

BLOOD ROYAL

Throughout medieval Europe, for hundreds of years, monarchy was the way that politics worked in most countries. This meant that power was in the hands of a family – a dynasty; that politics was family politics; and that political life was shaped by the births, marriages and deaths of the ruling family. How did the dynastic system cope with female rule, or pretenders to the throne? How did dynasties use names, the numbering of rulers and the visual display of heraldry to express their identity? And why did some royal families survive and thrive, while others did not?

Drawing on a rich and memorable body of sources, this engaging and original history of dynastic power in Latin Christendom and Byzantium explores the role played by family dynamics and family consciousness in the politics of the royal and imperial dynasties of Europe. From royal marriages and the birth of sons, to female sovereigns, mistresses and wicked uncles, Robert Bartlett makes enthralling sense of the complex web of internal rivalries and loyalties of the ruling dynasties and casts fresh light on an essential feature of the medieval world.

Robert Bartlett is the author of many acclaimed history books, including *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1350* (1993), which won the Wolfson Literary Prize for History in 1994, and *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?* (2015). He is Professor Emeritus at the University of St Andrews and is well-known as the writer and presenter of several BBC documentary series, including *Inside the Medieval Mind* (2008), *The Normans* (2010) and *The Plantagenets* (2014).

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BLOOD ROYAL

DYNASTIC POLITICS
IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

ROBERT
BARTLETT



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Contents

| | |
|--|---------------|
| <i>List of Figures</i> | <i>page</i> x |
| <i>Preface and Acknowledgements</i> | xiii |
| <i>List of Abbreviations</i> | xiv |
| Introduction: Royal Families | 1 |
| PART I: THE LIFE CYCLE | |
| 1 Choosing a Bride | 9 |
| Marriage with Local Aristocrats | 11 |
| Foreign Queens | 15 |
| Homesick Queens | 26 |
| Foreign Ways | 29 |
| Inspection of the Bride | 32 |
| Marriage to the Royal Widow | 34 |
| Prohibited Degrees | 43 |
| The Case of Joan of Woodstock | 48 |
| 2 Waiting for Sons to be Born | 52 |
| Death in Childbirth | 55 |
| The Uncertainties of Pregnancy | 57 |
| Celebration | 59 |
| Childlessness | 62 |
| Unmarried Kings and Kings Who Married Late | 84 |
| 3 Fathers and Sons | 89 |
| Securing the Succession | 89 |
| Waiting for Fathers to Die | 109 |
| Minorities | 114 |

CONTENTS

| | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 4 | Female Sovereigns | 124 |
| | The First Female Sovereigns in Medieval Europe | 124 |
| | The Later Middle Ages | 143 |
| | The Exclusion of Women from Rule | 146 |
| 5 | Mistresses and Bastards | 155 |
| | Concubines | 155 |
| | Noble Mistresses of the High Middle Ages | 159 |
| | Mistresses Drawn from the Queen’s Ladies-in-Waiting | 162 |
| | Bastards | 165 |
| | Bastard Kings | 168 |
| | Bastard Culture | 175 |
| | Legitimization | 180 |
| 6 | Family Dynamics | 187 |
| | The Shape of the Dynasty | 187 |
| | Brothers | 191 |
| | Wicked Uncles | 210 |
| | Killing Cousins | 220 |
| | Queens, Sons and Lovers | 226 |
| 7 | Royal Mortality | 240 |
| | Death | 240 |
| | Burial | 251 |

PART II: A SENSE OF DYNASTY

| | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 8 | Names and Numbering | 283 |
| | Terminology | 283 |
| | Names of Dynasties | 285 |
| | Naming Patterns within Dynasties | 289 |
| | Numbering of Monarchs | 301 |
| 9 | Saints, Images, Heraldry, Family Trees | 311 |
| | Dynastic Saints | 311 |
| | Public Images | 315 |
| | Heraldry | 321 |
| | Family Trees | 326 |

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| 10 Responses to Dynastic Uncertainty: Prophecy and Astrology | 340 |
| Astrology | 341 |
| Prophecy | 347 |
| 11 Pretenders and Returners: Dynastic Imposters in the Middle Ages | 360 |
| Recognition | 373 |
| 12 New Families and New Kingdoms | 379 |
| Foundation Legends and Founding Figures | 381 |
| Healing the Dynastic Rent | 384 |
| Excluded Dynasts | 388 |
| New Kingdoms | 393 |
| 13 Dynasties and the Non-Dynastic World | 397 |
| Elective Monarchy | 397 |
| Dynasties and the Church | 403 |
| Republics | 413 |
| Dynasties and Cities | 416 |
| Dynasty and the Kingdom | 419 |
| Conclusion | 429 |
| <i>Appendix A: Main Dynasties</i> | 435 |
| <i>Appendix B: Minorities</i> | 444 |
| <i>Appendix C: Female Sovereigns</i> | 447 |
| <i>Appendix D: Family Trees</i> | 448 |
| <i>Notes</i> | 450 |
| <i>Bibliography of Works Cited</i> | 561 |
| <i>Index</i> | 607 |

Figures

| | |
|---|----------------|
| 1 Map depicting marriage alliances of the kings of Aragon, Denmark, England, France and Hungary, 1200–1500. | <i>page</i> 16 |
| 2 Anne, Duchess of Brittany (1488–1514). | 41 |
| 3 The Byzantine empresses regnant, the sisters Zoe and Theodora, on a gold coin (<i>histamenon</i>) in 1042, the year of their joint rule. | 128 |
| 4 Urraca, queen of Leon-Castile (1109–26). | 132 |
| 5 Melisende, queen of Jerusalem (1131–52/61), and her husband Fulk of Anjou. | 137 |
| 6 The Battle of Aljubarrota, 1385. | 173 |
| 7 The Dunois Hours showing the count of Dunois (d. 1468). | 179 |
| 8 The murder of John the Fearless, duke of Burgundy. | 223 |
| 9 The tomb of the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick II (d. 1250). | 266 |
| 10 The image of the ‘anti-king’ Rudolf of Rheinfelden (d. 1080). | 268 |
| 11 Tomb effigies of Henry II of England (d. 1189) and his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine (d. 1204). | 270 |
| 12 The tomb of Richard II of England (d. 1400) and his wife Anne of Bohemia (d. 1394). | 272 |
| 13 The tomb of Peter I of Portugal (d. 1367). | 273 |
| 14 The tomb of Ines de Castro (d. 1355). | 274 |
| 15 The entrails tombs of Charles IV of France (d. 1328) and his wife Joan of Evreux (d. 1371). | 278 |
| 16 St Louis of Toulouse (d. 1297). | 314 |
| 17 Wall paintings from Karlštejn Castle: Charles IV. | 319 |
| 18 Wall paintings from Karlštejn Castle: Charles’ wife Blanche (d. 1348). | 320 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 19 | Coins of the Byzantine rulers Constantine VI and Irene from 780–92. | 322 |
| 20 | A twelfth-century depiction of the Carolingian dynasty. | 329 |
| 21 | Bernard Gui’s <i>The Tree of the Lineage of the Kings of the French</i> . | 336 |
| 22 | An English royal genealogical roll. | 387 |

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Preface and Acknowledgements

The subject of this book is the family politics of royal and imperial dynasties in Latin Christendom and Byzantium in the period 500–1500. Family politics means competition and cooperation within the ruling family, shaped at every point by the human life cycle of birth, marriage and death, and also by ideas of what a dynasty was. Hence the two parts of the book, the life cycle and a sense of dynasty. The main dynasties are listed in Appendix A. A full bibliography on this subject would fill a library but references have been given for all direct quotations and for facts other than those easily accessible. A few directly relevant titles have also been cited.

The book grew out of an invitation to deliver the Lydon lectures at Trinity College Dublin, a series of four lectures named in honour of the distinguished Trinity historian James Lydon, who was Lecky Professor of History at the College from 1980 to 1993 and died in 2013. The lectures were delivered in April 2017. Warm thanks are due to my hosts, Peter Crooks, David Ditchburn and Seán Duffy, and to the distinguished invited commentators on that occasion, Stewart Airlie, Sverre Bagge, Ana Rodríguez, Katharine Simms and Nicholas Vincent. Discussions at that time helped shape the further development of the book. Warm thanks for help of various sorts are due to Rory Cox, Michael Foster, Tim Greenwood and the late Ruth Macrides. Chris Given-Wilson, John Hudson and Simon MacLean had the great kindness to read through the whole text. I have incorporated their corrections and (most of) their suggestions and am extremely grateful to them for this act of collegiality and friendship.

Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|--|
| AN | Archives nationales, Paris |
| BAV | Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana |
| BHL | <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i> (cited by item number) |
| BL | British Library, London |
| BnF | Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris |
| CCCC | Corpus Christi College, Cambridge |
| CCCM | Corpus Christianorum, continuatio medievalis (Turnhout) |
| CCSL | Corpus Christianorum, series latina (Turnhout) |
| JL | Jaffé (rev. Löwenfeld), <i>Regesta pontificum Romanorum</i> (cited by item number) |
| MGH | Monumenta Germaniae historica |
| AA | Auctores antiquissimi |
| DD | Diplomata |
| SRG | Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum |
| SS | Scriptores |
| ODNB | <i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (60 vols., 2004) |
| OMT | Oxford Medieval Texts |
| PL | Patrologia Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne (221 vols., Paris, 1844–65) |
| Po. | Pothast, <i>Regesta pontificum Romanorum</i> (cited by item number) |
| Reg. Vat. | Registra Vaticana, Archivum Secretum Vaticanum |
| RHF | Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France (24 vols., Paris) |
| RS | Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores (‘Rolls Series’) (251 vols., London) |
| SHF | Société de l’histoire de France |
| TNA | The National Archives, Kew, London |