursued military and political exploits as a means to advancement, Henry focused on an ecclesiastical career. Henry was educated at multiple universities, including the University of Angers where he studied civil and canon law.\textsuperscript{18} Although Henry belonged to a minor baronial family and was educated at multiple

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Bennett, “Henry Burghersh (c. 1290-1340).”
\end{itemize}
universities, it was the patronage and assistance of his uncle Badlesmere that progressed his career. Through his military and social maneuverings, Badlesmere was a close confidante of Edward II. As a result of this relationship, Badlesmere obtained a position as a king’s clerk for Henry, while later pushing for his elevation to the episcopate of Lincoln. Edward II petitioned to the pope, and Henry became Bishop of Lincoln in 1320. In spite of the advancement of his career as a result of the efforts of Bartholomew Badlesmere, the relationship also proved to be problematic politically. Henry’s association with his uncle Badlesmere put him under suspicion with Edward II for being a supporter of the rebels and Thomas, Earl of Lancaster (c. 1278-1322). It seems, however, that Henry never acted or showed outward support for the rebels against Edward II. The Bishop remained in Lincoln, avoiding any direct involvement in the rebellion. The connection of Henry with his uncle Badlesmere, however, was enough to associate him with the rebels in the chronicles. Geoffrey le Baker, for example, placed Henry firmly with the rebels, noting that “Henry Burghersh, bishop of Lincoln, had been decorated with the mitre at the king’s appointment, but he knew he was guilty of the same crime as the Adam whom I mentioned earlier, and so was extremely afraid and in consequence hated the Despensers.” The Adam that Baker referenced was Adam de Orleton (c. 1275-1345), Bishop of Hereford, who was described as

19 Ibid.
20 Maddicott, “Sir Bartholomew Badlesmere (c. 1275-1322).”
21 Bennett, “Henry Burghersh (c. 1290-1340).”
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
providing support to the king’s enemies, including to the followers of Roger Mortimer.\textsuperscript{27} Baker furthermore placed Henry firmly at the demise of Edward II, describing how he was part of the group sent to negotiate with the king to give up the throne.\textsuperscript{28} Baker, however, was the only chronicler to name Henry and it is unlikely that he was involved in these events.\textsuperscript{29}

Unlike his brother Henry, who remained physically distant from his uncle Badlesmere during the baronial rebellion, Bartholomew actively joined with his uncle. Bartholomew Burghersh participated in the battle of Boroughbridge (16 March 1322) on the side of Thomas of Lancaster, opposing Edward II’s favorites the Despensers.\textsuperscript{30} After being defeated at Boroughbridge, Bartholomew accompanied his uncle Badlesmere to Leeds Castle, which was placed under siege and was later taken by Edward II.\textsuperscript{31} Many members of the garrison at Leeds were executed following their surrender, although Bartholomew, along with his wife and children, was taken prisoner and placed in the Tower of London instead.\textsuperscript{32} Bartholomew’s wife and children were released from the Tower of London on 31 December 1325, while he was freed by a mob when Edward II left London during the invasion of Mortimer and Isabella of France (1295-1358) in 1326.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 15.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 26-27.
\textsuperscript{30} Sir William Dugdale, The Baronage of England, or, An historical account of the lives and most memorable actions of our English nobility in the Saxons time to the Norman Conquest, and from thence, of those who had their rise before the end of King Henry the Third’s reign deduced from publick record, antient historians, and other authorities (London: Tho. Newcomb, 1675-1676), 34.
\textsuperscript{33} Verduyn, “Bartholomew Burghersh, the elder, second Lord Burghersh (d. 1355).”
For his actions during the rebellion, Badlesmere was captured, hanged, and decapitated on 14 April 1322.\textsuperscript{34} Henry and Bartholomew Burghersh might have survived this connection to Badlesmere, but they did face consequences for their actions (or suspected actions in Henry’s case) against Edward II. After the end of the rebellion, Henry’s temporalities were confiscated, injuring his episcopal income.\textsuperscript{35} Such punishment did not last long, and Henry continued as Bishop of Lincoln and served as an administrator during the reign of Edward III, going on several diplomatic missions to the continent.\textsuperscript{36} Bartholomew, too, had his lands seized by the crown.\textsuperscript{37} After gaining control, Isabella, as Queen Consort, restored Bartholomew to his rank.\textsuperscript{38} In 1327, Bartholomew petitioned the Parliament of Westminster for the restoration of his lands, tenements, and other goods taken from him by Edward II.\textsuperscript{39} Bartholomew stressed that he had not been indicted for any actions against the crown or the king, but instead, Edward II had willfully imprisoned him and taken his lands due to “evil” counsel.\textsuperscript{40} The council agreed with Bartholomew’s argument and restored his lands.\textsuperscript{41} The familial relationship that Bartholomew had through his wife to Roger Mortimer would have been key in the restoration of Burghersh lands and rank. Edward III’s mother, Isabella (1295-1358), and her lover Mortimer effectively ruled England during the first few

\textsuperscript{34} Bennett, “Henry Burghersh (c. 1290-1340).”
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Verduyn, “Bartholomew Burghersh, the elder, second Lord Burghersh (d. 1355).”
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
years of the young king’s reign. Elizabeth de Verdon’s familial connection to the Mortimers, then, facilitated the restoration of Burghersh lands while also encouraging continued trust and appointments for Bartholomew, allowing him to continue serving the crown during the reign of Edward III. Elizabeth’s relatives proved important to the fate of the family. Bartholomew’s decision to side with Lord Badlesmere against the crown in the 1320s appears to have been his only public actions against the English crown. Following his release from the Tower of London and after the restoration of his lands, Bartholomew firmly sided with and campaigned for Edward III, becoming a trusted ally of the king.

Bartholomew Burghersh served Edward III in a variety of positions, demonstrating his loyalty and capability in overseeing important tasks. Early in Edward III’s reign, the king established Bartholomew as constable of Dover Castle and warden of the Cinque Ports, posts previously held by his father. As constable of Dover Castle and warden of the Cinque Ports, Bartholomew monitored the movement of people and goods from England to France. The Close Rolls document regular instances where Bartholomew is instructed to allow specific individuals, along with their household and goods, permission to depart from Dover and cross the English Channel. Having the power to control the movement of individuals and goods demonstrated the trust that Edward III and his advisors had in Bartholomew. The crown knew that Bartholomew would allow approved travel, while stopping those who did not have authorization to enter or depart. A trusted ally in this position was especially

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important during times of upheaval, as in August 1328, when the regency council under the seal of the king instructed Bartholomew to prevent

any baron, knight, esquire, or other man-at arms from going out of the realm to parts beyond sea, under pain of forfeiture, and prohibiting any merchant or other person from taking any destrier-horses or other horses-at-arms or armour out of the realm, without special licence from the king, and to arrest any persons with their horses and arms found doing so after the proclamation, and to cause them to be kept in prison until further orders.45

The threat of rebellion in England demanded caution on movement to and from the realm. Bartholomew established himself as a trusted servant in the government of Mortimer and Isabella, and he avoided injury to his prospects after the pair were removed from power.46 In fact, Bartholomew became a trusted ally early in the young king’s reign, a role which only increased after Edward III became more active in governance.47 For this service, Bartholomew received 88l. yearly for personal expense and for those of the watchmen and servants at Dover Castle.48

Bartholomew continued to rise through his administrative and military service to the crown during the 1330s, participating in multiple military operations, fighting on the Scottish border, and in various campaigns of the Hundred Years War.49 Bartholomew additionally held a variety of important positions that served Edward III and the royal family, including as seneschal of Ponthieu, as the king’s chamberlain, and as master of Edward of Woodstock’s

47 Ibid.
(1330-1376) household. The list of Bartholomew’s participation in individual battles and campaigns is lengthy, as are the various positions he held. The chroniclers record, for example, that Bartholomew was present at the battle of Crécy (26 August 1346) along with his son, Bartholomew the younger (d. 1369). By Crécy, Bartholomew had already demonstrated his usefulness, and his contributions in such battles only further confirmed his loyalty and competence. This position enabled Bartholomew the younger to build on his father’s reputation, while establishing his own through distinction in battle.

Bartholomew’s presence at key battles during the Hundred Years War provided him with additional opportunities to perform important tasks. Edward III entrusted Bartholomew to return to England several times and report to Parliament on the situation of the fighting in France, with one such report occurring in May 1343. In another instance, Bartholomew traveled to Parliament on 13 September 1346 to provide an update on the king’s progress in France. Along with Sir John Darcy, Master John Toreshby, and Master John Carlton, Bartholomew orally delivered a letter from Edward III to Parliament. As introduction of his messengers and their credentials, the king referred to Bartholomew as “dilectorum et fidelium nostrorum,” establishing him as a confidante and loyal servant. Following the reading of the letters from Edward III, Bartholomew addressed the Parliament, describing the war’s progress, the victory at Crécy, the goal to take Calais, and plans to end the war by pursuing

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50 Barber, Edward III and the Triumph of England, 125. Green, Edward the Black Prince, 10.
52 Ibid., 155.
53 Ibid., 216.
55 Ibid.
the enemy.\textsuperscript{56} Such a narrative segued into the king’s request for a new tax to support the war effort.\textsuperscript{57} The request for monetary support of the war was incredibly important, for the absence of funds would have severely limited Edward III’s ability to pursue the French throne. Edward III trusted that Bartholomew could skillfully deliver his message to Parliament and convince them to provide the necessary funding. Such an important task must have been given to an individual whom the king trusted completely.

Joan’s father, then, excelled in his military career and earned the confidence and favor of Edward III. As a reward for his loyal service, Edward III granted Bartholomew several honors, including prestigious posts and various grants of land. After being retained by Edward III for life service during times of war and peace, Bartholomew received a life grant in several manors and part of the possessions of Edmund, Earl of Kent (1301-1330).\textsuperscript{58} Bartholomew established that he was a capable servant to the crown, and the king rewarded this service through his patronage. Good and loyal service thus had distinct monetary benefits for those who excelled.

\textbf{The de Verdons}\textsuperscript{59}

Where Bartholomew’s actions to distinguish himself are known, the heritage of Joan’s maternal family has been largely overlooked in the scholarship on the Burghersh and Mohun families. Bartholomew the elder married Elizabeth de Verdon, daughter and

\begin{itemize}
\item[Ibid.]
\item Barber, \textit{Edward III and the Triumph of England}, 216.
\item Dugdale, \textit{The Baronage of England}, 34.
\item There exist variations in this family’s surname, with both de Verdun and de Verdon being used interchangeably.
\end{itemize}
coheiress of Theobald II, lord Verdon. As descendants of a great Norman family, the Verdons held extensive estates, including Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire, Brandon Castle, Warwickshire, and their primary residence of Alton Castle, Staffordshire, that descended through Rohese de Verdon (d. 1247), the only daughter and heiress of Nicholas de Verdon. Rohese married Theobald Walter (d. 1230) in 1225. Theobald Walter hailed from the Ormond family and founded the Butlers, a powerful noble family that were lords of Wem in England and eventual Earls of Ormond in Ireland. After marrying Theobald Walter, Rohese continued to use her maiden name, as did her children by Theobald. Clearly she prioritized her heritage over that of her husband. After Theobald Walter’s death in 1230, Rohese lived out her widowhood as a wealthy landowner and patron, founding Grace Dieu, Leicestershire, an Augustinian priory, and she became a nun by 1242. Such an act enabled Rohese to remain single, while maintaining her landholdings for future generations.

Elizabeth’s father, Theobald II, inherited the lands of his father, Theobald de Verdon (1248?-1309) after his death. Although his military career was relatively short, Theobald II demonstrated his worth to the crown and was named as justice and lieutenant of Ireland in 1313. Theobald II died in 1316 without a male heir, leaving daughters as coheiresses of the

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63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., 592.
67 Ibid.
Verdon lands in England, Ireland, and the Welsh marches. See Figure 2, de Verdon Lineage.

Theobald II married his first wife Maud Mortimer (d. 1312), daughter of Edmund Mortimer (c. 1251-1304), in 1302. With the marriage, Edmund Mortimer was to grant the castle and manor of Dunamase in Ireland to Theobald II, although this grant never occurred, and Theobald likely received a cash payment instead. Beneficial marriage connections to the Marshal and Braose families and favor from Edward I (1272-1307) made the Mortimers one of the most important baronial families by the late thirteenth century, holding lands throughout England, Wales, and Ireland. Maud, then, would have brought decent wealth and property to Theobald and the Verdon family through the marriage. The union of Maud and Theobald II produced two sons, both of whom died without heirs before their father. If the Croxden chronicle is to be believed, Maud died in 1312 due to complications in childbirth, leaving three surviving daughters.

Theobald II married his second wife, Elizabeth de Burgh (d. 1360), likely after having abducted her, in 1316. Widow of John de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, (d. 1313) and coheiress of the Clare inheritance, Elizabeth de Burgh presented an enticing marriage option for those seeking wealth and status, and she faced pressure to remarry from many individuals,

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70 Ibid.  
71 Davies, “Mortimer, Roger, first earl of March (1287-1330).”  
73 Ibid.  
including the king, after John de Burgh’s death.\textsuperscript{75} The situation surrounding Elizabeth de Burgh’s marriage to Theobald II remains questionable. Allegations suggest that Theobald II abducted Elizabeth from Bristol Castle, while Theobald maintained that she went out to meet him and that the two were betrothed in Ireland.\textsuperscript{76} The marriage between Theobald II and Elizabeth de Burgh was short-lived, however, as Theobald II died a few short months after their marriage in 1316.\textsuperscript{77}

Depending on the date that Bartholomew and Elizabeth were married, Theobald’s daughter, Elizabeth, was either one of four heirs apparent or one of four heirs presumptive, with the assumption that she was entitled to a share of her father’s lands, or that she would become entitled to a portion of his lands after his death.\textsuperscript{78} A moment of uncertainty about Elizabeth’s status as heiress occurred in 1316. Theobald II’s second wife, Elizabeth de Burgh, was pregnant at the time of his death. The birth of a daughter, Isabel, in 1317 solidified Theobald II’s four daughters as coheiresses.\textsuperscript{79} The birth of a male heir in 1317 would have changed the status of Theobald II’s three daughters from his first marriage. With a stroke of luck for all three older girls, Theobald II left no male issue and Elizabeth’s status as co-heiress to his lands remained intact.

The favor of Edward III proved useful for Bartholomew and Elizabeth as they requested her share of the Verdon inheritance. In a petition to the king and the council in 1331, the pair requested that the king extend Elizabeth’s previously determined share, as the

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 29-30.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 30.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
grant of lands originally delivered to her sister Joan (1303-1334) was made before Elizabeth was of age and allotted to Joan more than her portion.\textsuperscript{80} The Archbishop of Canterbury and others of the king’s council agreed, and extended the lands mentioned in the petition.

A major division of the Verdon lands between the coheiresses occurred in 1332, after Theobald II’s youngest daughter proved her age in 1331.\textsuperscript{81} At the time of division, Theobald’s widow, Elizabeth de Burgh, survived, leaving two thirds of the property to be divided among his four daughters.\textsuperscript{82} The division of land in 1332 constituted a later action after earlier distributions of the Verdon inheritance, initially providing the widow with her dower and valuing the land in 1316.\textsuperscript{83} The daughters’ ages upon their father’s death affected when they received their purparty. Joan and her husband Thomas de Furnivalle (1318-1339) received her initial portion in 1319, for example, while Elizabeth and Bartholomew did not receive hers until 1329.\textsuperscript{84} Various disputes over the division of property between 1316 and 1332 survive, with the sisters and their husbands pressing to receive their fair share of the inheritance. An inquisition in 1327 determined the lands of the late Theobald, noting that two-thirds of his lands were held by King Edward II while the remaining one-third was assigned to Joan, the eldest of the daughters who had demonstrated her age.\textsuperscript{85} Elizabeth and her sister Margery, after proving their age, sued to have the lands that were in the hands of


\textsuperscript{81} Otway-Ruthven, “The Partition of the de Verdon Lands in Ireland in 1332,” 401.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 401, 445.

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 401.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 401, 445.

Edward II assigned to them, while also requesting that Alton Castle be returned to the whole of Theobald’s lands and the entirety then divided into three equal parts.\textsuperscript{86} Half-sister and the fourth coheiress, Isabel, was listed as a ward of the king in 1327.\textsuperscript{87} With the investigations completed the following year, Bartholomew Burghersh and Elizabeth were assigned a manor at Stoke and the castle of Ewyas Lacy in Wales, which is noted as being worth 41l. 16d. by the first extent and 81l. 15s. 1d. by the second extent.\textsuperscript{88} Ewyas Lacy represented the first caput of the Lacy family, brought to the de Verdens with the marriage of Sir John de Verdon (d. 1274) and Margaret de Lacy.\textsuperscript{89}

Elizabeth held several lands from her Verdon inheritance, and the surviving inquisitions following her death reveal the extent of them. Recorded in 34 Edward III, the castle of Ewyas Lacy and Bucknkal were noted as belonging to Elizabeth’s inheritance, as were possessions in Ireland including Dundugyn, Balybalryk, Dyuelek, and Loxendey.\textsuperscript{90} Elizabeth’s heir and Joan’s brother, Bartholomew the younger, continued to benefit from the Verdon inheritance, receiving the reversion of the manor of Brandon and the hamlet of Bretford, Warwickshire, in 1360.\textsuperscript{91} Following the death of Bartholomew the elder, Bartholomew the younger received his inheritance as male heir, which included his mother’s Verdon properties. Two parts of the town of Bucknkal and a moiety of the town of Fenton

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{89} Hagger, “The de Verdun Family in England, Ireland, and Wales, 1066-1316,”
Culvert, Staffordshire, were described as Elizabeth’s inheritance. Additionally, Bartholomew the younger was listed as the heir to the manor of Plumpstede, Kent, which Bartholomew the elder held jointly with his wife Elizabeth. As an heiress, Elizabeth brought one-fourth of the Verdon lands into the Burghersh family, which her husband Bartholomew capitalized on during his lifetime, and which bolstered the inheritance of her son and heir following her death.

The Marriage of Bartholomew Burghersh the elder and Elizabeth de Verdon

The union of Bartholomew and Elizabeth combined social ambition and close connections to the crown with a landed inheritance. Bartholomew contributed his growing reputation and the Burghersh title, while Elizabeth supplied her portion of the Verdon inheritance and the prestige that accompanied the Verdon name. Elizabeth, too, brought connections to powerful families through her Verdon relatives, including the Mortimers, Lacys, and Braoses, and affinal relationships with the various heirs to the earldom of Pembroke and Lordship of Leinster. Although some of these represented more distant relatives, they did provide beneficial connections politically and through inheritance rights. These Verdon connections proved to be just as important, if not more so, than the military and political pursuits of Bartholomew Burghersh.

The marriage of Bartholomew and Elizabeth produced four children: three sons and one daughter. One son, Henry (d. 1349), pre-deceased his father, leaving Bartholomew the

93 Ibid.
94 Verduyn, “Bartholomew Burghersh, the elder, second Lord Burghersh (d. 1355).”
younger as the surviving son.\(^{95}\) Aside from his name, little is known about their third son, Thomas. Joan’s brother Bartholomew the younger continued the Burghersh trend of serving the crown through military and administrative positions. Through his father, Bartholomew developed connections to Edward III and his court, and he campaigned in France as early as 1339.\(^{96}\) Bartholomew the younger thus served with his father in France during the Hundred Years War, joining the retinue of the Black Prince.\(^{97}\) Records indicate that Bartholomew the younger served admirably in France. In one example, Geoffrey le Baker described how Bartholomew, John Chandos, and James Audley took thirty-two knights and squires as prisoners in 1355.\(^{98}\) Like his father, Bartholomew additionally assisted with diplomatic missions. Bartholomew the younger helped in the negotiations for the treaty of Brétigny (8 May 1360), while later going to Flanders on behalf of Edward III.\(^{99}\) Bartholomew the younger represented the cohort of “new men” that Edward III promoted and invited to Parliament.\(^{100}\) Many of these men were associates of the Black Prince and had distinguished military careers.\(^ {101}\) As a reward for his service, Bartholomew the younger received patronage from Edward III and the Black Prince.\(^ {102}\) Bartholomew received the stannary of Devon in

\(^{98}\) *The Chronicle of Geoffrey le Baker of Swinbrook*, 117.
\(^{99}\) Anthony Verduyn, “Bartholomew Burghersh, the younger, third Lord Burghersh (d. 1369),”
\(^{100}\) Green, *Edward the Black Prince*, 150.
\(^{101}\) Ibid.
\(^{102}\) Anthony Verduyn, “Bartholomew Burghersh, the younger, third Lord Burghersh (d. 1369).”
1355, a post previously held by his father. He also received smaller, more personal gifts from the Black Prince, including armor and wine. Edward III further elevated Bartholomew the younger by inviting him to join the group of knights selected for the founding cohort of the Order of the Garter. Bartholomew the younger excelled in his career, further improving the Burghersh reputation. To add to his prospects, Bartholomew seemingly married for monetary reasons, as both of his wives were from the city of London, possessing wealth but not status. Bartholomew married first Cecily de Weyland, whose father was a wealth merchant and mayor of London. Bartholomew’s second wife, Margaret Picard (d. 1391), was the heiress of a wealthy merchant and the widow of another. Like his father, Bartholomew the younger spent his career dedicated to the crown through military and administrative service, and he was rewarded for these actions through the favor of the Black Prince and Edward III.

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103 Ibid. A stannary consisted of areas of tin mines in Devon and Cornwall that were distinct, with separate courts, customs, and privileges. The mid-fourteenth century saw a decline in production for the stannaries, as the Black Prince, who governed the stannaries in 1351, had to encourage “on pain of forfeiting their works tinners must expend on them the same cost and labor as they had done in times past.” George Randall Lewis, The Stannaries: A Study of the English Tin Miner (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1908), 40. See also: Christopher Corèdon with Ann Williams, A Dictionary of Medieval Terms and Phrases (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), 264.

104 Anthony Verduyn, “Bartholomew Burghersh, the younger, third Lord Burghersh (d. 1369).”


106 Anthony Verduyn, “Bartholomew Burghersh, the younger, third Lord Burghersh (d. 1369).”

107 Anthony Verduyn, “Bartholomew Burghersh, the younger, third Lord Burghersh (d. 1369).”

With a surviving brother who was designated as the Burghersh heir, Joan faced a much different position than her mother Elizabeth. Joan did not have a guaranteed inheritance or presumed inheritance to bring to her marriage. Bartholomew the elder, however, watched for an opportune match for his daughter and arranged for a beneficial match to the Burghersh interests and family status. A union with the Mohuns of Dunster provided a prominent lineage for the Burghersh family, while infusing additional wealth into the Mohun fortunes, stabilizing the position of the Mohuns for a time. Furthermore, the alliance reconnected the Burghersh family to the Mortimer, Verdon, and Marshal-heir spheres of influence through the Mohuns’ Mortimer cousins, who were related through their maternal lines and co-heirs to some of the Marshals’ estates in England and Ireland.

The Mohuns

Bartholomew Burghersh the elder recognized the benefits received from a successful marriage match. His own successful pairing may have inspired him to make similar, strategic arrangements for his children. An opportunity presented itself with the minor heir to the Mohun family. Whereas the Burghersh family was on an upward trajectory, the Mohuns were struggling socially and politically by the fourteenth century. The Mohuns faced periods of minority and wardships for many heirs during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, destabilizing the family’s position in England. A minor when his grandfather, John de Mohun III (c. 1267-1330) died in 1330, John de Mohun V (1320-1375) stood to inherit the Mohun lands. John’s father, John de Mohun IV predeceased his father, dying in Scotland.

\(^{109}\) *History of Dunster*, 37, 43.
after the Battle of Boroughbridge in 1322, but prior to 1330.\textsuperscript{110} John IV left three children, two daughters and a son.\textsuperscript{111} As the eldest son of John IV (d. 1322), John V assumed the position of his grandfather’s heir.\textsuperscript{112} John was around 10 years old in 1330, and as a minor, became a ward of the king following the death of his grandfather. See Figure 3, Mohun Lineage.

John V’s wardship presented a lucrative proposition for the king’s followers, with many recognizing the benefit they could receive from having him as a ward. During an heir’s minority, guardians could hold the lands and personage of the minor with the understanding that the guardian would receive a portion of profits if the ward and estate were adequately provided for.\textsuperscript{113} The grant of a wardship, or a portion of a ward’s lands during minority, could thus be used by the king to reward loyal followers by providing them with a guaranteed benefit for a set number of years. Holding the wardship of John V and his lands provided Edward III with an opportunity to demonstrate favor through choosing the minor’s guardian.

Shortly after John III’s death, Edward III granted the wardship of the Mohun lands and of the person of John V to Joan’s uncle Henry Burghersh, Bishop of Lincoln.\textsuperscript{114} The Bishop of Lincoln did not maintain John’s wardship for long, as the records note that William of Ayreminne, Bishop of Norwich, obtained two parts of the lands of the late John III during the heir’s minority in 1331.\textsuperscript{115} One-third of the Mohun lands remained with Sibyl

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
(d. after 1337), John III’s widow, as her dower. Disputes between Sibyl regarding her dower provide evidence of the political maneuverings surrounding John V’s wardship. On 1 February 1334, the Close Rolls note that the person of John V and a portion of his lands were in the custody of Bartholomew Burghersh, although another portion remained in the custody of the Bishop of Norwich. In suits brought by Sibyl before the king, the Bishop of Norwich maintained his custody of and right to two-thirds of the Mohun lands until John was of age. Clearly the Bishop of Norwich enjoyed the income benefits from the Mohun lands and did not want to give up any before he was required to relinquish it to John V.

It is important to note that the Close Rolls repeatedly document that the Bishop of Norwich argued for continued custody of Mohun lands, while the person of John V resided in the custody of Bartholomew Burghersh. Guardians like the Bishop of Norwich received a temporary, monetary benefit from the lands of a ward. But there existed an additional, and often more lucrative, benefit of determining a marriage match suitable for an heir during their minority. In possessing the custody of the ward, Bartholomew Burghersh held the right to negotiate for a suitable marriage match for John V. Control over John V’s marriage was a further way for Edward III to provide for one of his loyal knights. As Bartholomew had a daughter, it was natural to arrange for the marriage of Joan and John V. By granting the right of marriage for John V to Bartholomew, Edward III in effect blessed a union between the

116 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
120 Bothwell, “‘Escheat with Heir,’” 250.
Mohun and Burghersh families. Advantageous marriages were a means to advance socially for a family like the Burghershes, relative newcomers who had gained recognition largely as a result of Bartholomew’s military exploits and administrative efforts. A union with John V would provide not only temporary access to the Mohun inheritance but would bolster the holdings of the extended Burghersh sphere of influence. From the perspective of Edward III, granting Bartholomew the right to arrange the marriage of John V provided a way to solidify the newly elevated position of the Burghersh family financially and socially. Bartholomew would not gain direct access to the Mohun lands after the marriage, but the wealth and prestige of the match would benefit the larger interests of the Burghersh family. Through this arrangement, Bartholomew yoked his family with an heir of higher rank and greater wealth.

Whether as a self-serving request or because he had a fondness for the Mohun heir, or both, Bartholomew helped John V receive possession of his inheritance. In 1341, John received all of his grandfather’s lands in spite of the fact that he had not yet proved that he had reached his majority. At Bartholomew’s request, the king agreed to grant access to John “to show special favour to him” and also because John had taken homage for the lands. Records detail that the king desired to favor John V and granted him his inheritance at Bartholomew’s request. This action by the king demonstrates two separate grants, with the first to Bartholomew Burghersh. Bartholomew clearly had the ear of Edward III as he was able to successfully petition for the benefit of another. The second grant of regnal favor was bestowed upon John V. Edward III agreed to provide John with possession of his

121 Ibid., 251.
122 Ibid., 259.
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
grandfather’s lands although he had not demonstrated that he was of full age. John was allowed to pay homage to the king for the lands and receive them without further delay. This preferment was likely granted because of his proximity to Bartholomew, a trusted knight and ally. For Bartholomew and John, the fulfillment of the request benefitted each, for by 1341, John had married his guardian’s daughter Joan, creating an important affinity for Bartholomew while stabilizing the Mohun inheritance against any additional threats to a minor heir.\textsuperscript{126}

Logistically, allowing John to take possession of his inheritance in 1341 made sense. Edward III solidified the loyalty of another baron through showing preference to the Mohun heir. The fact that John and Joan were married by this time made John’s installation even easier, as one of the heir’s guardians would not contest and even encouraged the decision to transfer the lands. As Bartholomew’s ward, John V likely resided with his future in-laws, as was customary.\textsuperscript{127} John V and Joan quite possibly grew up in the same household as a result. The exact date of the arrangements and marriage of John V and Joan remains unknown, although the sources suggest that the match might have been sanctioned by John III before his death. A record exists in the Close Rolls from 20 June 1330 indicating a debt owed by John III to Bartholomew Burghersh.\textsuperscript{128} Although the reason for the debt was not noted, the Close Rolls entry detailed that John III of Dunster recognized that he owed 10,000\textit{l}. to

\textsuperscript{126} History of Dunster, 44.  
Bartholomew Burghersh. The timing of such a debt is not inconsistent with that of conversations regarding the marriage of the Mohun heir. A marriage arrangement between John V and Joan could have been agreed upon as partial repayment of the debt between John III and Bartholomew Burghersh. If arrangements to settle this debt were performed in conjunction with marriage negotiations, John III’s agreement to have his heir marry a Burghersh daughter demonstrates the attractiveness of the Burghersh family and their affines. Through her Burghersh relatives, Joan brought political and financial connections to the Verdon and Mortimer families, along with access to the wealth of her father which had substantially increased because of patronage from Edward III. John III must have recognized these political, social, and financial connections of the Burghershes and felt that these relationships would be beneficial to the Mohuns and their established holdings.

In marrying John V, Joan joined a family with a long record of service to the crown. According to Wace, an ancestor of John V, William de Mohun, arrived in England with William the Conqueror (c. 1028-1087). William de Mohun must have been a trusted ally, as he received estates and manors in England during William I’s reign. The Domesday Book lists William de Mohun holding as tenant-in-chief a number of properties in 1086 that were previously held by others. This William was also credited with building a castle that became the seat of Dunster. This holding comprised forty knights’ fees in the reign of

129 Ibid.
130 Verduyn, “Bartholomew Burghersh, the elder, second Lord Burghersh (d. 1355).”
132 History of Dunster, 3.
134 History of Dunster, 4.
Henry I (r. 1100-1135), with later enlargement. The arrival of the Mohun ancestors with William the Conqueror established the family and their caput honoris at Dunster. Furthermore, William de Mohun’s participation in the Conquest proved the family’s noble heritage and established their reputation.

The Mohuns, however, were plagued with succession problems during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The family suffered from the premature deaths of several male heirs, resulting in five family members being royal wards before reaching their majority and taking possession of their lands. Dunster during this time provided a source of income for the crown on a regular basis. The minority of John V was just another instance in a series of Mohun heirs as wards of the king. After obtaining their lands, many of these Mohun heirs focused on improving and expanding their inheritance. John III, for example, worked to consolidate his lands, exchanging his part of the Marshal inheritance in Kildare, Ireland, with the king for manors bordering his manor in Whichford, Warwickshire. Such a transaction increased the local Mohun holdings, while making them easier to manage. Military service, too, remained important for the Mohuns into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with

135 Ibid.
136 Ibid., 11-36.
137 Ibid., 37. Through the marriage of Reginald de Mohun (c. 1206-1258) and Isabel Ferrers, and John de Mohun, Reginald’s eldest son, and Joan Ferrers, Isabel’s sister, the Mohuns became minor heirs to the lands of the earls Marshal. The lands and earldom of William Marshal and Isabella de Clare were divided among their daughters’ heirs following the death of their five sons. For additional information on the Marshal inheritance and the Mohun connection to the Marshal inheritance see: chapter 6 on the daughters of the Earl Marshal in Sharon Bennett Connolly, Ladies of Magna Carta: Women of Influence in Thirteenth Century England (Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 2020); and, Linda E. Mitchell, “Agnes and her Sisters: Squabbling and Cooperation in the Extended Medieval Family,” in Portraits of Medieval Women: Family, Marriage, and Politics in England, 1225-1350 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 11-28.
John III serving in campaigns against the French, Welsh, and Scots. John de Mohun V

Like his ancestors, John V distinguished himself through his military prowess, campaigning in Brittany in 1342 and following the Black Prince on expedition in 1346. Furthermore, John served as a banneret during the battle of Crécy, and continued to campaign for the crown with the Black Prince and the duke of Lancaster in 1373. As a likely reward for his service, the Black Prince gifted John one of his horses named Grisel Gris. The records indicate that John regularly participated in the military campaigns of the day, and established a positive reputation on the battlefield. Perhaps the ultimate reward for

138 History of Dunster, 37.
139 George Frederick Beltz, Memorials of the Order of the Garter from its Foundation to the Present Time (London: W. Pickering, 1841), 49.
140 Barber, Edward III and the Triumph of England, 44.
141 Beltz, Memorials of the Order of the Garter, 383.
his loyalty and service occurred when Edward III elevated John V as a founding member of the Order of the Garter in 1348.\footnote{History of Dunster, 45.}

Although the details surrounding the founding of the Order of the Garter are sparse, sources generally agree that there were 26 founding members.\footnote{Barber, Edward III and the Triumph of England, 293-294.} Many of those chosen initially represented newcomers to the political scene under the reign of Edward III, and they also participated in the battles of Calais and Crécy.\footnote{Ibid., 301-302.} As such, elevation as a founding Knight of the Garter represented a reward for one’s military skills and loyalty on the battlefield.\footnote{Ibid., 306.} John V’s selection as a Knight of the Garter certainly stemmed from his military exploits. The benefits of being a Knight of the Garter as described in Garter documents were largely honorific, inspired by the knights of the Round Table, and allowed for “the right to hang their sword, helm, and banner (in life) and a stall-plate bearing their name and armorial achievement (after death) in a particular stall in the Order’s chapel.”\footnote{D’Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, The Knights of the Crown: The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe 1325-1520 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 138. The Order of the Garter is discussed further in Chapter 5.} Knights additionally held the honor of attending the yearly feast of Saint George and received garter robes to wear to the festivities, while receiving prayers and masses for their soul after death.\footnote{Ibid., 165.} Unofficially, Knights of the Garter received the benefit of gathering with other Knights at the feast of Saint George, attending the festivities where the monarch and members of the royal family who were knighted attended as members. Such interactions would have fostered further relationships between the members and the king, encouraging
patronage and favor among the group that others did not receive because they did not have such personal and repeated interactions with the monarch. The official and unofficial perks of being a Knight of the Garter were manifold. As such, membership was an honor and a demonstration of the royal favor bestowed on each Knight as a reward for his service.

Elevation as a Knight of the Garter represented a high point in the career of John V. Although loyal and honorable on the battlefield, John V seemingly lacked these characteristics in his personal life and business dealings. In 1344, John V and two of his uncles, Payn and Patrick, were indicted regarding various felonies, trespasses, and excesses. Evidence of such charges against him continued throughout John’s lifetime. An entry in the Patent Rolls on 5 May 1350 described an encounter between John V and John Durburgh while the latter was in Somerton to prosecute trespasses against John V and his servants. John V followed a fleeing Durburgh through Somerton to the churchyard, captured him, and transported him to Lamport. On the order of the sheriff, John V returned Durburgh to the justices in Somerton and acknowledged his guilt. Committed to prison for his behavior, John V petitioned the king for a pardon “on this condition, that if he in future perpetrate the like or other horrible delinquency he shall incur forfeiture of life and limbs as well as of lands and good without hope of mercy.” Edward III pardoned John V, but the conditions made it clear that such behavior would not be tolerated in the future.

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150 Ibid.
151 Ibid., 500-501.
152 Ibid., 501.
consideration of his loyal and skilled military service to the crown, John V escaped severe punishment for this and related incidents, but not without being chastised first.

In addition to his personal battles, John V struggled financially. Sources suggest that he regularly borrowed from those around him, even selling and mortgaging his land as needed. In a will executed as early as September 1342, John bequeathed all his movable goods to his wife Joan and Sir Ivo de Glynton, noting that these individuals should satisfy the debts owed to his creditors in London first, and afterwards to his other creditors.\textsuperscript{153} This is not the only example of John borrowing money, as he is listed as a debtor to the merchant Richard de Bibury of Cherrington, among others.\textsuperscript{154} The frequency with which John V is listed as a debtor suggests the financial insolvency of the Mohuns. Such problems appear to have begun for the Mohuns long before John V received his inheritance, likely compounded by the fact that several Mohun heirs spent time as wards of the king. John III, John V’s grandfather, owed the Burghersh family 10,000l., while also selling the Mohun portion of the Marshal inheritance in Ireland, indicating significant familial debts by the early fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{155} The reason for taking on such debt is unknown, although the Mohun heir might have mismanaged his assets while possibly living beyond his means. Maintaining appearances was important, and costly.

\textbf{Dunster Castle}

The pressure of mounting debt surely influenced how John V managed his lands and inheritance. The maneuverings surrounding Dunster Castle during John V’s lifetime are quite

\textsuperscript{153} \textit{History of Dunster}, 46.
\textsuperscript{154} TNA, C 241/152/41.
convoluted, although it is worthwhile to discuss the particulars in some detail. Beginning in the 1340s, John V began machinations regarding his lands, granting his wife an increasingly larger stake in their possession. On 19 May 1343, John V enfeoffed Ivo Glynton and Christian de Mohun with the two manors of Whichford, Warwickshire, and Cumpton, Berkshire, which the two returned to John, Joan, and his heirs.156 This grant and regrant was completed without the king’s license, a trespass for which the king issued a pardon and allowed the Mohuns to keep the manors.157 Furthermore, the king allowed the manor of Greywell, Hampshire, to be granted, and then returned to John, Joan, and his heirs.158 Joan, then, gained a life interest in three of the Mohun estates quite early in her marriage.

The enfeoffment of estates that were regranted to Lord and Lady Mohun became a regular strategy employed by the Mohuns to gain money. In a record from 23 June 1346, John received a license to grant Dunster Castle and several other lands held in chief to William Fordham and Maud Bourton, which William and Maud regranted to John V and Joan in tail, with the remainder to go to their heirs.159 This license, however, was followed by conflicting information shortly after in June and July 1346: Dunster Castle and the connected properties were regranted to John V and Joan in tail male, and not in tail.160 At this juncture in 1346, John V was at Portchester waiting to go on campaign to France in the retinue of the Black Prince.161 By 1346, John V and Joan had two daughters. Distinguishing between a grant in tail or in tail male, then, could have major repercussions on the Mohun lands

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157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
161 Ibid., 18.
depending on the gender of any surviving heirs. The switch to a grant in tail male possibly
demonstrated John’s preference at this moment for a male heir to the Mohun lands, rather
than a division of the inheritance between his two young daughters should he die on
campaign. Even if this was a fleeting preference for a grant in tail male, these settlements
would ultimately affect the future of the Mohun inheritance.

The consolidation of Mohun interests in Joan’s name continued during John V’s
lifetime. Through fines levied during the 1340s, Lady Mohun gained a life interest in a
majority of her husband’s manors in England. In 1348, for example, a license was granted
to John V to settle a number of Mohun estates on himself, Joan, and their heirs. Joan’s
natal family, too, aided in the concentration of property and wealth in her name. One such
action occurred in 1350, when John and Joan transferred the castle of Dunster, its fees, and
advowsons to her father and brother, Sir Peter de Veel, Sir Roger la Ward, and Matthew of
Clevedon. The terms charged rent at a rate of a red rose for four years, increasing to 400l.
after the initial rate. Following the death of Joan’s father Bartholomew, the Mohuns
regained the property in August 1355, and that same year, John gave his wife an additional
forty-three title deeds for various manors including Dunster and Minehead in Somerset, and
Torre Mohun, Bradworthy, and Ugborough in Devon. Motivations behind the amassing of
property in Joan’s name remain unknown, although such actions have elicited interest from
scholars. Writing on the history of Dunster, H. C. Maxwell Lyte opined that “by this date, at
any rate, Lady de Mohun was aiming at something more than a life interest in her husband’s

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162 History of Dunster, 48.
164 History of Dunster, 48.
165 Ibid.
166 Ibid.
estates. She seems indeed to have obtained complete ascendancy over him, either by the
power of the purse or by superior force of character.” Such descriptions suggest that an
incompetent and incapable John V allowed his strong-willed wife to have so much power
over him that she was able to take over his inheritance. In this image, John is emasculated,
with no control over the conniving actions of his wife. Such a view assumes that Lady
Mohun was an active participant. It would mean that she was domineering, placing her own
interests ahead of those of her husband and family. It ignores the fact that John’s spendthrift
behavior posed a threat to his inheritance, and the transfer of estates to his wife may have
served as a form of debt relief or as a way to protect the Mohun lands.

Such descriptions of Lady Mohun as being ascendant over her husband echo negative
descriptions of women who control their husbands. Maxwell Lyte’s descriptions of Joan
present her as a real-life wife of Bath, dominating her husband to fulfill her personal desires.
Similarly, the wife of Bath mastered three of her husbands, noting that “I had them eating
from my hand/ And as they’d yielded me their gold and land/ Why then take trouble to
provide them pleasure/ Unless to profit and amuse my leisure?” Joan seemingly convinced
her husband to give his lands and inheritance to her, just as the wife of Bath gained money
and land from three of her husbands that she then could use for her personal benefit.
Furthermore, the wife of Bath controlled the household and the marital relationship with her
fifth husband. Just as Lady Mohun seemingly took control of her husband’s lands, the wife of
Bath described how “He gave the bridle over to my hand./ Gave me the government of house

167 Ibid., 49.
and land.” The wife of Bath’s husband conceded his wealth and estate to his wife, as John V gave his lands to Joan. Such control, by Joan and the wife of Bath, was portrayed as an overstepping of boundaries. The wife of Bath described the position she held in marriage, noting that “when I’d mastered him, and out of deadlock,/ Secured myself the sovereignty in wedlock,/ And when he said, ‘My own and truest wife,/ Do as you please for all the rest of life,/ But guard your honour and my good estate,’/ From that day forward there was no debate.” The wife of Bath cuckolded her husband, gaining freedom and power in the relationship and regarding her husband’s property. In Maxwell Lyte’s descriptions, Joan performed similar actions, pushing John V to cede his lands over to her so that she could do as she pleased. Maxwell Lyte thus equated the trope of the wife of Bath to Lady Mohun, since the actions of John V are not easily explained. The thought that Joan could expertly manage her husband’s property where John V failed was dismissed as absurd, and the only explanation for such behavior was that Joan tricked her husband. Scholars like Maxwell Lyte, then, blamed any faults of John V on Joan, an image epitomized by Chaucer’s wife of Bath. A different interpretation reveals that Joan acted carefully with the family’s assets, protecting them as best she could.

Throughout the 1350s and 1360s, the Close Rolls document many additional debts taken on by John V. The creditors and the amount owed to each vary widely, with, for example, 20l. being owed to the Bishop of Worcester, while 100l. was owed to Hugh de Sadelyngstanes, both instances recorded in 1352. John V’s various creditors included Edward III, as noted in June 1355 when he acknowledged that he owed 228l. 14s. to the

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169 Ibid., 280.  
170 Ibid.  
king. The number and variety of creditors and the fact that John V received loans in different amounts suggests the severity of the financial issues that he faced. Unable to pay many of these debts, John V increasingly faced charges of outlawry for not meeting the terms of his loans. Hugh le Blount in February 1358 requested that John V be called before the justices of the Bench to answer for a debt of 20l. 17s. 10d. If John did not appear, it was recommended that he be charged as an outlaw. Unable to avoid the consequences of amassing such debt forever, John V succumbed to non-payment of one of his many debts in 1367 when he surrendered himself to the Fleet Prison. Once in prison, John V requested and received a pardon from the king for outlawry. The episode, however, demonstrates the financial hardships faced by John V as he chose the humiliation of going to prison because he was either unwilling or unable to repay this debt.

The cost to maintain Dunster and the Mohun lands would have been taxing. Yet John V appeared to contribute further to his financial problems through excessive spending and taking on additional debt as a temporary solution. As a result, John V took more drastic measures to use his lands as sources of funding. In 1346, John sold his lands at Cadeleigh, Devon. These were not the only lands that John sold during his lifetime. An inquisition for

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173 Ibid., 485-496.
174 Rather than appearing before the justices, many individuals fled, and they were marked as outliers. Being branded as an outlaw could result in confiscation of chattels, while the hue and cry was raised for the arrest of the outlaw. For additional information about outlawry, see: Susan Stewart, “Outlawry as an Instrument of Justice in the Thirteenth Century,” in Outlaws in Medieval and Early Modern England: Crime, Government and Society c. 1066-c. 1600, ed. John C. Appleby and Paul Dalton (London: Routledge, 2016): 40-42.
176 Ibid.
177 Inquisitions and Assessments Relating to Feudal Aids; With Other Analogous Documents, Vol. 1, A.D. 1284-1431 (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 189), 424.
Joan indicates that she held the Mohun manor at Ugborough, Devon with her husband until John granted it to Nigel Loryng, knight.\textsuperscript{178} Nigel Loryng was among the list of John’s many creditors, for the records indicate that in 1366 John owed the knight 80\textdollar{} and another debt of 120\textdollar{}.\textsuperscript{179} The transfer of Ugborough might have been a way for John to settle some of his outstanding debts. The fact that John actively sold some of the Mohun lands during his lifetime demonstrated that he was at the least understanding of the need to raise by any means possible. Such actions set a precedent for the later sale of Dunster Castle.

Financial issues notwithstanding, John V and Joan undertook arrangements to make socially advantageous marriages for their daughters. Having climbed the social ladder herself in marrying John V, Joan likely possessed similar ambitions to continue the Burghersh and Mohun ascent through advantageous matches for her daughters. Negotiations for the union of her eldest daughter, Elizabeth (1343-1415), during the 1350s and 1360s further strained the already cash strapped Mohuns. Lady Mohun and her brother Bartholomew the younger arranged a match for Elizabeth with William Montagu, Earl of Salisbury (1328-1397), in the late 1350s.\textsuperscript{180} The Mohuns were noticeably inferior to the Earl of Salisbury in rank and wealth, and nuptial negotiations proved to be incredibly expensive. The agreed upon sum of 4,500\textdollar{} was an amount that the Mohuns likely could ill afford.\textsuperscript{181} As a result, Joan worked with her brother Bartholomew to pay the amount, with Bartholomew likely recognizing the


\textsuperscript{180} Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 23.

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.
benefit that such a match would provide to the overall interests of the Burghersh family. Montagu would bring additional social and political connections to both the Mohun and Burghersh families, while further improving their status. Bartholomew committed to paying the marriage fee, with a partial payment of 1,000m. made in February 1361.\(^{182}\) The ambition of Joan and Bartholomew paid off in Elizabeth’s case, but it came at a great cost to the Mohun interests as it made them increasingly indebted to Joan’s natal family. Such a high price additionally injured the immediate marriage prospects of the two remaining Mohun daughters, for many of the Mohun interests became tied up in paying for the debt undertaken for Elizabeth’s marriage. Joan and Bartholomew gambled with the Mohun inheritance, but they succeeded in securing an alliance that elevated the social acumen of the Mohun and Burghersh families.

As Lady Mohun actively negotiated for her daughter Elizabeth’s marriage, so too did she gain more control over the Mohun affairs and lands. In July 1369, a license was granted to enfeoff Simon, Bishop of London, Aubrey de Vere, and John Burghersh with the manor and lands of Carhampton, Somerset, which the three were to handle according to Joan’s will.\(^{183}\) John’s preference for the fate of Carhampton seemingly did not matter. In a later agreement in July 1369, a similar license was granted for John and Joan to grant Dunster Castle, along with the manors of Minehead, Somerset, and Kilton, North Yorkshire, all held in chief, to Simon, Bishop of London, Richard, Earl of Arundel, Aubrey de Vere, and John


\(^{183}\) CPR, Edward III, A.D. 1367-1370, vol. XIV, 256.
Burghersh.\textsuperscript{184} Further details two days later echoed the earlier grant of Carhampton. The Bishop of London and the others could do as they pleased with Dunster and the other manors as long as the decisions were approved by Lady Mohun.\textsuperscript{185}

Although the reasons for it are unknown, the fact remains that John V placed the Mohun inheritance in Joan’s hands, effectively allowing her to manage it as she saw fit. Further evidence of Joan’s control over the Mohun affairs occurs during the 1370s. By 12 July 1372, Maud (d. 1400), second daughter of John V and Joan, was married to John, heir to Lord Strange of Knockin (d. 1397).\textsuperscript{186} John, eventual Lord Strange of Knockin, was also a nephew of the Earl of Arundel, and although he was a suitable match for a Mohun daughter, it seems that he knew that Maud would not inherit any of the main Mohun estates.\textsuperscript{187} The records indicate that Joan paid her son-in-law John 450\textit{m}. in 1377.\textsuperscript{188} Such a payment may have been made as a consolation due to the fact that Maud would not bring any substantial wealth from the Mohun inheritance to her marriage.\textsuperscript{189}

With such control of the Mohun lands, and while her husband was still alive, Joan began to arrange for the sale of Dunster. The purchaser, Elizabeth Luttrell (d. 1395), widow of John de Vere (d. 1350) and daughter of Hugh Courtenay, Earl of Devon (d. 1377), desired to provide for her son Hugh Luttrell (c. 1364-1428), issue of Andrew Luttrell (d. 1369/70), who belonged to a lesser branch of the Luttrell family.\textsuperscript{190} Although Elizabeth constituted a widow of high social standing with a decent income, her son Hugh stood to inherit a single

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 293.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{186} CPR, \textit{Edward III, A.D. 1370-1374}, vol. XV, 187.
\textsuperscript{187} Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 25.
\textsuperscript{189} Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 25.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., 25.
manor from his father, who had provided military service to the Black Prince but who did not possess much wealth.\textsuperscript{191} To remedy the lack of wealth and property that would pass to her son from his father, Elizabeth purchased lands for his inheritance, including the manor of Feltwell, Norfolk, and those of Moulton, Debenham, and Waldingfield in Suffolk.\textsuperscript{192} Although these lands would provide for Hugh, Elizabeth furthered the size of his inheritance by negotiating for the purchase of the more prominent Mohun lands and Dunster Castle. The purchase of Dunster, then, gave Elizabeth a way to provide a legacy for her son that his father had not.\textsuperscript{193}

Plans were in place for the sale of Dunster by 1374, for on 17 February Elizabeth made a deposit of 200\textshy;l. to Joan.\textsuperscript{194} Negotiations appear to be settled by 1376 when a receipt from 20 November indicate that Lady Mohun received payment of 5,000\textshy;m. from Elizabeth.\textsuperscript{195} The transfer of Dunster to Luttrell, however, did not occur immediately. As a part of the agreement, Joan retained a life interest in Dunster, and the barony was to pass to the Luttrells after her death, rather than to one or all of her daughters. Effectively, Lady Mohun negotiated to provide for herself during her lifetime while excluding her daughters from their inheritance.

With marriage arrangements completed for her two eldest daughters prior to the finalization of the sale of Dunster, only the youngest Mohun daughter, Philippa, remained single. As suggested by her name, Philippa (d. 1431) was likely a goddaughter of Queen Philippa (1310x15?-1369), and she was connected to the court through her mother and

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 26.
\textsuperscript{192} History of Dunster, 77.
\textsuperscript{193} Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 26.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
probably attended court as well.\textsuperscript{196} Like the marriages of her elder daughters Elizabeth and Maud, Lady Mohun used her connections at court to arrange for Philippa’s marriages.\textsuperscript{197} Philippa wed first Walter Lord FitzWalter (d. 1386), a landowner from Essex, in 1382.\textsuperscript{198} FitzWalter went on campaign with John of Gaunt, and he died while in Galicia in 1386.\textsuperscript{199} Philippa married secondly John Golafre (d. 1396), a courtier, as evidenced by a November 1389 grant by Richard II to John and Philippa of 100\textit{m.} a year.\textsuperscript{200} The marriage to Golafre must have also been short-lived, for he died in 1396.\textsuperscript{201} The marriages to FitzWalter and Golafre were suitable for Philippa, as the youngest Mohun daughter, for FitzWalter and Golafre occupied social positions similar to that of the Mohun and Burghersh families. Philippa’s third alliance, however, broke this trend. Philippa married Edward (c. 1373-1415), a cousin of Richard II and son and heir-apparent of Edmund of Langley, duke of York (1341-1402).\textsuperscript{202} Such a match was an interesting one, as Philippa was significantly older than Edward and she was socially inferior. Furthermore, Philippa remained childless from her first two marriages, and when combined with her age, the prospects of Philippa providing an heir to Edward were slim.\textsuperscript{203} Philippa and Edward must have developed an intimate relationship, likely sparked during interactions at court during the 1390s.\textsuperscript{204} Edward occupied a position close to Richard II in the 1390s, and Lady Mohun, too, remained a confidante of the king and

\textsuperscript{196} \textit{History of Dunster}, 51.
\textsuperscript{197} Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 28.
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{201} Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 27.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid., 27-28.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid.
enjoyed his favor during this time. Philippa naturally would have been connected to this inner circle through her mother and any time that she spent at court. This proximity would have enabled Philippa and Edward to form an attachment, especially if Lady Mohun provided additional encouragement. In spite of the negative factors that discouraged such a marriage, Edward and Philippa married in 1397. Surviving evidence supports this as a loving relationship between Edward and Philippa, for in his will from 1415, Edward refers to Philippa as “ma tresamee compaigne Phelippe.” In spite of not bringing the Mohun inheritance to this marriage, Philippa had a spectacular marriage with her third husband, one that even surpassed her older sister’s. Lady Mohun’s connections and reputation at court must have assisted with making these alliances for her daughters, and in doing so, these relationships further improved the social standing of the Mohuns and Burghershes in England.

**Conclusion**

Although the transaction for the sale of Dunster was not completed until 1376 after the death of John V, negotiations began during his lifetime. John must have been aware that the Mohun *caput honoris* was likely to be sold. The long-held value of the Mohun land

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208 The *caput honoris* was the center of an honor and included the main residence for a lord. Dunster Castle, thus, served as the main residence of the Mohuns and served as their administrative seat. See: “Short Definitions,” Civil Law, Common Law, Customary Law –
was converted to cash, providing much needed funds to the Mohuns. Yet Joan did not quietly retire to Dunster Castle to live out her days after arranging its sale. Instead, Lady Mohun chose to spend her time at court or near her Burghersh kin, details of which will be discussed in later chapters. On 2 October 1404 Joan wrote a will, requesting burial in the crypt at Canterbury Cathedral.²⁰⁹ In it, Joan bequeathed her movable goods to those close to her.²¹⁰

Inquisitions performed days after Joan’s death provide further details on the Dunster arrangements, while also recognizing the ensuing dispute that might be coming between Sir Hugh Luttrell and the Mohun daughters. One such query found that Joan held Dunster, the manors of Kilton, Minehead, and Carhampton, along with the hundred of Carhampton, for life.²¹¹ The remainder of these lands was to go to Elizabeth Luttrell, her heirs, and John Wermyngton.²¹² Since Elizabeth and John Wermyngton predeceased Joan, Hugh Luttrell was named as heir.²¹³ The escheator took possession of these lands and placed them in the king’s hands.²¹⁴ A further query in January 1405 confirmed that the remainder of the above estates was to go to Elizabeth Luttrell, her heirs, and Wermyngton after Joan’s death.²¹⁵ This entry provides an additional detail regarding how Joan had managed these properties during her lifetime: Joan held the lands, but she had granted them for life to her two daughters Elizabeth

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²¹⁰ Ibid.
²¹² Ibid.
²¹³ Ibid.
²¹⁴ Ibid.
²¹⁵ Ibid., number 1134.
and Philippa, along with Philippa’s husband Edward (by this time duke of York) for 400m. rent a year.216 Elizabeth and Philippa are named as Joan’s heirs, along with Joan’s grandson Richard Strange, while Hugh Luttrell is listed as Elizabeth Luttrell’s heir.217 A further entry adds that Dunster Castle, the manors, and the hundred were considered as one property and had not been divided.218 Granting Dunster and its associated manors to two daughters for life prior to her death suggests that Joan might have regretted the previously arranged sale of the lands, and was providing her heirs with a means from which to argue their right to the Mohun caput honoris. The details of the legal dispute between the Mohun daughters and Hugh Luttrell following Lady Mohun’s death have been well documented, recounting the legal maneuverings over who was the rightful heir to the lands.219 In the end, Sir Hugh proved his claim to Dunster. A payment of 100m. for Dunster in July 1408 from Sir Hugh to the crown further confirmed his rights to the lands.220 Although the spendthrift actions by John V accumulated significant debt injuring the viability of the Mohun daughters continuing to hold Dunster, it was Joan’s arrangement for the sale of the lands that officially alienated her daughters from their landed inheritance. Mohun control of Dunster thus ended, and the land passed to the purchaser’s legal heir.

Where the wealth and position of the Burghersh family rose in the fourteenth century, the status of the Mohuns declined, culminating in the sale of the family seat at Dunster. Joan

\[216\] Ibid.
\[217\] Ibid.
\[218\] Ibid., number 1135.
\[219\] For a complete discussion of the legal proceedings and negotiations between Luttrell and the Mohun heirs, see Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England.” History of Dunster, 80-86, provides an additional discussion of the legal dispute over Dunster from the Luttrell point of view.
\[220\] Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 41.
continued the rise of the Burghersh family through her marriage to John V and arranged for ambitious marriage matches for her three daughters. Yet the arrangement for the sale of Dunster and associated lands marred the Mohun image and standing. The sale of Dunster dominates discussions of Lady Mohun and her life. The reason for such interest in the sale of Dunster is twofold. First, Joan sold her husband’s inheritance, denying male and female Mohun heirs of their right to hold Dunster. Furthermore, arrangements were made by a woman to sell Dunster to another woman and widow. The nature of the Dunster transaction has elicited scholarly interest because of the unique nature of the arrangements. Second, the fight over the rightful heir to Dunster following Joan’s death provides ample documentation of the many details surrounding the sale and how the conflict was eventually resolved. Litigation following Lady Mohun’s death recorded evidence about Dunster and its management because there was a conflict. As such, many of the details regarding Joan and her life are focused on the documentation surrounding the sale of Dunster.

The sale of Dunster represents one piece of Lady Mohun’s life; however, it should not define her entire existence. The remaining chapters examine Joan separate from the sale of Dunster. Living apart from her husband, Joan connected with the upper echelons and created a socially and materially beneficial position for herself in the courts of Edward III and Richard II. Although not a member of the upper echelons, Joan used her social proximity to her advantage. As a participant at court, Joan successfully maneuvered, allying with the most important players in England. Joan’s life, then, demonstrates the interplay of social advancement and political allegiances. Through a deeper examination of Joan de Mohun, we thus gain a better understanding of court culture in fourteenth-century England.
Figure 1. Burghersh Lineage

NB: Only the individuals relevant to the current discussion are included on this chart.
Figure 2. De Verdon Lineage

Theobald Walter d. 1230 = Rohese de Verdon d. 1247

Sir John de Verdon d. 1274 = Margaret de Lacy

Nicholas de Verdon d. 1271 = John de Verdon d. 1271 = Theobald de Verdon 1248-1308 = Margery

John de Verdon d. 1297 = 1) Maud Mortimer d. 1312 = Theobald II de Verdon 1278-1316 = 2) Elizabeth de Burgh, née de Clare 1294/5-1360

Robert de Verdon = Nicholas de Verdon = Michael de Verdon

1) John Montagu = Joan de Verdon 1303-1334 = 2) Thomas de Furnivalle 1318-1359 = Elizabeth de Verdon 1305/6-1364 = Bartholomew Burghersh d. 1355 = Matilda/Margery de Verdon

1) Sir William Blount = 2) Sir Mark Hose = Isabella de Verdon 1317-1349 = Henry Ferrers d. 1343

3) Sir John Crophill
Figure 3. Mohun Lineage

1) Ada Tibetot
d. c. 1324
John de Mohun III
1267-9-1330
2) Sibyl de Lorty
d. after 1337

Christian Seagrave = John de Mohun IV
d. 1322
Robert de Mohun
d. c. 1331
Baldwin de Mohun
Payn de Mohun
Reynold de Mohun
Patrick de Mohun
d. 1349
Hervey de Mohun
Laurence de Mohun
Eleanor de Mohum

John de Mohum V
c. 1320-1375 = Joan Burghersh
d. 1404
Margaret de Mohun = John Carew
Elizabeth de Mohun

William Montagu
earl of Salisbury
1328-1397 = Elizabeth de Mohun
1343-1415
1) John Lord Strange d.
1397 = Maud de Mohun
d. 1400
1) Walter Lord Fitzwalter
d. 1386 = Philippa de Mohun
d. 1431 = 3) Edward duke of York
c. 1373-1415

Elizabeth Fitzalan
1366-1425 = William Montagu
d. 1382
Richard Lord Strange of
Knockin
1381-1449 = Elizabeth Cobham
2) Sir John Golaffre
d. 1396
Figure 4. Extended Mohun Lineage

Reginald de Mohun
d. before 1213

= Alice Browar

1) Hawise Fitzpeter
d. before 1237 = Reginald de Mohun
c. 1206-1258 = 2) Isabel Bassett
née Ferrers

Joan Ferrers = John de Mohun I
d. 1254

Alice de Mohun
Juliana de Mohun
Lucy de Mohun

William de Mohun
1254-1282

John de Mohun II
d. 1279

= Eleanor Fitzpiers

1) Ada Tibetot
d. c. 1324 = John de Mohun III
1267/9-1330 = 2) Sibyl de Lorty
d. after 1337

John de Mohun IV
d. 1322

Robert de Mohun
d. c. 1331

Baldwin de Mohun
Payn de Mohun
Reynold de Mohun
Patrick de Mohun
Hervey de Mohun
d. 1349
Laurence de Mohun

Eleanor de Mohun

NB: Isabel Bassett née Ferrers and Joan Ferrers were sisters. Only the individuals relevant to the current discussion are included on this chart.
CHAPTER 3

SELF-FASHIONING AND COURTESY: THE CREATION OF A COURTIER

Joan de Mohun hailed from the socially mobile Burghersh family. Her father, Bartholomew, and brother, Bartholomew the younger, both campaigned for and served the crown. Contemporaries, then, knew the Burghersh family for their military exploits and for their commitment to the king. With her marriage to John V, Joan joined the Mohuns, a socially and politically established family, with ancestors who arrived with William the Conqueror. The Mohuns thus possessed an established lineage as landholders and servants to the crown. Medieval contemporaries, however, encountered a family with successive generations of underage heirs to the Mohun inheritance. From 1176 to 1330, six Mohun heirs were underage when their predecessor died.1 These six Mohun heirs spent time as wards of the king until they reached their majority, with Dunster providing financial benefit to the crown during these periods.2 This presented challenges to the stability of the Mohuns. The prestige of the Mohuns thus increasingly waned, exacerbated by behavioral and financial struggles that plagued the last lord, John V. The Lady Mohun found herself at a crossroads between her natal and marital families.3

To reconcile having married into a family whose reputation and prestige declined in the fourteenth century and her natal family, which possessed an increasing social reputation, the Lady Mohun embarked on a process to construct a carefully curated image for herself and, by extension, the Mohun family. Through a conscious self-fashioning, Joan built on the

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1 History of Dunster, 11-12, 18, 35-36, 43.
2 Ibid.
3 A full discussion of the social standing of the Mohuns and Burghersheshes, along with the financial stability of the Mohuns, is discussed in Chapter Two.
lineage of the Mohun family while incorporating the positive characteristics embodied by the Burghersh family. The creation of a positive image of the Mohuns would not only benefit the entire family, but such efforts also specifically strengthened Joan’s personal reputation. The Lady Mohun, then, worked to construct a familial image of longevity and honor, traits that by extension represented her personally. This chapter examines the ways that Joan de Mohun fashioned herself as an ideal courtier who was a loyal servant to the monarchy. Such an image embodied the tenets of courtesy, emphasizing proper behavior associated with the elite. Embodying the model courtier had its rewards. This chapter also explores the benefits that Lady Mohun received from her constructed identity. Joan could likely not control the behavior or spendthrift ways of her husband John V, but she could create a positive image and loyal reputation through targeted efforts. Joan de Mohun used this constructed image to her advantage, helping her to establish an influential and materially comfortable lifestyle at court apart from John V and Dunster.

**Self-Fashioning, Chivalry, and Courtesy**

To recognize the efforts that Joan used to construct a positive image of herself and the Mohuns, we must first understand the concepts of self-fashioning and image construction. Such concepts describe the tools that Joan used to achieve her ends. In explaining the process of society becoming civilized and moving away from the uncivilized, Norbert Elias noted that the elite in the Middle Ages “gave expression to their self-image, to what, in their own estimation, made them exceptional.”\(^4\) The idea of courtesy, as it was referred to in English,

defined acceptable modes of behavior and the actions that should be avoided. The idea that
the image of oneself was intimately connected to behavior, and ultimately, what made one
noticeable or memorable, is important. Actions adhering to those defined by courtesy set one
apart in a positive way. Exhibiting certain behaviors, then, became important in both how
individuals saw themselves and, equally important, how others viewed them.

Self-fashioning thus involves a conscious choice to present oneself to others in a
specific way. This construction of the self could be achieved in several ways, including
through personal actions, written text, or pictorial images. Stephen Greenblatt described the
multiple meanings of the idea of self-fashioning and how its goals may be accomplished:

it describes the practice of parents and teachers; it is linked to manners or demeanor,
particularly that of the elite; it may suggest hypocrisy or deception, an adherence to
mere outward ceremony; it suggests representation of one’s nature or intention in
speech or actions. And with representation we return to literature, or rather we may
grasp that self-fashioning derives its interest precisely from the fact that it functions
without regard for a sharp distinction between literature and social life.

Although Greenblatt focuses on the rise of the term ‘self-fashioning’ as a sixteenth-century
phenomenon, the concepts are applicable here. The choice to exhibit certain behaviors, while
avoiding others, is one way to develop a personal image. Yet it remains possible that actions
may be purely outward representations and were not internalized by the performer. It is the
presentation that creates one’s public image. Aside from watching physical displays,
literature and written texts provide descriptions of behavior on the extremes of the spectrum.
These descriptions teach which actions were considered ideal and those that were deemed to
be crass. Literary descriptions thus provide a major source for examples of self-fashioning.

5 Ibid., 62-63.
6 Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago:
Conscious choices were made, as authors chose what details to relay about an individual and the actions in which they participated. Conduct outside of these parameters was considered crude, and authors described those exhibiting behaviors outside the ideal negatively, becoming examples of what not to do. Authors emphasized perfection, while instructing the reader to avoid those traits and actions described as undesirable. The term ‘self-fashioning’ may not appear in primary documentation until the sixteenth century, but the concepts exist much earlier, as we will see through Lady Mohun’s efforts.

The embodiment of ideal behavior, then, was an important tool for those aspiring to climb the social ladder. Acting like a member of the elite suggested to others that one belonged within their ranks. An individual with aspirations to improve their social position first had to know how to behave properly. Then, they needed to embody and portray those traits associated with their social superiors particularly in public settings or when in the company of their social superiors in public or private. A flawless adherence to proscribed behaviors could boost one’s reputation, demonstrating worth and belonging. Individuals could learn of the desired behaviors of social superiors through several methods, including observation, literary descriptions, and by reading edificatory manuals. The genres of conduct literature and romance became popular, serving as both forms of entertainment and instruction. Describing the tenets of chivalry and courtesy, such texts defined the preferred behavior of courtiers and the elite for readers.

Although a defining element of elite culture in the Late Middle Ages, chivalry was not one, overarching concept. Instead, “medieval chivalry was more an outlook than a doctrine, more a lifestyle than an explicit ethical code. It embraced both ideology and social practice. Among the qualities central to it were loyalty, generosity, dedication, courage and
courtesy, qualities which were esteemed by the military class and which contemporaries
believed the ideal knight should possess.” The knight was a defining figure of chivalry, but,
the concept of chivalry transcended the knight and permeated society. Various social sectors
adopted and adapted the general ideals of chivalry, using its concepts for their needs. For
example, chivalry in a military setting differed from the performance of chivalry in an
ecclesiastical setting, although the general tenets remained the same. Here we are focusing on
the characteristics of chivalry as portrayed at the royal court. This form focuses on the
manners and behaviors that defined the elite. As the highest individuals on the social scale,
the royal family set expectations for how courtiers should interact with the sovereign and
with others. Courtly chivalry, then, established the standard for individual and group
behavior while at court.

As the knight represented a foundational element of the general concept of chivalry,
so too did he represent a key figure at court in fourteenth-century England. Military service
to the crown provided opportunity for advancement, as the most loyal and capable knights
received rewards from the king for their deeds. Such rewards included titles, money, land,
and positions in governance. These martial men, like Joan’s father Bartholomew Burghersh,
sought to maintain the ideals of knightly chivalry as they increasingly occupied roles of
governance, serving the crown in positions separate from military campaigns. This code of
conduct, infused with traits like loyalty and honor, created the standard that those of the
nobility and gentry should adhere to, behaviors that ultimately set them apart from the rest of

8 Ibid., 3-4.
9 Scott L. Waugh, England in the Reign of Edward III (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Yet chivalry needed to adapt to life at court, focusing more on social interactions and governance, while minimizing the realities surrounding its military elements and rules of war.

Chivalry at court consisted of mutual support by the king, knights, nobility, and courtiers. As leader, the king needed to set an example for others to follow. The king, thus, set the standard for courtly chivalry, showing those around him how it should be organized and supported. In this model, the king is an active member “of chivalric society and could only hope to reap the full benefits of its latent potential for external conquest and strong government if they became paragons of the chivalric virtues.” Embodying and promoting chivalry enabled the monarch to connect with those at court, while also establishing the social mores expected of courtiers. The monarch’s successful portrayal of chivalric ideals, including knightly prowess, loyalty, and courtesy strengthened his relationship with the nobility while bolstering his subjects’ commitment to his government. In return, the nobility and courtiers imitated the king’s chivalric attitudes to demonstrate respect and service to the monarch.

As a concept defined by knights and war, chivalry maintained some of its militaristic values in civilian settings. The tournament became an outlet for combat in a structured and celebratory way. Courtly chivalry, however, required more of an emphasis on social interactions and personal behavior. This increased emphasis on proper actions provided an opportunity for both men and women at court to portray the non-militaristic characteristics of

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10 Ibid., 130.
12 Ibid.
chivalry. An associated concept to chivalry, courtesy “summed up all the aspects of good
dehaviour associated with courts and those who attended them.”\(^{13}\) Courtesy thus focused on
the ideal behaviors expected of courtiers, detailing the social expectations of a non-
militaristic setting. While it was assumed that the nobility possessed chivalrous attitudes
because of their position at birth, they were still “expected to embrace particular modes of
upright, moral conduct.”\(^{14}\) To be truly noble, and by extension courteous, one had to exhibit
the positive traits of their peers. Not adhering to such courtly social mores could be a
detriment to the position of a courtier, but it could furthermore affect the trust and reliability
that others had in the king. As Nigel Saul argued, Henry VI’s (r. 1422-1461, 1470-1471) lack
of skill as a knight and by extension his lack of chivalry led to England’s elite questioning his
legitimacy, turning their support to Richard, duke of York (1411-1460), who did exhibit such
behaviors.\(^{15}\) The importance of presenting a chivalric and courteous image at court, then,
remained important for all participants.

Properly projecting courtesy could thus influence one’s social standing and ability, or
inability, to participate in life at court. Just as in learning the tenets of chivalry, courtiers had
a variety of ways to absorb the related ideas of courtesy. If already interacting with members
of the elite or present at court, one could learn through observation, mimicking the actions of
those around. In addition to learning through observation, literary texts defined those traits
considered desirable to its audience. A growing number of texts focused on instructing

\(^{13}\) Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English Kings and
Jones and Peter Coss (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2019), 234.
\(^{15}\) Nigel Saul, *For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England, 1066-1500* (London: Bodley
Head, 2011), 333.
readers on a variety of traits. Known as courtesy books, these texts expanded access to information on desirable behavior and societal norms. At the most basic level, courtesy books represented “prose treatises or poems inculcating the etiquette of court.” Texts intended to describe ideal characteristics, courtesy books first defined and then taught appropriate behavior. Many topics of noble life were described in courtesy books, including “serving at table, general table manners, and personal and religious hygiene, offering general recommendations concerning proper measure, generosity, and deference to elders and other superiors.” Authors described all aspects of a courteous life in such texts, creating a sort of roadmap for not only current courtiers, but also for aspiring ones, and even for members of the merchant *nouveau riche*. Thus, by describing such behaviors in a written format, courtesy books expanded the number of individuals who had access to knowledge about the proper mannerisms regaled by the elite and the court. Literate adults and children could absorb the tenets presented in courtesy books, which they could then model in their public and private lives. Learning and then exhibiting the ideals presented in conduct books allowed those who were not born to the elite to absorb their mannerisms and customs without already being in the social circle of the elite. The presentation of proper behavior, as learned through courtesy books, allowed for additional social mobility as members of the gentry adopted and mastered these characteristics.

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Where courtesy books remained overt in their educational purpose, other medieval literary genres provided additional forms of instruction. Medieval romance presented stories of valor and chivalry, while forcefully stressing good over evil. Although medieval romances varied in style and structure, “the link between love and chivalric exploits involves a true ‘constitutive model’ for most medieval romances.”\textsuperscript{18} The tales in medieval romance describe both the behaviors of noblemen and noblewomen, emphasizing those actions considered proper, while admonishing those considered rude.\textsuperscript{19} The actions of the hero and the villain represented more than an entertaining story; instead “romances encouraged their readership to emulate examples of bravery, martial prowess, and service to ladies, and to espouse values such as loyalty and courtesy.”\textsuperscript{20} Both the knight and the lady demonstrated expected behaviors, especially the etiquette of love.\textsuperscript{21} Through the descriptions of knightly heroics and interactions at court, readers saw how chivalry and courtesy operated in social settings. Exposure to these ideals through the reading of romance further familiarized audiences with the ideals of chivalry, providing additional examples to emulate.

As is described below, Joan de Mohun thus had a variety of resources at her disposal for learning the chivalric code of the English court. As a member of a natal family recently elevated in England, Lady Mohun must have recognized the importance of performing

\textsuperscript{20} Bellis and Leitch, “Chivalric Literature,” 252.
\textsuperscript{21} Carol Parrish Jamison, “A Description of the Medieval Romance Based Upon \textit{King Horn},” \textit{Quondam et Futurus} 1, no. 2 (1991): 51.
courteous behavior while in public and especially when at court. To supplement her personal actions, however, Joan worked to further bolster the image of her family. Through her actions and patronage efforts, we see how Joan de Mohun embraced the chivalric culture of the English court, mastered it, and used it to fashion an image for herself and her family.

The Mohun Chronicle and Literary Representations of a Chivalrous Family

Courtesy books and romance provided literary descriptions of conduct from which readers could learn how to emulate ideal behavior. Although the most obvious, additional genres provided instructions on conduct too. Literary works commissioned by and for a patron, for example, co-opted literary images of the ideal lord and lady, and used these traits for self-aggrandizement. In these works, authors incorporated positive traits into depictions of their patron, describing the characteristics of the patron while also including details on the patron’s chivalric ancestors and heritage. Patrons themselves exhibited ideal behavior, but so did their family, demonstrating how ingrained and long-lasting such characteristics were.

Although there exist a variety of literary genres that champion the positive traits of a patron, the use of a noble genealogy, that is a biographical account of family history that often includes information on the family’s property ownership, is particularly relevant to Joan de Mohun and her efforts to create an elite image of herself and of the Mohuns. The content of medieval noble genealogies varied, with some focused on concise lineage tables, while others emphasized land ownership and inheritable properties. These genealogies were practical in

23 Ibid., 64.
nature, as they tracked and documented acquisition dates for properties while also noting the biographical details of the relevant heirs and family members. Such information could prove to be important in property or inheritance disputes. In addition to this accounting function, authors also used the noble genealogy genre to establish the character of a family.\textsuperscript{24} Such accounts included the family’s genealogy, incorporating legendary materials and descriptions aimed at confirming the family’s status and reputation.\textsuperscript{25} The goal of these noble genealogies consisted of more than documenting lineage and property rights, but aimed to highlight the heroics and chivalrous nature of the family, preserving these details for future generations while presenting a positive image of the family to any reader. These texts celebrated the character and lineage of a family. This emphasis on positive traits strengthened a family’s reputation. Established noble families could benefit through reinforcing their connection to chivalry, while socially ambitious families demonstrated their belonging in the nobility through their family’s chivalric pursuits. The creation of a literary text, then, was one way to present a chivalric image to contemporaries and to preserve such an image for posterity.

The Mohun family participated in the documentation of familial history and lore through the production of a fourteenth-century text known as the \textit{Mohun Chronicle}. The \textit{Mohun Chronicle}, preserved primarily in London, BL MS Additional 62929, consists of a short history of the world that incorporates the noble origins of the Mohun family.\textsuperscript{26} Although the exact origins of the \textit{Mohun Chronicle} are unknown, it has been attributed to

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 65.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
Abbot Walter de la Hove of Newenham. John Osborne, Joan’s clerk and Constable of Dunster Castle, suggested that the Abbot of Newenham authored a history of the Mohun family lineage “for the utility and profit of the lords of Dunster and most of all to the praise and glory of his most noble lady, Lady Joan de Mohun.” Osborne’s statement likely refers to the Mohun Chronicle. The surviving manuscript exists today as a single quire of eight folios, sized 235mm x 170mm, with 33 lines per page.

If Osborne’s reference to a text dedicated “to the praise and glory” of Joan de Mohun is to be believed, it is possible that the Lady of Dunster actively participated in the commissioning of a work focused on the heritage of her affinal family. Joan’s motivations for the creation of such a text were likely varied. The financial decline of the Mohuns, especially John’s spendthrift behavior, would have reflected poorly on the family. A reminder of the noble lineage of the Mohuns, including ancestors arriving with William the Conqueror, could bolster the image of the current generation. Unlike similar extant manuscripts that describe the noble heritage of a great family, the Mohun Chronicle incorporates a female-driven founding of England through the arrival of Albina and her sister to the island. Such a focus on the female founders of England could indicate deeper motivations for Lady Mohun. As a family without a male heir — the issue of John and Joan

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27 Ibid. Wogan-Browne, “Mother or Stepmother to History? Joan de Mohun and her Chronicle,” 299.
30 Ibid.
consisted of three daughters — she was all too aware of the resulting dynastic problems the Mohuns would face in the near future. A narrative focused on female martial power and leadership could promote a preference for matrilineal heritage, while extolling the importance of female social action. The act of commissioning a noble genealogy, too, demonstrated that the Mohuns had the means to do so. The ability to frame a narrative history further proved the family’s position among the elite who used books as evidence of their status.

The text of the *Mohun Chronicle*, its literary influences, and the manuscript itself have been examined at length by John Spence who also transcribed and translated the content of the surviving manuscript. Yet the content of the *Mohun Chronicle*, when considered in tandem with Joan’s life and aspirations, establishes a valuable narrative that allowed Joan to fashion an image of renown for the Mohun family and connected them to the national history of England.

The prologue to the *Mohun Chronicle* begins with the proto-father Adam, who knew three things that were to come in the world: judgement by water, judgement by fire, and an understanding that all living things would die. To combat the decay of his knowledge, Adam wrote on two pillars. A metaphor of inscription by which knowledge is transmuted establishes the rationale for this chronicle. In following Adam’s example, the author notes that “therefore we, who are more frail than Adam ever was, must put into writing the deeds, the sayings, the names, the lines of succession, and the virtues of our kin, and particularly of our ancestors, since because of their good deeds we live and rejoice on earth, and they live

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 171, lines 2-12.
33 Ibid., 171, lines 12-13.
and rejoice in heaven.” In imitation of Adam’s transcriptions, the author reminds that we must write the details, names, and lineage of our families. The reason for writing this information and preserving it for posterity is simple. The author continues, opining that this heritage must be documented “because many things may be forgotten, with the passage of time, old age, various wars and sudden changes of lineage, unless they are put in a book by men of religion.” This statement is telling if examined with an eye to the economic and political position of the Mohun family. Attributing the chronicle to Joan’s patronage, this exhortation to document the family history gives it a new meaning. The Mohun family had a position of prestige, as their ancestor William arrived in 1066 and received lands to protect and maintain for the Conqueror. The familial role, therefore, was to support and serve the monarch. With the passage of time from the Conquest to the fourteenth century, it was natural that Joan would want to remind others of this heritage, emphasizing the length of time that the Mohuns possessed a position of prestige in England, and one close to the monarch. It is also plausible that by the date of construction of the Mohun Chronicle, Joan’s husband John was already exhibiting his spendthrift behavior, injuring the family image. A timely reminder of the family’s heritage could bolster the immediate position of Lord and Lady Mohun and provide a record of long-standing and loyal service.

The author continues, in the prologue, expanding on the issue of “sudden changes of lineage,” comparing how regions and towns have changed names with the evolution of the surnames of the great lords. In this way, the family surname changed from ‘Moion,’ as it

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34 Ibid., 171, lines 14-17.
36 History of Dunster, 3.
was known in the age of the Conqueror, to ‘Mohun.’ This revision of the family name did not take away the great heritage of the family. Instead, it was a fact that only need be clarified so that all understand the longevity and position of the family. In fact, the author notes that “because of such changes no people living have a greater need to learn the history of the world, and of holy church, than the great lords of England have.” As a result of their position in English society, the lords need to understand the history and evolution of the great families so that they can recognize those who belong in this elite group. In linking the Mohun family to the great lords of England, including them in the group of individuals who need to learn about history and heritage, the author establishes a historical status that Joan and her daughters sought to reclaim.

The author ends the prologue by placing the text that follows into a canon of such family chronicles, as he calls them “these little chronicles,” describing how such texts follow a similar structure, including a narrative on the origins of the world, the early habitation of England, the decline of Rome, a list of the popes of Rome, a list of the archbishops of Canterbury, the kings of France, and the kings of England. This general history of the world narrows in scope so that by the end of the chronicle, which focuses on the Mohuns, recounting how William de Mohun of that “noble family” arrived with the Conqueror and the number of men that accompanied him at that time, can conclude with a list of the descendants of this William de Mohun until the present day. Such a placement of the Mohun family in the history of the world emphasized their position among the great families.

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38 Ibid., 171, lines 29-32.
40 Ibid., 173.
41 Ibid.
of England. The author makes it clear that the Mohuns belonged as a member of England’s elite and that their lineage was worthy of inscription and remembrance.

In the same style as other contemporary chronicles, the author of the *Mohun Chronicle* stressed the accuracy of the text that followed the prologue, while also establishing his method of gathering information for the text. Attesting to the veracity of the details, the author reminds his audience that he has written the details “as we have heard.” Many of the events contained in this chronicle could not be verified textually; instead, the author had to rely on oral tradition. As in other chronicles, the author establishes the reason for documenting the history of the world, and subsequently, the history of the Mohun family. For many chroniclers, a reason for writing the text was to preserve information that should be remembered. The content of the *Mohun Chronicle* is no different, as the author explains that the events in his text “should be held dear and gladly heard by all men.” Furthermore, the author opines that the world is not as good as it used to be, and that the lords need to be reminded of the good qualities and deeds of their ancestors for edifying purposes, for such stories “teach how one should lead a Christian life and behave honourably in the world. For to live without honour is to die.” The author places the Mohun ancestors within this instructional context, indicating that their deeds serve as an example of how to live an honorable life. The *Mohun Chronicle*, then, recounts the nobility of the Mohun family, while serving as a positive example of honorable behavior. Like conduct literature and romance,

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44 Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 57, 60.
46 Ibid.
the *Mohun Chronicle* sets out to explain chivalry through the main characters, in this case the Mohun ancestors. The author linked the Mohuns to chivalric behavior, providing a timely reminder of the family’s heritage as John V repeatedly undercut this ideal through his financial misdealings and spurious behavior.

Although the copy of the *Mohun Chronicle* that survives in Additional MS 62929 is not complete according to the grand vision established in the prologue, the text that remains provides some clues that connect Lady Mohun to the text. After the prologue, the author defines the length of the five ages, covering the creation through the life of Jesus. Yet the focus of this section of text following the prologue is on a time before Brutus arrived in Britain. Although the land is currently named Britain after Brutus, prior to Brutus, the area was styled as Albion, after Albina, the first woman who arrived on the island. In this version, Albina was one of thirty daughters born to the king of Greece who had no male heirs. Desiring to have control of all of Greece, Albina and one of her sisters plotted to kill all their sisters and their father. Caught and convicted for this plan, the king banished Albina and her sister to the sea, giving them a ship with no mast and no rudder to direct their course. The wind drove the two to Dartmouth, where Albina claimed the land for herself, while her sister remained on the ship after a quarrel and later landed at Southampton. No men inhabited the island at this time, and instead, “evil spirits” mated with the two sisters, producing giants to populate the land. Although the giants inhabited all of the land at one

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47 Ibid., 173.
48 Ibid., 173, 175.
49 Ibid., 175.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
time, there remained only 39 giants when Brutus arrived in what would become Britain.\textsuperscript{54} Brutus, with the help of Corneus, killed the surviving giants, and took control.\textsuperscript{55}

The text of the \textit{Mohun Chronicle} firmly places the story of Albina in the canon of British history that leads into the arrival of Brutus. Although a number of \textit{Brut} manuscripts contain the story of Albina, the tale is typically presented in a prologue, separated from the primary text.\textsuperscript{56} The inclusion of Albina’s narrative within the main text of the \textit{Mohun Chronicle} is unusual and may signal Joan’s involvement in the text’s production. In this structure, female agency figures prominently into the founding of Britain. Like the author’s exhortations in the prologue regarding the evolution of the Mohun name, Britain’s heritage and name has evolved since its founding. Although no longer referred to as Albion, for the most part, the story of this female ancestor deserves a place within the main account of the island, and not as a footnote in the island’s historical narrative. By its placement in the \textit{Mohun Chronicle}, the author stressed that Albina and her contribution deserve to be remembered.

The inclusion of Albina’s story and its position of prominence in the \textit{Mohun Chronicle} is curious and could suggest the preference of a female patron or a desire of the author to please a female patron. Yet it is the content of the Albina tale that further relates to the Mohun family and Joan’s possible involvement. John V and Joan had three daughters.\textsuperscript{57} With no male issue, like the figurative king of Greece, John and Joan must have been concerned with the Mohun inheritance and the continuation of the family name. The

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{56} Wogan-Browne, “Mother or Stepmother to History? Joan de Mohun and her Chronicle”, 306.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 309-310.
significance of the incorporation of a female-driven narrative and the absence of male heirs could serve to normalize the existence of female heirs (or serve as a cautionary tale about single daughters cast out). Such a story also places importance on the matriline, for it was through Albina and her sister that “Albion” was inhabited. The inclusion of the Albina story shapes the past through the lens of female founders, a fact that is especially poignant for the Mohuns where the daughters represent the future fortunes of the family.  

By establishing a narrative focused on women, Lady Mohun may have influenced the author to fashion an image that respected the matriline to illustrate how such a heritage could be used to further a family’s legacy.

After the Albina narrative, the remainder of the extant text of the *Mohun Chronicle* that survives in Additional MS 62929 transitions into a more traditional global history, recounting the history of Rome and the papal curia. Missing in this manuscript is a description of the Mohun family origins, their arrival with the Conqueror, and the family tree from the Conquest to the present day. It may be that the latter section included a definitive answer regarding the patronage and provenance of the *Mohun Chronicle*. The evidence that survives, however, links Joan to the chronicle. With a likely date of the mid-fourteenth century, the manuscript was produced during Joan’s active engagement as leader of her family. It seems probable, therefore, that Joan was the impetus, or at least inspiration, for its production. Acutely aware of the spendthrift ways of her husband John and the familial issues inherent in a dearth of no male heirs, Lady Mohun might have commissioned a text that shifts priorities. The *Mohun Chronicle* was intended to place the family in global and local history, linking their heritage to the Conquest and stressing their position among

58 Ibid., 312.
England’s elite. The prominence of Albina and her story, however, recenters the chronicle’s narrative, emphasizing the importance of women in the historical narrative of a nation and in a noble family.

A reputation for being chivalrous, courteous, and honorable remained an important part of a family’s social prospects. The surviving text of the *Mohun Chronicle* demonstrates the traits that the author, and by extension the patron, felt were important. An adherence to the behaviors and mannerisms described in texts like the *Mohun Chronicle* and courtesy books confirmed a place of belonging among the elite. Aside from strengthening membership in the nobility, a flawless exhibition of these manners could be particularly useful at court. Those considered the most courteous or chivalrous distinguished themselves, earning a positive reputation with other courtiers and with the royal family. Being known as the most courteous courtier came with benefits, often in the form of patronage or gifts. The exhibition of courtesy and chivalry proved to be lucrative pursuits for those who mastered their artforms.

**Self-Fashioning In Action:**

**The Benefits Of Creating A Courteous And Chivalric Image**

The author of the *Mohun Chronicle* presents the family’s lineage while also placing its members among the heroes of English history. Yet contemporary conduct literature also stressed that one needed more than an honorable lineage and position of birth to be considered noble. Instead, appropriate behaviors must accompany one’s position. To be considered truly noble, one must behave honorably. Lineage and actions combined to demonstrate if one belonged in the elite. These ideas permeate the content of conduct books
produced and circulated in England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Joan would have been familiar with such information, and it would have influenced her in her efforts to fashion herself as the ideal courtier.

As Lady of Mohun, Joan would have had the responsibility to manage and maintain her lands, while her husband was away on campaign and during her widowhood. She might have used informational treatises to supplement her knowledge regarding estate management. Such texts would have provided her with details on how to maintain her lands and household efficiently and effectively, factors that were particularly important to the Mohun holdings because of the family’s precarious financial situation. One such manual written in the thirteenth century by Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln (d. 1253), *The Rules of Saint Robert*, might have guided Joan in managing her holdings.59 As established in the introduction, Grosseteste compiled this information for the Countess of Lincoln, so that she could effectively manage her lands.60 Grosseteste’s advice was practical for both men and women charged with governing their estates, and he included information, for example, on how to know the rents and fees of their lands, how to compare accounts, and practical details to consider when selling and threshing one’s corn.61 This provided logistical advice on how to perform duties associated with estate management. Yet Grosseteste also included guidance on running a household and managing those who work in it. His ninth rule, for example, encouraged loyalty to the Lord or Lady, noting that one should regularly tell the servants

61 Ibid., 123, 131, 143.
“that often, that fully, quickly, and willingly, without grumbling and contradiction, they do all your commands that are not against God.”

Loyal behavior was presented as the ideal, while courteous behavior was also encouraged in the twelfth rule, with Grosseteste instructing that one should ask if there are “any disloyal, unwise, filthy in person, gluttonous, quarrelsome, drunken, unprofitable” individuals in the household, and if so, they should be removed. All should exhibit good behavior, not just the Lord or Lady, for the actions of all reflect on the image of the family. Grosseteste continued with practical advice for managing logistical elements, like receiving guests, instruction on which clothes should be worn at meals, and how to seat individuals at a meal. There exist many elements to attend to, including the running of an estate and maintaining the standards of those in the household. Such rules were intended to guide noblemen and noblewomen on how to create an efficient and courteous household.

As suggested by the creation and possible patronage of the *Mohun Chronicle*, Joan de Mohun was concerned about her reputation and that of her family, and she took concerted efforts to create a positive reputation for the family. Flawless maintenance of her lands and establishing her household as a noble one was an additional way for Joan to support the nobleness of her family. The Lady Mohun seemingly established this image, as her clerk John Osborne refers to her as “the most noble lady, lady Joan de Mohun, lady of Dunster, daughter of the most distinguished, energetic, and most noble knight, Bartholomew de Burghersh the elder” for whom he wrote a register for this “most kind and excellent lady.”

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62 Ibid., 133.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., 135, 137.
65 Spence, “The *Mohun Chronicle,*” 163-164. This text survives today as BL MS Egerton 3724. In this passage, Osborne suggests that this register, in addition the Red Book by the
Osborne’s words advertise the positive traits that Joan possessed, including being noble, kind, and excellent. Although Osborne likely included such descriptions to impress his patron, the content demonstrates the traits that Lady Mohun admired. These are some of the characteristics that Joan focused on when constructing her self-image and that of the Mohuns.

Although such descriptions of Joan suggest that she established herself as an ideal courtier, one task that she received further supports the idea that she skillfully presented an image of nobility, chivalry, and courtesy at court leading to a position of trust. For a span of years in the late 1370s and early 1380s, John of Gaunt (1340-1399) placed two of his children, Henry Bolingbroke (1367-1413) and Catalina of Lancaster (1372-1418), in the care of Joan and her household. Henry remained in Joan’s household from 1377 to 1380, while Catalina arrived later and stayed with Joan from 1380 until at least 1383. After the death of his mother Blanche of Lancaster (1342-1368), Henry lived with his great-aunt Blanche Lady Wake (c. 1305-c. 1380), although after Gaunt married his second wife Constanza of Castile (c. 1371-1394), he went to live in her household, with his father’s mistress, Katherine Swynford (c. 1349-1403) as his governess. During the years that Bolingbroke and Catalina resided in the Mohun household, Joan would have been responsible for their maintenance and for at least a part of their educational curriculum. The care of these two children was important, and Gaunt would not have rewarded any courtier with such a task. Lady Mohun’s

Abbot of Newenham were written specifically for Lady Mohun. Osborne dates the production of the register to 24 Edward III, 1350-1351.


67 Ibid.

qualifications as a gentlewoman and as an important member of the Gaunt affinity would have factored into her selection as keeper of Henry and Catalina. 69 Through her actions, Joan must have demonstrated her noble nature to Gaunt, making her a worthy guardian for a time.

Gaunt and Lady Mohun entered into a formal agreement regarding the care of his two children, details of which are contained in his register. The agreement lists some basic details on the maintenance of Catalina and her household, including information on the financial arrangements between Gaunt and Joan. 70 An entry from 8 June 1380 instructs that Catalina is to stay with “nostre treschere et tresamee cosyne la dame de Mohun pur un certein temps.” 71 Lady Mohun is described as a most dear friend and cousin of Gaunt, suggesting a familiar relationship between the two. With the advice of his council, Gaunt arranged for Catalina’s care while in the Mohun household. A sum of 100l., with equal payments made at Easter and Michaelmas, were to be provided to Joan during Catalina’s stay. 72 Due allowance would also be provided to cover Catalina’s expenses and those of her household. Similar details of subsequent orders and payments were entered on 20 February 1381 and 22 May 1382. 73 An entry on 6 May 1383 provided Joan with 50l. for the recently passed Easter term. 74 This 1383 entry was the last recorded evidence of payment to Joan for Catalina’s care, although it is not

69 The relationship between John of Gaunt and Joan de Mohun will be further explored in the next chapter.
70 Little information remains on Henry Bolingbroke’s time in the Mohun household, aside from the fact that he did spend time in the care of Lady Mohun. Catalina remained with Joan for a longer amount of time than her half-brother, and there remains more evidence regarding her care.
72 Ibid., 107.
73 Ibid., 160, 226.
known if such evidence indicates that Catalina departed after this date or if Catalina remained with the Lady Mohun thereafter. It remains possible that Catalina stayed in Joan’s care until she traveled to Castile with her father in 1386.\footnote{Echevarria, “Catalina of Lancaster,” 80, 82.}

At their arrival to the Mohun household, Henry was around ten years old while Catalina was around eight years old. As such, Joan would have participated in Henry’s and Catalina’s education during this time in addition to being responsible for their physical well-being. This education would have focused on how to behave as a member of the royal family, advising on topics like manners, behavior, and courtesy.\footnote{Chris Given-Wilson, The English Nobility in the Later Middle Ages: The Fourteenth-Century Political Community (London: Routledge, 1996), 4.} For Henry, instruction on maintaining a noble household with loyal and courteous servants, like that described by Grosseteste, would have constituted topics of instruction that Joan could teach him. As a member of the English royal family and designated heir to the throne of Castile, the quality of Catalina’s education would have been especially important.\footnote{Echevarria, “Catalina of Lancaster,” 79-80.} Lady Mohun’s age and status as a widow furthered her image as a woman of wisdom, especially when combined with the established chivalric identity of her Burghersh relatives. As a middle-aged widow, Joan possessed social and religious knowledge that she could share with her young wards, a position in society occupied by contemporary widows.\footnote{Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker, “The Age of Discretion: Women at Forty and Beyond,” in Middle-Aged Women in the Middle Ages, ed. Sue Niebrzydowski (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2011), 23.} In placing both a young Henry and Catalina, Gaunt demonstrated the trust and regard that he held for Joan. It was common for children to be sent to live and learn in another household, either at court or, ideally, with a

\footnote{Echevarria, “Catalina of Lancaster,” 80, 82.}
\footnote{Echevarria, “Catalina of Lancaster,” 79-80.}
\footnote{Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker, “The Age of Discretion: Women at Forty and Beyond,” in Middle-Aged Women in the Middle Ages, ed. Sue Niebrzydowski (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2011), 23.}
family of higher social rank.\textsuperscript{79} Grosseteste himself developed such a strong reputation for his education, courtesy, and manners that members of the nobility sent their sons to be educated by him.\textsuperscript{80} In a similar way, Joan must have been recognized for her meticulous conduct and manners, knowledge which she would have imparted to Gaunt’s children and wards under her physical care. The responsibility entrusted to Joan emphasizes her character and reputation as an example of an ideal courtier and gentlewoman.\textsuperscript{81}

Although the details of Catalina’s time and education with Joan are sparse beyond the financial arrangements, the basics of her educational experiences can be surmised. Lady Mohun represented a courtier, but also an efficient manager of household and property, topics that she would have taught her wards. Much of the instruction that Catalina received from Joan, then, would have been informal and would have been learned through observation. A variety of servants populated Joan’s household, in addition to any other wards that might have been with her at the time. Like other elite households, members of the Mohun residence lived in public, rather than private, with servants and the family interacting regularly throughout the course of the day.\textsuperscript{82} Through her active management, Joan would have shown Catalina efficient methods for running and maintaining a noble household. Regular interaction with the various members of the Mohun house and those socially inferior to Catalina would have naturally taught the child skills in social interaction and estate management that should be learned and familiar for girls from aristocratic families. The activities surrounding the household and attending to visitors provided a natural education

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\textsuperscript{79} Orme, \textit{From Childhood to Chivalry}, 45.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 56-57, 135.
\textsuperscript{81} Goodman, \textit{John of Gaunt}, 293.
\textsuperscript{82} Orme, \textit{From Childhood to Chivalry}, 28.
\end{flushleft}
that Catalina would have observed, with Joan demonstrating the appropriate manners to exhibit and the types of speech that should be employed in these various interactions.\(^8^3\) Catalina absorbed these skills through observation and she would have learned proper behavior and the manners that would be expected of her as she grew and participated in such situations as an adult.

As a courtier and a lady perceived to be noble in her actions, Joan exhibited expected behavior as described in conduct manuals. Although Lady Mohun did not document the specific information that she taught to Catalina, the likely topics of instruction can be ascertained through further examination of contemporary conduct manuals. Such texts suggest a roadmap of the ideal behaviors both desired by members of the elite and those actions that should be instilled in children.

One such contemporary text is *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, attributed to the French knight Geoffroy de la Tour Landry.\(^8^4\) La Tour Landry wrote an instructional manual for the edification of his daughters, describing the desirable behaviors of a noble and courteous gentlewoman regarding religious and social conduct, while contrasting these ideal traits with descriptions of the actions of sinful and coarse women.\(^8^5\) Written over the course of the 1370s, the content of la Tour Landry’s work presents a contemporary opinion on the types of behavior encouraged for girls and women in late fourteenth-century England.

In a similar manner to other contemporary courtesy manuals, the author of *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* explains the reasons for writing the text at the beginning. La Tour

\(^{8^3}\) Ibid., 121.


\(^{8^5}\) Ibid., xviii, xxxv, xxxviii.
Landry establishes in the prologue that the book is directed to his daughters “of whom I hadde grete desyre that they should torne to honoure aboue alle other thyng.” The knight wanted his daughters to be respectful in their actions first, choosing a life of honor. La Tour Landry extolled that “they ought at begynnyng to be taught & chastised curtoisly by good ensamples & doctrynes as dide a quene I suppose she was quene of hongry/ whiche fayre and sweetly chastysed her doughters/ and them endoctryned as is contenyned in her book.” La Tour Landry wanted to instruct his daughters on such behaviors from an early age, teaching them through presented examples and instructions, mimicking the guidance from a queen who had guided her daughters on courtesy. The example of this queen in instructing her daughters encouraged la Tour Landry to compile a book containing instructions for the benefit of his daughters. As similar guidance formed a part of the instruction of noble children, learning courteous behavior would also benefit the knight’s children. La Tour Landry recognized the importance of appropriate behavior for both his daughters and sons, and further described in the prologue how he made two instructional books; one for his sons, and this one for his daughters. The desired skills varied based on the child’s gender, a fact that the knight stressed in creating separate texts that he believed were appropriate for each.

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86 Ibid., 11, lines 27-28. English translations from a copy of The Book of the Knight of the Tower printed by William Caxton in 1484 are utilized throughout this discussion. Manuscript copies of the text of The Book of the Knight of the Tower in French existed by at least 1416, and the contemporary authorship of la Tour Landry’s text with Joan’s guardianship activities provides information on the topics considered important for a girl to learn to be considered courteous. Contemporary ideas on courteous behavior in The Book of the Knight of the Tower, then, demonstrate what topics were most important to learn at the time when Joan instructed Gaunt’s daughter Catalina on the behaviors needed to successfully navigate life at the royal court.
87 Ibid., 11, lines 29-33.
88 Ibid., 13, lines 21-22.
La Tour Landry’s goal for these works was to provide guidance to boys and girls on the skills unique to their gender that they needed to be a part of polite society. The order of topics discussed in *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* demonstrates the significance that the author placed on each, with the most important topics first. For la Tour Landry, religious devotion is of the utmost importance, as the topic is first in the text. This section included detailed instructions on topics like how to say matins, confession, and praying for the souls of the dead.\(^\text{89}\) A flawless performance of and commitment to religion was a vital part of a courteous demeanor. Following the first nine chapters, la Tour Landry moves to a discussion of appropriate behaviors for girls and women. Based on the order of the text, la Tour Landry considers appropriate behavior second in importance for his daughters’ education only to the performance of religious devotion.

Chapter 10 of *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* begins the discussion on public actions, with la Tour Landry explaining how exhibiting courteous and humble behavior encourages social respect.\(^\text{90}\) The knight describes how being courteous to others will garner friendships and love, a more effective tool than trying to buy the loyalty of others.\(^\text{91}\) Courteous behavior, however, should not only be performed around those of aristocratic and royal families. Instead, the knight tells his daughters to “shewe youre curtosye vnto the mene and smal people/ for to do them honoure/ And to speke to them fayre and sweetly/ And for to answere them curtoysly/ they shalle bere and doo the gretter reuerence/ gretter preysyng and renommee than the grete.”\(^\text{92}\) Behaving courteously to those lower in social station is a sign of

\(^{89}\) Ibid., chapters 1-9.  
\(^{90}\) Ibid., 23, lines 36-38.  
\(^{91}\) Ibid., 24, lines 9-16.  
\(^{92}\) Ibid., 24, lines 21-24.
respect. The individuals receiving this respect will be loyal to the giver, showing them reverence and speaking highly of their reputation. Those of the aristocracy, for example, expect such behavior because of their social position. Conversely, an individual of lower social status that receives such an honor “thynketh that he is happy to receyue it and hath therin a grete playsyre/ And gyueth ageyne grete honoure to hym or her/ that hath done to hym suche curtosye and honoure/ And by this maner of the small peple to whome is done suche curtosye or honoure cometh the grete loos and renomme/ whiche growth fro day to day.” The social capital gained by exhibiting courteous behavior to social inferiors is great, as these individuals are happy to receive this honor from a lady. The receiver will, in return, speak of the great reputation of the giver and spread her renown for good behavior. As a skilled courtier, Joan would have recognized the benefit that could be received from being courteous to others of both a higher and lower social rank. With Gaunt’s claims to the Spanish crown, such an ideal would have been important for Catalina to learn while in Joan’s care, as Catalina would interact with individuals from a variety of social ranks in her daily activities at court. Honoring all, regardless of rank, with courteous behavior was key to creating a loyal retinue, a group vital to maintaining political and social power.

Exhibiting courtesy to others could benefit an individual, as noted above, by extending such behavior to those of a lower social station. Conversely, not adhering to courtesy could injure one’s prospects in life, for participating in crude behaviors had consequences. La Tour Landry advised that young maidens should not turn their heads frequently, looking all around. Instead, girls should “alwey see that ye be stedfast in lokyng

93 Ibid., 24, lines 25-26.
94 Ibid., 24, lines 29-34.
95 Ibid., 25, lines 7-8.
plainly to fore you … so shalle ye hold you in your estate more ferme & sure.” The trait of constantly looking around demeaned one’s character, indicating an unstable and unreliable nature. Looking forward with a steady gaze, however, demonstrates a reliable nature. For la Tour Landry, a seemingly small variation in behavior emphasized the differences in one’s character. Courteous behavior included self-presentation, and a seemingly minor deviation from the ideal could injure one’s reputation and make them seem unbecoming.

La Tour Landry continued his discussion of courtesy through anecdotal examples, further explaining the benefits of exhibiting ideal traits and the injuries that could be felt otherwise. Such tales illustrate the author’s argument while encouraging the reader to engage more fully with the text. In one such example, the king of England sent knights and ladies to the royal court of Denmark to find a suitable wife because the king of Denmark had three daughters with reputations of being noble and fair. The English emissaries examined each daughter and reported back on her comportment and suitability for the king of England. Of the three daughters, the oldest was the most beautiful, but she frequently turned her head here and there. The second daughter spoke too much, and often responded before she understood what was being said to her. The youngest daughter, although not the most beautiful, presented herself in a courteous manner that outshone her sisters. The youngest “mayntened her manere more sure and sadly/ & spak but litil/ & that was wel demeurly. & her regard & sight was more ferme/ & humble than of that other two.” After hearing of the character of each of the three daughters, the king responded that “I haue herd ofter myshappe for to take a

96 Ibid., 25, lines 11, 13.
97 Ibid., 25, lines 31-35.
98 Ibid., 26, lines 8-10.
99 Ibid., 26, lines 11-13.
100 Ibid., 26, lines 13-16.
wyf for beaulte or for plaisaunce than to take her: whiche is of stedfast manere: & that hath
fair mayntene: And there is not in the world so grete ease: as to haue a wife sure & stedfast:
ne none so grete: & fair noblesse: & therefor I chose the third daughter.”

The eldest two daughters may have possessed more beauty, but their behaviors and character made them less
desirable matches. The king, noted for his wisdom, chose the youngest daughter because her
manners demonstrated a noble character. The most courteous of the daughters, then, became
queen of England. As evidenced by the decision of the king of England, la Tour Landry
reminded his daughters of the importance of exhibiting appropriate behavior in all
circumstances. He stressed that “al gentyl wymmen and noble maydens of good lygnage/
ought to be softe: humble: Rype: stedfast of estate and of manere: of lytel speche to answere
curtoisly and not to be ouer wyld to sprynge ne lepe: ne cast her sight ouer lyghtely.”

Ideal behaviors for his daughters included being pleasant, humble, and knowledgeable, with an
unwaveringly strong and steady manner. Deviating from such ideals had serious
consequences, “for many haue lost their maryage for to shewe them ouer moche.”

Such guidance on the importance of courteous behavior would have been important for Catalina to
know. As the two elder daughters of the king of Denmark learned, engaging in behavior
considered to be crude could limit one’s marriage prospects, undermining an illustrious
lineage and threatening future wealth. Even daughters of the royal family needed to exhibit
courteous behavior if they desired to find suitable marriage matches.

La Tour Landry emphasized comportment for his daughters, stressing things like
religious devotion, proper dress, and ideal behavior. All of these traits would be important for

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101 Ibid., 26, lines 34-38.
102 Ibid., 28, lines 10-13.
103 Ibid., 28, lines 14-15.
a girl to learn, whether she was a member of the royal family, nobility, or one aspiring to climb the social ladder. Yet more practical elements were also important for a young noblewoman to learn, especially in regard to the maintenance of the household. Written between 1392 and 1394, the Goodman of Paris wrote instructions for his fifteen-year-old bride, providing counsel on the skills needed to be a wife due to her young age. Like la Tour Landry, the Goodman began with religious devotion, and discussed choosing good companions, and proper behavior, particularly toward her husband. The second section of the Goodman’s guidance, moreover, included details on the maintenance of the household, describing such practical details as when to plant the garden, choosing servants, ordering supplies for meals, and even recipe tips. Such details served as practical instruction and reference that would benefit a lady as mistress of the household, while her husband was away, and during widowhood. As a widow, Joan de Mohun would have demonstrated many of these traits through her daily actions, reinforcing such behaviors through teaching Catalina the traits needed to be an efficient mistress of the house. The running of the household is an important task, and the Goodman reminded his wife “that after your husband, you should be mistress of the house, the giver of orders, visitor, ruler and sovereign administrator, and it is for you to keep your maidservants in subjection and obedience to you, teaching, correcting and chastising them.”

105 Ibid., 43-44.
106 Ibid., 193-310.
107 Ibid., 209.
to correct and counsel her servants, encouraging them to exhibit behavior becoming of the household in which they served.

Written during the late fourteenth century, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* and *The Goodman of Paris* encapsulated contemporary opinions on conduct considered becoming for an elite woman and courtier. The ideas espoused in these texts were echoed in conduct manuals composed in both the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. One such text, *Lessons for My Daughter*, was written by Anne of France (1461-1522), daughter of the French king Louis XI (1423-1483, r. 1461-1483), for the instruction of her daughter Suzanne (1503-1521). Anne’s experiences differed from those of most female members of a royal family. She received custody of her brother Charles (1470-1498, r. 1483-1498) shortly before her father’s death in 1483, effectively giving her control of governing France. Her instructions to her daughter emphasized the behaviors and attitudes that one should exhibit to develop and hold a good reputation and to be considered noble. Produced in either the late 1490s or the first few years of the 1500s, Anne drew on a wide variety of classical knowledge and conduct books in her family library when writing guidance to her daughter. Based on the content of her text, Anne was particularly inspired by three books, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, *The Goodman of Paris*, and *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*. Anne’s instructions to her

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109 Ibid., 4-5. Anne was not given the title of regent, but having custody of her thirteen-year-old brother meant that she was responsible for governing France until her brother took a more active role in 1491 when Anne left the court.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid., 8-11.
112 Ibid., 12.
daughter thus incorporated and adapted some of the major concepts found in conduct literature written in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

A pervasive element of Anne of France’s text was establishing and maintaining a good reputation for a woman. Actions and attitudes were a main component of achieving a good reputation, but the focus for a woman should be on the “acquisition of virtue.”\textsuperscript{113} Behavior was important in the development of virtue and moral character. As such, Anne exhorted her daughter to “behave so that your reputation may be worthy of perpetual memory: whatever you do, above all, be honest, humble, courteous, and loyal.”\textsuperscript{114} These traits reappear throughout Anne’s text, and she repeatedly stressed that exhibiting them was important in building a good reputation and for demonstrating true nobility. In fact, Anne stressed that “nobility, however great, is worth nothing if it is not adorned with virtue.”\textsuperscript{115} Actions demonstrated the true nobility of an individual, while a constant listing of “honors, status, or lineage, which might otherwise go unrecognized … is the very reason why they were not sufficiently honored in the first place.”\textsuperscript{116} Those who constantly talk of their “nobleness” were grasping to prove their rank. Instead, those who embodied positive behaviors are truly the most noble. For Anne, “nobility is never found save in a humble, benign, and courteous heart, and every other perfection you might have – like beauty, youth, wealth, or power – is vile without the aforesaid virtues.”\textsuperscript{117} Thus the overarching instructions of Anne to her daughter stressed that actions, like being humble and pious, were important to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[113] Ibid., 30.
\item[114] Ibid., 31.
\item[115] Ibid., 47.
\item[116] Ibid.
\item[117] Ibid., 65.
\end{footnotes}
portraying nobility. These behaviors, more than a listing of status and honors, demonstrated nobility and established a positive reputation.

Just as the Goodman of Paris included practical advice on the household in his treatise, so too did Anne of France in her guidance to her daughter. Anne exhorted her daughter to encourage proper behavior amongst her female servants, but “if your women do not behave as they ought to, show them their faults sweetly, using few words.”\textsuperscript{118} Similar to the Goodman’s advice, the mistress of the house should ensure that the servants behaved honorably, and rebuke them gently if correction was needed. Anne continued with a discussion on the importance of employing honorable attendants. Those who were trouble should be sent “away graciously” and “you must always maintain a blameless and honorable household; do not suffer blameworthy followers or bad conduct or anyone whose honor has been tarnished, especially women.”\textsuperscript{119} Anne recognized that the actions of a household’s servants reflected on the mistress of the house. The actions of these servants represented the honor and courtesy of the mistress, so their behavior must also be held to a high standard.

From personal experience, Anne of France recognized that a wife may need to solely govern the household either as a widow or in the absence of her husband. Here Anne stressed the need for decisiveness and action, noting that “when it comes to the government of their land and affairs, they must depend only on themselves; when it come to sovereignty, they must not cede power to anyone.”\textsuperscript{120} Anne recognized the need for a woman to make decisions to govern effectively, as she had been called to govern over not just her lands, but

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 54.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 54-55.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 64.
of France, while having custody of her brother Charles.\textsuperscript{121} Although not the experiences of a typical woman, Anne knew the value of decision making on the household scale and instructed her daughter to use such traits when controlling her properties. Anne provided further instruction to “protect yourself from deceitful and presumptuous followers, especially those with whom you conduct business often, because of the suspicions that can arise,” while also extolling her to protect members of her household from such individuals as well.\textsuperscript{122} Interactions with such individuals may not only be bad for business and profits, but also for the reputation of the lady and her household. Anne concludes her discussion of household governance by telling her daughter to “govern wisely without getting a bad name for yourself; after serving God with great care, concern yourself with setting a good example for your children and loving them wholly and sincerely.”\textsuperscript{123} Anne provided practical lessons for her daughter regarding household governance, while continuing to stress the importance of reputation, piety, and family. These actions would help her daughter to effectively manage her household and property as needed.

As a widow charged with the instruction and care of Gaunt’s daughter, Joan would have instructed Catalina on courtly chivalry, courtesy, and the practical elements of running and keeping a household. Authors of conduct manuals stressed these topics in their texts, creating descriptions of the idealized behaviors associated with them. Although Joan did not leave a syllabus of the things that she taught to Catalina, the content of conduct manuals fill in the details as such texts were the authorities on the preferred types of behavior for

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 4-5. Anne was not given the title of regent, but having custody of her thirteen-year-old brother meant that she was responsible for governing France until her brother took a more active role in 1491 when Anne left the court.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 64.

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
England’s elite to portray. An adherence to such actions demonstrated one’s status and belonging within the elite, and these skills would have been important for a young lady of the royal family, elite, or socially mobile gentry to learn and master. John of Gaunt rewarded Joan for her courtesy and trusted her with the task of caring for and teaching his daughter.

**Conclusion**

The tenets of courtly chivalry and courtesy defined the behaviors considered appropriate for those attending court. As evidenced by her connection to the production of the *Mohun Chronicle*, Lady Mohun recognized the traits that should be exhibited to demonstrate belonging in the elite, and she mastered these skills to her benefit. As a social newcomer, Joan might have learned of the concepts of chivalry and courtesy through conduct books and romance. These texts set the standard for polite behavior, defining the actions that proper men and women should exhibit. Such contemporary descriptions demonstrate the attitudes and mannerisms important to the court and elite during the fourteenth century. Written instructions, however, provided a way for socially ambitious individuals to learn the mannerisms desired by England’s elite. Behavior, then, became a tool that could be used for social advancement.

Adherence to courtesy and chivalry alone, however, were not enough to be recognized as a member of England’s elite. Position of birth remained important, especially in establishing the reputation of an individual and their family. Thus, the socially ambitious participated in efforts to self-fashion a positive image connected to a noble past. The presentation of ideal behavior was one key element in this process, while finessing a familial heritage connected to the heroics of England’s past leaders further supported one’s position.
among the elite. Such links demonstrated an individual’s rank, while establishing the long-standing connection of their family to England’s history. Families possessing this heritage, especially when combined with courteous and chivalric behavior, enjoyed many benefits as a result of their close connection to the crown and England’s history. The truly noble had an elevated rank at birth, but behaved properly to demonstrate their belonging, as they were noble not merely by birth but also in their actions.

Lady Mohun recognized the dual importance of noble lineage and the exhibition of ideal behaviors. Knowing this, she campaigned to create a positive reputation for herself and her family. As the likely patron and inspiration for the Mohun Chronicle, Joan commissioned a noble genealogy highlighting the heroics of Mohun ancestors while connecting them to England’s national history. Contemporary actions, like the financially and morally deficient behavior of John V, may have injured the immediate reputation of the family. A careful retelling of the Mohun legacy, emphasizing their long-standing history, reminded readers of their true rank. The addition of the chivalric reputations of Joan’s Burghersh relatives to their ranks further improved the Mohun reputation, demonstrating their service to the crown. Lady Mohun, then, undertook these efforts to improve the current standing of Mohun family, while leaving a record of their nobility for future generations. The benefits of the image recounted in the Mohun Chronicle would be long-lasting, continuing the family’s legacy regardless of the actions of its fourteenth-century members.

Joan de Mohun sought to bolster the social position and reputation of the Mohuns during the fourteenth century. She undertook efforts to self-fashion an image of nobility that was supported by her adherence to idealized behaviors at court and with the construction of a text dedicated to the genealogy and heroics of the Mohun family. Such efforts must have
worked, as Joan secured a place for herself at court, and she received the honor of caring for and instructing two of John of Gaunt’s children for a time. Lady Mohun worked to move herself and her family from the fringes of elite society to a more prestigious location, one close to the court and the royal family. Joan succeeded in creating a positive image for herself and built upon this status to secure further benefits as a courtier and loyal servant of the crown.
CHAPTER 4

JOAN DE MOHUN AS A COURTIER

Joan de Mohun distinguished herself through an adherence to courteous behavior. This reputation provided opportunities for Lady Mohun, which she capitalized on particularly during her widowhood. Joan enjoyed an extended widowhood following the death of her husband John V in 1375, until her death in 1404. During this time, she established a place for herself at court, and developed friendships with the most important figures in England, including with John of Gaunt, Richard II, and Anne of Bohemia. Relationships with and service to these individuals brought financial and social gain to Joan, allowing her to establish an influential position at court. The benefit received through patronage from these relationships enabled Joan to choose to live away from Dunster Castle, instead spending her widowhood at court or in other locations like Canterbury. This chapter focuses on the time that Joan spent as a courtier, largely during her widowhood. It explores the relationships that Lady Mohun developed with the royal family, the patronage she received, and the ways that she established herself as a valuable and respected member of the court.

Because of her time spent at court and her connections to the royal family, Lady Mohun can be described as a courtier. The term “courtier” is used in this chapter to describe Joan’s career spent physically attending court and her actions as a noblewoman who loyally supported the crown. Joan interacted at court with those chosen to support the royal family and visiting aristocrats; such encounters enabled Lady Mohun to develop relationships with England’s elite. Joan’s physical presence at court, then, placed her in an advantageous position for self-advancement. By proximity — and a flawless execution of courtesy — Joan embedded herself into the context of the Lancastrians proving to others that she was worthy
of reward for her loyalty. The patronage that she received from the royal family enabled her to live how she pleased, away from Dunster Castle. Although Joan’s exact motivations are unknown, her dedicated service to the crown, by which she sought advancement and preferment, establishes Joan as a courtier.

**Estrangement from Dunster Castle and the Move to Court**

Although Lady Mohun certainly resided away from Dunster Castle during her widowhood, it is unclear when she initially moved from the property. As described previously, the relationship between John V and Joan is difficult to discern. Familial biographical details, then, become important to unraveling Joan’s living arrangements and her location while her husband was alive. The marriage of Lord and Lady Mohun produced three daughters, with at least two born during the 1340s. Elizabeth (1343-1415) and Maud/Matilda (d. 1400) were alive when John V departed on campaign in 1346 and when the initial transfer of Mohun lands into Joan’s hands began. The birth of the couple’s youngest daughter, Philippa (d. 1431), is harder to place. It is possible that Philippa was born shortly after her older sisters but after her father returned from France, placing her in her eighties at death. John V frequently campaigned in France, and although he returned to Dunster by 1348, when we encounter additional conveyances made to Joan, he once again departed in 1355. Philippa could have been born during this period while her father was between military expeditions. Such limited time at Dunster remained the norm for John V, as he

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1 A discussion of the relationship between John V and Joan is in Chapter Two.
3 Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 20-22.
participated in multiple campaigns during the 1350s, 1360s, and into the 1370s. Conversely, Philippa could have been significantly younger than her older sisters. In addition to the absences of John V, Joan’s age must also be considered as to Philippa’s birth. John V and Joan were married by 1341, at which point Joan would have been at least twelve years old, as this was the age that the Church approved of marriage for girls. If Joan married her husband at twelve years old, she could conceivably have given birth to Philippa into the mid-1360s. This also assumes that Joan married at the minimum canonical age of twelve, but recent research suggests that girls were often older at first marriage, unless they were heiresses. Instead, Joan was likely older when she married, making her closer to the average age of 17-24 at first marriage for daughters of medieval landed and urban elites. Thus it seems most likely that Philippa was born in the 1350s during a break in campaigns for her father and before her parents grew apart. Details surrounding Philippa’s life, too, assist with determining her date of birth. Philippa married first Walter, Lord Fitzwalter in 1382. The expensive marriage of her older sister Elizabeth and the negotiations for the sale of Dunster likely delayed Philippa’s marriage, although the extent is unknown. If Philippa was born in the 1350s, she would have been in her late twenties or early thirties when she married,

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4 History of Dunster, 44.
6 Such calculations consider that Joan was twelve years old in 1341, and that she would no longer be able to give birth after her fiftieth birthday. In examinations of the age of menopause in the Middle Ages, fifty is the most commonly used age for menopause in medical texts. See: Darrel W. Amundsen and Carol Jean Diers, “The Age of Menopause in Medieval Europe,” Human Biology 45, no. 4 (December 1973): 605-612. Catherine Rider, “The Medieval Biological Clock? Gendered Reproductive Aging in Medieval Western Medicine,” Journal of Aging Studies 64 (2023): 1-6.
8 Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 27.
9 Ibid., 27-28.
making her older than that average age of 17-24. A date of birth in the 1340s would have made Philippa significantly older when she married her first husband. It seems unlikely that her marriage would have waited until she was in her mid- to late thirties, placing a logical date of birth in the 1350s. A date of birth in the 1350s, then, suggests that John V and Joan maintained at least some relations until this time.

Although John V increasingly placed the Mohun lands into Joan’s hands beginning in the 1340s, surviving evidence suggests that the two were estranged and possibly living apart by the early 1350s. Such evidence supports a tentative date of birth for daughter Philippa in the late 1340s or early 1350s, before Joan and her husband began to live separately. A papal petition from 1349 granted both John V and Joan the ability to choose a confessor, noting that the couple resided in the diocese of Bath. Such a designation suggests that the couple resided together at Dunster Castle in 1349, for Dunster belonged within the boundaries of this diocese. Joan’s brother Bartholomew is similarly granted the ability to choose his own confessor in 1349, although he is listed as residing in the diocese of Canterbury. A later indulit from 1354, however, lists Joan alone, while also noting that the Lady of Mohun is a resident of the diocese of Canterbury. Similarly, her brother Bartholomew is given permission to choose a personal confessor in 1354. Bartholomew is listed with his wife Cicely as residents of the diocese of Canterbury, consistent with his listed residence several years earlier. Between 1349 and 1354, Joan appears to have left Dunster Castle and the

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12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., 528.
14 Ibid.
diocese of Bath to go to reside with or nearer to her natal family in the diocese of Canterbury. Furthermore, she is listed on her own as the Lady of Mohun, although her husband was alive at the time. Another description of Joan after 1354 suggests she continued to live apart from her husband. For example, a later papal grant in 1357 allows Joan a portable altar. Here Joan is again listed by only her name, although she is referred to as the sister of Bartholomew Burghersh. In these grants, Joan, while styled as Lady Mohun, is more closely associated with her natal family than with her husband. This association could be a result of her physical proximity to the Burghersh family, or it could be a means for Joan to argue that she, too, should receive a similar grant to that given to her brother. Either way, Joan made requests in her own name during the 1350s signaling an increasing distance from John V and Dunster.

**Royal Favor During the Reign of Edward III**

Such descriptions suggest that Lady Mohun developed an early preference for life away from Dunster Castle and quite possibly one separate from her husband many years prior to his death. From the 1350s onwards, Joan is regularly identified in documents by her own name, although there are references to her father or brother when mentioning a connection to a male relative. Like the descriptions in the papal petitions, Lady Mohun increasingly creates a distinct identity for herself in both the records and in the grants of patronage that she received from the royal family during the reigns of Edward III and Richard II. Favor shown to the Mohuns was increasingly directed at Joan, both before and

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16 Ibid.
after the death of John V. For example, following her father’s death in 1355, Joan received
the wardship of the heirs of John de Burghersh and the manor of Ewelme in county Oxford
because of the good service of her father. In this arrangement, Joan owes nothing to
Edward III for this wardship. The king, however, retained the right to arrange the heir’s
marriage, but provided Joan with the revenues from Ewelme to cover John’s heirs’
expenses. A further grant on 14 May 1362 added to the lands that Joan held for this ward,
with the crown designating the manors of Hatfield Peverell and Wytham, county Essex, to
John V and Joan while John de Burghersh remained a ward. The documentation specifies,
however, that John de Burghersh’s wardship had been given to Joan expressly by the king.
John V might have been included in this grant, but the benefit was clearly directed to Joan.
The bestowal of royal favor to Lady Mohun, then, signifies the personal prestige she held at
court apart from her husband many years prior to his death.

The grant of a wardship could be lucrative for the guardian. Joan, then, emulated
her father’s maneuverings and participated in possessing and maintaining wards throughout
her lifetime. Overseeing of Burghersh relatives while a minor was a repeated occurrence for
Joan, as she later received the wardship of John de Burghersh’s daughter after his death. A
settlement from 21 March 1392 provided dower to Ismania, John’s widow, with Joan’s
agreement. Richard II had already granted the portion of Maud de Burghersh, one of John’s

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18 Ibid.
of John de Burghersh was also named John de Burghersh.
20 Ibid.
21 The minority of John V is described in Chapter Two.
heirs, to Joan. As a result of possessing Maud’s portion of her father’s inheritance, Joan benefitted from the income from her lands, as she did when she held the lands of John de Burghersh during his minority. The income from such ventures would have improved Joan’s finances and contributed to a more comfortable widowhood.

Joan receiving guardianship of two Burghersh family members during their respective minorities made sense to all parties involved. The wards would be taken care of by a family member, and the income from any property would remain within the family. Although Joan was a family member, she had no claim to the estates, and thus any benefit to her remained temporary. The justification for such a grant would also be easy for the king to defend because of the familial relationship. The king provided this benefit in her name, and this demonstrated the preference that he had for Joan over her husband while he was alive. Edward III must have intended to provide for Joan specifically. Joan, thus, had established her personal reputation with the royal family by 1355, and presented herself as a worthy recipient of the king’s patronage.

Much of the favor shown by Edward III went to John V and Joan jointly, as evidenced by approval of the legal maneuverings to place Dunster Castle and other Mohun lands in Joan’s control. Such requests benefitted Joan personally, but they were given to the couple jointly. The service that John V provided to the crown during the Hundred Years War must have contributed to Edward III’s desire to maintain both the knight and his wife. The recorded patronage involved traditional grants of land whose income would provide for the family. An entry in the Close Rolls on 26 May 1372 described a dispute over the king

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23 Ibid.
24 The process of consolidating Mohun lands under Joan’s control is described in Chapter Two.
holding the manor of Ryston in county Norfolk. The details do not concern us; however, the details of the manor’s management while in the king’s hands does. Edward III had granted Joan a farm that was to maintain the manor of Ryston. As Ryston was no longer going to be held by the king, the sheriff of Norfolk gave notice to John V and Joan to attend in chancery to defend their cause. Lord and Lady Mohun did not attend, and the manor was restored to the appropriate party. The inquisition here described that the grant was given to Joan to keep the manor of Ryston. Although both John and Joan’s presence was requested, the king’s favor had been specifically directed to Lady Mohun.

Edward III provided additional land and income to John V and Joan during the 1370s. On 20 May 1373, an entry in the Patent Rolls described how the king regained control of the manor of Streatley, county Berkshire. Edward III then granted the manor of Streatley to John and Joan to hold for life. The manor of Streatley had been associated with the Mohuns since the thirteenth century when Humphrey de Bohun (d. 1227) enfeoffed the manor to his sister Hawise, who brought it with her to the Mohuns through her marriage to Reynold de Mohun II (d. 1257/8). The manor later became entangled with the financial hardships faced by Walter Chiriton, a citizen of London, in the 1340s and 1350s who had sub-leased the land. Chiriton’s lands were taken as payment for his debts by the crown, and Streatley was

26 Ibid., 384.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
eventually given to Lord and Lady Mohun.\textsuperscript{33} Such a grant by Edward III continued the Mohun connection to Streatley, as Philippa, daughter of John V and Joan, held Streatley in 1428.\textsuperscript{34} Edward III, thus, returned the lands to John V, while also providing its income to the Mohuns.

Edward III rewarded Lord and Lady Mohun for their service, providing wardships and land grants to the couple. This traditional form of patronage ensures an income for a loyal knight, while thanking Lady Mohun for her attendance on the royal household. These grants made by Edward III to the Mohuns were public in nature, demonstrating the monarch’s trust and appreciation. These public grants, like those of a wardship, demonstrate the maintenance of a member of an affinity. Joan gave service to Edward III, so the king ensured that she had an income to survive, provided through a grant of lands or other benefit like a wardship. In addition to such public grants intended to provide for the maintenance of Lady Mohun and her household, she also exchanged gifts of a more personal nature with members of the royal family. These intimate gifts indicate Joan’s personal connection with the king and those around him. Such personal gifts place Joan within the purview of the gift-giver and demonstrate the closeness of their relationship.

\textbf{Patronage Received as a Member of the Lancastrian Affinity}

As illustrated in the previous chapter, John of Gaunt publicly respected Joan for her efforts as a courtier and chose her to care for and instruct two of his children for a time. The relationship between Lady Mohun and Gaunt, however, extended beyond this formal

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
arrangement as the two regularly exchanged gifts. The known gifts that Gaunt gave to Joan are both personal and extravagant. In a grant recorded on 24 December 1372 at Hertford Castle, Gaunt provided decoration for a fillet for the Lady of Mohun.\(^\text{35}\) A type of headband or ornamental headdress, Gaunt designated 40 large pearls to decorate one fillet, along with another fillet with 43 large pearls and six additional pearls, and a last fillet with 60 pearls.\(^\text{36}\) Gaunt clearly gave Joan an extravagant Christmas gift, with each fillet adorned with an array of pearls. The fillet itself was meant to be worn by Joan herself and thus presented a gift to be displayed to others to show her status and Gaunt’s affection. Earlier in the year in April 1372, Gaunt provided for an elaborate headdress for his wife, Constance (1354-1394).\(^\text{37}\) Gaunt provided for a golden fillet with 4 balas rubies and 21 pearls, while also delivering 1,808 pearls large pearls and 2,000 smaller pearls for her wardrobe.\(^\text{38}\) Constance received a larger number of pearls for her use. In comparison, the fillets from Gaunt represent extravagant gifts for a courtier, which Gaunt did not provide for other female friends. The relationship between Gaunt and Joan existed on a more personal level by at least the early 1370s.

Gifts from John of Gaunt to Lady Mohun continue throughout the 1370s, with these items being directed to Joan personally with no mention of her husband, even for gifts received prior to John V’s death in 1376. The act of giving and receiving gifts creates a reciprocal relationship between the two interested parties. The generous giving of a gift, however, contains deeper meaning. The nature of gift-giving and receiving is transactional,

\(^{36}\) Ibid.
\(^{37}\) Ibid., 106-107, number 1123-1124.
“based on obligation and economic self-interest.”\textsuperscript{39} One ultimately gives to receive something in return, creating an obligatory cycle. As such, gift-giving fits into the overall tenor of bastard feudalism, providing payment for service rendered and a reward for loyalty.\textsuperscript{40} Financial assistance created support among the members of a lord’s affinity, with grants of land and rent distributed to those in service. Individuals remained loyal because it benefitted them. Traditional definitions of an affinity, such as the Lancastrian affinity identified by the historian Simon Walker, limit the group to male members, and includes those serving in the household as attendants, indentured retainers, and estate officials.\textsuperscript{41} For example, those in the Lancastrian affinity were dependent on the duke for support, and they loyally served him to receive rewards for their service.\textsuperscript{42} Thus, Simon Walker argues that an affinity “is best confined to those who possessed some material incentive for their loyalty, in the form of an office or annuity from the duke.”\textsuperscript{43} Such a definition, however, prioritizes male service to the duke of Lancaster or other lord, ignoring the contributions of women. As evidenced in Lady Mohun’s interactions with members of the royal family, she served loyally and received rewards for her actions. The Lady Mohun benefitted in a variety of ways, including from lands, rents, wardships, and material goods. Many of these items are outside those listed as the benefits generally given to male members of an affinity, but they hold value and provided Joan with material benefits especially during her widowhood. Furthermore, if the service that Lady Mohun provided was not considered to be of value to

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 10.
the duke of Lancaster, she would not have been so handsomely rewarded. As such, a broader
definition is needed to encompass female contributions like those provided by Joan to
members of the royal family. I define an affinity here outside of the male purview,
incorporating additional types of service and rewards. I argue that an affinity consists of a
group of individuals providing loyal service to a social superior in return for support. This
support was always something of value, but had a variety of forms, including monetary gifts,
offices, trusted positions, material goods, and beyond. The reciprocal relationship between
lord and supporter is emphasized, not preferencing overt male service above the more subtle
support often provided by women. By this definition, Joan was clearly connected to the
Lancastrian affinity.

Surviving evidence indicates the reciprocal nature of the relationship between Joan
and John of Gaunt. Lady Mohun not only received gifts from the duke of Lancaster, but she
also gave gifts to him. In an entry from 1 May 1373, Gaunt granted Joan a beryl hanap, a
type of goblet made out of a pale green precious stone, garnished with gold.44 Demonstrating
the cycle of gift-giving, the entry noted that the cup had been initially given to Gaunt by
Margaret Marshal, suo iure Countess of Norfolk (c. 1322-1399), who is referred to as the
Lady of Mauny.45 Similarly, the entry also describes the gifting of a chalice of beryl

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45 Ibid. Gaunt here references Margaret Marshal in relation to her second husband, Sir Walter
Mauny (c. 1310-1372). Mauny distinguished himself in war and was a founding knight of the
Order of the Garter, but he was socially inferior to his wife. A cousin of Edward III, Margaret
Marshal was eventual heir of Thomas of Brotherton, first earl of Norfolk (1300-1338), and
became Duchess of Norfolk in her own right in 1397. For additional information on Margaret
Marshal, see: Rowena E. Archer, “Brotherton [Marshal], Margaret, suo iure duchess of
January 2024, https://doi-org./10.1093/ref:odnb/53070. For additional information on Sir
Walter Mauny, see: Jonathan Sumption, “Mauny [Manny], Sir Walter (c. 1310-1372),”
garnished with silver to Alice Perrers (c. 1348-1400/1401).\(^{46}\) Joan is listed as the original giver of this chalice to Gaunt.\(^{47}\) The act of re-gifting in the Middle Ages did not carry the social taboo that it does today. Instead, re-gifting demonstrated the movement of valuable treasures among the nobility.\(^{48}\) In a system of patronage, an item gained value when given away by its owner, for the exchange created goodwill and friendship between the recipient and giver.\(^{49}\) Keeping a valuable item for oneself limited the social benefit that the owner could receive from it. As such, the gifting and re-gifting of an item increased its value through the social capital gained through the exchange. Joan materially benefitted in the re-gifting situation above. She gave Gaunt a hanap with silver gilding and received one in return from Gaunt that was gilded with gold. Joan received a hanap more valuable than the one she gave, demonstrating the value that Gaunt placed on their friendship and its maintenance. It is possible that Gaunt’s re-gifting here is a social game. The duke provides a valuable gift to Lady Mohun, which originated with the higher-ranking Countess Margaret Marshal. Gaunt re-gifting of a chalice originating with Lady Mohun could also be viewed as a social snub to Alice Perrers. Even if this was the case, Joan still received the most valuable item from Gaunt, reflecting his personal favor, at least over Marshal and Perrers.


\(^{47}\) *John of Gaunt’s Register, 1379-1383*, vol. II, 194, number 1343.


\(^{49}\) Ibid.
Joan’s receipt of the gilded beryl hanap demonstrates the value of her relationship with Gaunt, while furthering a sense of her indebtedness to the duke. The exchange surrounding the hanap is an example of a particularly intimate and valuable item gifted to Joan by Gaunt, but it is not unique. In a register entry from 11 October 1375, Gaunt requested that his warrener deliver rabbits from his hunting-grounds at Aldbourne, county Wiltshire, to the Lady Mohun.\footnote{John of Gaunt’s Register, 1379-1383, vol. II, 311, number 1694.} A relative newcomer to England, rabbits remained scarce and valuable commodities throughout the fourteenth century, desired for both their meat and fur.\footnote{Mark Bailey, “The Rabbit and the Medieval East Anglian Economy,” The Agricultural History Review 36, no. 1 (1988): 1, 10-11. Sale prices for rabbits in East Anglia from 1370-1379, for example, indicate that the average price per rabbit was 2.61d., demonstrating their limited availability for purchase.} Rabbits represented a prestigious and expensive present, one popular for friends and favorites.\footnote{Ibid., 10.} In offering such a valuable gift, Gaunt demonstrated his regard and illustrated Joan’s importance to him and the affinity.

In addition to moveable goods, money could also be given to solidify loyalty and to reward service. As described above, Gaunt provided payments to Joan to maintain his daughter Catalina and her household. These payments were directly related to Joan’s efforts to educate and maintain Catalina, but Joan received additional monetary rewards from Gaunt that were not directly related to an act of service. An entry from 26 January 1375 records Gaunt giving 66s. 4d. to Joan, while a later entry on 12 August 1375 notes that Joan should be given 100m.\footnote{John of Gaunt’s Register, 1379-1383, vol. II, 298-299, number 1661, and 318, number 1716.} Joan received these payments in 1375, prior to her husband’s death. Once again, Gaunt’s Register entries specifically indicate that the items were to be given to the
Lady Mohun, with no mention of John V. Joan, then, was personally attached to the Lancastrian affinity and she was rewarded for her service, while her husband might not have ever received Gaunt’s favor. Joan thus demonstrated her worth to Gaunt, while her husband and his loyalty did not provide a service valuable enough to be provided for directly by the duke. Gaunt’s Register describe other instances where the duke gave to noblewomen. For instance, wine, hanaps, and pater-nosters were gifted to noblewomen in 1372 around the timing of interactions between the duke and Lady Mohun. The frequency and value of the items intended for Joan suggest a closer relationship between the two. During this time, Gaunt trusted Joan, as evidenced by placing two of his children in her household. The exact nature of the services Lady Mohun provided to the duke are unknown, but we do know that Gaunt valued her because of the nature of the gifts that he provided to her. The exchanges between the two end in the sources in the 1380s. At that time, Joan developed a friendship with Richard II and his queens, beginning an even more fruitful arrangement than that with Gaunt.

The Personal Favor of Richard II

Although evidence remains that Edward III showed favor to John V and Joan through grants of land and income, the larger displays of royal patronage to Joan occurred during the reign of Richard II, following John V’s death. Such grants occurred after the end of the king’s minority and indicate that Richard himself authorized them. In an entry from 8 October 1384, the receiver of the stannary in Devon and Cornwall is ordered to pay Joan

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54 Ibid., 54, number 982, 93, number 1090, and 192, number 1342.
100l. yearly for life because of her good service to the king and queen.\footnote{CCR, Richard II, A.D. 1381-1385, vol. II (London: H.M.S.O., 1920), 484.} It is noted that the king provided this grant to Joan, which was to be given on a yearly basis for life or until other arrangements were made to provide for her maintenance.\footnote{Ibid.} The king gave such gifts to favored courtiers as a form of reward. Joan, however, received repeated provisions from the king. The parameters of such a grant demonstrate that Joan provided useful services to Richard II and Queen Anne, which was recognized through this and subsequent grants.

Joan used the provision of 100l. yearly as a basis from which to gain greater subsequent grants from Richard II. The following year, on 19 October 1385, Joan received a yearly grant of 100m. for life from the king’s manor of Macclesfield, county Chester.\footnote{CPR, Richard II, A.D. 1385-1389, vol. III (London: H.M.S.O., 1900), 35.} This grant to the “king’s kinswoman” was conditional on the basis that Joan settle accounts with the Exchequer by returning the surplus over that amount as rent.\footnote{Ibid.} The reference to Joan as the “king’s kinswoman” appears to be a term of endearment.\footnote{Although there is a very extended familial relationship between Joan and Richard II through Joan of Kent and the Staffords, there is no blood relation between the two.} Another of the women elevated to the Ladies of the Garter that rose from a position outside the traditional elite, Blanche Bradeston, was referred to as the “king’s kinswoman” in an 18 April 1399 grant of a tun of wine from Richard II.\footnote{CPR, Richard II, A.D. 1396-1399, vol. VI (London: H.M.S.O., 1909), 533.} Blanche, too, did not possess an obvious familial relationship with Richard II, and instead this designation indicates a fondness that the king had for Joan and Blanche.Shortly after, on 17 November 1385, the arrangement for Macclesfield changed. The yearly grant of 100m. was increased to 170m., with a yearly rent of 10m.
instead of the surplus constituting the yearly rent.\textsuperscript{61} Such an update in terms, however, rested on the fact that Joan must surrender the letters patent that she received in 1384 that granted her 100l. yearly for life from the stannary of Cornwall and Devon.\textsuperscript{62} In this scenario, Richard II exchanged Joan’s source of yearly income providing her with 170m., along with additional income from the manor and hundred of Macclesfield. Furthermore, a writ \textit{de intendendo} for Joan issued on 1 July 1386, confirmed her custody of the forest of Macclesfield in addition to its lordship and hundred.\textsuperscript{63} Joan parlayed the yearly grant of 100l. into a more valuable grant in these initial arrangements to hold Macclesfield.

Exchanges surrounding Macclesfield constituted an important part of the patronage given by the king and queen to Joan. Possession of Macclesfield once again changed hands in 1389, an arrangement between Queen Anne and Joan. On 13 November 1389, a license was given to Queen Anne to provide a yearly income to Joan totaling 100l. from her dower, 50l. of which was to come from the farm of Queenhithe, London, and paid by the mayor and London, while the remaining 50l. was to be paid by the sheriffs of London.\textsuperscript{64} The 100l., however, was given in exchange for the manor, lordship, and hundred of Macclesfield.\textsuperscript{65} The same day, a license was granted to Joan to give Macclesfield and all associated benefits which Joan had received from Richard II to Queen Anne in exchange for the yearly grant of 100l. for life.\textsuperscript{66}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., 188.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., 158.
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\end{footnotesize}
The 100l. yearly payment to Joan continued for a few years after the documented exchange with Queen Anne. In a record from 1390, Joan confirms that she received the appropriate sums from Queen Anne’s dower that she had designated as a part of the exchange for Macclesfield.\textsuperscript{67} This monetary grant was not to last. Instead, an entry the following year on 9 October 1391 indicated that Joan requested that she be allowed to demise the 100l. to Thomas Percy (d. 1403).\textsuperscript{68} The letters patent given to Joan granting the yearly sum were cancelled in the chancery, and Richard II subsequently affirmed the grant to Thomas Percy for his life.\textsuperscript{69} Percy, a Knight of the Garter who accompanied John of Gaunt on his expedition to Spain, moved in the same circles as Joan.\textsuperscript{70} Joan’s transfer of this annuity to another member of the Lancastrian affinity provided her with an ally. Such gifts and grants of patronage, thus, contained the most power when given away. The perceived benefit that Lady Mohun would receive from transferring her annuity to Percy must have been greater than its monetary value. As in her previous exchanges, Joan would have participated in this one only if she stood to benefit from it.

Joan received several valuable grants from Richard II and Queen Anne during the 1380s that signified her relationship with the monarchs. The receipt of such grants, however, placed Joan in a precarious situation, as evidenced by the actions that the Appellants took against her. \textit{The Westminster Chronicle} notes that Joan was one of three ladies forced to leave the court following the Merciless Parliament.\textsuperscript{71} Richard’s enemies, then, recognized the

\textsuperscript{67} TNA, E 210/2532.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
close relationship between Joan and the king. Seeing her personal influence as a threat, the Appellants removed Joan from Richard’s immediate presence. The Appellants would not have felt the need to remove Joan if she was an unimportant courtier.

Although temporarily banished, Joan did not remain away for long. Joan returned to court by 1390, after which she continued to enjoy patronage from Richard II. In fact, an especially prestigious and valuable grant to Joan occurred soon after her return. Prior to her death, Queen Anne granted Lady Mohun with a lease for Leeds Castle, county Kent.\footnote{History of Dunster, 54.} Closely connected to English queens as a place of residence, Leeds Castle was an important property.\footnote{John Leland, “The Abjuration of 1388,” Medieval Prosopography 15, no. 1 (1994): 126.} Conditions for the grant of Leeds Castle indicate that Joan’s rights to the lands lasted during the lifetime of Queen Anne. Joan, however, had other ideas. Following Anne’s death in 1394, Lady Mohun continued to hold and benefit from Leeds Castle through a royal pardon. An entry in the Patent Rolls on 21 February 1399 provided a pardon to Joan for her possession of Leeds Castle and all its associated benefits after Queen Anne’s death without settling the situation with the Exchequer.\footnote{CPR, Richard II, A.D. 1396-1399, vol. VI, 526.} Joan was forgiven for her possession of Leeds Castle and was allowed to continue.

Recognizing the opportunity in the situation, Joan pushed for more favorable terms. Shortly after the pardon, on 19 May 1399, Leeds Castle, including the watermill, fishery, and park, were granted to Joan for life free of rent.\footnote{Ibid., 562. The original copy of the petition is located at TNA SC 8/221/11003.} Joan became responsible for providing yearly dues to those established and connected to Leeds Castle, and she was obligated to maintain the property and pay for recent repairs.\footnote{CPR, Richard II, A.D. 1396-1399, vol. VI, 562.} Lady Mohun subsequently argued that the

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\footnote{History of Dunster, 54.}
\footnote{CPR, Richard II, A.D. 1396-1399, vol. VI, 526.}
\footnote{Ibid., 562. The original copy of the petition is located at TNA SC 8/221/11003.}
\footnote{CPR, Richard II, A.D. 1396-1399, vol. VI, 562.}
cost of repairs left little remaining income after the stated debts were settled, and she negotiated again, this time requesting to hold it without being responsible for the repairs.\textsuperscript{77} This arrangement was further updated after Joan requested a revision to the terms. A subsequent entry in the Patent Rolls on 19 May 1399 noted that “at the supplication of Joan,” Leeds Castle is granted to the Lady of Mohun for life with no obligation to repair the premises.\textsuperscript{78} The expenses related to Leeds Castle are listed: 100s. a year must be paid to the constable, 100s. a year to John Curteys, yearly wages to the parker, while Joan must allow all who have an interest from the king or queen access based on the terms in their grant.\textsuperscript{79} After satisfying such yearly burdens, little profit would have remained. At Joan’s request, the terms for her possession of Leeds Castle were revised in her favor. Lady Mohun’s connection to Richard II and Queen Anne not only provided her with the benefits of Leeds Castle, but also gave her the ability to negotiate incredibly lucrative terms. It appears that Richard II must have strongly favored Joan and provided well for her as a result.

Leeds Castle did not remain much longer with Joan after these renegotiations, as Henry IV (r. 1399-1413) took possession of the castle after becoming king, reestablishing it as a residence for English queens. Henry IV, however, provided for Lady Mohun and continued to refer to her as the “king’s kinswoman.”\textsuperscript{80} On 5 July 1401, Joan was granted 50m. a year from the issues of the county of Somerset to cover the loss of Leeds Castle.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 567.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} CPR, Henry IV, A.D. 1399-1401, vol. I (London: H.M.S.O., 1903), 509. Joan was more closely related to Henry IV and his wife Mary Bohun, so this reference might have reflected the familial relationship between the two. As such, Henry IV might have felt an obligation to provide for Joan as a kinswoman of himself and his wife.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
Although granted 50m. a year, the patronage that Joan received from Henry IV was significantly less than what she previously enjoyed. The absence of any further rewards from Henry IV to Joan is interesting. As discussed in Chapter Three, Bolingbroke spent time in Joan’s household for several years when he was a child, staying with her from 1377 to 1380. Henry does not seem to have developed a fond association with the Lady of Mohun, as the largesse dwindled. Henry’s experience in her household might have resulted in his taking a personal dislike to Lady Mohun, and, once he became the king, he might have provided her with a yearly annuity only out of a feeling of obligation for her service to his father. As this is the only recorded grant that Joan received from Henry IV before her death, it appears that her time as a powerful and influential courtier was at an end.

Such largesse demonstrated that Richard II and Queen Anne wanted to provide for Lady Mohun, and they granted her property to do so. Although these provisions suggest a fondness for Joan, they are public in nature and do not fully represent the relationships between Joan, Richard II, and his queens. Joan exchanged gifts with Richard II and Queen Isabella (1389-1409), similar to her earlier interactions with John of Gaunt. In a listing of the gifts that Queen Isabella purchased from four London goldsmiths for the New Year in 1397, Joan is listed as a recipient. In an inventory of the royal treasure of Richard II, Lady Mohun is noted as giving three distinct gifts to the monarch. Delivered in January 1398, Joan gave “hart couchant in a roundel enamelled with broomcods, set with balas rubies, diamonds and pearls.” The item is unvalued in the inventory, however, the emblem of the resting white hart, Richard’s badge, decorated with broom coids, or broompods, the emblem of the French

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83 Ibid., 95.
king’s collar, personally reflected the king’s personal imagery. The decoration with rubies, diamonds, and pearls, too, reflected the high value that Joan placed on her relationship with the king. Two additional items are noted in this inventory of Richard II’s royal treasure, with both possibly signifying gifts for Queen Isabella. One was a mirror showing on the outside the Annunciation in mother-of-pearl, with an image of the Virgin Mary on the inside. The second consisted of a silver gilded rosary. The inventory lists the combined value of the mirror and the rosary as 15l. 13s. 4d. Three other women outside the traditional elite who were honored as Ladies of the Garter by Richard II, Elizabeth Tryvet, Joan Fitzwalter, and Blanche Bradeston, were also listed in the inventory as giving to the monarch at this time. A tablet decorated with the Trinity and the Virgin Mary, valued at 26l. 6s. 8d. was attributed to Elizabeth Tryvet, while Joan Fitzwalter provided a candlestick, hanap, and a silver and silver-gilded box. Like Lady Mohun, Blanche Bradeston gifted a gold mirror with mother-of-pearl, valued at 6l. Joan gave valuable and personal items to Richard II and Queen Isabella, as did her contemporaries who also existed close to the royal family. Such interchanges confirmed that Joan occupied a premiere spot at court, for she received personal gifts from the royal family while she returned thoughtful items to them. Joan appears to have known of the personal preferences of Richard II, and gifted goods tailored to these interests.

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85 *Stratford, Richard II and the English Royal Treasure*, 95.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., 134.
89 Ibid., 94-95, 134.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., 95, 134.
As evidenced by the recorded grants of land given to her, Joan regularly negotiated Richard II for favorable terms of possession. Through her persuasion, and the personal relationships she maintained with successive monarchs, Joan successfully requested and received various forms of patronage for herself. Yet Lady Mohun also used her position close to the crown to make requests for other individuals. The records indicate that Joan had some success in making such requests, and her role as intercessor further demonstrate the prestigious position she held at court.

**Intercession as an Additional Form of Royal Patronage**

The reign of Richard II was particularly conducive to petitions submitted before the Chancery. Desiring to be the center of power, Richard II increased the power of the Chancery to centralize the king’s justice and allowed individual subjects the ability to directly appeal to the crown. Such a space enabled courtiers like Joan de Mohun to make petitions, both on her own behalf and for others. The cordial relationship between Joan and the king would also have improved her odds of success. There are several known instances when Lady Mohun made requests of the crown for others, and several times where she interceded on behalf of another, requesting the mercy of the king. These intercessory acts further demonstrate the social and political power that Joan held at court.

Aware that the royal pardon was a valuable tool, Richard II used it as a method to increase political support. The crown could and did grant pardons to those who committed

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crimes for a variety of reasons, including religious ones, and as a favor to the requester.\footnote{John Leland, “Percy Pardons,” \textit{Medieval Prosopography} 10, no. 2 (Autumn 1989): 82.} If Richard II used the pardon to bolster his support among his male subjects, it only follows that a similar consideration applied to women like Lady Mohun. The grant of a pardon made at Joan’s supplication solidified her support for Richard II, while also providing her with a way to improve relationships with those in her social and political circles.\footnote{Ibid.} All parties involved mutually benefitted from such an arrangement.

Although the records do not detail the times that Joan made a request of the crown and was denied, there are several successful petitions recorded. Of the seven that Joan made for others, four resulted in a grant of a pardon, and three granted lands or a benefit. Joan submitted all the surviving petitions during the reign of Richard II, and she made these requests during her widowhood. Lady Mohun thus made these requests of the crown in her own name, and the requests were approved because of her personal standing.

Joan became a supplicant for individuals who committed two types of crimes: rape and abduction, and murder. Only one, the earliest recorded request for a pardon submitted by Lady Mohun, specified that the committed crime was rape, while the remaining three pardons were for murder. On 23 August 1383, Joan requested and received a pardon for John de Wodehous for the rape, abduction, and imprisonment of Alice, daughter of Richard Jakman.\footnote{\textit{CPR, Richard II, A.D. 1381-1385}, vol. II (London: H.M.S.O., 1897), 306.} Listed as residents of Braithwaite, county Cumbria, and Wodehous, it is possible that John de Wodehous was connected to Mohun holdings, even though his residence was outside of the traditional Mohun lands. It is also possible that Joan made the request at the prodding of a contemporary courtier who knew that the pardon was more likely to be
successful if it was submitted by Lady Mohun. The Appellants recognized that Joan had sway with the king, and others at court would have known this as well. As she used an intermediary to request a favorable action from the Pope, so too might others have utilized her connections to receive the action that they desired.

Joan submitted three additional petitions requesting a pardon for a crime. All three involved a request for relief from murder. The first, documented on 26 June 1387, asked for a pardon for John, son of John Dewy, for the death of Thomas Clercson, which was granted.96 Joan made this request shortly before she was banished from court by the Appellants. As a consequence of being physically away from court, Lady Mohun did not have access to the king, seemingly limiting her ability to serve as an intercessor but in effect she retained her influence.

When Joan did return to court, she submitted another pardon request on 10 June 1390. In this petition, Joan defends the position of Ralph Durburgh and asks for a pardon for the death of John Orchard.97 The facts indicate that Durburgh had previously received a general pardon for this crime but was once again indicted for the crime due to the maneuverings of his enemies, who based their argument on an ordinance of Parliament that none should petition the king for a pardon for treason or murder.98 At Lady Mohun’s request, Durburgh received a pardon for this second indictment. Durburgh’s crime was noted as having been committed in the county of Somerset.99 Durburgh, then, was likely connected to or resided in a Mohun holding, as Dunster Castle is located in the county of Somerset. Joan appears to

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98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
have argued specific, additional facts about Durburgh’s case, noting that the indictment occurred only because of the work of his enemies. Lady Mohun might have had a personal reason for petitioning on behalf of Durburgh. The Durburgh family is mentioned in previous interactions with the Mohuns when Joan’s husband had an altercation with John Durburgh in 1350. In this situation, John V captured John Durburgh, an action that required a pardon from Edward III. Ralph Durburgh may have been a relative of this John Durburgh, as both are linked to Somerset. It remains possible that Lady Mohun’s petition was meant to lessen any resentment held by the Durbughs against the Mohuns. If so, Joan once again acted to assuage the prior missteps of John V.

Lady Mohun’s final surviving request for a pardon of a crime was entered on 6 October 1393. The subject of this pardon was Isabel, wife of Edward Cowhurd, who was convicted of killing John Shepehurd in Mansbridge, Hampshire. When Joan requested a pardon for an individual associated with the crime of homicide, it was done with the goal of saving the accused, given that hanging was one punishment for murder, although burning at the stake was the usual punishment for women convicted of homicide. Such a request, then, was gravely important to saving the life of the accused. The person seeking a pardon would have sought assistance from an individual with a favorable reputation who was likely to succeed with the request. Lady Mohun must have been publicly perceived as having a positive reputation and close connection with the king. The accused requested this favor from

101 Ibid., 500-501. See Chapter Two for additional details on the encounter between John V and John Durburgh.
Joan because she had some power. If she did not, the accused would have sought assistance elsewhere. Joan successfully petitioned the king for the pardon of four accused criminals over a period of 10 years. Two of these individuals were likely connected to Mohun holdings which would have encouraged Joan to engage on their behalf. Joan’s motivation for interceding for the remaining two individuals is unknown. It is possible that they were also connected with Mohun holdings, although this information is not clear in the evidence. Lady Mohun might have also been personally compelled to assist, convinced by their stories. Joan, too, might have been inspired by political motivations, as intercessions are an accepted way for women to change the direction of power. Queen Anne intervened in certain situations making requests of the king. Joan might have witnessed such interactions and desired to use her influence with Richard II in a similar manner. Joan would have recognized that she held influence with the king, and she chose to use it in certain instances for the benefit of others.

Joan similarly succeeded when requesting material benefits for others during the 1380s and 1390s, in addition to the success that she enjoyed when petitioning for her personal benefit. On 18 September 1383, the king granted a petition from Joan requesting a license for John le Strange to sell wood in Dunham Massey, county Cheshire, without penalties while a suit between le Strange and Thomas Fyton was pending. Protections in place to preserve forests limited the cutting of trees and the sale of wood without the

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105 Collette, “Anne of Bohemia and the Intercessory Modes of Ricardian England,” 100.
106 Ibid., 118-121.
107 TNA, SC 8/224/11158.
permission of the king.\textsuperscript{108} A license to sell wood from either the king’s forest or from one’s lands was valuable in that it provided a source of income with established parameters. This request was of a more personal nature for Lady Mohun, as her daughter Maud was married to John le Strange at this time.\textsuperscript{109} Joan used her relationship with Richard II to request that the king extend his favor to her son-in-law. Even if le Strange enjoyed this benefit for a short amount of time, the license would have provided him with valuable financial benefits that others in his locality did not enjoy. Such a request was one way that Lady Mohun could use her position at court for the benefit of her family.

The petitions that Joan submitted in 1395 and 1396 were for the benefit of the same individuals, Edmund Hestyng and his wife Alice. Joan requested on 19 June 1395 that Hestyng, noted as one of the king’s esquires, receive a messuage, a carucate of land, and 5\textit{m.} rent in Withcote, county Leicester, with a yearly rent of 6\textit{m.} 9\textit{s.} 8\textit{d.}\textsuperscript{110} The king granted this request, although it was vacated in 1396 after new terms were arranged. In a grant on 23 June 1396, Hestyng and his wife were again given the messuage and 5\textit{m.} rent in Withcote.\textsuperscript{111} At Joan’s request, the terms were revised and Hestyng received the stated benefits in Withcote without the burden of paying the yearly rent.\textsuperscript{112} Similar to the ways that she petitioned for a change in terms regarding her holding of Leeds Castle, Joan renegotiated the terms for Withcote to Hestyng’s benefit. In these requests, Joan used her favor and relationship with

\textsuperscript{108} Charles Young, “Conservation Policies in the Royal Forests of Medieval England,” \textit{Albion} 10, no. 2 (Summer 1978), 101.
\textsuperscript{109} See Chapter Two for additional information on Joan’s daughter Maud and her first marriage to John le Strange. Surviving information on Maud is sparse. This is a rare example of Lady Mohun acting for the benefit of Maud and her family.
\textsuperscript{110} \textit{CPR, Richard II, A.D. 1391-1396}, vol. V, 580.
\textsuperscript{111} \textit{CPR, Richard II, 1396-1399}, vol. VI, 4.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
the crown to petition for others, strengthening her circle of friends and supporters. Lady Mohun capitalized on her relationship with Richard II, using it for personal financial gain and also for the grant of requests for a handful of additional subjects. This additional form of patronage benefitted Lady Mohun and its grant suggests her influence.

**Conclusion**

Receipts of various forms of patronage and gifts connect Joan to the affinity of John of Gaunt, while also establishing her position as a successful courtier during the reigns of Edward III and Richard II. Although Lady of Mohun, Joan physically distanced herself from the family seat at Dunster Castle and from her husband during his lifetime. Joan held Dunster for life but used it as a source of income and arranged for its sale. By removing herself from Dunster, Joan focused on life as a courtier, where she garnered favor with the royal family and established a comfortable life through receiving valuable patronage in the form of lands and money. Lady Mohun established herself as more than a low-level courtier. She received personal gifts from members of the royal family and received honors of great importance. Such grants suggest a close relationship between Joan and John of Gaunt, Richard II, and Queen Anne. These gifts suggest that Lady Mohun clearly understood political maneuverings at court and enacted them to improve her personal situation. She fashioned herself as the ideal courtier and gained the trust of John of Gaunt, Richard II, and Queen Anne. Her repeated receipt of patronage and favor — and her banishment from court for her seemingly undue influence — shows her significance. Richard II provided handsomely for Joan’s maintenance, supporting her lifestyle as a courtier. Yet the king also improved her social rank.
by inviting her to participate in the feast of Saint George as a Lady of the Garter. Such an honor served as the culmination of Lady Mohun’s career as a courtier.
CHAPTER 5
JOAN DE MOHUN AND THE LADIES OF THE GARTER

Connections to the royal court and her status as a courtier benefitted Joan de Mohun through various forms of patronage received from individuals such as John of Gaunt and Richard II. Grants of gifts, land, and income provided for Joan and her household, while personal favors, like the grant of a pardon made at Joan’s request to the king, demonstrate her close connections to the royal family. The evidence of patronage and favor given to Joan by John of Gaunt, Richard II, and Queen Anne suggests that she was highly regarded by important members of the royal family. In addition to the monetary and immediate favors given to Joan described in the previous chapter, she received a further prestigious honor with the receipt of garter robes and elevation as a Lady of the Garter for attendance at several feasts of St. George during the reign of Richard II. The highest honor bestowed on female subjects by medieval kings after Edward III, elevation as a Lady of the Garter solidified Joan’s position at court.

Joan de Mohun represented one of at least thirty women elevated to the Ladies of the Garter during the reign of Richard II.¹ Those women invited to the feast of St. George

¹ Sources compiling the lists of women in attendance at the annual feast of St. George as a Lady of the Garter varies both in number and, in some cases, regarding the year and number of invitations that a particular woman received to the feast of St. George. The names and number of women in attendance at the recorded annual feasts of St. George in this text have been compiled from those lists recorded in: George Frederick Beltz, Memorials of the Order of the Garter from its Foundations to the Present Time (London: W. Pickering, 1841), ccxi-ccxxii, and the Complete Peerage, vol. II, 591-595. Grace Holmes, The Order of the Garter: Its Knights and Stall Plates 1348-1984 (Windsor, 1984), 168-172, and James L. Gillespie, “Ladies of the Fraternity of Saint George and of the Society of the Garter,” Albion 17, no. 3 (Autumn, 1985): 259-278, were additionally consulted. It should be noted that the lists of women in attendance at the feast of St. George and who received garter robes each year are likely incomplete, providing the names of the recognizable women in attendance and omitting others.
comprised a diverse group, representing female members of the royal family, loyal ladies-in-waiting, and politically useful allies. The organization recognized as the Ladies of the Garter was closely tied to the chivalric society of the Order of the Garter and the organization’s yearly feast of St. George (23 April), held to honor the group’s patron saint. The Order of the Garter honored the military pursuits of England’s knights. The Ladies of the Garter focused on honoring the women of the realm, although the tenor of the group varied depending on the personal preferences of the sitting monarch. For his part, Richard II expanded and regularized the Ladies of the Garter, making it a consistent honor that the king utilized to bolster support for the crown. The organization of the Ladies of the Garter was inextricably linked to the Order of the Garter, and to understand the honor given to Lady Mohun and other Englishwomen elevated as Ladies of the Garter, we must first examine the Order of the Garter and its origins.

**Origins of the Order of the Garter**

The exact motivation behind the founding of the Order of the Garter is not clearly established in surviving documents, although the connections of the group to chivalric honor is evident. Jean Froissart (1337?-c. 1404), a near contemporary of the organization's founding, suggested that Edward III, inspired by King Arthur and the Round Table, wanted to rebuild the castle at Windsor and to create a group of “the bravest and noblest” knights in England.\(^2\) Froissart explained that the earls, barons, and knights of England embraced Edward III’s desire for an organization of knights, believing that it would “strengthen the

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bonds of friendship among them.“ The knights selected to the Order of the Garter committed to attending a yearly feast on St. George’s Day at Windsor Castle. Although some of Froissart’s details surrounding the founding of the Order of the Garter are questionable, namely that there were forty founding Knights of the Garter, the chronicler provided some important information about the motivation for the group’s founding. From the beginning, Edward III connected the Order of the Garter with Windsor Castle and established the primary function of the knights as attending the yearly feast of St. George. Edward III established the Order of the Garter to bring together England’s important men as a brotherhood of knights while rewarding the men who were most loyal to the kingdom and crown of England.

Froissart placed the initial celebration of the feast of St. George in 1344, although this date is much disputed. Instead, scholars largely agree that Edward III founded the Order of the Garter later in the 1340s, generally accepted as either 1348 or 1349. The earliest known surviving statutes associated with the Order of the Garter found in London, College of Arms

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3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Historians questioned the veracity of Froissart’s details surrounding the founding of the Order of the Garter as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Such criticisms focus on the year that Froissart named as the foundation for the Order of the Garter, and the number and list of founding members. Examples of such skepticism can be found in: John Selden, *Titles of Honor* (London, 1672), 658, and Elias Ashmole, *The Institution, Laws, and Ceremonies of the Most Noble Order of the Garter* (London, 1672), 185-186.
7 Froissart, *Chronicles* (1968), 66.
MS Arundel 48, name twenty-six men initially selected as Knights of the Garter. With a likely issuance date of 22 April 1415, this text constitutes a French copy of the earliest statutes of the Order of the Garter. These statutes emphasized the religious duties of the knights, while stressing that members must attend the yearly festivities for St. George’s Day at Windsor. Of the list of twenty-six founding Knights of the Order of the Garter honored by Edward III, all were involved in the fighting in France, with most present at Calais.

These selected knights actively participated in battle and fought valiantly during the recent conflicts of the Hundred Years War. The chosen knights had not been politically active during the reign of Edward II, but instead exercised political service beginning in the reign of Edward III. Edward III, then, selected knights who served him and his reign, and who were loyal to him personally.

From its inception, Edward III committed the Order of the Garter to honor knights for their military prowess. As a chivalric organization, the members of the Order of the Garter followed an established code of chivalry that set guidelines for how a knight should behave. In addition to the military aspects of chivalry, the lady was an integral element of its code of ethics. As expressed through the literature of medieval troubadours, chivalry espoused images of courtly love where service to a lady was compared to the loyalty given to a lord. A lady was essential to this element of chivalry, for she often encouraged the man dedicated

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10 Ibid., 356-357.
13 Ibid.
15 Ibid., 30.
to her service to achieve martial prowess on the battlefield in her name.\textsuperscript{16} The combined influence of chivalry and courtly love is illustrated through a legendary tale of Edward III’s inspiration to create the Order of the Garter. At a celebration hosted by Edward III, “the Lady Joan Countess of Kent and Salisbury her Garter, that falling from her leg in a dance, was taken up by the King who much affected the Queens Jealousie, or some of the Lords merrily observing it, told them all openly, Hony soit qui mal y pense … and that shortly the Garter should be most highly honored.”\textsuperscript{17} This description of Edward III’s encounter with a woman’s fallen garter is likely more legend than fact. The connection, albeit fictional, of Joan of Kent (c. 1328-1385) with the king’s decision to revise his idea of the Round Table into the Order of the Garter illustrated how vital women were to the concepts of courtly love and chivalry; these ideals not only proved foundational to the ethos of the Order, but also became important aspects of the image of the Order of the Garter in English society.

Edward III thus created a chivalric fraternity of knights dedicated to England, the monarch, and St. George. According to Froissart, Edward III incorporated women of the English court into the first feast held to honor St. George, noting that Queen Philippa and a large number of her ladies attended, dressed in robes that matched those of the Knights of the Garter.\textsuperscript{18} The degree of participation that Queen Philippa and her ladies had during this feast is unknown, as is their status in relation to the Order of the Garter. After this initial feast, Edward III appears to have allowed women to attend the feast sporadically during his reign and, at times, provided these attendants with clothing or robes that matched those given to

\textsuperscript{17}Selden, \textit{Titles of Honor}, 658.
the Knights for the festivities. In 1358, for example, Edward III gave Queen Philippa 500l. for clothing to attend the feast of St. George, likely funding clothing for both the queen and several attendants.\(^{19}\) Records indicate that Queen Philippa also attended a mass for the feast of St. George in 1361.\(^{20}\) Although Edward III extended invitations to the feast of St. George to some women, he reserved the honor for his closest female family members. Such invitations are largely known through entries in the Wardrobe Accounts, designating cloth or money for clothing to attend the feast. In addition to Queen Philippa, Edward III included his eldest daughter Isabella (1332-1382) in the festivities, giving her a tunic to attend the feast in 1361.\(^{21}\) Isabella was regarded as the king’s favorite daughter, making her a natural choice for inclusion in the feast.\(^{22}\) Isabella remained unmarried in 1361, so her attendance might have been an extension of her royal duties or as a way to honor her, distinguishing her from her siblings.\(^{23}\) Edward III particularly doted on Isabella as evidenced by his permission to allow her to marry Enguerrand de Coucy for love in July 1365.\(^{24}\) Isabella’s connection to the feast of St. George becomes more significant beginning in 1375, when she is provided with “livery of the Knights of the Garter [de secta militum de garterio].”\(^{25}\) Here, Isabella received robes that matched those given to the Knights of the Garter for the feast of St. George. Earlier gifts to Queen Philippa and Isabella provided clothing that differed from the robes distributed to

\(^{23}\) Ibid.
\(^{24}\) Ibid. Isabella was 33 years old on the date of their marriage.
the male members of the Order. The gift of a matching robe separates Isabella from earlier female attendees, providing her with a distinct honor. Edward III continued to exalt his daughter in this way, and she received robes for the feasts of St. George held in 1376 and 1377.\textsuperscript{26} Aside from the infrequent inclusion of Queen Philippa or his daughter Isabella to the feast of St. George, Edward III did not regularly provide for women to participate in the festivities of the Order of the Garter.

**Richard II and the Structure of the Ladies of the Garter**

Edward III established a precedent for inviting women to festivities associated with the Order of the Garter by occasionally including close female relatives in the feast of St. George. It was Edward III's successor Richard II, however, who embraced the opportunity to include women and who transformed female participation from sporadic and infrequent to a regular recognition. Richard II regularized the participation of women at the feast to such a point that the women honored with robes and garters became known as “*Dominae de Secta et Liberatura Garterii.*”\textsuperscript{27} As the first monarch who frequently included women, Richard II controlled the means to define these Ladies of the Garter as a group, while determining their association with their more formally selected counterparts, the Knights of the Garter. As for membership, Richard II did not establish a formal process to select women as Ladies of the Garter, either for an individual feast or for life; nor did he establish a specific number of women who would be honored at the feast of St. George each year. Elevation as a Lady of the Garter was temporary, with women chosen to attend on a yearly basis.\textsuperscript{28} This selection

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{26}{Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, vol. II, 502.}
\footnote{27}{Ibid., 264.}
\end{footnotes}
meant that a woman might receive robes in one year, but not for subsequent feasts, whereas another woman might receive robes more frequently, or even annually. As a result, the number of women selected by Richard II varied greatly from year to year. The act of choosing a woman to participate as a member of the Ladies of the Garter, then, was a powerful honor that Richard II used to his benefit. Inclusion as a Lady of the Garter became an additional form of patronage that Richard II used to encourage and reward loyal behavior by his subjects.

A woman elevated as a Lady of the Garter received an invitation to attend the feast of St. George held at Windsor Castle and a robe that was delivered by a warrant of the crown, matching the delivery of robes to the Knights.29 The robe itself mimicked the color and cloth used in the robes given to the Knights.30 As with the Knights, the status of each lady was considered in the creation of her robe. A larger allotment of cloth and a larger number of garters adorned the robes of the highest-ranking ladies, with lesser amounts of cloth and fewer garters being reserved for the robes of lower ranking women, with the amount varying by degree according to each individual rank.31 The image of a garter was adopted as the emblem of the Order of the Garter and was represented on a badge.32 As a piece of clothing, the garter was a piece of cloth tied around a man’s leg to keep the hose from falling.33 Visual representations of garters could be embroidered on the robes.34 A woman selected as a Lady of the Garter additionally received the honor of wearing a garter, embroidered with “hony

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29 Anstis, The Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, 123.
31 Beltz, Memorials of the Order of the Garter, 245.
32 Barber, Edward III and the Triumph of England, 269.
33 Ibid.
34 Beltz, Memorials of the Order of the Garter, 245.
soit qui mal y pense,” the motto of the Order of the Garter, around her left arm.\textsuperscript{35} The wearing of garter robes and a garter around the left arm made those women who received the honor visually distinct. Combined with their presence as attendees at a celebration previously reserved for men, the Ladies of the Garter represented a distinguished female contingent that received patronage from the king who reciprocally provided personal and familial support for the crown.

Richard II was particularly concerned with creating an image for himself that exuded royal authority through extravagant and theatrical display, often presented through ostentatious events and the purchase of lavish clothing.\textsuperscript{36} The feast of St. George was one occasion for the king to impress his subjects through an elaborate feast, while also courting increased loyalty from those who had not been invited. Visual representation of the strength and success of the monarchy through a carefully choreographed feast of St. George thus reinforced the king’s image and inspired continued loyalty in those who attended as Richard II looked and acted like a chivalric king. The inclusion of women at this event increased the number of those in attendance, disseminating this image of royal authority to a larger audience. Female subjects, too, provided support and service to the crown, and they talked to one another and to the male members of their families. These female attendees recounted to others their experiences at the feast of St. George. These conversations about the magnificence of the display and the authority of the king could strengthen support amongst his subjects. In this way, the feast served as a propaganda event, for those who attended spread details about the displays of kingship that they witnessed.

\textsuperscript{35} Gillespie, “Ladies of the Fraternity of Saint George and of the Society of the Garter,” 263. 
\textsuperscript{36} Saul, Richard II, 93.
Unlike his predecessor, Richard II did not reserve invitations to the feast of St. George or garter robes for immediate members of the royal family. Instead, Richard II increasingly included women from diverse backgrounds as his reign progressed. Where the selection process for a Knight of the Garter was established and known, the selection process and the relevant criteria for a woman to be selected as a Lady of the Garter remains unknown. Such mystery, however, provided Richard II with the ability to make politically expedient choices that benefitted him personally. The flexibility in populating the Ladies of the Garter gave Richard II a form of patronage that benefitted both the king and the chosen woman. An invitation and the receipt of garter robes honored the woman and her family, while serving as a reward for loyal, and continued, service to the crown. Although Richard II invited more women to the Ladies of the Garter than other medieval monarchs, the group remained highly selective. These women gained both a visible boost in status through their elevation, but also access to the king and the royal family. This close interaction remained important for requesting patronage from the king. Such proximity to the king was a luxury that one would not want to lose. Those who received an invitation to the feast wanted to keep their access and would continue to demonstrate support for the monarch in order to receive future invitations. Those on the outside would have recognized the benefits associated with such membership, and would have aspired to its ranks, taking actions to demonstrate that they, too, were worthy subjects. Royal support was a valuable asset, one which inspired loyalty in the king’s subjects. Richard II used such invitations to the feast of St. George and their political power to his advantage, working to secure support for his throne.

As a political tool, the Ladies of the Garter evolved throughout the course of Richard II’s reign, adapting to the contemporary needs of the monarch. Richard II was a mere child at
his coronation in 1377, having inherited the throne from his grandfather at age eleven, with his father, the Black Prince, dying mere months before the aged monarch Edward III.\(^{37}\) As a result of his young age, the early years of Richard’s reign, from 1377 to 1380, depended on the guidance of advisors around him, including a series of councils, and his mother, Joan of Kent.\(^{38}\) It was not until January 1381, at the age of 14, that Richard entered “adolescentia” which gave him a larger, but nonetheless still limited, say in the daily governance of England.\(^{39}\) The two feasts of St. George recorded prior to Richard II reaching his “adolescentia,” demonstrate the influence of his advisors, particularly in the women selected to receive robes for the Ladies of the Garter. These women constituted close relatives of the royal family, imitating the women provided with garter robes during the reign of Edward III, although the group increased in number. Richard’s first celebration, held in 1378, honored seven women.\(^{40}\) The king’s mother, Joan of Kent, and his half-sisters, Joan (1350-1384) and Maud (\textit{d.s.p.} 1392), received robes, along with Constance, Duchess of Lancaster (1354-1394), and two of the duke of Lancaster’s daughters, Philippa (d. 1415), and Elizabeth (1363-1425).\(^{41}\) A more distant relative of Richard II, Philippa, Countess of Oxford (d. 1411), similarly received robes for this feast. Philippa was also the wife of Robert de Vere (1362-1392), a personal favorite of Richard II during his reign.\(^{42}\) In her own right, however, Philippa was a granddaughter of Edward III and cousin to Richard II. The following feast held in 1379 honored the same seven women with robes, with an eighth for Isabel, Countess


\(^{39}\) Ibid., 108.

\(^{40}\) Cokayne, \textit{Complete Peerage}, vol. II, 592.

\(^{41}\) Ibid.

\(^{42}\) Saul, \textit{Richard II}, 121.
of Cambridge (1355-1392), and first wife of Edmund of Langley (1341-1402).\footnote{Cokayne, \textit{Complete Peerage}, vol. II, 592.} Her husband was a surviving son of Edward III and uncle to Richard II.\footnote{Saul, \textit{Richard II}, 28.} The initial feasts of St. George held during the reign of Richard II, then, included women close to his mother, Joan of Kent, and his uncle, John of Gaunt, demonstrating their influence on the king and his political decisions during the early years of the young king’s reign.

\textbf{Philippa, Countess of Oxford:}

\textbf{The Role of Favoritism in Selecting a Lady of the Garter}

Although the first feasts of St. George held by Richard II included close female relatives encouraged for selection by his mother or uncles, the young king exercised increased personal preference through the elevation of Philippa, wife of one of his favorites, as a Lady of the Garter in 1378. The death of Earl Thomas de Vere (1336/8-1371), Robert de Vere’s father, thrust his heir into the royal household where he was raised as a ward.\footnote{Ibid., 121.} As a member of the royal household, Robert had close interactions with Richard II prior to the death of Edward III, and the two became close friends and companions.\footnote{Ibid.} Upon becoming king, Richard II remembered and elevated his close friend. Robert received offices, wardships, and grants of land from the king, among other forms of favor that caused jealousy among the other members of the nobility.\footnote{Ibid.} Clearly Richard II believed that Robert de Vere was a close friend and ally, as evidenced by the multiple and varied rewards bestowed on him by the king. In the inaugural group of the Ladies of the Garter, Richard II likely desired...
to extend his personal favoritism of Robert to his wife, Philippa. Joan of Kent, who
influenced the women and families honored by selection to the 1378 Ladies of the Garter,
would have approved of the selection of Philippa de Vere for a number of reasons. For one,
Robert's uncle, Sir Aubrey de Vere (1338/40-1400), had served her husband the Black
Prince.48 Yet Philippa belonged to a noble pedigree aside from the connections of her
husband. Her mother, Isabella, was Edward III’s favorite daughter who received garter
robes.49 As the granddaughter of Edward III and a relative of the young king, Philippa was
eligible for the honor of becoming a Lady of the Garter in her own right. Her inclusion in the
feast of 1378, then, was acceptable to both Joan of Kent, who likely encouraged her son to
surround himself with close family members, and to Richard II, who rewarded his friendship
with Robert de Vere by honoring his wife. Following her invitation to the feast in 1378,
Philippa received garter robes for several following feasts, including those held into the late
1380s.

Throughout the fourteenth century the de Vere family remained one of the poorest of
the titled nobility, a situation that Sir Aubrey and Robert attempted to correct through their
close association with the crown.50 To rectify the situation, Richard II rewarded the de Veres
for their service through various types of patronage. In October 1382, Richard II granted
lands in Kendale, with knight's fees and advowsons, to the de Veres.51 Yet the reason for this
grant was not attributed to Robert; instead, the focus was on Philippa's lineage. Since Robert

48 N. B. Lewis, “The Continual Council’ in the Early Years of Richard II, 1377-80,” The
English Historical Review 41, no. 162 (Apr., 1926): 251.
49 Anne Commire and Deborah Klezmer, ed., Dictionary of Women Worldwide: 25,000
50 Saul, Richard II, 121.
did not possess land or the ability to support his family, “and especially to support the said Philippa, the king's kinswoman,” Richard II provided the Kendale lands to the de Veres for her lifetime.\(^{52}\) It was Philippa's relationship to the king that warranted a gift of land and income to the de Veres in this situation. In Philippa's case, it helped to be the wife of a favorite of the king, although not entirely necessary to receive valuable patronage.

Invitations to the feast of St. George ceased for the Countess of Oxford in the 1380s after her attendance at the feast of St. George held in 1387.\(^{53}\) Politically, this date is significant. In 1387, Philippa’s husband Robert left her to pursue Agnes Lancecrona (fl. 1382-1388), a lady-in-waiting to the queen.\(^{54}\) Richard II’s decision not to invite Philippa to future feasts of St. George suggest that at least in the king’s mind she had been included in the recent festivities because of her connection to her husband and not because she was a royal relative. The political aftermath of Robert’s relationship with Richard II, and the subsequent actions against him by the Appellants, removed de Vere from the king’s inner circle.\(^{55}\) Philippa remained in England. While Robert was exiled and went to the continent, she lived with her estranged husband’s mother Maud de Vere (1345?-1413).\(^{56}\) Although Richard II provided for Philippa, including an annuity of 300 m. and dower from the de Vere estates, she did not receive a further invitation to the feast of St. George until 1399.\(^{57}\)

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\(^{52}\) Ibid.


English nobility and especially Philippa’s royal relatives strongly supported her, and they saw de Vere’s actions as an affront to the royal family.\(^{58}\) Politically, Philippa maintained the support of her close relatives and the nobility, yet she did not attend the feast of St. George in the years immediately following Robert’s exile. Such a decision demonstrates that Richard II personally chose the women who would participate as a Lady of the Garter by the late 1380s. Philippa’s status as a kinswoman might have warranted her inclusion, however, it appears that Richard II did not want her in attendance. Robert’s mother Maud received invitations to the feasts of St. George held in 1388-90, after which she too did not receive an invitation again until 1399.\(^{59}\) The choice to elevate Philippa de Vere as a Lady of the Garter might have initially depended on a combination of her status as a royal relative and her husband’s close relationship with the king. The decision to exclude her from its ranks for a time after 1387, however, appears to be a personal one made by Richard II. Philippa’s attendance would have served as a reminder of Robert’s absence. Although inadvertent, Philippa garnered support among the nobility against her estranged husband as a result of his abandonment of their marriage, an action that ultimately led to his exile. Richard II might have ensured that Philippa received financial support after 1387, but he did not feel compelled to continue to include her in the social events surrounding the feast of St. George.

**Richard II’s Expansion of the Ladies of the Garter**

The inclusion of Philippa de Vere in the feast of St. George in 1378 demonstrates that Richard II elected to include women outside of his immediate relatives. As Richard II slowly

assumed power, he increasingly exerted his will on the court. This included a choice to expand the number and statuses of the women after the initial feasts held in 1378, 1379, and 1381. Following his marriage to Anne of Bohemia in 1382, the queen naturally joined the list of women in attendance at the annual feast of St. George. The previously established status quo continued with the women invited to the feast of St. George in 1383, but Richard II greatly expanded the number of women selected to participate. By this point in his reign, Richard II had entered his majority and was steadily increasing his influence on the court and in governing, asserting his personality on the direction of the court. Such attitudes can be seen in the choices he made in the selection of Ladies of the Garter, beginning with the feast of 1384, and becoming more apparent in 1385 and 1386. Although some women who had previously received robes continued to be honored, a number of new faces appeared in the records. As a king becoming more secure in his ability to rule, Richard II began to elevate and honor the women he wanted, prioritizing his personal opinions over those of his advisors.

Recorded expenditures indicate that twelve robes were ordered for eleven women for the 1384 feast of St. George, with four of these being new additions to ranks of the Ladies of the Garter. Eleanor, the Countess of Buckingham (c. 1365-1399), wife of Thomas of Woodstock (1355-1397), brother of John of Gaunt and child of Edward III, received garter robes for the feast of St. George for the first time in 1384. Eleanor was a coheir of the de Bohun family (earls of Hereford), and her marriage to Thomas of Woodstock, an uncle of Richard II, recalled the earlier selection criteria for the king in regards to inviting women to

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attend the feast of St. George, for she belonged to a prominent family and was married to a member of the royal family.

The remaining three additions to the feast of St. George in 1384 are all connected and demonstrate the increasing agency of Richard II in his decisions to expand the sphere of those who received garter robes and patronage from the crown. Catalina of Lancaster received an invitation and garter robes for the first time, although she was quite young at the time of the feast. As a daughter of John of Gaunt and member of the royal family, Catalina certainly fits the image of a traditional selection to the Ladies of the Garter. Yet the surrounding circumstances of Catalina’s elevation provide additional depth to the expansion of female attendees at the feast in 1384. Only about twelve years old when she received her first garter robes, Catalina would not have personally demonstrated her usefulness or loyalty to the crown. Instead, her familial connection to Richard II would have factored heavily into the decision to provide her with garter robes. Catalina’s selection as a Lady of the Garter must have been largely symbolic, as she received garter robes and an honor more mature than her age warranted. The two additional women elevated as Ladies of the Garter this year provide additional insight into Richard II’s expansion of women honored in 1384.

Joan de Mohun and her daughter, Elizabeth, Countess of Salisbury, received garter robes for the first time in 1384. As we have already seen, Joan established a position for herself at court, finding favor with Richard II, Queen Anne, and John of Gaunt. The timing of receiving garter robes for the first time in 1384 might have resulted from Joan’s recent loyal

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service to the crown and royal family. Beginning in 1380, Joan maintained Catalina of Lancaster and her household, an arrangement that continued until at least 1383.\textsuperscript{65} The elevation of Joan and Catalina to the Ladies of the Garter for the first time in 1384 suggests that Catalina might have remained in the Mohun household beyond 1383. As Catalina’s keeper, Joan could have been invited to the feast in 1384 to watch over and instruct her ward on the arts of attending a royal function. Such a hypothesis, however, does not take into account the fact that Joan continued to receive garter robes after Catalina departed England for Spain, nor does it consider that Joan had personal connections to Richard II and Queen Anne. Instead, Richard II might have used the distribution of garter robes to Joan in 1384 as a reward for the service that she recently provided to the royal family through maintaining and instructing Catalina. Even if Catalina still resided with Joan at this time, Joan’s position at court suggests that she received this invitation to attend the feast of St. George as a reward for her personal service and connection to the crown, and not only because of her connection to Catalina of Lancaster.\textsuperscript{66}

The inclusion of Elizabeth, Joan’s eldest daughter, further honored the Mohun family in 1384. Of Joan’s three daughters, Elizabeth is the only one recorded as receiving garter robes and an invitation to attend the feast of St. George during the reign of Richard II. Elizabeth’s elevation as a Lady of the Garter in the same year that her mother received the honor might have been the result of a favor to Joan. As previously discussed, Joan and her brother Bartholomew negotiated for and paid handsomely to arrange for the marriage of

\textsuperscript{65} Ana Echevarria, “Catalina of Lancaster,” 80. Catalina’s time with Joan de Mohun is more fully described in Chapter Three.

\textsuperscript{66} Lady Mohun’s activities as a courtier and supporter of the crown are more fully discussed in Chapter Four.
Elizabeth and William Montagu. Although Earl of Salisbury, William’s family constituted relative newcomers to England’s higher nobility. Edward III created six new earls in 1337, naming William’s father, also named William (1301-1344), as the first Earl of Salisbury. Edward III honored the elder William Montagu because he distinguished himself as a knight, although he had a close friendship with the king too. Elizabeth was thus socially inferior to Montagu at the time of their marriage in the 1360s, but the Mohuns represented a family with long-established links to England’s royal family, with their service to the crown dating to the time of William the Conqueror. Elizabeth’s elevation as a Lady of the Garter, then, increased both her personal standing at court while adding further prestige to her husband’s reputation. Elizabeth’s husband William had also served with the Black Prince at Crécy and he was selected as a founding Knight of the Garter by Edward III. Multiple connections thus support the Countess of Salisbury’s inclusion as a Lady of the Garter, including that she was the daughter, niece, and wife of current or former Knights of the Garter. Yet there exists a distinct connection between Elizabeth’s inclusion as a Lady of the Garter with that of her mother. Lady Mohun and the Countess of Salisbury received garter robes, together, for the first time in 1384. Subsequent invitations to Joan and Elizabeth continue in tandem, both receiving garter robes for the feasts of St. George held between 1385 and 1390, with their

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67 Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 23. Marriage negotiations for Elizabeth de Mohun and William Montagu are discussed in Chapter Two.
69 Ibid., 36.
final invitation extended by Richard II in 1399. There is no surviving evidence of a feast where one was invited, and not the other. Mother and daughter received the honor together or not at all.

Concurrent invitations to Lady Mohun and the Countess of Salisbury, and the years in which they received this honor, provide greater insight into the possible reasons behind their selections. As described in the previous chapter, Joan served Richard II and Queen Anne during the 1380s and received continued patronage for her service during this time. In one example, Joan received a grant of 100l. for life because of her service to the king and queen, while a grant the following year referred to her as the “king’s kinswoman.” Lady Mohun, too, successfully petitioned Richard II for pardons in 1383 and 1387. Such actions indicate that Joan was an active member of the court during the 1380s, and that she developed a close relationship with both Richard II and Queen Anne, because of which she was ultimately asked to leave the court after the Merciless Parliament. Contemporaneous events, then, suggest that the relationship between Lady Mohun and Richard II during the 1380s warranted her selection as a Lady of the Garter. Furthermore, Joan could have requested that her daughter Elizabeth also receive garter robes during these years. The Lady Mohun repeatedly asked for and received favor from the king, and Elizabeth’s inclusion may have signified one further solicitation by Joan. The relationship between Lady Mohun and Richard II must have been prioritized over male Mohun and Burghersh famillial connections to the Knights of the

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73 The patronage that Joan de Mohun received from Richard II is described in Chapter Four.

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Garter, as the relationship between Joan and the king was active and seemingly close during the years that she received garter robes. Prior male Mohun and Burghersh relatives might have served Edward III and the Black Prince, but the service that Joan provided to the crown would have been the foremost factor for Richard II when choosing to honor her and her daughter.

The elevation of Lady Mohun and the Countess of Salisbury thus represented a shift in strategy for Richard II. After 1384, the king increasingly expanded the pool of women selected as Ladies of the Garter, and he moved away from including only female family members in the feast of St. George. Details associated with the amount of cloth dedicated to the robes of Joan and Elizabeth, however, demonstrate the true rank of this mother and daughter within the list of women elevated to the Ladies of the Garter in 1384. Descriptions of the robes that year indicate that they were violet lined with fur and contained a scarlet hood embroidered with little garters, similar to those made for the king and Knights of the Garter.77 The amount of cloth, fur, and garters used on each robe varied for each Lady of the Garter, decreasing in volume according to rank. Queen Anne received “8 Ells of Cloth, and half an Ell of Scarlet for the lining of her Hood,” while Joan of Kent received two robes that had “one whole Cloth, and a double proportion of Scarlet.”78 The Duchess of Lancaster received “half a Cloth and half an Ell of Scarlet,” and the Countess of Cambridge received “7 Ells of Cloth, and half an Ell of Scarlet.”79 As members of the immediate royal family, these women received the most cloth for their robes, while “the rest of the Ladies the same

78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
 proportion of Cloth with the Knights-Companions; that is, each of them 5 Ells apiece, and half an Ell of Scarlet.”

The fur given to each woman was similarly divided based on the rank and nobility of the Lady and her family. Richard II might have been willing to elevate a personal favorite like Lady Mohun to the Ladies of the Garter, however, he would not place her on the same level as a member of the royal family. The amount of cloth and garters dedicated to a woman’s robe signified her personal standing among the group of women elevated to the Ladies of the Garter in a given year. Status and royal blood ultimately remained more important than personal preference or favoritism.

Further Expansion of the Ladies of the Garter

Lady Mohun’s initial invitation, specifically, represented a trend to increase the circle of women who were deemed worthy attendees at the feast of St. George. Festivities held during the later 1380s and 1390s increasingly incorporated women who were outside the royal family and established elite. The feast in 1385, the year following the elevation of Joan and her daughter, included Blanche de Mowbray (d. 1409). Granddaughter of Henry of Lancaster, third earl of Lancaster (c. 1280-1345), and a descendant of Henry III (1207-1272), Blanche had a royal lineage, although her marriage matches were quite humble. Married several times, Blanche’s husband Thomas Poynings (1349-1375), for whom she was referred to as Lady Poynings in the sources, came from a military family connected to Edward III’s

80 Ibid.
campaigns in France with additional associations with John of Gaunt.\textsuperscript{83} The service that Blanche’s husbands provided to members of the royal family must have contributed to her selection as a Lady of the Garter, although she seems to have also established a close relationship with Richard II himself. Like Joan de Mohun, Blanche was forced to leave court by the Appellants.\textsuperscript{84} Blanche, also like Joan, received garter robes for the feasts of St. George through 1390 and received her final invitation in 1399.\textsuperscript{85}

Another invitee to the feast in 1385 provided a curious connection to Joan de Mohun. Elizabeth Luttrell, with whom Joan previously negotiated to sell Dunster Castle, received robes for the first time in 1385 and enjoyed repeated invitations through 1390.\textsuperscript{86} Elizabeth Luttrell possessed wealth and standing apart from her husbands. A member of the Courtenay family, Elizabeth’s brother Hugh (d.1348/9) was honored as a founding Knight of the Garter shortly before his death.\textsuperscript{87} Elizabeth’s father, also Hugh (d. 1377), served Edward III, and her mother, Margaret (1311-1391), was daughter of Humphrey de Bohun VII (c. 1276-1322) and Elizabeth (1282-1316), the youngest daughter of Edward I (1239-1307).\textsuperscript{88} Her second husband, Sir Andrew Luttrell, provided military service to the Black Prince.\textsuperscript{89} After the two married in 1359, Edward III provided the couple with a yearly annuity of 200l.\textsuperscript{90} Elizabeth,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Cokayne, \textit{Complete Peerage}, vol. II, 593.
\item Barber, \textit{Edward III and the Triumph of England}, 293.
\item History of Dunster, 76.
\item Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 26.
\item History of Dunster, 76.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
too, provided personal service to the Black Prince and Joan of Kent.\textsuperscript{91} Recognizing the service that Elizabeth provided to his parents, Richard II granted an annuity of 200\textpounds; in her own name on 20 May 1381 following her husband’s death.\textsuperscript{92}

By the time of receipt of her first invitation to the feast of St. George in 1385, Elizabeth was a widow and had already negotiated for the purchase of Dunster Castle from Joan de Mohun, although Luttrell possession of the Mohun lands would not be realized during her lifetime. Elizabeth’s son and heir, Hugh Luttrell, first served in the house of John of Gaunt, later attending the court of Richard II as a knight.\textsuperscript{93} Hugh’s service to Richard II and his time at court, however, is recorded as occurring in the 1390s, following his mother’s participation as a Lady of the Garter.\textsuperscript{94} Although Hugh might have already been known to Richard II, the knight did not establish himself as a loyal supporter and courtier until later. Although her father, husband, and son all served the crown, such individuals were not active at the time of her participation with the Ladies of the Garter. Instead, Elizabeth’s personal service and connections held additional weight at the time of her invitations to the feast of St. George.

The extension of invitations to a wider circle of courtiers in 1384 and 1385 signifies a move by Richard II to exercise further control over his court. These women — Joan de Mohun, Elizabeth, Countess of Salisbury, Blanche de Mowbray, and Elizabeth Luttrell — all had connections to Richard’s parents. Some close male relatives served with the Black

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 77.
\textsuperscript{94} History of Dunster, 78.
Prince, while the women themselves had connections to Joan of Kent and her household. In addition to providing service to Richard’s parents, these women also served the king and spent time at court. Joan de Mohun and Blanche de Mowbray would not have been removed from court by the Appellants if the two had not been close to Richard himself. As such, their elevation to the Ladies of the Garter further signified the favor shown personally to Joan and Blanche by Richard II. Personal service and loyalty to Richard II factored into the decision to include these women in the feasts of 1384 and 1385, a consideration that continued in Richard II’s selections of women to the Garter in the 1390s.\textsuperscript{95} Royal lineage remained important, but it was no longer the primary consideration to extend an invitation to a Lady of the Garter.

As the first woman outside the inner Lancastrian circle who was recognized by Richard II with garter robes, Joan de Mohun’s selection signified a shift in the population of the Ladies of the Garter. Richard II increasingly honored women who served him and his family, rewarding personal loyalty and not only lineage. Following the Appellant crisis, Richard II honored more women who personally served him and his family than before. One such woman, Anne Gomenys, personified service to the crown, through both her husband’s actions in the king’s knightly household and her service in Queen Anne’s household.\textsuperscript{96} Anne received garter robes in several years, for the feasts from 1388 through 1390, and again in 1399.\textsuperscript{97} Similar to the experiences of other Ladies of the Garter, receipt of robes constituted only one form of patronage from Richard II. For example, in one case, Anne received a pardon for Robert del Hay the younger for murder in August 1386, demonstrating her favor

\textsuperscript{95} Mitchell, “Ladies of the Garter,” 165.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 166.
\textsuperscript{97} Holmes, \textit{The Order of the Garter}, 170.
with the king. In a grant from 13 November 1389, after the death of her first husband, Richard II provided Anne with 100m. a year because she married her late husband at the king’s wish and because she had “no means of livelihood” after his death. Such a reason for this grant indicates that Anne might have married her first husband to please Richard II. Richard II recognized this fact and rewarded Anne for her obedience. Anne demonstrated a strong level of commitment to the royal family through service to their household and to the king’s political desires, for which she remained important to the king.

Seven additional women were elevated to the Ladies of the Garter by Richard II for service to the crown and royal household. These women included: Joan Beauchamp (elevated in 1389, 1390, 1399), Elizabeth Tryvet (elevated in 1390, 1399), Joan Fitzwalter (elevated in 1390, 1399), Agnes Arundel (elevated in 1399), Blanche Bradeston (elevated in 1399), Margaret Coucy (elevated in 1399), and Margaret Roos (elevated in 1399). None of these women came from a magnate family, but all had a history of serving Richard II and the crown. Although he had initiated such invitations prior to the acts of the Appellants with the addition of Lady Mohun and her daughter, Richard II accelerated the inclusion of women outside the traditional elite beginning with the feast of St. George in 1390. Richard II steadily regained power, asserting his authority as king, cemented by his actions in a council meeting

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on 3 May 1389 where he assumed “personal responsibility for the governance of the
realm.” Richard II thus regained control, and his personal preferences were reflected in the
decisions of those women elevated as Ladies of the Garter. Although more cautious about
bestowing excessive patronage, Richard II provided garter robes for additional women who
had served him, strengthening their loyalty while rewarding them for their actions. The
increase in the number of women from outside the royal family and traditional elite
demonstrated the efforts of Richard II to expand the Ladies of the Garter into a larger
organization that recognized the service of women to the crown, while increasing the number
of those who exercised personal loyalty to the king.

Richard II created a broader support base by including those who were traditionally
seen as outsiders, including women, in prominent positions at court. These individuals were
indebted to the king, knowing that their social rise and patronage were due to his personal
favor. They wanted to keep the benefits, including money, property, and social status, that
they received from the king. Joan specifically wanted to continue to receive such patronage,
and she specifically wanted to maintain possession of Leeds Castle. This was an incentive for
her to remain loyal, especially in the absence of a competing patron of a comparable level
and ability. Others like Anne Gomenys, too, received financial benefits by doing as the king
requested. Such individuals might not have enjoyed the same lifestyle without royal favor.
Yet their support for the monarch was about more than money. A Lady of the Garter gained a
level of prestige and influence that others did not. Membership set her apart, for
contemporaries knew of her connection to the monarch and sought her out as an
intermediary. A Lady of the Garter had the ear of Richard II, and this was a tool that could

102 Saul, Richard II, 203.
sway opinions. In return for this favor, a Lady of the Garter would have been expected to both exhibit personal loyalty to the crown, but also to curry support with others. Her encouragement of others, describing the grandeur of the feast of St. George and the vitality of the king, would instill trust in others. In counsel to male relatives, she would additionally inspire loyalty to the king. These actions built further support for the reign of Richard II.

Conclusion

The designation of garter robes to Joan de Mohun, then, began the tradition of including women from a larger social background in the Ladies of the Garter. Lady Mohun’s service as a loyal courtier to Richard II provided personal benefits, in the form of patronage received and elevation as a Lady of the Garter. Yet Lady Mohun’s loyal service also benefitted members of her family. As noted previously, her eldest daughter Elizabeth received invitations to the feast of St. George during the reign of Richard II. Joan and Elizabeth’s participation as Ladies of the Garter set a precedent for inclusion of Mohun women in its ranks. The Lady Mohun’s youngest daughter Philippa, Duchess of York, received this honor during the reign of Henry IV. Unlike his predecessor, Henry IV did not include women as Ladies of the Garter frequently, with the records indicating a small number of feasts during his reign where women received garter robes. Joan’s daughter Philippa received an invitation to the feast of St. George in 1408, while married to her third husband, Edward, duke of York. By 1408, Edward had assumed the duchy of York, and he had

103 Holmes, The Order of the Garter, 173.
104 Beltz, Memorials of the Order of the Garter, ccxxii-ccxxiii.
proven his usefulness to Henry IV by, speculatively, exposing a plot to murder the king and his son at a tournament in Windsor.\textsuperscript{106} In addition to extending invitations to women less frequently, the number of women invited by Henry IV to attend the feast of St. George was significantly lower than it had been during the reign of Richard II. As Duchess of York, Philippa possessed a title and position in society that outranked both her mother and sister, occupying a position that was in the highest non-royal echelon. Philippa’s rank confirmed that she merited a spot in the Ladies of the Garter, especially when considered in relation to her mother and sister who belonged to its ranks previously. Philippa additionally received garter robes in 1416 during the reign of Henry V, showing her status and favor during multiple reigns.\textsuperscript{107} The reputation of this generation of Mohun women slowly grew to include the highest honors in England, and they continued to receive honors from the crown during their lifetimes.

Elevation to the Ladies of the Garter was an honor that only a select group of women received. Unlike other medieval monarchs, Richard II utilized the Ladies of the Garter to reward more than the established elite in England. Instead, Richard II expanded the group to include a number of women who personally served him, his queens, and the crown. Courtiers like Joan de Mohun received garter robes for their service, and their elevation demonstrated their political and social favor with the crown. Richard II appeared to select these courtiers to attend the feast of St. George because he wanted them present at the festivities. An invitation to the Ladies of the Garter, then, became an additional way to bestow patronage to the king’s


favored courtiers. Richard II might have expanded the number of women included in the Ladies of the Garter, but it remained a select group. The receipt of garter robes and an invitation to the feast of St. George, even for a single year, was a high honor. These women outside England’s traditional elite who received garter robes during the reign of Richard II were selected for a variety of reasons, but all demonstrated their usefulness to the crown.
CHAPTER 6
ARRANGING FOR SPACE:
RELIGIOUS PERFORMANCE, PIETY, AND THE TOMB OF JOAN DE MOHUN

Joan de Mohun developed friendships and fostered relationships with England’s elite and with members of the royal family during her lifetime which enabled her to live at court and in locations away from Dunster Castle. We have thus far viewed Lady Mohun primarily as a recipient of gifts and patronage. Yet she also behaved as a patron in her own right. Joan reciprocated in the giving of gifts to individuals who provided for her, as evidenced through gifts that she gave to John of Gaunt, Richard II, and Queen Anne.¹ Throughout her widowhood, Joan additionally gave gifts and funds to the church, focusing her giving on Canterbury Cathedral. When not at court, Joan preferred being in Canterbury, making the cathedral a natural choice for her generosity. Although Joan gave handsomely to Canterbury Cathedral, her reasons for giving are not clearly recounted in the extant documents. To determine why Joan gave to the church, however, requires an examination of her actions in the context of fourteenth-century religion, female performances of piety, gift giving, and planning for the afterlife. The intersection of these elements place Joan’s giving to the church in the framework of the actions of her contemporaries. Lady Mohun did not operate in a vacuum; instead, she participated in a community that emphasized giving to the church with the goal of limiting one’s time in Purgatory and eternal maintenance of the soul. Joan’s choice of burial location and her gifts to Canterbury Cathedral might have been unique, but her actions mirrored those of other elite women.²

¹ Joan’s giving and receiving of gifts is discussed in Chapter Four.
² Scholarship focused on the patronage of women is a growing field, covering activities ranging from literary patronage, artistic patronage, political patronage, and beyond. Research
This chapter first provides a context for medieval women’s patronage and gift-giving before exploring Lady Mohun’s interactions with religion and religious institutions in surviving documents. Throughout her lifetime, Joan participated in religious activities and rituals, details of which demonstrate her performance of Catholic devotion, while also suggesting her personal piety. This chapter examines the amount, type, and frequency of gifts that Joan gave to the church. This focus on giving to Canterbury Cathedral allowed Joan to contribute to various church projects, while the consolidation of her gifts to one church enabled her to give at a visible level of generosity. Joan’s giving and interactions with the church culminate with her negotiations for a prominent burial place in Canterbury Cathedral. Through such transactions, Joan created successful relationships with the Canterbury monks, and she was able to negotiate for space in the cathedral. As such, Lady Mohun brilliantly used social conventions to her advantage. This chapter focuses on the ways that Joan used these conventions and the reward that she received for her efforts.

Joan’s interactions with Canterbury Cathedral and her efforts to designate a space for herself in its community of monks, archbishop, abbot, and laity exists at an interdisciplinary crossroads. As such, Joan practiced her faith in multiple ways; for example, through participating in liturgical events and performing her personal piety in public and private spaces. Religion in fourteenth-century England represents a juxtaposition between public worship and an increasing adherence to personal devotion, as members of the nobility and the gentry began to focus on private reading of religious texts, *legendae* (saints’ lives compiled in volumes referred to as “Golden Legends”), and prayer books. Those of the upper class had access to books and texts, and they increasingly consulted and read them. As we will see, Lady Mohun’s interaction with religion and the church throughout her life demonstrates that she was aware of liturgical expectations, and she fully participated in such activities.

**Elite Religious Experiences in Medieval England**

In analyzing English Catholicism during the Late Middle Ages and the transition to Protestantism, Eamon Duffy explored both the complexity of a low expectation for ideology and the extent to which individuals participated in religious activity and how they used it to structure not only their daily lives but also their lifecycles. The church in fourteenth-century England was not a distant institution, but one that lay individuals of all social statuses

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became invested in. Individuals demonstrated the influence that religion made on their lives through their active involvement in the regular rituals of worship. Religious belief was a main part of life, and individuals used it to inform opinions of the larger world and their place in it. Religion during the fourteenth century was not an abstract concept but instead it was a foundational element of private and social life.

Duffy’s arguments about lay religious devotion form the basis of my examination of the importance that Joan placed on religious rituals, culminating with her negotiations for a prominent burial place. Building on Joan’s interaction with religion and the church are the concepts of space and placement. Through negotiations with Canterbury, Lady Mohun identified and claimed space in the cathedral for her tomb. In her studies on gender and archaeology, Roberta Gilchrist describes the relationship between material culture and the social construction of gender. Gilchrist explains that gender is culturally manifested, and this can be seen through material objects like art and space. In examining the positioning of things, one can better understand their historical significance while also suggesting how individuals experienced social constructions of gender in their daily lives. Some spaces became imbued with great importance, while others remained less so. Examining these premiere spaces, often associated with males and masculine identity, and those deemed lesser, often characterized as female-centered, demonstrates the larger implications behind occupying certain discrete spaces and the gendered connotations behind such actions.

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5 Ibid., xxviii.
6 Ibid., 7.
8 Roberta Gilchrist, Gender and Archaeology: Contesting the Past (London: Routledge, 1999), 19.
In addition to space and placement, the giving of an item demonstrates its perceived value to an individual and to society. The more an individual gave, both in quantity and frequency, the higher the value. One common form of giving in medieval England included gifts from the laity to the church. Joel Rosenthal examines this concept of gift-giving to religious entities and the reciprocal relationship such giving created between the giver and the church in *The Purchase of Paradise: Gift Giving and the Aristocracy, 1307-1485*. All forms of giving to the church, including money, goods, and land, represented a social exchange. Such items were given generally with the intention of providing prayers for the giver with the goal of easing their time spent in Purgatory. Duffy, too, recognized that the laity’s belief in Purgatory and their obsession with death encouraged them to give gifts to the church, including items meant to decorate and beautify the physical church space. These items served as visual reminders to the living of the contributions of the dead, suggesting that they should be remembered for their generosity. Such arguments recognize the social construct created through gift-giving as espoused by Marcel Mauss. For Mauss, gift-giving was a transaction based on obligation and personal interests. One gave to establish and further a relationship, while creating a mutual obligation for the receiver to give in return. A focus of time and energy through repeated giving signaled the value placed by the giver.

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11 Ibid., 10.
12 Ibid.
Such activities, too, suggest what givers expected in return. Gift-giving was not entirely altruistic, as there existed an expectation of receiving in return.

Related to the concept of gift-giving is patronage. Although a term widely discussed, patronage does not encompass a definitive set of behaviors and can refer to a variety of activities between a benefactor and recipient depending on the context. In a general sense, patronage involves a benefactor giving a recipient something of value, often money, gifts, or political influence.\textsuperscript{15} Patronage for medieval women, then, became a way for them to publicly use their position and wealth.\textsuperscript{16} Using their position of power, female benefactors supported the artists, artisans, and projects that they desired. For example, Elizabeth de Burgh regularly purchased from her preferred goldsmiths, supporting them and their craft.\textsuperscript{17} Such monetary support ensured that these individuals could continue to create, while also rewarding them for the quality of their work. Like gift-giving, the patron expected something in return. Loyalty, physical items, and remembrance were all things that the receiver could provide to the patron. The patronage relationship, then, benefitted both the patron and the recipient.

Women’s participation in patronage and the social exchange of giving to the church has been increasingly studied by scholars. Focusing on the patronage and activities of Joan’s step-grandmother Elizabeth de Burgh, Frances Underhill noted Elizabeth’s purchase of items needed to perform mass, including the altar, altar goods, and vestments, as well as keeping

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 2.
her favored goldsmiths busy with her bequests.\textsuperscript{18} Elizabeth’s will also described the distribution of such items after her death, including a crystal reliquary given to the London Minoresses and other reliquaries that were given to Tewkesbury Abbey.\textsuperscript{19} Elizabeth gave to a variety of institutions and sources, including to the founding of Clare College.\textsuperscript{20} Such discussions of the variety of ways that a woman like Elizabeth de Burgh gave to her community, the church, and those around her demonstrate the wide array of gift-giving activities that women, particularly widows, were involved in during the Middle Ages.

Elizabeth de Burgh represents a significant patron, supporting the arts, church, and education. Yet women also gave on a smaller scale, often to the institutions in their communities. In her discussion of female patrons of English monasteries, Karen Stöber recounts some of these gifts found in women’s wills.\textsuperscript{21} Isabella (1262-1333), daughter of Gilbert de Clare (1243-1295), gave money to Tewkesbury Abbey in 1307, while Beatrice Lady Ros (d. 1415) bequeathed items for worship to the Augustinian canons at Warter Priory in 1414.\textsuperscript{22} Beatrice’s will further requested that her body be buried in the choir of the church at Warter.\textsuperscript{23} Beatrice had already provided items including vestments, candelabra, a chalice, and other items intended for worship to this priory, gifts that seemingly persuaded the monks to grant her request for burial in the priory.\textsuperscript{24} Women did not only give to those institutions in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 271.
\item \textsuperscript{20} For a more detailed discussion of Elizabeth de Burgh and her patronage activities, see Frances A. Underhill, \textit{For Her Good Estate: The Life of Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of Clare} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).
\item \textsuperscript{21} Karen Stöber, “Female Patrons of Late Medieval English Monasteries,” \textit{Medieval Prosopography} 31 (2016).
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 122.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 124.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 122, 124.
\end{itemize}
which they desired to be buried, but such gifts do often appear alongside requests for burial and surely encouraged the granting of such a request.

The giving of physical items to the church placed one in the memory of the community. These physical reminders encouraged a continued honoring of the dead through actions like prayer for their souls. This created a cycle of giving as the living saw the benefit received by the dead as a result of their generosity. The living, then, were encouraged to give their own gifts so that they would be remembered and receive their own eternal benefits. Such interactions greatly benefitted the church, while providing comfort to those who gave.

**Personal Devotions and Personal Convenience:**

**Portable Altars and Private Confessors**

Participation in the Western Church took many forms during the fourteenth century. Formal actions, like tithing and attending mass, represented public acts of participation in religion. Yet more personal actions, performed in private, reflect adherence to religious performance as well. During her life, Joan participated in public rituals and adhered to liturgical events, while also observing her faith privately. These observances demonstrate her personal devotion and the role religion played in her life. Lady Mohun was not unique in her actions. Prominent families in England and members of the gentry similarly proved active and public participants in religion by, for example, providing ceremonial items, like vestments, to the parish church, and attending mass in private pews or other locations of prominence.\(^{25}\) Such positions of honor demonstrated outward piety, while further illustrating

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the social standing of those in attendance. Gifts to the church provided the needed items for the Catholic mass, while demonstrating the wealth and prestige of the giver.

Throughout her life, Joan established a pattern for religious giving and participation in religious activities. One example of her devotion appears through petitions to the pope for permission to exercise her faith in a personalized way. In 1349, Joan and her husband John V requested permission to choose a confessor, while again asking for the ability to select a personal confessor in 1354. In similar cases, rather than confessing to the parish priest, the requestor desired to designate another individual as their confessor. A grant of this request enabled the individual to practice religious observances away from their parish church. Lady Mohun might have submitted these requests for a variety of reasons, including convenience. For instance, in the request made with her husband in 1349, Joan’s residence was listed as being in the diocese of Bath, while her individual request in 1354 indicates that she was a resident of the diocese of Canterbury. A change in location could have warranted such a request, as the constant movement between locations would have made the process easier if her chosen confessor traveled with her. This permission could have also enabled Joan to elect a confessor to serve her in Canterbury. The choice to employ a personal confessor might have been more practical in nature. Individuals trusted their confessors, and often employed them as secretaries. A confessor represented a confidante, holding an

28 Ibid.
intimate position in the family’s household. These requests for a personal confessor suggest that Joan regularly confessed, and that she desired the convenience of having a personal confessor. Even when Lady Mohun remained in one location, a personal confessor and secretary would have provided an additional convenience, as confession could be done at a time of her choosing outside of the parish church. Such a luxury would have made the act of confessing easier, while also demonstrating the Lady’s status. Joan need not visit the parish church to confess, but instead, she had the means to employ a confessor and she had the connections and status needed for her request to be approved by the pope. Furthermore, her personal confessor could provide extra services to her household, performing secretarial duties in addition to hearing confession. The ability to choose a confessor might have started Joan’s relationship with the Canterbury religious community. As a resident of the diocese of Canterbury, she could have selected the prior or one of its monks, establishing a reciprocal relationship that would later benefit Lady Mohun when negotiating for her place of burial. A personal confessor, then, provided Joan with a number of benefits including convenience, relationship building, and a public boost to her social status.

In addition to desiring a personal confessor, Lady Mohun requested another way to practice her religion outside of church. Through her benefactor, the Black Prince, Joan made a request to the pope for the use of a portable altar, which was approved in 1357.30 A grant for a portable altar provided the ability to celebrate mass anywhere.31 As Joan spent more time away from Dunster Castle, she traveled between court, Canterbury, and other locations.

The flexibility to hold mass with a portable altar would have enabled Joan to continue her religious observances while traveling and could demonstrate a personal desire to hold additional services in her household. Furthermore, this allowed Joan to avoid her own parish church and to live away from Dunster Castle. Employing a private confessor and possessing a portable altar portrayed Lady Mohun’s status to others, for she had the means to request and employ such luxuries associated with private worship, but it also allowed her to choose where she resided. Regardless of where she lived, she would be able to worship as she pleased. Yet Joan required the assistance of an intermediary, the Black Prince, to make this request of the pope. Although Lady Mohun had close connections to the court and royal family, she remained outside the upper echelons of the elite. The likelihood of a favorable opinion increased when made by a prominent individual, and Joan used this fact to her advantage by going through the Black Prince with these requests.

The use of a personal portable altar in the household became a way to control not only one’s own piety, but also that of one’s household and family members. In addition to possessing and using the items needed for personal worship, some families set aside spaces or chapels in their residences for such purposes. Permission was needed to formally celebrate mass in a specific space, although informal use of a space for religious purposes was

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32 High-ranking women did submit petitions to the pope in their own name during the fourteenth century. For example, Matilda de Lancaster (c. 1310-1377), countess of Ulster, asked that her confessor might provide forgiveness of her sins and those of her husband Ralph de Ufford (d. 1346) at their death, and for the ability to use a portable altar, both requests that were granted and recorded in 1343. Elizabeth de Bohun (1313-1356) similarly requested that her confessor absolve her of all her sins, while adding permission to use a portable altar for herself and her husband William de Bohun (c. 1312-1360), both of which were granted in 1343. Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland, Petitions to the Pope, A.D. 1342-1419, Vol. I, 27, 69.

33 Mertes, “The Household as a Religious Community,” in People, Politics and Community in the Later Middle Ages, 129.
common. As noted in an agreement between Reynold de Mohun II (d. 1257/8) and the Prior and Convent of Bath dating from 1254, mass could be celebrated by a “respectable secular chaplain, ‘in the upper chapel’ of Dunster Castle dedicated to St. Stephen.” Later records for Dunster Castle indicate that the castle had two active chapels, although it is uncertain when these chapels began to hold sanctioned services. The 1254 reference to using the upper chapel at Dunster for mass suggests that two chapels were present and used at the castle prior to this date. While residing at Dunster, Joan would have participated in religious observances in these chapels and enacted personal demonstrations of faith that she desired to continue during her time away. Gentry and noble houses during the fourteenth century would have generally had a space reserved for religious functions, with many having a space like the chapels at Dunster. The Stonor family, for example, had a private chapel at their residence where mass was celebrated from at least 1331. The existence of dedicated chapels at Dunster and at Stonor manor demonstrates the commonplace of religious worship in the household. Depending on a household’s status and wealth, dedicated space to religious devotion would have been much more modest. One did not need to be excessively wealthy or a member of the nobility to informally designate a space for worship. Through participating in these types of personal worship, Joan reflected the religious devotion of her peers and superiors.

34 History of Dunster, 31.
35 Mertes, “The Household as a Religious Community,” in People, Politics and Community in the Later Middle Ages, 124.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
Tomb Building and Patronage

Through such activities, Lady Mohun personalized her religious performance, making it work for her and her household. Such requests demonstrate the more private elements of religious practice. Yet Joan also participated publicly, specifically through giving gifts and funds to the church. Concerned with death and the afterlife, Joan focused much of her giving on the maintenance of her soul after death. During her lifetime, Joan planned carefully for her burial place, designing a tomb to be housed in Canterbury Cathedral near the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In making such arrangements, Joan chose a location distinct from those of her husband and natal family. Joan’s husband, John V, designated his place of burial as Bruton Priory, in Somersetshire, founded by his ancestor William de Mohun II (d. before 1155) in 1142.38 Bruton Priory was near to Dunster and the Mohuns had long had an association there, making it a likely choice for John V. But, it was a location that Joan avoided. Joan also chose a space away from her Burghersh relatives. Joan’s parents were buried in the Chapel of the Apostles at Grey Friars in London, while her father Bartholomew also had a cenotaph in Lincoln Cathedral near the altar of St. Catherine.39 Located nearby in Lincoln Cathedral is the tomb of Joan’s uncle Hugh Burghersh, Bishop of Lincoln, and a third tomb whose resident is unidentified, but is likely related to the Burghersh family, and could be Robert, Lord Burghersh, brother of Bartholomew and Hugh.40 Joan’s brother, Bartholomew the younger, was buried at Walsingham Priory, in North Norfolk.41

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40 Ibid., 123-127.
Bartholomew left clear directions in his will for his burial and funeral procession, desiring to be buried at Walsingham near the image of the Virgin Mary.\textsuperscript{42} Leaving nothing to chance, Bartholomew the younger provided instructions for how to transport his body to Walsingham quickly by chariot, adding that at each stop alms were to be provided to the poor that morning.\textsuperscript{43} The chariot and his body were to be draped only with a red cendall with the lion of the Burghersh arms, and his helmet.\textsuperscript{44} Such detailed instructions ensured that Bartholomew the younger’s wishes were known for his final journey to Walsingham, and it appears that his final requests were honored.\textsuperscript{45} A tomb believed to be Bartholomew the younger was excavated at Walsingham Priory in 1961 near the altar and a statue of the Virgin Mary.\textsuperscript{46} Although no identifying details remain on the tomb, its location in Walsingham Priory combined with additional historical evidence suggest that the excavated skeleton belonged to Bartholomew the younger.\textsuperscript{47} The Lady Mohun, then, might have been inspired by her brother’s clear instructions about his preferred burial location, and imitated them.

Joan made specific arrangements for her final resting place in Canterbury Cathedral and went to great lengths to secure the location of her tomb in a position of prominence.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Ibid. A cendall was a silk fabric. Bartholomew thus requested a red silk garment with the Burghersh heraldry to be draped over the chariot and his body.
\item \textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 255, 278.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 285-287. An examination of the skeleton believed to be Bartholomew the younger provides much detail about the knight. Bartholomew was taller than most contemporary males, and demonstrating his activities as a knight, his right arm was longer and larger than his left likely “due to increased functional demands on the right arm.” The evidence that remains in his skeleton demonstrate the physical toll of serving as a knight.
\end{itemize}
Canterbury Cathedral was used as a place of burial for its archbishops and some priors. Members of the laity were not allowed burial in the cathedral between 1066 and 1375, until the agreement allowing the Black Prince’s burial in the crypt. In spite of the agreed upon arrangements, the Black Prince was interred instead near the shrine of St. Thomas in the Trinity chapel in 1376. Joan secured only the second agreement with the monks at Canterbury for the burial of a layperson in the cathedral. Extraordinarily, this request by a widow who existed close to the royal family but who did not belong to its ranks, and who also did not belong to the upper echelons of English society, was approved. Joan dedicated significant resources over many years to Canterbury Cathedral. Such a generous and lasting relationship likely convinced the priors to grant her request for burial in the undercroft.

To receive this honor, Joan established an agenda of providing gifts and money to Canterbury long before her death, giving for a period of over twenty years. An entry in the Treasurer’s Account from 1371-1372 recorded a gift of 33l. 13s. 4d. from Joan for the cathedral undercroft chapel. Joan gave two additional gifts of 20l. to the cathedral during the 1370s. Aside from monetary gifts, Joan provided for an iron grille at the cathedral, paid for in 1378-1380. Such gifts to the cathedral did not come without their immediate benefits.

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49 Ibid., 246.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
54 Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, “Mother or Stepmother to History? Joan de Mohun and her Chronicle,” 313.
The Treasurer’s Account noted that mass was to be said for Joan in the crypt during the 1370s, presumably a reward for her generosity. As such, Joan received an immediate benefit for her giving while also building a positive relationship with the priors, Richard Gillingham (prior 1370-1376), Stephen Monegeham (prior 1376-1377), John Finch (prior 1377-1391), and Thomas Chillenden (prior 1391-1411), and with the Canterbury monks. Two of these priors, John Finch and Thomas Chillenden, were especially devoted to the building and renovating of the cathedral. Both Prior John and Prior Thomas focused on the revival of the monastic dormitory and the building of a new cathedral nave, among other building projects. For his building and restoration efforts, Prior Thomas was later remembered as “that greatest builder of a prior that ever was in Christ’s (sic.) Church.” The timing for Joan, then, could not have been better, as the ambitions of Prior John and Prior Thomas required funds for completion. Joan’s timely giving to Canterbury must have contributed to establishing a positive relationship with Prior John and Prior Thomas. Lady Mohun was thus actively involved in Canterbury by the 1370s and she repeatedly provided funds for the cathedral and the building projects of its priors. These donations kept Joan in the minds, and prayers, of the local community, linking her to the community of Canterbury.

58 Ibid.
and the cathedral itself. Joan established her name and reputation through these gifts to
Canterbury Cathedral.

Aside from the saying of mass for the Lady Mohun in the 1370s, there is not a record
that she received any other immediate benefits for her generosity. This giving, however,
likely put Joan in the good graces of the Canterbury priors. Joan skillfully built up this
goodwill and used it to make a large request in the form of asking for space for her tomb.
Joan finalized arrangements for her tomb in an agreement with Prior Thomas Chillenden on
18 June 1395. Negotiations surrounding this agreement are not known. The content of the
agreement, however, provides Joan with a great reward in the form of her chosen space in
Canterbury Cathedral. A copy of this deed establishing Joan’s chantry survives in London,
BL MS Arundel 68, f. 61. Visually the deed is striking, suggesting the importance of its
contents. The copy of the deed contains a decorated initial “O” surrounding the combined
arms of the Mohun and Burghersh families, representing Joan's heraldic crest. Red, blue,
black, and gold-leaf color the “O,” while a vine border of the same colors edges the left, top,
and bottom of the initial page of the text. The elaborate ornamentation shows the importance
of this agreement.

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59 Jennifer C. Ward, “English Noblewomen and the Local Community in the Later Middle
Ages,” in Medieval Women in their Communities, ed. Diane Watt (Toronto: University of
Toronto Press, 1997), 195.
Woodruff contains a translation of the ordination deed for Joan’s chantry.
61 Heath, “Tombscape: The Tomb of Lady Joan de Mohun in the Crypt of Canterbury
Cathedral,” 191. Images for select folios of Arundel 68, including the copy of the deed for
Joan’s chantry, can be viewed on the BL’s Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, at:
https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7308&CollID=20&
The content of the deed clearly establishes Lady Mohun’s wishes for her chantry and lists the gifts that she provided to the cathedral to fund and fulfill her wishes. In return for a chantry, Joan agreed to give 350m. to the cathedral along with a bed, a coverlet, a tester, three curtains, a traverse, four cushions, a striped red and black velvet cloth to make vestments for a chaplain, a deacon, and a subdeacon, two gold cloth copes, a missal, and a chalice, totaling 67l.62 Funds from her manor at Selgrave paid for the chantry, and after her death, Selgrave itself was granted to the prior and Canterbury Cathedral, a gift that was affirmed by a license from Richard II.63 Joan thus agreed to provide 233l. 6s. 4d. in cash to the cathedral, with material gifts totaling 67l. Of the known donations that Joan previously made to Canterbury, she gave 73l. 13s. 4d., while providing funds for an iron grill, cost unknown. In total, the known gifts that the Lady Mohun provided to Canterbury Cathedral during her lifetime equaled 373l. 19s. 8d. Joan’s husband John V might have been a spendthrift whose habits likely encouraged the sale of Dunster during the 1370s, but Joan herself seems to have built up holdings during her widowhood, allowing her to give generously to Canterbury Cathedral. As evidenced through her long-standing donations, Joan paid handsomely to establish her chantry there, efforts that ultimately paid off.

62 Heath, “Tombscape: The Tomb of Lady Joan de Mohun in the Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral,” 169. In this gift, Joan provided bedding, including a tester, which included the bed frame and canopy. Joan also provided a traverse which was a screen or partition to create an enclosed, private space.

63 Ibid. Details on the arrangements that gave Selgrave to the priory at Canterbury are recorded in a copy of the indenture found in Lambeth Palace MS 20 f. 227v. The copy of this indenture also contains an illuminated initial “O,” although it contains floral images colored in red, blue, green, and orange. The copy also contains a floral illuminated border. The inclusion of such decorations demonstrates the importance of the document in providing for Canterbury Cathedral.
Leaving nothing to chance, Joan detailed all of her specific requests in the indenture. The agreement confirmed that Joan selected the place for her burial, in a tomb built near the altar of Mary in the undercroft of Canterbury Cathedral. Joan desired her tomb to be located in this spot, and included “that the body of the said lady, when it shall have been buried there, shall not be amoved nor the name of the tomb changed, but shall be preserver’d honourably.” Joan clearly preferred that her tomb remain in her chosen location, but contemporary events might also have encouraged her to include this stipulation. It has been argued that the Black Prince was initially interred in the Lady Chapel, located in the undercroft, but was later moved to the cathedral’s main floor. The 1376 will of the Black Prince requests that his body be buried “in the midst of the chapel of Our Lady Undercroft directly before the altar.” The tomb of the Black Prince is instead located in the Trinity Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral. If the Black Prince was relocated from the undercroft, Lady Mohun witnessed this relocation, and it might have inspired her to include instructions that her tomb would not be moved in the future.

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64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
67 A translated copy of the Black Prince’s will can be found in the Appendix: John Harvey, *The Black Prince and His Age* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1976), 160.
69 Robertson, “The Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral, Part II,” 533. Bodies could be moved for a variety of reasons after burial, and this did occur during the Middle Ages. Joan may have recognized the presumptuous nature of her burial location and did not want to be moved if someone of a higher station requested her location in the undercroft chapel. For additional information on the movement of bodies after burial see: Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England 1066-1550* (London: Routledge, 1997), 85. It remains possible that the tomb of the Black Prince was relocated from the undercroft, however, a recent study of the composition of the effigy of the Black Prince using a handheld X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF), places the construction in the mid-to-late 1380s. If this later date of...
In addition to the specifications that Joan made for her place of burial, she also arranged for maintenance of the chantry and for benefits for her soul. The agreement stipulated that a Canterbury monk would be chosen to provide daily celebrations for Richard II, Joan, her daughter Elizabeth, and her niece Elizabeth Despenser (c. 1342-1402) during their lifetimes, and remembrances for their souls after their death. Furthermore, Joan requested prayers for the souls of some who had previously died, including John, two Edwards, Bartholomew, Queen Philippa, and Queen Anne. Joan provided 40s. paid at the feasts of St. Michael and at Easter from the profits of Selgrave, as payment for the monks’ prayers. After her death, Joan further requested that she be remembered on the anniversary of her death “with *placebo* and *dirige* in the night; and mass of *Requiem* on the day following; with the other solemnities thereto pertaining.” In this way, Joan provided for the yearly remembrance of her soul, while lessening any time spent suffering in Purgatory through the saying of these yearly prayers.

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construction is correct, then the tomb of the Black Prince was not moved but was instead placed in a more prominent position in the church than the undercroft, although this location was against the wishes of the Black Prince as described in his will. See: Jessica Barker, Graeme McArthur, and Emily Pegues, “‘Fully Armed in Plate of War’: Making the Effigy of the Black Prince,” *The Burlington Magazine* 163 (November 2021): 997-1009.

71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid. Italics in the translated copy. The Office of the Dead consisted of prayers said for the soul of a deceased individual, assisting them through Purgatory and helping them to reach Heaven. *Placebo* represented the vespers of the dead, prayers said during the canonical hour of prayer in the evening. *Dirige* was the first word of the Office of the Dead, requesting “*Dirige, Domine Deus meus, in conspectus tuo viam meam.*” (Translated as “Direct my path, Lord, my God, in your sight.”) Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England*, 43-44, 58. See also: Christopher Corèdon with Ann Williams, *A Dictionary of Medieval Terms and Phrases* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), 102, 219, 289.
remembered with 8s. 4d. being distributed among 100 paupers.\textsuperscript{75} Joan included 5s. to be paid to a clerk to maintain her tomb, keeping it “clean and seemly throughout the whole year.”\textsuperscript{76} For her final requests, Joan provided 6s. 8d. for the monk who celebrated mass on the anniversary of her death, while she allotted 3s. 4d. for the deacon who read the Gospel on the anniversary of her death, paid from the profits of Selgrave.\textsuperscript{77} To ensure the monks’ adherence to all of Joan’s wishes the indenture was entered into the cathedral martyrlogy, with instructions that it should be read yearly on the date of her death.\textsuperscript{78} Knowing that she wanted to be buried at Canterbury, Lady Mohun made meticulous arrangements with the cathedral monks years before her death.

**Space and Placement of Joan’s Tomb in Canterbury Cathedral**

With arrangements for the chantry finalized in 1395, Joan built her tomb between 1396 and 1399, completing it several years before her death in 1404.\textsuperscript{79} From its appearance and scope, Lady Mohun commissioned an imposing memorial. As established in Joan’s arrangement with Canterbury, her tomb resides near the undercroft chapel of the Virgin Mary. Joan rests a level below the shrine of Thomas Becket, although she is not directly beneath the saint’s resting place.\textsuperscript{80} In its current state, Joan’s tomb and effigy are badly damaged.\textsuperscript{81} Early descriptions of the tomb suggest it was damaged by the eighteenth century.

\textsuperscript{75} Woodruff, “The Chapel of Our Lady in the Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral,” 170.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 171.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{79} Heath, “Tombscape: The Tomb of Lady Joan de Mohun in the Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral,” 193.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 187.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 194.
Edward Hasted in his 1800 publication described Joan’s monument as “handsome,” while also noting that “this has, as well as the rest of the monuments in this part of the undercroft, been from time to time much defaced by the carelessness of the workmen belonging to the church, who make this place the common repository for their materials, ladders and other such like unwieldy lumber; of course it is suffered to remain in a very filthy condition.”

Nineteenth-century drawings in Stothard illustrate a face missing its features, while showing that the effigy is missing its arms and hands. Such damage had been done long before the nineteenth-century drawings documenting the tomb. Based on such descriptions, Lady Mohun’s tomb was damaged and forgotten by this time.

Despite its decay, the scale and grandeur of Joan’s tomb can be traced through an examination of the monument as it exists today and through surviving historical descriptions. Diane Heath provides a detailed inventory of Joan’s tomb, noting that it currently measures 240cm high, 215cm long, and 85cm wide. Stothard reported in the early nineteenth century that Joan’s effigy existed on an “altar-tomb under a gothic canopy, adorned with pinnacles and arches terminating in corbelled points.” Later in the nineteenth century, Robertson described the features of Joan’s tomb, noting that the canopy contains carved roses and a...
lion’s head. Furthermore, the vaulting of the Lady Chapel contained elaborate colorful decorations, including a number of gilded molded suns and stars atop a blue backdrop, although some of the colors had already faded or oxidized to black.

The canopy provided cover for Lady Mohun’s effigy which rests below. Robertson noted that Joan’s head reclines upon cushions, adorned by carved stone angels on either side. Joan’s effigy wears the fashion popular at court during the late fourteenth century. Joan’s hair is arranged in the nebulé style, which Nigel Saul describes as being popular in the 1380s where “the face was framed by veils starched into wavy flounces, with smaller flounces lower down arranged on the shoulders.” Furthermore, Joan wears a jeweled net, styled in a square around her face that grazes her chin. As for her clothing, Joan models a cote-hardi, a waistcoat or vest with sides that are cutaway, revealing a jeweled girdle beneath. Joan’s neck is exposed by the wide neck of her dress, and her waistcoat contains ten buttons. Each of the buttons contain “a central heraldic ‘lion statant’ motif, a very distinctive royal device used by John of Gaunt and his brother, the Black Prince.” Knowing of the gift-giving between Joan and John of Gaunt, such imagery suggests her position in

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88 Ibid., 535-536.
89 Ibid., 534.
94 Based on the illustration found in Stothard, The Monumental Effigies of Great Britain.
95 Heath, “Tombscape: The Tomb of Lady Joan de Mohun in the Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral,” 196.
Gaunt’s affinity, while further alluding to her relationship with the Black Prince and to his son, Richard II. Joan’s close relationship with Gaunt especially benefitted her during her lifetime, and such imagery would have signaled her support into eternity. Under the waistcoat Joan wears a full-length kirtle, and a cloak completes her ensemble. See Figure 5, Effigy of Lady Mohun, Canterbury Cathedral.

Joan chose an image for her effigy that placed her alone, dressed in clothing fashionable at court during the latter part of the fourteenth century. The Lady Mohun likely chose the style of her headdress and clothing carefully, creating an image that demonstrated her wealth and position in English society. This was not the dress of a pious widow, but of an important member of court. Joan thus connected herself to court through the style of her dress, while resting in a locale entirely separate from the tombs of her husband and other family members. She does not present herself as a widow or as a devoted wife; she is instead presented as a courtier. This focus on Joan as an individual is further emphasized through the inscription around her tomb which reads “por dieu priez por l’ame Johane Burwaschs, qe feut Dame de Mohun.” Joan thus identified primarily with her birth name and family, while using the title received through her marriage to bolster her status. Just as Joan created an image of herself and the Mohun family through her likely commissioning of the Mohun Chronicle, in her tomb design she presented an image of piety, wealth, and political connections through the imagery and positioning of her effigy. See Figure 6, Overview of the tomb of Lady Mohun, Canterbury Cathedral.

97 Stothard, The Monumental Effigies of Great Britain, 67. Translated, the inscription reads “pray for the soul of Joan Burgasch who was Lady de Mohun.”
98 See Chapter Three for the discussion of Joan’s created imagery in the Mohun Chronicle.
Stone effigies depicting women alone, representing wealth and status, increased in popularity during the early fourteenth century and can help fill in the details now missing from Lady Mohun’s tomb. One such example is an effigy of Elizabeth de Montfort, Lady Montacute (d. 1354), found in St. Frideswide’s, Oxford. Built earlier in the fourteenth century, Lady Montacute’s effigy rests with her head on pillows, hands joined in prayer, and a dog at her feet. See Figure 7, Tomb of Elizabeth de Montfort, Lady Montacute, Christ Church Cathedral. Similar in structure and style to Joan’s tomb in Canterbury is one presumed to be of Euphemia, mother of Ralph, lord Neville (d. before 1331). Located at Staindrop, county Durham, this effigy includes a canopy overhead, while the lady’s head rests on pillows supported by angels with a dog and lion near her feet. Euphemia’s hands are also clasped in prayer. See Figure 8, Effigy of Euphemia Neville, Staindrop, county Durham. It appears that stylistically Joan selected a model popular with some of her contemporaries. Joan may have personalized some elements of her tomb and effigy, but she largely adhered to a structure of tomb popular with elite women in England at that time.

As Joan’s posture on her effigy mirrored that of Lady Montacute’s effigy, so too did her manner of dress reflect trends employed by other women in their funerary images. Lady Montacute’s effigy wears a sleeveless garment fastened with ornamental buttons in the front,

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100 Anne McGee Morganstern, “The Tomb as Prompter for the Chantry: Four Examples from Late Medieval England,” in *Memory and the Medieval Tomb*, ed. Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo and Carol Stamatis Pendergast (London: Ashgate Publishing), 82. St. Frideswide’s was re-consecrated as Christ Church Cathedral after the Dissolution.
101 Ibid., 82-83.
102 Ibid., 81.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
while a garment underneath furnishes the sleeves and an additional pattern. A mantle decorated with roundels and *fleurs-de-lys* completes her outfit. The attention to detail in the represented costume demonstrated more than just fashion sense. Clothing illustrated the social standing of the individual. Decisions by the Lady Mohun on her effigy’s attire supported the image that she worked so hard to construct during her lifetime. The establishment of this image, then, not only demonstrated Joan’s piety, but also created an intimate effigy, representing her personal taste, fashion sense, and self-definition.

Of Joan’s three daughters, Philippa’s tomb survives and rivals that of her mother in presentation and location. Philippa created an effigy similar to that of her mother while also choosing a prominent burial place for herself, in the Chapel of St. Nicholas in Westminster Abbey. See Figure 9, Overview of tomb of Philippa de Mohun, Duchess of York, Westminster Abbey. Philippa reclines on a pillow where she is dressed wearing a long cloak and widow’s hood. Her hands, likely clasped in prayer, are also missing. See Figure 10, Effigy of Philippa de Mohun, Duchess of York, Westminster Abbey. A wooden canopy, with the underside painted blue with golden stars and additional images of God and the

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106 Ibid.
107 Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages*, 301.
110 Ibid.
Crucifixion, is now destroyed.\(^{111}\) Such imagery, including the painted sky and stars along with the canopy mimics the structure of Lady Mohun’s tomb in the undercroft at Canterbury Cathedral. The Duchess of York might have been inspired by the tomb that her mother created, as evidenced by the inscription on her tomb that names her as both daughter and (possibly) wife, with Stothard recording its text as “Philippa, filia et cohaeres Johannis D’ni Mohun de Dunster, uxor Edwardi Ducis Eboracensis, moritur anno D’ni M.CCCC.XXXXIII.”\(^{112}\) This familial heritage continues on Philippa’s tomb, as the pedestal is wrapped with coats of arms including Mohun, York, Fitzwalter, Golafre, and Burghersh.\(^{113}\) Philippa, then, embraced the heritage of her paternal and maternal families and those of her affinal relations, including all on her final resting place. Joan, by contrast, connected herself to the royal household and Lancastrians, placing a secondary emphasis on her familial relations.

Stylistically, Lady Mohun commissioned a tomb and effigy that mirrored her female contemporaries who chose to be represented alone. The chosen location for Joan’s tomb, however, remains unique and requires additional discussion. When not at court, Joan spent much of her time residing in and around Canterbury, a personal preference, that might also relate to its connection to her natal family and her personally held properties. Joan’s surname,

\(^{111}\) Neale and Brayley, *The History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St. Peter, Westminster*, 165.

\(^{112}\) Ibid. Translated, the inscription reads “Philippa, daughter and coheiress of John de Mohun of Dunster, wife of Edward, duke of York, who died in the year of Our Lord 1433.” The year of Philippa’s death is incorrect in Stothard, as she died in 1431. Later descriptions of Philippa’s tomb, however, indicate that “uxor Edwardi Ducis Eboracensis” is missing, and that there is no evidence that this was ever a part of the text. See: Neale and Brayley, *The History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St. Peter, Westminster*, 165.

\(^{113}\) Neale and Brayley, *The History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St. Peter, Westminster*, 165.
Burghersh, references the town of Burwash, county Sussex, some forty miles from Canterbury. Leeds Castle, which Joan held near the end of her life from a grant by Queen Anne, was similarly located a short distance from Canterbury. Canterbury was thus a natural choice for Joan’s tomb. Burial in Canterbury Cathedral for the laity, however, was an uncommon occurrence when Joan began making her arrangements; her admittance into the cathedral represented a distinct honor, as burial space in the cathedral remained reserved for religious men and a few important men like the Black Prince.

Furthermore, Joan requested a space in the undercroft near the altar of the Virgin Mary. Joan did not specify her reasoning for this location near the altar to the Virgin Mary, but requests to be buried near the altar of the Virgin Mary appear to have been popular during the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in England. The symbolism of the Virgin Mary, however, might have appealed personally to Joan. For example, the image of the Virgin Mary as intercessor, often portrayed through her efforts to intervene in favor of the fate of an individual’s soul, might have resonated with her. During her time as a courtier, the Lady Mohun actively negotiated for the benefit of those close to her, requesting favor from Richard II. Intercession was thus a familiar role for Joan. The Lady Mohun would also...

115 History of Dunster, 54.
117 Nicolas, Testamenta Vetusta, vol. I, 77. In a study of 4,700 wills regarding request for burial places in 1389-1475 in the diocesan Exchequer Court of York, Christopher Daniell found that the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary was the most popular location for those requesting burial near an altar. Daniell, Death and Burial in Medieval England, 88-90.
have wanted the Virgin Mary to intercede for her, embodying the idea of the medieval cult of saints that the saint would protect and reward an individual for her devotion.\textsuperscript{119} Joan might have selected a powerful ally by connecting herself with the Virgin Mary through her burial location.

The popularity of the altar of the Virgin Mary for burial, along with Joan’s likely reverence for the saint, make this a natural choice for Joan’s tomb. On a practical level, the monks were willing to grant this space to Joan as it was in the undercroft and not on the main floor of the cathedral.\textsuperscript{120} From Joan’s perspective, this was space that was available to her because of her generosity to the cathedral’s building projects. An added benefit existed in the fact that she would be near an altar of the most important saint in the Roman church.

Although the cathedral chapter might have been happy to allow Joan access to the space granted to her in Canterbury Cathedral, later observers decried her receiving such space and her placement in the undercroft chapel. Robertson, in his description of Joan’s tomb written in 1880, expressed his negative opinion regarding its placement, noting that Joan’s tomb “has utterly destroyed the symmetry of the east end of the Lady Chapel,” disrupting portions of the screenwork previously associated with the Black Prince and his tomb.\textsuperscript{121} Furthermore, Robertson opined how “this tomb palpably breaks the continuity of the original ornament of the chapel,” while adding that “close examination of this doorway, and of the vaulting shaft beside it, as well as of the corresponding shaft west of the tomb, will at once convince any practised (\textit{sic.}) observer that the tomb was inserted, to the great detriment of the shaft-caps which were much hacked to admit it; and to the destruction of the Black

\textsuperscript{119} Duffy, \textit{The Stripping of the Altars}, 161.
\textsuperscript{120} Woodman, “Kinship and Architectural Patronage in Late Medieval Canterbury,” 246.
\textsuperscript{121} Robertson, “The Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral, Part II,” 533.
Robertson thus presents Joan’s tomb, and by association Joan herself, as an intruder into space where she did not belong, as well as destroying the harmony of the space as it existed prior to her appearance. For Robertson, Lady Mohun seemingly spoiled the former grandeur of the Black Prince’s supposed monument in the undercroft. Robertson clearly questioned the prominent position that Joan’s tomb occupied because she was not a member of the royal family, she was female, and she might have displaced that of the Black Prince. Regardless of Robertson’s overall negative opinion of its style and placement, he recognized, begrudgingly, that Joan’s tomb warranted discussion because of its location in Canterbury Cathedral.

Not as brazen as Robertson’s commentary, more recent descriptions of Joan’s tomb and its placement similarly question its belonging. In describing the structure of Lady Mohun’s tomb, Christopher Wilson noted that “the construction of the lierne-vaulted and gabled canopy entailed destroying and replacing in near-replica the very recently installed screen-work on the south side of the chapel.” Here Joan is presented as not only destroying ornamentation in the chapel, but also as causing a gaudy reconstruction. Wilson’s descriptions of the tomb suggest an amateur nature, with craftsmen forcibly removing structures to accommodate the building of Joan’s tomb. Although not as overt as Robertson’s discussion a century earlier, Wilson also suggests that Joan’s wealth was not sufficient to make the space beautiful. As a result, the Lady Mohun is presented as an interloper who does not belong. The loss of the original architectural features of the undercroft chapel are

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122 Ibid., 534.
prioritized, while the reasoning behind Joan’s choosing such a location for her tomb is completely ignored.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century commentators, therefore, present Joan’s tomb as disruptive, prioritizing the previous architectural plan, while the addition of the tomb of a woman of questionable social status harmed the space that she occupied. Such arguments suggest that Joan might have been able to buy this space because of her generosity to Canterbury, but this did not necessarily make her a worthy occupant to modern eyes, although this was clearly apropos to the monks of Canterbury. A further examination of the features of Joan’s tomb and its placement, however, suggest that Joan was politically canny when choosing this location and the features on her effigy. In this way, Joan exhibited agency through her selective choices. Joan’s effigy becomes imbued with political choices as well, performing religious devotion while illustrating the importance that she placed on the created performance of piety through the positioning and features of her tomb and effigy.\textsuperscript{124} The totality of Joan’s tomb, then, demonstrates her quest for space while seeking to validate her wealth and position in English society.

Just as Joan existed on the fringe of royal society, so too does her tomb rest on the edge of some of the most sacred spaces in Canterbury Cathedral. Joan’s tomb lies on the margin of the undercroft chapel.\textsuperscript{125} It infringes into the space, while not fully entering the chapel. Lady Mohun’s tomb furthermore rests on a level beneath the shrine of Thomas Becket, yet she is not immediately below the saint’s shrine.\textsuperscript{126} By proximity, Joan is close to

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\textsuperscript{125} Heath, “Tombscape: The Tomb of Lady Joan de Mohun in the Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral,” 192.  
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
these holy spaces, although she does not penetrate the most sacred. Heath argues, however, that this location on the fringe was a benefit, particularly in relation to the altar in the undercroft chapel.\textsuperscript{127} From this location to the side, Joan’s effigy had an unobstructed view of the altar of the Virgin.\textsuperscript{128} A more central location in the chapel would have prevented such a view. This placement would have allowed her effigy to see the altar, while also enabling her to observe her chantry priests raising the host at the altar.\textsuperscript{129} Gilchrist notes that in some cases “religious imagery was placed over the tomb in a position that could only be viewed by the effigy, as if it were a sensory person.”\textsuperscript{130} Open eyes, along with a view reserved for the effigy, created a feeling that the body was alive and actively watching. The damage to the face on Joan’s effigy limits the visibility of such an image. But the fact remains that Joan might have chosen this location to the side of the undercroft chapel, electing for a line of sight directly to the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary, rather than occupying a position of marginally more prominence at the center of the chapel. If Joan placed value on this specific view, she must have believed that it would benefit her soul throughout eternity. In this way, Joan embraced a position of marginality and structured the gaze of her effigy to maximize the perceived benefit. As Joan embraced her marginality to manage her political and social affairs, so too did she use this fringe position to her advantage for her eternal well-being.

Lady Mohun thus convinced the Canterbury priors to allow her to inhabit sacred and privileged space. On the surface, Joan received space on the margins, close to the altar of the Virgin Mary but not fully in the undercroft chapel. Yet in viewing the symbolism of Joan’s

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 192-193.
\textsuperscript{130} Gilchrist, \textit{Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course}, 198-199.
effigy, taking into account its gaze and its position in the cathedral, we see how Joan used this position on the margin to her eternal and political advantage. Joan’s effigy gained a view of the Virgin Mary’s altar, while occupying her chosen location in the cathedral.

**Praying for Salvation as an Act of Patronage**

As part of her arrangements with Canterbury, monks were to provide acts of remembrance for Joan, including saying mass and prayers. A main objective of establishing a chantry was to provide for prayers for the souls of the dead, easing any time spent suffering in Purgatory. Like her contemporaries, Joan requested prayers for her soul and for select family members or friends. Those whom Joan chose to include in her requests for prayers while alive and after death further demonstrate her familial and political connections, while also suggesting those who were personally important to her. Generally, the requestor limited the list of names for whom prayers were to be said, ensuring the effectiveness of the prayers. The number of individuals for whom Joan requested prayers was relatively small, indicating that she included only those who mattered most to her. Importantly, Joan included members of the royal family, showing her political loyalties. Lady Mohun requested prayers for Richard II, two Edwards (probably Edward III and the Black Prince), Queen Philippa, and Queen Anne. This was a common request to remember the monarch and his family in prayers. The inclusion of Edward III and the Black Prince further supports Joan’s political savvy, as she and her family served Edward III and in the retinue of the Black Prince. Her

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132 Ibid., 14.
political loyalty remained with them in eternity, remembering that these individuals provided Joan with the patronage needed to exist at court, away from Dunster, during her widowhood.

As for immediate family members, Lady Mohun included Elizabeth, her eldest daughter, and her husband, John V. Joan’s two youngest daughters, Maud and Philippa, were not mentioned. Joan similarly did not include Maud in her final testament, probably because she predeceased her mother in 1397 before its writing. Philippa’s absence in Joan’s request for remembrance is curious. Joan’s will lists Philippa and her husband, Edward, the duke of York, before Elizabeth, demonstrating her preference for this pair at her death. Both Edward and Philippa also received valuable items at Joan’s death. Edward received a *Legend of the Saints* and a book with painted pictures, while Philippa received Joan’s blessing and her best *rubrum*, or red wine. Philippa and Edward were not yet married when Joan finalized arrangements with the Canterbury monks regarding her chantry and the maintenance of her soul in 1395. At this time, Philippa was married to her second husband, Sir John Golafre, who died in 1396. Philippa’s absence in the Canterbury arrangements could indicate her mother’s current attitude towards her youngest daughter, an opinion that must have changed by the time of her death. It is possible that Joan might not have approved of Philippa’s marriage to her second husband, causing strife between the two. Lady Mohun’s opinions of her daughters clearly vacillated, as she included remembrances for her daughter Elizabeth in the Canterbury arrangements, while stressing frustration with her eldest daughter

136 *Somerset Medieval Wills, 1501-1530*, 303.
137 Ibid.
138 Wogan-Browne, “Mother or Stepmother to History? Joan de Mohun and her Chronicle” 310.
in her will. Joan bequeathed Elizabeth a cross “which I used to say I liked the best of all,” and a *Legend of the Saints*.

Elizabeth’s decreased stature behind her younger sister and Joan’s additional commentary suggest a shifting of Joan’s preference for her two surviving daughters before her death. This ranking demonstrates that the Lady Mohun was greatly concerned with status, applying such elements to her personal relationships with her daughters. Possibly in accordance with Philippa’s elevated rank through her marriage to the duke of York, Joan included Philippa above Elizabeth in her will. The items that Joan gave to Elizabeth, however, were more personal. Receiving a formerly favored cross and a copy of the *Legend of the Saints* had more sentimental value than wine. Joan further included a request for prayers for the soul of her husband John V. Although Joan did not want to be buried with her husband, she remembered maintenance of his soul.

Lady Mohun’s bequests of a copy of the *Legend of the Saints*, one to her daughter Elizabeth and the other to her son-in-law the duke of York, provide additional information about her piety and her social standing. Devotional literature gave women another way to privately engage with religious material.

Joan possessed two copies of the *Legend of the Saints*, demonstrating that it must have been a personal favorite and that she regularly read it during her lifetime. As she desired private acts of worship through a personal confessor and portable altar, Joan read about the saints. The English titles of the book, too, suggest that they were in the vernacular, a common trend for female medieval book owners. The possession and willing of books to family members, especially to a daughter, places Joan in a similar

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139 *Somerset Medieval Wills, 1501-1530*, 303.
142 Ibid., 760.
position as her peers. Books constituted luxury and expensive items during the fourteenth century, limiting their purchase to members of the elite.\textsuperscript{143} Elite women also regularly left books to other women, with mothers often giving religious texts to their daughters.\textsuperscript{144} This passed knowledge and the ability to participate in private forms of worship to the next generation. Through her ownership and gifting of books, Lady Mohun showed her piety and her membership in the elite as she was able to participate in such activities that were important amongst her peers.

Joan included two additional individuals from her natal family for the Canterbury monks to remember, requesting that prayers be said for the soul of her brother Bartholomew, and for her niece Elizabeth Despenser.\textsuperscript{145} Joan must have enjoyed a positive relationship with Bartholomew’s daughter Elizabeth, for Joan similarly included her niece in her will, providing a bed of green silk and all its apparel.\textsuperscript{146} Lastly, Joan included her brother Bartholomew the younger, further suggesting a close relationship between Joan and her brother’s family.\textsuperscript{147} Listed in Joan’s arrangement with Canterbury were those she enjoyed or admired during her lifetime. As evidenced by those close family members who were excluded, Lady Mohun prioritized her most intimate relationships. She included those who bolstered her image because of their rank, while adding some who were personally important to her. A relationship by blood alone did not constitute a reason for inclusion in either the remembrances at her chantry or in Joan’s final will.

\begin{center}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 747.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 749.
\item \textsuperscript{145} Woodruff, “The Chapel of Our Lady in the Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral,” 170.
\item \textsuperscript{146} \textit{Somerset Medieval Wills, 1501-1530}, 303.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Woodruff, “The Chapel of Our Lady in the Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral,” 170.
\end{itemize}
\end{center}
Joan’s Final Days and Her Relationship with the Priors and Canons of Canterbury Cathedral

Lady Mohun remained in Canterbury after 1395, and her connection to the religious community continued, for her will records that it was written from Meister Omers on 2 October 1404, a location that was on church grounds.\(^\text{148}\) Utilized as a site of hospitality, Meister Omers catered to the honored guests of the cathedral’s prior.\(^\text{149}\) Joan’s residence at Meister Omers demonstrates her lengthy and continued preference for Canterbury Cathedral.\(^\text{150}\) Moreover, her establishment at Meister Omers suggests that the prior held Joan in high regard, as it was reserved only for the most honored guests. Joan remembered this final kindness, ordering the executors of her will to make an inventory of her goods and pay her final debts, with the remainder going to the church at Canterbury.\(^\text{151}\) Joan named Prior Thomas Chillenden, with whom she made arrangements for her tomb several years earlier, and Thomas Arundel (1353-1414), Archbishop of Canterbury, as two of her executors.\(^\text{152}\) Joan’s relationship with Prior Thomas in particular resulted from her association with the cathedral. Details on Prior Thomas’ background are sparse, although it is likely that his family took their name from Chillenden, Kent.\(^\text{153}\) Elected as prior of Christ Church, Canterbury in 1391, Chillenden would have known Lady Mohun, as she actively gave to the

\(^{148}\) *Somerset Medieval Wills, 1501-1530*, 302.


\(^{151}\) *Somerset Medieval Wills, 1501-1530*, 303.

\(^{152}\) Ibid.

church during his residency. The Lady Mohun’s relationship with Thomas Arundel went beyond Canterbury Cathedral. Joan was a distant relative of the archbishop, as her daughter Maud’s first husband, John, Lord Strange of Knockin, was a cousin to Arundel, and the Mohuns were also distantly related to the Fitzalans through the Mohuns’ Ottery branch of the family. Additionally, the archbishop’s father, Richard Fitzalan, earl of Arundel (c. 1313-1376) assisted in the legal maneuverings to place the majority of Mohun lands in Joan’s hands. Lady Mohun, too, chose individuals with whom she must have interacted frequently. Leeds Castle, which Joan held near the end of her life, was located near Arundel Castle and Lewes Castle. Such familial connections, in addition to the contact Lady Mohun had with the Archbishop and Prior Thomas through Canterbury Cathedral, made them natural choices as executors. Joan entrusted those at Canterbury to finalize her worldly assets, while also believing that they would maintain her soul through eternity.

154 Ibid. Furthermore, Prior Thomas served as a treasurer of Canterbury Cathedral, and he brought this expertise to his position as prior. As such, Prior Thomas was intimately aware of the finances of the cathedral, and he knew who supported his building project.


157 The Fitzalans gained a large part of the Warenne properties, including Lewes Castle, through marriage. The Mohuns were cousins to the Warennes in addition to being distant relatives of the Fitzalans. Matt Raven, “The earls of Edward III and the Polity: the earls of Arundel and Northampton in the Localities, 1330-60,” Historical Research 92, no. 258 (November 2019): 695.
The trust that Joan exhibited in Chillenden seemingly extended beyond her religious affairs and included her legal maneuverings. In a 1406 plea, Prior Thomas indicated that Joan entrusted him with a chest containing documentation and charters regarding the sale of Dunster Castle. In this plea, Prior Thomas explained that the Lady Mohun provided him instructions as to whom should receive this chest: her daughters, if Sir Hugh Luttrell did not make a claim, to Sir Hugh if the Mohun daughters did not make a claim, and to the victor if there was a legal dispute between Sir Hugh and the Mohun daughters. The opening of the chest revealed documents that supported Sir Hugh and the Luttrell claim to Dunster. Such directives demonstrate the level of trust and the regard that Joan had for Prior Thomas. She believed that Chillenden would safeguard the documents and provide them to her designated party depending on the presence or absence of a claim by the opposing party. Joan knew that Prior Thomas would follow her wishes, and that he would not interfere based on the interests of one side or the other. Her request suggests that she might have regretted her earlier decision to sell Dunster Castle and her daughters’ inheritance. At the very least, Lady Mohun knew that there would be litigation regarding the sale after her death, and she desired to safeguard her associated documents. Joan did not tell Prior Thomas to give the chest to Sir Hugh, the rightful owner of Dunster. Instead, Lady Mohun provided an opportunity for her daughters to make a claim to Dunster. Prior Thomas, then, was to provide the documents only in the absence of a claim by one of the listed parties or to the one determined by the court. Even after Joan’s death, Prior Thomas remained steadfastly loyal to her requests.

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158 Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 28.
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid. The plea can be found in TNA, CP 40/581/119.
As Joan predicted, a struggle for control of Dunster arose between her two surviving daughters and the duke of York and Sir Hugh Luttrell. The Mohun daughters based much of their arguments on the earlier arrangements made by Joan and John V when the lands at Dunster were placed under Joan’s control. Yet the evidence, including the documents held by Prior Thomas, ultimately favored Sir Hugh’s claim to Dunster and the matter of inheritance was effectively settled in 1406. Sir Hugh made a payment of 100m. to the crown in 1408 for the barony of Dunster, securing his title, which he held until his death in 1428. After Sir Hugh’s death, Philippa made one last unsuccessful attempt to make a claim to Dunster. Philippa’s death in 1431, however, ended the dispute between the Mohun heirs and the Luttrells. Joan’s surviving grandson through her daughter Maud, Richard, Lord Strange of Knockin (1381-1449), did not pursue claims to Dunster or the Mohun inheritance.

Conclusion

As with many factors in her life, Joan’s performance of piety was careful and deliberate. By requesting the use of a portable altar and the ability to choose a confessor, Joan took advantage of the convenience of having a confessor near her at all times, including before death. Death might be inevitable, but preparations could be made for the afterlife. Similarly, Joan carefully planned for her tomb and burial place, leaving no detail to chance.

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161 Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 41.
162 Ibid. History of Dunster, 103. A description of the detailed legal maneuverings surrounding the struggle between Joan’s daughters, along with the duke of York, and Hugh Luttrell can be found in: Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 28-43, and Maxwell Lyte, History of Dunster, 80-100.
163 Payling, “Legal Right and Dispute Resolution in Late Medieval England,” 41.
164 Ibid.
165 Ibid., 42.
while negotiating for a space in Canterbury Cathedral through repeated and generous donations.

Coming from a family that was upwardly mobile, Joan spent much time and effort constructing a posture of belonging. Through her lineage, connections, religious devotion, and image, Lady Mohun argued that she belonged in the upper echelons of English society. The culmination of Joan’s efforts of self-presentation came in the form of her tomb at Canterbury Cathedral. In many ways, Joan supported her status and position through her tomb and its effigy. She chose a prime location in the undercroft near the altar of the Virgin Mary, below the shrine of Thomas Becket, whose holiness permeated the cathedral. Joan furthermore constructed the image she desired on her effigy. She is presented alone, hands clasped in prayer, gazing at the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her clothing and hairstyle are that of a courtier, representing the height of court fashion. Joan also provided for masses and prayers for her soul, and for those most important to her. Such choices illustrate how Joan crafted her image in death, using her tomb to advertise herself, her social standing, and her piety for eternity.¹⁶⁶ Like her contemporaries, Joan prepared and paid for her salvation through the means available to her.

In spite of Joan’s detailed plans and arrangements for her tomb and for the maintenance of her soul, critics have questioned her occupying a space previously reserved for the burial of abbots and some priors. As a member of the royal family, the tomb of the Black Prince represented a worthy addition to Canterbury Cathedral. In their minds, the tomb

¹⁶⁶ Sarah Stanbury and Virginia Chieffo Raguin refer to this as using tomb space as self-advertisement. See: Sarah Stanbury and Virginia Chieffo Raguin, “Introduction,” in Women’s Space: Patronage, Place, and Gender in the Medieval Church, ed. Virginia Chieffo Raguin and Sarah Stanbury (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 2.
of a gentry woman who was not a member of the royal family, not even a member of the nobility, was a stain on the structure of the undercroft chapel. Such critics ignored the fact that the church leaders — the prior, the archbishop, and the overseers of the structure itself — welcomed Joan into their midst and approved her inclusion in this sacred space. In other words, Joan was not an interloper: she was a welcome guest and resident, one with important political and close personal connections to the royal family. By ignoring the actual activities, events, and relationships shared between Joan and the religious of Canterbury, these critics demonstrate their own prejudice rather than presenting an historically factual account. These critics — perhaps because of their misogynist refusal to admit the legitimacy of women in these contexts — minimize Lady Mohun’s influence in fourteenth-century court culture. Their attempt to delegitimize her placement in the undercroft chapel delegitimizes their presentation of the past.

Joan’s performance of piety and her focus on tomb building demonstrate the ways in which religious observance occupied a central part of her life and that of her contemporaries in fourteenth-century England. The surviving evidence suggests that Joan practiced her faith both privately and publicly, supporting Duffy’s claims regarding how Catholicism influenced individuals and their daily lives. This lifelong adherence to liturgical events, too, provided a structure for Lady Mohun, culminating with her arrangements for and building of her tomb. As she did throughout her life, Joan used her connections to her advantage and created a space for herself. Joan thus utilized conventions in her own way to create the life, and eternal resting place, that she wanted.
Figure 7. Tomb of Elizabeth de Montfort, Lady Montacute, Christ Church Cathedral. Photograph by user: Pruneau, accessed 23 March 2024, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4271459.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Joan de Mohun set priorities for herself that she worked to establish and maintain throughout her lifetime. A deep reading of the sources connected to her and to those with whom she associated reveals both her choices and the efforts that she used to craft an influential life among the Plantagenet royal family and the Lancastrian affinity before Henry IV’s usurpation. The care taken behind the scenes to construct an image for herself as the ideal courtier and to maximize connections with the royal family and powerful individuals in England is noticeable through the entirety of Lady Mohun’s adult life. Although occupying a space on the fringe of England’s highest elite, she used this position to her advantage, creating a comfortable lifestyle for herself, her daughters, and her brother’s family through her personal relationships and service to the crown.

Lady Mohun successfully self-fashioned an image as the ideal courtier. Such efforts began before her estrangement from her husband John V, before she controlled Mohun lands, and before she negotiated the sale of Dunster Castle. She likely learned how to present herself and how to provide service to those in power from her parents. Her father, Bartholomew Burghersh, clearly excelled at social advancement through military and governmental service to the crown. Joan’s mother, Elizabeth de Verdon, however, provided important connections to prestigious relatives. As Joan instructed members of her household in the concepts espoused in contemporary conduct manuals, so too would her mother have educated her as a child. The foundation established by her natal family, then, encouraged Lady Mohun to continue such efforts on her own.
Similarly to other women outside the highest levels of the elite who entered into service at the court of Richard II, Joan had a number of tools at her disposal which she adapted to her needs. Conduct literature provided a roadmap with which to fashion a reputation. The personalized nature of family genealogies emphasized the heritage and standing of a single family. Family genealogies were one way to construct a memorable heritage. Such texts provided both an image for others, but it also reminded family members of their ancestors’ past heroics and of the standard to which they should adhere. Through the text of the *Mohun Chronicle*, Lady Mohun established the standing of her husband’s family. The content, however, also served as a reminder to her husband. In this way, Lady Mohun might have provided a not-so-subtle nudge to John V to correct his behavior and resemble his ancestors, knowing that her reputation was ultimately connected to his. Family genealogies served as a tool by which women could exert a level of control over their husbands’ bad behavior, as these texts stressed the great familial achievements while ignoring the negative and minimizing any challenges that they faced. With her patronage of the *Mohun Chronicle*, Joan commandeered the family’s image and focused on those actions that she wished to highlight. Through reconstructing the family’s history, she isolated the behavior of John V, confining it to the sidelines, while laying out for her husband an image of how he should behave. The *Mohun Chronicle* might not have changed John V’s behavior, but it did provide a direct exemplar of family heroics that Joan felt he should mimic.

Joan’s efforts to fashion an image of a loyal and politically savvy courtier provided a means by which she could form more significant connections with England’s elite families. Her constructed reputation set her apart from her peers, a fact that proved incredibly important in establishing herself at court. As a woman on the social fringe, Joan would have
possessed limited access to members of the royal family. Yet her public presentation as the ideal courtier, combined with the relationships that she cultivated, allowed her to gain increasing access to those who were most important at court. Lady Mohun segued her connection to the Black Prince’s household to one in a position of prominence near John of Gaunt while ultimately connecting with Richard II and Queen Anne. She proved herself in these limited circles, demonstrating that she was a worthy confidante. Joan must have flawlessly executed her role as a courtier, not only engaging in courteous behavior but also proving her skills as an enjoyable companion. She must have been pleasant company, and combined with the fact that she looked and behaved the part of a courtier and member of the highest elite, demonstrated that she belonged, at least in the eyes of those around her at court. If she was the most courteous woman in England, but she was boring, Joan’s career as a courtier would likely not have progressed to the heights that it did.

The relationships that Joan developed with the royal family proved to be beneficial, and she was rewarded for her companionship and loyalty. As one of Joan’s early supporters, John of Gaunt rewarded her with gifts while also granting her the task of caring for Henry Bolingbroke and Catalina of Lancaster in her household. The benefit to Joan was twofold. She received a monetary benefit for maintaining these two children, as evidenced by the payments provided by Gaunt’s household. Such payments would have not only provided for the children, but they also would have assisted with the upkeep of her household. Second, having Gaunt’s children in her household represented a highly visible honor. Through entrusting his children to Joan, Gaunt demonstrated that she occupied a position of social prominence in the Lancastrian affinity. Gaunt’s children would be staying in a household positioned in the elite. Furthermore, Gaunt trusted Joan to provide high caliber instruction to
his two children. Gaunt would have known that Joan was a worthy teacher of courteous behavior as a result of their interactions. If Gaut had doubted Lady Mohun’s ability, he would not have entrusted his children and part of their education to her household.

During her time at court, Joan gave and received gifts with members of the royal family. Using Mauss’ theories on the exchange of gifts, we gain a better understanding of the nature of Joan’s relationships with these individuals.¹ The value of a gift and the frequency of exchanges establish the importance of the relationship to the involved parties. The tenor of Lady Mohun’s relationship with Gaunt is particularly intriguing. The duke’s Register describes several exchanges. The gifts that Gaunt gave to Lady Mohun suggest an intimate relationship between the two. For example, Gaunt gifted several fillets (headbands) made of pearls, as well as rabbits and a goblet decorated with gold to Joan, while she gave him a beryl chalice with silver. Such items were valuable and intimate, suggesting a deeper relationship than one between the duke and an average member of his affinity. These gifts, when combined with Joan’s care of two of Gaunt’s children, further hints at the closeness of the pair. Although the exact nature of the relationship remains unknown, it is safe to assume that Lady Mohun represented a valuable member of the Lancastrian affinity and a close confidante of the duke himself.

Based on records in Gaunt’s Register, the relationship between the duke and Lady Mohun was concentrated in the 1370s, ending after Catalina left the Mohun household in either 1383 or 1386.² During the early years of Richard II’s reign, Gaunt was involved in the

¹ Mauss, The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies.
² A discussion of the gift exchanges between Gaunt and Joan is in Chapter Four. Ana Echevarria, “Catalina of Lancaster,” 80, 82.
actions of the crown and worked to defend England and the king’s interests.³ As Richard II took an increasingly active role in governance after 1381, the relationship between the king and his uncle became strained.⁴ Being at court, Lady Mohun would have recognized these dynamics at play. Gifts and favor given to Joan by Richard II began in 1383, after he assumed more control.⁵ The timing of the shift in patrons is key here. Richard II started to show favor to Joan at the time when Gaunt halted his patronage. Joan shifted her focus to the king, recognizing that he was the ascendant power in England, while Gaunt and his influence waned. Gaunt’s absence from England while he campaigned in Iberia from 1386 to 1389 created further distance between Joan and her former patron.⁶ Joan found a new and generous patron in Richard II and later in Queen Anne. This changing allegiance, away from Gaunt to the king, would have been noticed by members of the Lancastrian affinity, especially since Joan previously enjoyed a close relationship with the duke. Connecting with Richard II at court while fostering a personal friendship with the king could have resulted in hard feelings between Joan and the Lancastrians. Although he spent time in the Mohun household, Henry IV stripped Lady Mohun of Leeds Castle after becoming king, providing only 50m. in compensation for the loss.⁷ Henry’s action regarding Leeds might have been to spite Joan for abandoning his father and her Lancastrian connections.

Ultimately it was her friendship with Richard II and Queen Anne that proved to be most influential in her life. Both Joan’s brother, Bartholomew the younger, and her husband

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³ Goodman, John of Gaunt, 76-84.
⁵ For examples of favor shown to Joan de Mohun by Richard II in 1383, see: CPR, Richard II, A.D. 1381-1385, vol. II, 306; and, TNA, SC 8/224/11158.
⁶ Goodman, John of Gaunt, 106.
John V campaigned with Richard’s father the Black Prince. These Mohun and Burghersh connections to the Black Prince might have assisted in facilitating Joan’s position with the young king. Although this may have helped, it certainly was not the only factor that allowed her to enter the king’s inner circle. Recorded patronage given to Joan began in 1383, after the marriage of Richard II and Queen Anne in January 1382. As Joan spent much of her time in Canterbury when not at court, it is possible that she met Anne after she landed in England on her journey to London. Anne stopped in Canterbury and then traveled to Leeds Castle before arriving in London. Anne’s later gift of Leeds Castle to Joan might have reflected a meeting on this trip. Although this is speculative, it is evident that Lady Mohun received valuable patronage from Richard II after his marriage to Anne. Richard and Anne had a close relationship, and evidence remains that the Queen requested favor from the king for others while also acting as a patron in her own right. Anne’s influence might have persuaded Richard to initially provide for Joan and bring her into the inner circle.

Yet Joan also enjoyed a close relationship with Richard II, apart from Queen Anne. The king continued to provide for Lady Mohun after Queen Anne’s death in 1394. This could have been a way for the king to provide for a loyal companion of his beloved queen. The more telling evidence of Joan’s personal friendship with the king, however, is from the action that the Appellants took against her. Lady Mohun was one of fifteen individuals who was asked to leave the court in 1387 after giving a promise that she would not return without

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8 Saul, Richard II, 90.
9 Ibid., 89.
10 History of Dunster, 54.
12 Saul, Richard II, 277.
the permission of Parliament. The Appellants singled out these individuals for their “evil influence on the king,” and they wished to limit their control of the king by removing them from his presence. Perception is key here. Others saw Lady Mohun as such a threat due to her influence on the king that she was banished from court for a time. Joan did receive patronage from the king beginning in 1383, and the Appellants would have recognized this favor. The extreme act of removing her from court, however, suggested that the Appellants believed that she could, and did, persuade the king. Lady Mohun convinced Richard II to give her things like money, property, and the granting of pardons. If she could successfully advocate for such things, then she could direct the opinion of the monarch in other ways. It was her level of access to and sway with Richard II that made her a threat to the Appellants. They would not have bothered to remove Joan from court if she was an average courtier who received “appropriate” levels of patronage. A testament to Lady Mohun’s political savvy is in the fact that she returned to the court by 1390 and continued to receive valuable patronage from the king. After her return, Joan must have exhibited more caution. She received the incredibly valuable grant for Leeds Castle after 1390 and continued to negotiate with Richard II for more favorable terms until the end of his reign. Although it had burned her before, Joan continued to ask for the king’s favor. Her advancing age, however, might have made her seem less of a threat to the king’s opponents in the 1390s, especially as she spent more time around Canterbury.

Overall, such secular alliances proved beneficial for Joan, but she also connected successfully with the most powerful leaders in the religious community. During her time at

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14 Ibid., 116.
Canterbury and through repeated generosity to Canterbury Cathedral, Joan developed connections with the prior there. She gave numerous gifts to the cathedral, garnering goodwill while building a rapport with the governors of the cathedral and its organizations. As evidenced through her relationship with Richard II, Joan must have been an incredibly charming negotiator, and she used these skills to request space for a burial location in the cathedral. Yet the tenor of her actions here does not appear manipulative. The monks at Canterbury agreed to provide her with a prime burial location, while also allowing her to reside at Meister Omers as a distinguished guest in her old age. As Joan fostered relationships with Richard II and Queen Anne, so too did she cultivate friendships with the leaders of Canterbury. Lady Mohun demonstrated her piety by giving handsomely to the cathedral building projects, while endearing herself to the religious community there. Joan clearly benefitted from the relationships that she developed, and she did not hesitate to ask for things that she wanted or needed.

In looking at the entirety of Joan’s life, it becomes noticeable how separated she is from her husband John V. Early in their marriage, we saw that John V and Joan submitted petitions and requests jointly. At the least, the pair coexisted early in their marriage, and they recognized the value in using their names together in such requests. Yet the sources indicate a growing distance between husband and wife. Being raised in a family in service to the crown, Joan appears to have preferred residing in a location close to the activities of the royal court. The remote location of Dunster Castle in western England would have held little appeal for her. The transfer of Mohun lands to Joan might also be an indication of her frustration and unhappiness with John V. Her husband’s mismanagement of affairs forced Joan to a losing position. She could not save the Mohun inheritance and was faced with the
difficult choice of how to best provide for herself and her daughters. Since the location of Dunster was less than desirable, Joan might have comforted herself with its sale by knowing that it helped to fund a life that she desired at court, and one nearer to her natal family in Canterbury. Joan also counteracted the loss of Dunster through skillfully arranging advantageous marriages for her three daughters. They would not benefit directly from the Mohun inheritance, but they would have security and a career close to court if they desired.

Further evidence of the separation between Joan and her husband are seen in the arrangements for their final resting places. John V remained near his Mohun lands, being buried at Bruton Priory. Few details about his burial place remain, but it is likely that it was modest. Joan did not design or build an extravagant tomb for John V. Instead, Lady Mohun used her energy on arrangements for her own burial location in Canterbury Cathedral. The location, tomb, and effigy are extravagant, and focused on her individual legacy. Joan provided for prayers for her husband, but she did not go above the expected obsequies. Such maneuverings fit with what we know about Joan’s personality. She focused on her personal desires, and she worked to achieve them. Yet this further demonstrates her opinion of John V. He was her husband, so he deserved perfunctory service and recognition. But like Dunster, she did not prefer his presence. Joan’s dislike of John V must have stemmed from his behavior. John V’s recklessness with finances and his personal conduct contrasted sharply with Joan, who carefully fashioned an image of courtesy. Such disparate worldviews would have caused a rift between the two that encouraged a separation years before the death of John V. Lady Mohun thus distanced herself and her reputation from that of her husband because she did not like him, and she increasingly lived her life as she pleased.
Through reexamining the sources, this dissertation argues that Joan de Mohun actively and successfully pursued her goals. In all aspects of her life, she prioritized her personal preferences, including where she lived and where she was buried. Such an argument shifts the established narrative of women who gained access to power and space during the Middle Ages. Previous historians generally belittle the access a woman received, marking it as unimportant. The power that a woman had as a patron, for example, has been characterized as so-called soft power: it did not signify “real” power, but was inherently somehow lesser than that utilized by a male patron. Scholars who have prioritized space and placement, too, establish the normal occupant as male. In particular, access to sacred space has, according to them, remained the purview of men. A woman receiving access to such spaces, then, is presented as an intrusion. We see this especially with Joan’s tomb in Canterbury Cathedral. Scholars like William Archibald Scott Robertson and Christopher Wilson described it as gaudy and an interruption of the prior harmony of the dedicated space. Instead of being viewed as an exercise of her power, these later male scholars instead viewed her tomb as an act dedicated to the vanity of a socially grasping woman.

Robertson and Wilson focused on the tomb of Lady Mohun, presenting her, by extension, as an intruder. Other scholars who have addressed her life, particularly H. C. Maxwell Lyte, further minimized her actions, confining her to the circumstances surrounding the sale of Dunster Castle, quantifying her actions as manipulative in gaining control of her husband’s properties and in her requests for patronage from the crown. These scholars view

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16 History of Dunster, 47-58.
Joan and her actions through a male perspective, specifically reviewing her through the lens of her husband John V. They largely ignore Joan’s lengthy widowhood as well as her achievements after her husband’s death. But the sources present a different view. She made decisions that benefitted herself and manipulated her surroundings to gain what she desired. And she had great success in doing this. Joan gained the ear of Richard II, Queen Anne, John of Gaunt, and the Canterbury Cathedral religious community. These individuals did not believe that Joan was using power improperly or that she was taking space that did not belong to her. Instead, they welcomed her. Joan might have hailed from a social position on the fringe, but she proved her worth as a companion and confidante through her actions. In fact, Joan cultivated relationships with the most powerful in England and crafted a position for herself that was both remunerative and influential. Her advice influenced the court of Richard II and the decisions of the king himself, and she should be considered a major player in fourteenth-century court culture. It is only the modern attitude of misogyny that minimizes the position that Joan, and other courtiers like her, had in fourteenth-century England.

This examination of the life of Joan de Mohun as a whole demonstrates that there is more to her story than the sale of Dunster Castle and the creation of the Mohun Chronicle. Instead, revisiting the sources and mining them for Lady Mohun’s activities and engagements allows us to analyze her life and experiences, seeing the factors that influenced her and how she actively directed her trajectory. By reapproaching the sources, we see the number of women like Lady Mohun who were active in society, court life, and in acts of patronage. Including their existence in the historical narrative seeks to correct the prior scholarship that both ignored and erased the experiences of medieval women. Women were present and active in the past, and as Joan’s life demonstrates, women occupied influential
positions at court. Such advisement of the king might have been done on a personal level, through a friendship rather than a governmental post, but such a relationship was no less important.

Yet Lady Mohun is not the only socially ambitious woman outside the traditional elite in fourteenth-century England to earn such a position. The court of Richard II was particularly welcoming to women, and in some instances, personality mattered more than social pedigree when choosing confidantes. As evidenced by the regular use and expansion of the Ladies of the Garter, Richard II included women in royal festivities while taking the additional step to honor them with garter robes for the feast of Saint George. These women were partygoers, but they were also individually chosen to participate in this event of royal display.

Joan is thus one example of a courtier outside the traditional elite who was honored as a Lady of the Garter and who received various types of patronage from the royal family. There exist other women who came from similar backgrounds and who had similar social ambitions that gained positions at court and invitations to the Ladies of the Garter during the late fourteenth century. The sources suggest that Blanche, Lady Poynings, developed a similar relationship with Richard II, and the king provided her with patronage and invitations to the feast of Saint George. Also like Joan, Lady Poynings was seen as a threat and was removed from court by the Appellants. Anne Gomenys, too, distinguished herself through her service to Richard II and in Queen Anne’s household. According to Richard II, her commitment to the royal household warranted her inclusion in the Ladies of the Garter, in

17 Cokayne, Complete Peerage, vol. II, 593.
18 The Westminster Chronicle 1381-1394, 231.
spite of the fact that she came from a humble familial background.\textsuperscript{20} This examination of Lady Mohun demonstrates the value of returning to the sources, searching for these previously overlooked women. An examination of more of these female courtiers outside the traditional elite would be valuable for several reasons. As individuals, many of these women have interesting stories to tell. Yet these women represented important players at Richard II’s court. By reconstructing their lives and how they influenced the king, we add to the discussion of court culture, social movement, and female access to the centers of power in fourteenth-century England. With the increased participation of women at court during the reign of Richard II, his reign is particularly ripe for examination, as more women operated as residents and advisors at court. Richard II listened to the women at his court, and understanding their perspectives highlight the issues at play at court during his reign.

Henry IV, successor of Richard II, created a different sort of court than that seen during the late fourteenth century. Where Richard II included those outside the highest elite and particularly welcomed women at court, Henry IV established a primarily masculine court that prioritized close family relatives.\textsuperscript{21} Aside from his queen and second wife, Joan of Navarre (c. 1368-1437), few women populated the court.\textsuperscript{22} Henry continued to invite a very select group of women to the Ladies of the Garter, but he returned to the trend established by Edward III, including only close female relatives or women directly related to a Knight of the Garter.\textsuperscript{23} Only ten women were invited to the feast of Saint George during his reign as compared to at least thirty who attended during the reign of Richard II.\textsuperscript{24} As a result, many of

\textsuperscript{20} Grace Holmes, \textit{The Order of the Garter}, 170.  
\textsuperscript{21} Given-Wilson, \textit{Henry IV}, 419-420.  
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 420.  
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid. Holmes, \textit{The Order of the Garter}, 172-173.  
\textsuperscript{24} Holmes, \textit{The Order of the Garter}, 168-173.
the women honored by Richard II were marginalized and ignored, a change from their prior elevated positions at court. Joan herself received only a pittance of royal patronage from Henry IV. Yet the fifteenth century was not devoid of influential women at court. Instead, the reign of Henry VI (r. 1422-1461, 1470-1471) included the efforts of women during his infancy, and his queen Margaret of Anjou (1429-1482), became an influential force on the king. The female presence and influence at the court of Richard II is often seen as an anomaly in late medieval and early modern kingship in England. Instead, it is noticeable that women are absent primarily during the reign of Henry IV, but they do return to court and positions of prominence later in the fifteenth century. In moving away from Richard II’s style of rule, Henry IV might be the anomaly. It seems that Richard II’s inclusion of women at court set the standard for the later fifteenth century.

Lady Mohun survives in the sources in part because of her unique experiences. Yet upon further review, a picture of a more than typical courtier emerges. Joan played the game better than most, connecting herself to the most powerful in England and using her skills and self-fashioning efforts to enter the inner circles at court. She excelled as a courtier, but her general experiences also provide insight into those of similarly positioned women in fourteenth-century England. Thus, by unravelling the details surrounding her unique experiences, we gain a better sense of court culture and society. Lady Mohun represents a powerful courtier during the reign of Richard II. She influenced the most important members of the royal family, convincing them of her worthiness. Joan de Mohun’s life demonstrates

\[\text{\textsuperscript{25}}\text{ CPR, Henry IV, A.D. 1399-1401, vol. I, 509.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{26}}\text{ Bertram Wolffe, Henry VI (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 35-37, 183.}\]
how an important court player can be overlooked. But in returning to the sources, her role
and power, and that of similar women, becomes clearer.
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At an early age, Melissa Marie Morris became interested in history and developed a desire to unravel details about the past. This fascination with the past continued during high school and college, where she pursued a Bachelor of Arts degree in History at California State University, Fresno, in Fresno, California. While completing her bachelor’s degree, Melissa spent a semester abroad studying in London, England, in 2005. This experience narrowed Melissa’s primary field of study to Medieval England, with an emphasis on women. Melissa received her Bachelor of Arts degree in 2007, and continued her studies at California State University, Fresno, where she received a Master of Arts degree in 2010.

Melissa relocated to Kansas City, Missouri, to pursue a doctoral degree in History and English at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. During her studies, Melissa worked as a graduate assistant for several courses, including World History and American History. Melissa also taught undergraduate history courses including World History since 1450 and U.S. History since 1877. She also worked as a research assistant for CODICES: A Codex and Manuscript Digitization Project where she examined medieval manuscripts and books printed in Early Modern Europe and helped to photograph and digitize a copy of the *Summa theologica* by Antoninus published in the fifteenth century. A highlight of her work on the CODICES project included presenting the paper, “Reimagining Incunables: How Accessible Digital Technology Illuminates the Production Process of Antoninus’ *Summa theologica,*” with a colleague at the Landmarks of Printing: From Origins to the Digital Age, Printing Historical Society 50th Anniversary Conference, held in London, England, November 2014.
Melissa currently works as a trainer for the federal government. She plans to continue her research on medieval women and hopes to shed additional light on their lives and experiences.