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## THE QUEENS OF THE KALMAR UNION

‘SED IN HOC NEGOCIO LONGE PRESTANCIUS EXHIBUIT  
SE REGINA QUAM REX’


### Abstract

In the research on the Kalmar Union, the focus has mainly been on the kings as *personae agens* of the development. Even though one could not avoid treating Queen Margaret Valdemarsdatter as the founder of the Union, she has often been portrayed as genderless in political terms. Her successors, on the other hand, disappeared into historical obscurity or were mentioned more in passing sentences. Yet the queens had a considerable influence on the cohesion of the Union, just as Dorothea of Hohenzollern and Christine of Wettin played a role in restoring or maintaining the dynastic claims of the Oldenburg family. This article will therefore attempt to shed light on the political role of these princesses within the Kalmar Union and at the same time try to find reasons for the *damnatio memoria* of these queens.

**Keywords:** Kalmar Union, queenship, gender history, historical agency, royal power, dynastic marriages, late Middle Ages

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Received 27.09.2022; Received in revised form 13.01.2023; Accepted 27.03.2023

## I. 1. QUEENSHIP – QUEENS AS PART OF THE ROYAL POWER

In historical research on the Kalmar Union, women, apart from Margaret Valdemarsdatter<sup>1</sup>, have not played a significant role until now<sup>2</sup>. This was not only in line with the trend of international and especially Scandinavian medievalism until the end of the nineteenth century<sup>3</sup>, but above all, it seamlessly continued the tendencies formulated by the Danish court chronicler Arild Huitfeldt in the sixteenth century<sup>4</sup>. Huitfeldt had systematically written the role of queens out of history from the perspective of a sixteenth-century Danish Protestant high nobleman<sup>5</sup>. And his successors from the seventeenth to the twentieth century naturally saw no reason to change this. And even when Ellen Jørgensen, the second female historian with a habilitation in Denmark, and Johanne Skovgaard compiled the first overview of Danish queens in 1910, the women remained merely companions to their husbands<sup>6</sup>. Only today is this picture beginning to change – albeit slowly<sup>7</sup> – but Scandinavian research, with the exception of Steinar Imsen's article on queenship from 1997<sup>8</sup>, is still a long way from the progress and insights of Anglo-Saxon queen studies<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See i.a. Anders BØGH, *Sejren i kvinden hånd. Kampen om magten i Norden ca. 1365–89*, Aarhus 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Parallel to working on this article, I was the supervisor of Kathrine Wang Langer's master's thesis entitled 'Dronningemagt i det senmiddelalderlige Norden. En undersøgelse af de tre unionsdronninger – Philippa, Dorothea og Christine' ('Queenship in the Late Medieval North: An Investigation of the Three Union Queens – Philippa, Dorothea, and Christine'). During the many discussions about Scandinavian queens, we inspired each other. Therefore, some of the ideas listed here are based on Kathrine's thoughts. See, for example, Ole G. MOSENG, Erik OPSAHL, Gunnar I. PETTERSEN, Erling SANDMO, *Norsk historie 750–1537*, Oslo 2007, pp. 279–418; Aksel E. CHRISTENSEN, *Kalmarunionen og nordisk politik 1319–1439*, Copenhagen 1980.

<sup>3</sup> See introductory Sebastian ROEBERT, *Die Königin im Zentrum der Macht. Reginale Herrschaft in der Krone Aragón am Beispiel Eleonores von Sizilien (1349–1375)*, Berlin–Boston 2020, pp. 9–17.

<sup>4</sup> Arild HUITFELDT, *Danmarks Riges Krønike. Historiske Beskriffuelse om [...] Christiern, den Første*, Kjøbenhaffn 1599; idem, *Kong Hansis Krønike*, Kjøbenhaffn 1599; idem, *Den Tredie Part Chronologiae*, Kjøbenhaffn 1603.

<sup>5</sup> See Carsten JAHNKE, *Dronning Dorothea af Brandenburg, Danmarks, Norges, Sveriges Dronning, Hertuginde af Slesvig og Holsten, Christopher III og Christian I kone. En biografi* [forthcoming].

<sup>6</sup> Ellen JØRGENSEN, Johanne SKOVGAARD, *Danske Dronninger. Fortællinger og Karakteristiker*, København 1910.

<sup>7</sup> See i.a. *Dronningemagt i middelalderen. Festskrift til Anders Bøgh*, ed. Jeppe B. NETTERSTRØM, Kasper H. ANDERSEN, Aarhus 2018; Grethe JACOBSEN, *Magtens kvinder før enevælden*, København 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Steinar IMSSEN, *Late Medieval Scandinavian Queenship*, [in:] *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne DUGGAN, Woodbridge 1997, pp. 53–73.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, *Medieval Queenship*, ed. John C. PARSONS, Stroud 1994; William MONTEMER, *The Rise of Female Kings in Europe, 1300–1800*, New Haven–London 2012; Theresa EAREN-

Research over the last twenty years has made it abundantly clear that queens had their natural place in the late medieval power structure: as *consors regni*<sup>10</sup> or as *regina regnans*. The reginal sovereigns had been prepared by their education for the conduction of rule<sup>11</sup>, and they naturally exercised power<sup>12</sup>, whereby power is to be defined here, according to Stafford and Roebert, as ‘the ability to take part in the events, to have means at your disposal to give some chance of success’<sup>13</sup>. The reginal exercise of power is often visible in exceptional situations, such as the absence of a male ruler, but is to be understood as a constant factor of good reginal rule in general.

The queens’ power resulted on the one hand from their position as a crowned and thus sacredly legitimised woman at the top of the empire, and on the other hand from their political position at the ruler’s side or in the centre of power. Thirdly, the queen possessed an independent role due to her economic and financial possibilities, which was to be understood within the dynastic boundaries but was clearly separate from those of the king and empire. And fourthly, the role of the ruler was consolidated by her descendants, as she ensured the continuity of the dynasty – or not.

These points, which have long been elaborated in international research, also apply – and in particular – to the queens of the Kalmar Union: Philippa of Lancaster (1394–1430), Dorothea of Hohenzollern (1431–1495) and Christine of Wettin (1461–1521), whom will be the focus of this paper.

## I. 2. THE SACRAL RULER

The queens to be presented here were, and this is an almost banal statement, crowned rulers. Philippa was crowned Queen of Northern Europe on 1 November 1406, Dorothea on 14 September 1445 and Christine on 18 May 1482. This fact, often mentioned in a passing remark, is important because the

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FIGHT, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, Basingstoke 2013; eadem, *A Lifetime of Power: Beyond Binaries of Gender*, [in:] *Medieval Elite Women and the Exercise of Power, 1100–1400*, ed. Heather J. TANNER, Cham 2019, pp. 271–293.

<sup>10</sup> See for this *a priori* discriminatory term S. ROEBERT, op.cit., pp. 111 f.

<sup>11</sup> See i.a. Benjamin MÜSEGADES, *Fürstliche Erziehung und Ausbildung im spätmittelalterlichen Reich* (Mittelalter-Forschungen, Bd. 47), Ostfildern 2014; Cordula NOLTE, *Familie, Hof und Herrschaft. Das verwandtschaftliche Beziehungs- und Kommunikationsnetz der Reichsfürsten am Beispiel der Markgrafen von Brandenburg-Ansbach (1440–1530)*, Ostfildern 2005, pp. 213–231.

<sup>12</sup> Amelie FÖSSEL, *Die Königin im mittelalterlichen Reich. Herrschaftsausübung, Herrschaftsrecht, Handlungsspielräume*, Stuttgart 2000, pp. 151–372.

<sup>13</sup> Pauline STAFFORD, *Emma: The Powers of the Queen in the Eleventh Century*, [in:] *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne DUGGAN, Woodbridge 1997, p. 11; S. ROEBERT, op.cit., p. 19, note 45.

coronation gave the sovereign a sacredly legitimised position alongside the king<sup>14</sup>.

The Scandinavian coronation ritual for queens probably followed the Roman rite<sup>15</sup>, which had been formulated in Mainz in 960<sup>16</sup>. Already in the introit, it is proclaimed that God has given courage and triumph into the queen's hand, just as Judith once did, just as Esther is later pointed to as an example<sup>17</sup>. This is – also – connected with the wish for fertility when it is said: 'together with Sarah, Rebekah, Leah and Rachel, blessed and honourable women, may she receive congratulations for her fertility and the fruit of her womb, for the glory of the whole kingdom and the care of God's Holy Church'<sup>18</sup>, but the reference to the Old Testament heroines testifies more to the political dimension of the coronation than to the ruler as 'mother of the throne'. The queen is elevated by the coronation to a sacral-political role to serve and defend the people.

### I. 3. THE ECONOMIC RULER

A Scandinavian peculiarity extended the power spectrum of late medieval queens even further: the morning gift<sup>19</sup>. According to ancient, possibly late Germanic, custom, a bride received a *pretium virginatis* or a *commissæ virginatis præmium et operæ nocturnæ pretium*<sup>20</sup> on the day following the wedding night. In the course of the Middle Ages, this had developed into an endowment in the form of land and other income, which was intended to provide

<sup>14</sup> With regard to the symbolic-religious meaning of the crown, cf. Louise BERGLUND, *En gyllene krona på hennes huvud. Kröning och birgittinsk symbolik under senmedeltiden*, [in:] *Allt på ett bräde. Stat, ekonomi och bondeoffer. En vänbok till Jan Lindegren*, ed. Peter ERICSSON, Fredrik THISNER, Patrik WINTON, Andreas ÅKERLUND (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, vol. 249), Uppsala 2013, pp. 299–312.

<sup>15</sup> Wilhem SWENSEN, *Kröning*, [in:] *Kulturhistorisk lexikon för nordisk medeltid*, vol. 9, Malmö 1964, col. 497–502.

<sup>16</sup> *Die Ordines für die Weihe und Krönung des Kaisers und der Kaiserin. Ordines coronationis imperialis*, hrsg. v. Reinhard ELZE (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Fontes iuris Germanici antiqui in usum scholarum separatim editi, vol. 9), Hannover 1960, pp. 6–9.

<sup>17</sup> A. FÖSSEL, *Die Königin im mittelalterlichen Reich*, pp. 17–49; eadem, *Die Königin im Herrschaftsgefüge des hochmittelalterlichen Reiches*, Historischer Verein Bamberg. Bericht, Bd. 137: 2001, pp. 86 ff.

<sup>18</sup> *Die Ordines für die Weihe und Krönung*, p. 8: 'et una cum Sara atque Rebecca, Liam et Rachel beatis reverendisque feminis fructu uteri sui fecundari seu gratulari mereatur ad decorem totius regni statumque sanctaen Dei ecclesiae regendum necnon protegendum'; Joanne L. LAYSMITH, *Fertility Rite or Authority Ritual? The Queen's Coronation in England, 1445–1487*, [in:] *Social Attitudes and Political Structures in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Tim THORNTON (The Fifteenth Century, no. 7), Stroud/Gloucestershire 2000, p. 58.

<sup>19</sup> The morning gift largely corresponded to the *Dos* of Central European queens in its function, see A. FÖSSEL, *Königin im mittelalterlichen Reich*, pp. 67–80.

<sup>20</sup> Jan E. ALMQUIST, *Om morgongåvas stadfästelse med glaven*, [in:] idem, *Strödda bidrag till familjerättens historia*, Stockholm 1932, p. 73.

security for the wife in the event of widowhood<sup>21</sup>. Since 1217, this gift has also been documented for queens.

Although the morning gift was actually subject to the husband's administration and was only to be at the disposal of the wife after his death, the morning gift territories lent to queens developed into special areas, the income from which accrued to the ruler<sup>22</sup>. With wise economic management, this income made the queen a potent financier – also for her husband. Borrowing from his wife was particularly advantageous for the sovereign since pledged territories and revenues reverted to the royal family upon the queen's death and thus became void<sup>23</sup>. The numerous pledges of landed property to the queens, especially under Christian I and John I, increased their economic power and thus their political influence in the empire. In this context, the Scandinavian Crowns, like the British Crown today, can be described as a 'firm' in which both king and queen were shareholders.

## II. THE KALMAR UNION – POLITICAL CONSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS

Independent of the political history of the Kalmar Union, which was marked by the power struggles of various noble groups and diverging interests between the preservation and dissolution of the Union<sup>24</sup>, the role of the monarchy in the three kingdoms changed significantly between 1397 and 1523. Although Sweden and Denmark were and remained elective kingdoms during this period, the rulers attempted to undermine the electoral rights of the estates through a different conception of rule. While the rule of Margaret Valdemarsdatter was essentially based on the convergence of interests between the members of the Council of the Realm and her, her successor Eric of Pomerania was already attempting to override and negate the power of the council. This resulted in the revolt of the 1430s, which was to lead to Eric's expulsion<sup>25</sup>.

However, in the years of Margaret and Eric, the idea of 'the king's two bodies', as Kantorowicz put it<sup>26</sup>, had also emerged in the Scandinavian context.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> See Lars HAMRE, *Morgongåva. Norge*, [in:] *Kulturhistorisk lexikon för nordisk medeltid*, vol. 11, Malmö 1966, col. 700–702.

<sup>23</sup> Dieter STRAUCH, *Die Rechtslage der schwedischen Frau im Mittelalter*, [in:] *Schwedisches historisches Recht. Vier Einblicke ins Mittelalter und in die Frühe Neuzeit*, hrsg. v. Dieter STRAUCH (Rechtsgeschichtliche Schriften, Bd. 33), Wien 2022, pp. 87 ff.

<sup>24</sup> See Lars-Olof LARSSON, *Kalmarunionens tid. Från drottning Margareta till Kristian II*, Stockholm 1997; Herman SCHÜCK, *Sweden as an Aristocratic Republic*, *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 9: 1984, no. 1, pp. 65–72.

<sup>25</sup> Markus HEDEMANN, *Var Erik af Pommerns kongemagt arvelig?*, *Historisk Tidskrift*, Bd. 117: 2017, H. 2, pp. 503–530.

<sup>26</sup> Ernst H. KANTOROWICZ, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, Princeton 1957.

The idea of kingship, a *corona regni*, as it was formulated for Denmark in the fourteenth century, which was independent of the person holding the crown, began to take shape<sup>27</sup>, whereas in Sweden it competed with the idea of the realm<sup>28</sup>. This not only allowed, as will be shown, Queen Dorothea to take the place of a sovereign, but also made the formulation of an explicitly dynastic claim to all three realms possible, as it was to be formulated under King John.

In the ideal world of Scandinavian kingship with a 'body natural' and a 'body politic', the role of the body natural could be carried out by a woman, since the mechanisms of the body politic – separate from it – proceeded independently, as the example of Margaret Valdemarsdatter shows. Even if she avoided the title 'queen' in the beginning, she was called 'queen in Sweden and Norway and heir in Denmark'<sup>29</sup>, which together with her personal power clearly indicates the idea of a body politic independent of the sex of the body natural. In this system, female rulers possessed 'the ability to take part in the events, to have means at [their] disposal to give some chance of success in them which constitutes power on this definition – i.e. the means of strategic action'<sup>30</sup>.

### III. 1. PHILIPPA OF ENGLAND

#### III. 1. α. THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Philippa of Lancaster had been born at Peterborough Castle in Cambridgeshire in 1394, the sixth child and second daughter of Henry Bolingbroke and Mary de Bohun. Five years later Henry usurped the English throne as Henry IV and installed the Lancasters as the royal family. In the concert of European ruling houses, however, they were regarded as parvenus and usurpers<sup>31</sup>. The Lancaster position had to be upgraded through marriage alliances. Less than a year after taking the throne, Henry sent a delegation to the Union of Kalmar to inquire about the conditions there and the possibility of a double marriage<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Carsten JAHNKE, *Konsolidierung der Reiche Dänemark-Norwegen und Schweden-Finnland*, [in:] *Nordeuropa. Handbuch für Wissenschaft und Studium*, hrsg. v. Bernd HENNINGSEN [forthcoming].

<sup>28</sup> Margaretha NORDQUIST, *Envisioning a Political Community: Peasants and Swedish Men in Vernacular Rhyme Chronicles, Late Fifteenth Century*, [in:] *Imagined Communities on the Baltic Rim, from the Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Wojtek JEZIEWSKI, Lars HERMANSON, Amsterdam 2016, pp. 92 f.

<sup>29</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum*, Række 4, Bd. 6: 1396–1398, ed. Aage ANDERSEN, Copenhagen 1998, no. 12, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> P. STAFFORD, op.cit., p. 11; S. ROEBERT, op.cit., p. 19, note 45.

<sup>31</sup> Louise BERGLUND, *En lysande fru. Filippa av England och den mångfacetterade drottningrollen under senmedeltiden*, Personhistorisk Tidskrift, 2015, nr 1, p. 75.

<sup>32</sup> Ludvig DAAE, *Erik af Pommerns, Danmarks, Sveriges og Norges konges, giftemaal med Philippa, prindsesse af England*, Historisk Tidsskrift, Række 2, Bd. 2: 1880, pp. 332–374; Carl

Margaret Valdemarsdatter saw a marriage between the heir to the throne, Eric of Pomerania, and one of Henry's daughters as a good opportunity to carry out her own political goals. One of her most important goals was the reconquest of the island of Gotland, which had been occupied by the Teutonic Order in January 1399<sup>33</sup>. Since the English king was one of the Order's most important supporters<sup>34</sup>, pressure could be exerted in this way. At the same time, however, Henry wanted to secure the Kalmar Union as an ally in the Hundred Years' War<sup>35</sup>, which Margaret wanted to avoid. After lengthy negotiations, the double marriage between England and the Kalmar Union became a triangular relationship, which further increased the pressure on the Order: Philippa was betrothed to Eric, while her sister Blanche married Emperor Ruprecht's son Louis of the Palatinate, and in 1406 Eric's sister Catherine married Louis' brother John of Neumarkt<sup>36</sup>. This raised the status of the Lancastrians and considerably increased the pressure on the Teutonic Order.

The marriage contract was concluded at Westminster on 26 November 1405<sup>37</sup>, and on 8 December 1405, Henry declared his daughter queen of the Kalmar Union after she had married, by proxy, a deputy of Eric<sup>38</sup>. The direct marriage between Philippa and Eric took place in Lund on 26 October 1406<sup>39</sup>.

Under English law, Philippa received no dowry, only a trousseau<sup>40</sup>, which included a crown<sup>41</sup> with which she was crowned in Lund, valued at 1,078 marks, while Eric's crown was worth only 698 marks<sup>42</sup>. As a morning gift, the

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G. STYFFE, *Bidrag till Skandinaviens historia ur utländska arkiver*, D. 2: *Förhandlingar med Tyskland och Sveriges inre tillstånd under Unionstiden 1395–1448*, Stockholm 1864, no. 41, pp. 109–114.

<sup>33</sup> Mikael K. HANSEN, *Valdemar Atterdags og Margrethes udenrigspolitiske relationer til den Tyske Orden 1340–1412* (MA thesis, University of Copenhagen), Copenhagen 2006, pp. 124–127.

<sup>34</sup> See i.a. Werner PARAVICINI, *Die Preußenreisen des europäischen Adels*, Tl. 1, Sigmaringen 1989.

<sup>35</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 14020314001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14020314001> [accessed online 17 February 2023]; no. 14020616001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14020616001> [accessed online 17 February 2023].

<sup>36</sup> L. DAAE, *op.cit.*, pp. 372 ff.

<sup>37</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 14051126001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14051126001> [accessed online 17 February 2023].

<sup>38</sup> L. DAAE, *op.cit.*, p. 358.

<sup>39</sup> *Petri Olai Annales rerum Danicarum [...] ad An. Chr. 1541*, [in:] *Scriptores rerum Danicarum medii aevi*, vol. 1, ed. Jacobus LANGEBEK, Hafniæ 1772, p. 193; *Vadstenadiariet. Latinsk text med översättning och kommentar*, ed. Claes GEJROT, Stockholm 1996, no. 147, pp. 106 f.

<sup>40</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 14061026001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14061026001> [accessed online 17 February 2023]; no. 14061102001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14061102001> [accessed online 17 February 2023].

<sup>41</sup> Gottfrid CARLSSON, *De båda guldchronorna i Vadstena kloster*, Fornvännen, vol. 51: 1956, pp. 95–109.

<sup>42</sup> *Vadstenadiariet*, no. 641, pp. 276 f.

12-year-old Philippa received the fief of Næsbyhovet on the island of Fionia in Denmark, Romerike in Norway and Örebro in Sweden<sup>43</sup>. With this, she received central possessions in all three realms.

### III. 1. β. PHILIPPA'S POLITICAL ROLE – IN GENERAL

In historical research, Philippa has hardly played a major role so far, as her activities were overshadowed by her husband's largely futile politics<sup>44</sup>. Also, the early years of her time as queen fell under the 'quasi-regency' of Margaret Valdemarsdatter, so no evidence of her doings until 1412 has survived<sup>45</sup>.

However, immediately after her marriage, the English legation contacted the monastery of Vadstena in Sweden to found a daughter monastery in England, which was encouraged by Philippa<sup>46</sup>. At the same time, Philippa was assigned Katerina Finnsson as court mistress. Not only was Katerina married to the highest commander in Norway, but she was also the granddaughter of St Birgitta of Vadstena and, together with Magarethe Valdemarsdatter, had been raised by Birgitta's daughter<sup>47</sup>. So it was naturally, that Philippa also sought contact with the most important Swedish royal monastery. By 1415 she had already been to Vadstena twice<sup>48</sup>, in 1421 she founded a mass there for the king and herself<sup>49</sup>, and in 1422 she brought a precious relic to the monastery<sup>50</sup>. And she used her influence with the pope on behalf of the monastery<sup>51</sup>. The *Diarum* of the monastery dryly remarks on this: 'Sed in hoc negocio longe prestancius exhibuit se regina in donariis et sumptibus quam rex'<sup>52</sup>.

Through this fruitful and close relationship with Vadstena, Philippa built up a network in the Swedish high nobility<sup>53</sup>, which she was later able to use

<sup>43</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 14200630001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14200630001> [accessed online 17 February 2023]; S. IMSEN, op.cit., p. 68.

<sup>44</sup> But see now Marie-Louise FLEMBERG, *Filippa. Engelsk prinsessa och nordisk unionsdrottning*, Stockholm 2014.

<sup>45</sup> See also L. BERGLUND, *En lysande fru*, p. 79.

<sup>46</sup> *Vadstenadiariet*, no. 147, pp. 106 f.; Tore NYBERG, *Birgittinische Klostergründungen des Mittelalters* (Bibliotheca Historica Lundensis, vol. 15), Lund 1965, pp. 69–77; L. BERGLUND, *En lysande fru*, pp. 82 ff.

<sup>47</sup> Kathrine WANG LANGER, *Dronningemagt i det senmiddelalderlige Norden. En undersøgelse af de tre unionsdronninger – Philippa, Dorothea og Christine* (MA thesis, University of Copenhagen), Copenhagen 2022, p. 15.

<sup>48</sup> *Vadstenadiariet*, no. 238, pp. 144 f. See in general M.-L. FLEMBERG, op.cit., pp. 147–168.

<sup>49</sup> *Vadstenadiariet*, no. 322, pp. 170 f.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 330, pp. 174 f.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 333, pp. 174–177; *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 14190327001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14190327001> [accessed online 17 February 2023]; no. 14191204001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14191204001> [accessed online 17 February 2023].

<sup>52</sup> *Vadstenadiariet*, no. 333, 3, p. 176.

<sup>53</sup> See *ibid.*, no. 239, pp. 144 f.



politically. Nonetheless, the basis for her not insignificant power in Denmark and Zealand has not yet been further investigated.

### III. 1. *γ*. PHILIPPA'S POLITICAL ROLE – REGINA REGNANS

Philippa's political role becomes abundantly clear when Eric of Pomerania set out on St Laurence's Day 1423 for a 'pilgrimage' to Jerusalem that would last until Ascension Day 1425<sup>54</sup>. Previously as early as 1416, the queen regularly appeared in royal privileges with the phrase 'and us and our beloved wife, Queen Philippa, etc.'<sup>55</sup>, which makes it clear that Eric had granted her a political role in the realm. In 1420, Eric took another step to extend Philippa's power. As the couple had not had any children, Eric wanted to appoint his cousin Bugislav as his successor, but this met with resistance from the royal councillors. To further this plan, Philippa's morning gift was redesigned on 30 June 1420. The queen gave up Næsbyhovet and Romerike and instead received all of Zealand (with the new capital Copenhagen) as a fief, with the proviso that it be given to Bugislav. She also now owned Uppsala and Stockholm in addition to Örebro<sup>56</sup>. Her fiefs formed, as Steinar Imsen put it, a queendom in the empire, which included the most important towns and economic areas<sup>57</sup>.

At the same time, in the event of Eric's death, Philippa was appointed as governor in all three realms, to hand them over to Bugislav or another relative from the Griffin dynasty<sup>58</sup>. Hereby she had been granted a central role in the succession arrangement, which curtailed the power of the Council of the Realm. As a logical consequence, for example, the new Bishop of Orkney, Thomas de Tulloch, and the Jarl of the Isles, David Menzies of Weem, now had to swear allegiance to both king and queen<sup>59</sup>. And shortly before his departure, Eric himself implored the Hanseatic towns to defend Philippa's possessions in the event of his death<sup>60</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> William MOLLERUP, *Kong Erik af Pommerns Udenlandsrejse 1423–1425*, Historisk Tidsskrift, Række 5, Bd. 3: 1881–1882, pp. 713–743.

<sup>55</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 14160901005, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14160901005> [accessed online 17 February 2023]: 'oc oss oc wore kære husfrwæ drotning Philippe etc.'

<sup>56</sup> S. IMSSEN, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 14200630001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14200630001> [accessed online 17 February 2023].

<sup>59</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 14220710001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14220710001> [accessed online 17 February 2023]; no. 14230715001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14230715001> [accessed online 17 February 2023].

<sup>60</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 14230615001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14230615001> [accessed online 17 February 2023].

After his departure, Philippa not only assumed full power of government in Denmark<sup>61</sup> and Sweden<sup>62</sup>, but Eric had also left her in charge of supervising the execution of Margaret Valdemarsdatter's prestigious tomb in Roskilde cathedral<sup>63</sup>.

One of Philippa's most important projects during Eric's absence was a re-organisation of the coinage (the so-called Philippa-Sechsling)<sup>64</sup>, which she achieved on 8 October 1424 in negotiations with the Hanseatic cities. In the *Narratio*, she highlights her powers: 'We Philippa, by the grace of God, Queen of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the Wends and Goths, and Duchess of Pomerania confess with this letter that we, Queen Philippa, by such power and by such command which our most gracious Lord has granted us in his absence from the realm and the country, and according to the advice and instruction of our royal councillors, instead of the same our gracious Lord, for the sake of our and the knights and the soldiers of the realm, on the one hand [...]'<sup>65</sup>.

However, Philippa only sealed this treaty with her small secretion and not with the royal seal. At the same time, she preserved her husband's rights. Thus she tried *exempli causa* to have the so-called judgment of Ofen, which was supposed to support Eric's claim to the Duchy of Schleswig<sup>66</sup>, published in Lübeck and Wismar<sup>67</sup>.

### III. 1. δ. PHILIPPA'S POLITICAL ROLE – CONSORS REGNI

After Eric's return in 1425, Philippa remained in a strong position – alongside the king. Eric soon found himself in conflict with the Hanseatic cities

<sup>61</sup> See in general still Ferdinand H. JAHN, *Danmarks politisk-militaire Historie under Unionkongerne*, Kiøbenhavn 1835, pp. 478 ff. See C. G. STYFFE, *Bidrag till Skandinaviens historia*, D. 2, no. 89, pp. 222 ff.; *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 14240212001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14240212001> [accessed online 17 February 2023]; or no. 14240213001, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14240213001> [accessed online 17 February 2023]. See also *Hanserecesse*, Abt. 1: *Die Recesse und andere Akten der Hansetage von 1256–1430*, Bd. 8, bearb. v. Karl KOPPMANN, Leipzig 1897, no. 1093, p. 705; no. 1155, p. 743.

<sup>62</sup> C. G. STYFFE, *Bidrag till Skandinaviens historia*, D. 2, no. 88, pp. 220 f.; no. 95, pp. 236 f.

<sup>63</sup> *Petri Olai Annales rerum Danicarum*, p. 194.

<sup>64</sup> See also C. G. STYFFE, *Bidrag till Skandinaviens historia*, D. 2, no. 95, pp. 236 f.

<sup>65</sup> *Hanserecesse*, Abt. 1: *Die Recesse und andere Akten der Hansetage von 1256–1430*, Bd. 7, bearb. v. Karl KOPPMANN, Leipzig 1893, no. 740, pp. 498 ff.: 'Wy Phylippa, van Godes gnaden to Dennemarken, Sweden, Norweghen, Wenden unde der Ghoten konynghinne unde hertoghinne to Pomeran [...] bekennen in desser jeghenwardyghen scrift, dat wy konynghinne Phylippa erbenomed van sodaner macht unde bevelynghe wegghen, also uns unse alderleveste gnedige here in sinem affwesende de ryke unde land bevolen heft, unde na rade unde vulborde der rede-re unser ryke, van des sulven unses gnedigen heren, unser unde der rike redere unde manschop wegghen, uppe de enen zyde [...]']

<sup>66</sup> See for this Markus HEDEMANN, *Danmark, Slesvig og Holsten 1404–1448 – konflikt og konsekvens* (Skrifter udgivet af Historisk Samfund for Sønderjylland, nr 114), Aabenraa 2018.

<sup>67</sup> *Hanserecesse*, Abt. 1, Bd. 7, no. 742 f., pp. 500 f.

again, in which he now relied more and more on his wife. In the spring of 1427, war with the cities was inevitable, and Eric sent Philippa to the Swedish Council of the Realm to negotiate support<sup>68</sup>. From there she seems to have returned to Copenhagen shortly before the city was besieged by Hanseatic troops in 1428<sup>69</sup>. However, there is as of yet no evidence to support the claim that she defended the city by herself<sup>70</sup>. The following year, Eric travelled to Sweden, while Philippa in April 1429 assembled a fleet from Copenhagen to conquer Stralsund. However, the fleet suffered a defeat there<sup>71</sup>, which, according to later, unfounded tradition, was blamed on the queen<sup>72</sup>.

The historians of the sixteenth century used the defeat at Stralsund as an opportunity to weaken the strong role of the queen. According to a legend based on Albert Krantz (1450–1517) and Olaus Petri (1492–1552), passed on by Arild Huitfeldt, the king was said to have been so angered by the defeat that he beat his pregnant wife, who then suffered a miscarriage and retired to the monastery of Vadstena, where she died<sup>73</sup>. This legend has already been rejected as unfounded by Jahn in 1835<sup>74</sup>.

### III. 1. ε. PHILIPPA OF LANCASTER – A QUEEN FULFILLING HER DUTY

Queen Philippa can be described as an example of a reginal sovereign in the fifteenth century. Despite coming from a French-speaking court, she easily integrated into Scandinavian society, creating networks and freedoms for herself. She exercised power in the Kalmar Union – qua her office, but also because of her commitment. She was able, to take part in the events, and she had means at her disposal which gave her a chance at success. It is striking that her role as *mater et fidelissima protectrix*<sup>75</sup> manifested itself not only in the 'emergency situation' of the king's absence but also before and after. Philippa

<sup>68</sup> Kristian ERSLEV, *Danmarks Historie under Dronning Margarethe og Erik af Pommern*, D. 2, København 1901, pp. 211 f.

<sup>69</sup> *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 14280526002, <http://diplomatarium.dk/dokument/14280526002> [accessed online 17 February 2023].

<sup>70</sup> A. HUITFELDT, *Den Tredie Part Chronologiae*, p. 440, reports, following a document published in *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 14280526002, that the queen had her own warriors, which she probably used against the Wendish cities. But there is no closer proof of this. I would like to thank Dr. Markus Hedemann, Copenhagen, for this information. The king also stayed in Copenhagen until July 1428 at the latest, see K. ERSLEV, op.cit., pp. 230 ff.

<sup>71</sup> F. H. JAHN, op.cit., pp. 98 f.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 478 ff.

<sup>73</sup> A. HUITFELDT, *Den Tredie Part Chronologiae*, p. 445. For the use of Philippa for the Vadstena Abbey, see Louise BERGLUND, *Queen Philippa and Vadstena Abbey: Royal Communication on a Medieval Media Platform*, [in:] *Media and Monarchy in Sweden*, ed. Mats JÖNSSON, Patrik LUNDELL, Göteborg 2009, pp. 21–32.

<sup>74</sup> F. H. JAHN, op.cit., pp. 478 ff.

<sup>75</sup> *Vadstenadiariet*, no. 406, p. 196.

was a true Union Queen at her husband's side, fully fulfilling the role assigned to her as protector of the realm and the Holy Church.

### III. 2. DOROTHEA OF HOHENZOLLERN

#### III. 2. α. THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Eric of Pomerania failed because of the succession issue and his poor relationship with the realm councils, especially in Sweden and Denmark. In 1439, the situation had come to such a head that he withdrew to Gotland, and the realm councils offered the crown to his nephew Christopher of Palatinate-Neumarkt, who was able to establish himself as king<sup>76</sup>. Christopher was the son of Eric's sister Catherine and was the last surviving male relative of King Eric. These two were also the last representatives of the old Danish royal dynasty. On New Year's Day 1443, Christopher was crowned *archirex* of the Kalmar Union. However, he was directly dependent on the realm councils, both politically and financially. To improve this position, he planned the conquest of Lübeck in the medium term<sup>77</sup>. A possible success would have significantly improved his position in the kingdoms. For this, he needed allies in the Holy Roman Empire. In 1443 he, therefore, entered into negotiations with the Hohenzollern family, who were the margraves of Brandenburg. A marriage alliance was agreed upon under which Dorothea of Hohenzollern, born in 1431, was married to Christopher in Copenhagen on 12 September 1445. On 14 September, she was crowned *archiregina* of the Kalmar Union by the archbishop of Lund<sup>78</sup> with Philippa's queen's crown from Vadstena<sup>79</sup>. As a morning gift, she received four territories of equal size in all four dominions of Christophers, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Neumarkt, each of which was worth 15,000 Rhenish florins<sup>80</sup>. These allotments, symbolically appropriate for an *archiregina*, secured the queen considerable political influence due to their economic

<sup>76</sup> Jens E. OLESEN, *Rigsråd – kongemagt – union. Studier over det danske rigsråd og den nordiske kongemagts politik 1434–1449*, Aarhus 1980, pp. 125–222.

<sup>77</sup> C. JAHNKE, *Dronning Dorothea*, chpt. IV.A.

<sup>78</sup> J. E. OLESEN, op.cit., pp. 307–309; *Vadstenadiariet*, no. 555, p. 213; *Hanserecesse*, Abt. 2: *Hanserecesse von 1431–1476*, Bd. 3, bearb. v. Goswin VON DER ROPP, Leipzig 1881, no. 205, § 5, p. 105.

<sup>79</sup> *Norges gamle love*, Række 2: 1388–1604, Bd. 1: 1388–1447, ed. Oscar A. JOHNSEN, Oslo 1912, no. 133, pp. 261 f.

<sup>80</sup> *Jämtlands och Härjedalens diplomatarium*, D. 1: *Till 1450*, ed. Karl-Erik LÖFQVIST, Robert SWEDLUND, Östersund 1956, no. 263, pp. 266–268; *Norges gamle love*, Række 2, Bd. 1, no. 135, pp. 266 f.; *Diplomatarium Norvegicum. Oldbreve til Kundskab om Norges indre og ydre Forhold, Sprog, Slægter, Sæder, Lovgivning og Rettergang i Middelalderen*, Saml. 2, Bd. 7, ed. Christian C.A. LANGE, Carl R. UNGER, Christiania 1852, no. 436, pp. 423 f.; *Christoffer af Bayerns breve 1440–1448 vedrørende hans bayerske stamhertugdømme*, ed. Jens E. OLESEN, København 1986, no. 56, pp. 153–155; no. 57, pp. 155 f.; no. 57c., pp. 159 f.

scope, which she exploited when Christopher died in January 1448 while preparing for the military campaign.

III. 2.β. DOROTHEA OF HOHENZOLLERN – FROM *CONSORNS REGNI*  
TO *REGINA REGNANS*

In the years of her marriage to Christopher of Palatinate-Neumarkt, Dorothea was the classic example of a *consors regni*, beautiful and nice to look at<sup>81</sup>. However, she used the time to create networks for herself, especially in Denmark. These networks came to fruition after Christopher's death. Being a widow opened up unimagined freedoms for Dorothea. Firstly, she emancipated herself from her own family, whose renewed marriage plans she ignored<sup>82</sup>. Secondly, she aggressively defended her claims to her acreage in Northern Europe, while giving up the acreage in the Neumarkt, which was close to her family's possessions<sup>83</sup>. And thirdly, she used the political influence that the morning gifts gave her to stay in power.

Around 1448, there were two roughly equal political groupings in the Kalmar Union, one of which favoured a continuation of the Union under one ruler, whereas the other sought the dissolution of the Union and the creation of national kingdoms<sup>84</sup>. For both groups, the queen dowager was both interesting and an obstacle. She was interesting because in Denmark and the Kalmar Union she could help legitimise the transition to a new royal dynasty by tying the old and the new dynasties together. However, she was also an obstacle in all the kingdoms, as her morning gift was so large that there were hardly any possibilities to provide for further queens without endangering the state budget. This gave Dorothea a key position, which she actively used from 1448 onwards<sup>85</sup>. According to reports from the Teutonic Order, she succeeded in retaining power in Denmark in 1448<sup>86</sup> – and was not to relinquish it again until 1482.

<sup>81</sup> Svenska medeltidens rim-krönikor, D. 2: Nya eller Karls-krönikan. Början af unions-striderna samt Karl Knutssons regering, 1389–1452, ed. Gustaf E. KLEMMING, Stockholm 1866, l. 7202–7234, pp. 248 f.

<sup>82</sup> Carsten JAHNKE, *Dorothea von Brandenburg (um 1431–1495). Verdrängt, vergessen und doch überaus machtvoll*, [in:] *Zwischen Macht und Schicksal. Acht Herrscherinnen des Nordens aus acht Jahrhunderten (1200–2000)*, hrsg. v. Oliver AUGÉ, Lars N. HENNINGSSEN, Frank LUBOWITZ, Broder SCHWENSEN (Große Schriftenreihe der Gesellschaft für Flensburger Stadtgeschichte, Bd. 78), Flensburg 2013, pp. 56–75.

<sup>83</sup> Idem, *Dronning Dorothea*, chpt. VIII.C.

<sup>84</sup> Poul ENEMARK, *Kriseår 1448–1451. En epoke i nordisk unionshistorie*, København 1981, pp. 68 ff.

<sup>85</sup> C. JAHNKE, *Dronning Dorothea*, chpt. V–VIII.

<sup>86</sup> Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin-Dahlem, XX. Hauptabteilung, Ordensbriefarchiv, Nr. 9478 (1448 März 8); Gustaf A. LÖGDBERG, *De nordiska konungarna och Tyska Orden 1441–1457*, Uppsala 1935, pp. 102 f.

However, Dorothea was aware that her position had no legal basis, as she was not descended from the old royal family either. She, therefore, needed a man who, as a crowned ruler, was to guide the fortunes of the realms together with her. According to a report by her son's chancellor, the royal councillor Adolf VIII of Holstein presented her with a list of three possible candidates, from which she chose one: Christian I of Oldenburg<sup>87</sup>. The chronicler explains the reasons: 'And the earl of Holstein, Adolf VIII, had a sister, married to the earl of Oldenburg and mother of three sons. And the same Adolf wanted one of his nephews as king of Denmark. So he went in secret to Queen Dorothea, who sat on her royal widow's throne and explained to her, that she, by marrying one of them, could stay as powerful queen in all three countries, together with the king. And Queen Dorothea, as a woman who strove for great honours, great power and influence on government as for the possession of land, many subjects and own demesnes, agreed to this'<sup>88</sup>.

Dorothea not only put her new husband through his paces politically and militarily. His personal qualities were also tested: at her wedding on 29 October 1449, the queen was already heavily pregnant and soon gave birth to the couple's first of ten children, the first heir to the Danish throne in one hundred years<sup>89</sup>.

III. 2. *γ*. DOROTHEA OF HOHENZOLLERN – CONSORS REGNI  
AND REGINA REGNANS AT THE SAME TIME

Dorothea paved the way for Christian I's rise to power in Denmark, which went completely smoothly. Significantly, some privileges bear the suffix 'Dn rex per se, presente domina regina Dorothea'<sup>90</sup>, as the queen was to remain a decisive element of policy throughout Christian's life<sup>91</sup>.

But it was also Dorothea who opened the way for her husband into the Kalmar Union. She opened the door first to Norway and then to Sweden, thus maintaining the Kalmar Union, at least in theory. According to the union agreements, the realm councils of the Kalmar Union were supposed to elect

<sup>87</sup> Niels M. PETERSEN, *Samtidig Beretning om Forhandlingerne imellem Kong Christian den Anden og Hertug Frederik, samt dennes Kongevalg*, Danske Magazin, Række 3, Bd. 3: 1851, pp. 3 f.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 4: 'So bliebe sy als ein gewaltige konigin, mit Irem herren, In silgedachten [sic!] Reichen besitzen, Es hatt solche vorschlagk, hochgedachter konigin Dorothea, als einem wei-be die viler Ehren, grosser herschung vnd Regierung darzu viller lanndt vnd leut, auch großes guts, wies ernach males die erfharung offetmales außgeweiset, begirig, Solcher vorschlag nit vbel gefhallen.'

<sup>89</sup> Carsten JAHNKE, *Dorothea von Brandenburg. Die zentrale Fürstin der dänischen und schleswig-holsteinischen Geschichte* [forthcoming].

<sup>90</sup> *Repertorium diplomaticum regni Danici mediævalis*, Række 2, Bd. 1: 1451–1466, ed. William CHRISTENSEN, København 1928, no. 230, p. 72.

<sup>91</sup> C. JAHNKE, *Dronning Dorothea*, chpt. VIII.B.1.

a ruler together after the death of the previous one<sup>92</sup>. After the death of her first husband, the Swedish councillors, however, elected Karl Knudsson (Bonde) as the new king<sup>93</sup>, who also refused to recognise Dorothea's morning gift<sup>94</sup>. However, according to the Swedish royal law, the *Konungsbalken*, she was irrevocably entitled to these territories<sup>95</sup>. That was the lever Dorothea could use to pave the way into Sweden for Christian.

However, before Christian could take the Swedish throne, the battle for Norway had to be decided. Here there were three parties, one that wanted an independent Norwegian kingdom and one Swedish- and one Danish-minded party. After lengthy negotiations and a futile military intervention by Karl Knudsson, Christian was crowned king of Norway on 2 August 1450 in Nidaros<sup>96</sup>. If one looks at the document of homage from 1458, it states, among other things: 'And if it is God's will that the highborn princess, our gracious Lady Dorothea, should survive our gracious lord, then we pledge to her the best and loyalty with all submissiveness and fidelity and will be at her will and service according to our best ability and power'<sup>97</sup>.

Like Philippa, Dorothea was also seen as regent after the possible demise of the king. Consequently, in 1462, the new Bishop of Orkney, Vilhelm, took the oath of allegiance to both the king and queen and the couple's children<sup>98</sup>. The same had been done in 1453 by the new Bishop of Børglum, Jep Friis, in Denmark<sup>99</sup>.

<sup>92</sup> *Samling af Danske Kongers Haandfæstninger og andre lignende Acter*, København 1856–1858, no. 11, pp. 38 ff.

<sup>93</sup> P. ENEMARK, *Kriseår 1448–1451*, pp. 14–160; J. E. OLESEN, op.cit., pp. 379–425.

<sup>94</sup> Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin-Dahlem, XX. Hauptabteilung, Ordensbriefarchiv, Nr. 9605 (1448 Juli 25): 'Item als wir dann bey vnser gnedigsten frawe gewest synt wir vornamen das die sweden karl knawtsson uff genomen haben zu eynem koninge. So synz meyne gnedigsten frawe koningynne in den dreen rychen etliche tzins als leipzucht vrsprochen als in itzlichen ryche 15.000 gulden in sulch weise ap se ers hern konigs tode gelobete so wen se deme auf de rychen tzehen worde so sulche man in auf itzlichen ryche de 15.000 geben. Item so sulden meyne gnedige frawe oc tzins auf sweden vor eynen halben jare gefallen worden sein die werden nu doch bis her noch vor gehalten vnd meyne gnedigste frawe (vorsich sich das) befuget sich eer tzins auch hat se se manen lassen.'

<sup>95</sup> *Konungsbalken*, <http://www.arnell.cc/konungabalken.htm> [accessed online 17 February 2023].

<sup>96</sup> Esben ALBRECHTSEN, *Danmark-Norge 1380–1814*, Bd. 1: *Fællesskabet bliver til 1380–1536*, Oslo 1997, pp. 204–207.

<sup>97</sup> *Norges gamle love*, Række 2, Bd. 1, no. 79, p. 136: 'Føgher oc Gudh, at høg boren førstinna, war nadige frwe drotning Dorothea, warss nadige herris liiff offerliffuer, tha lofwan wii wilia witha hennis betzste og bestand med all hulscap og troskap oc wara henne til wilie oc thieneste epter wara betzste maght oc formaaghe.'

<sup>98</sup> *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, Saml. 2, Bd. 5, no. 842, p. 610.

<sup>99</sup> *Dokumenter, vedkommende Rigsraaden Mourits Nielsen (Gyldenstjerne) til Aargard*, ed. Michael N. Ch. K. RASMUSSEN, *Danske Magazin*, Række 3, Bd. 3: 1851, no. 3, p. 267, note 1.

In 1450, however, Christian was not only crowned king of Norway, but he also had to ostensibly recognise Karl Knudsson's regency in the Peace of Halmstad<sup>100</sup>. Here Dorothea intervened with her morning gift. According to the *Konungsbalken*, Karl Knudsson should have paid her the value of her possessions and revenues, but he did not. This enabled the queen to now appeal to the pope and the ecclesiastical and secular authorities since she had been robbed as a 'poor widow' by a secular ruler<sup>101</sup>. From 1455 until the end of her days, Dorothea pursued a fundamental political idea: 'and we have from the grace of God the sharp sword of the ban, with it we will bring them into your hand, with the help of God', as she herself wrote to her son<sup>102</sup>. Working tirelessly, the queen obtained one interdict and one banishment after another, against Sweden, Karl Knudsson and others, exerting constant pressure on Swedish politics<sup>103</sup>. She used her role as a woman, and thus as a subject specially protected by the Church, to build up a political threat. She was aware that an interdict did not promise a solution in the short term, but that in the long term the sum of various bans and interdicts created so much pressure that the Swedes and the Oldenburgs had to negotiate with each other. In this way, she ultimately succeeded in helping both Christian I (several times) and her son John to the Swedish throne. In the Swedish propaganda of the time it earned her the lines: 'Om hans drothningh dorothea kan jak ey scriffua goth. / Wthan onth smäligh och spoth / Thz was teh wärsta qvinna / Som man kan fynna' ('I have nothing good to say about his Queen Dorothea. Without malice and ridicule: she was the worst woman you could ever find')<sup>104</sup>. For the Swedes, she became a she-wolf to this day, who as a foreigner had fought against the (alleged) interests of the Swedish nation.

We see in the politics of Christian and Dorothea clear cooperation, although political negotiations, especially with the Hanseatic cities, could also be conducted by both of them separately. With the cities, Dorothea's hardness of negotiation was notorious, or as the bailiff of the city of Lübeck put it at the Scanian fairs in 1466: 'The king is not in Zealand or Scania; had he been here, the bailiffs of the cities would have stepped before his grace. The queen is

<sup>100</sup> Poul ENEMARK, *Christian I og forholdet til Sverige 1448–1454*, Historie/Jyske Samlinger. Ny Række, Bd. 14: 1981–1983, nr 3, pp. 440–492.

<sup>101</sup> *Erkebiskop Henrik Kalteisens Kopibog*, ed. Alexander BUGGE, Christiania 1899, no. 32, p. 170.

<sup>102</sup> *Aktstykker i Bandsagen mod Sten Sture*, [in:] *Aarsberetninger fra det Kongelige Geheimearchiv*, Bd. 4, ed. Caspar F. WEGENER, København 1866–1870, no. 8, p. 393: 'wy hebben von der gnade Gades en scharper sweert des bannes, dar willen wij se juw mede in de hant bringen, mit der hulpe Gades.'

<sup>103</sup> C. JAHNKE, *Dronning Dorothea*, chpt. VIII.C.

<sup>104</sup> *Svenska medeltidens rim-krönikor*, D. 3: *Nya krönikans fortsättningar eller Sture-krönikorna. Fortgången af unions-striderna under Karl Knutsson och Sturarne, 1452–1520*, ed. Gustaf E. KLEMMING, Stockholm 1867–1868, pp. 85 f.



in Malmö. I hope that she will not come near us, but I fear that she will come to Falsterbo<sup>105</sup>.

In the political world of the fifteenth century, King Christian was responsible for the war, parts of external diplomacy and above all representation<sup>106</sup>. In domestic politics, both often acted in an interplay that allowed a certain flexibility. The king could not (and should not) keep secrets from his wife. Once, shortly before his death, he wanted to act alone, when he planned a crusade through Russia to the Holy Land. But that did not end well. One of his confidants, Erik Axelsson Thott, wrote to Lübeck about it: 'My lord had kept the same actions and alliances so secret that even the queen and the crown prince had no knowledge of them. But now, when my gracious lord lay on his deathbed, he revealed himself to his wife and the young lord'<sup>107</sup>.

### III. 2. δ. DOROTHEA OF HOHENZOLLERN – THE HEAD OF A 'FIRM'

The case that Christian could not keep secrets from his wife was also due to the fact that he had hardly any money available for independent politics. His financial resources were limited, especially as income from Sweden was often not available and instead war expenditures had to be made to confirm his claims there. The king was therefore constantly short of money. Dorothea, on the other hand, had a steady flow of money from the territories of her morning gift, at least from Denmark and Norway. She used this money, not unselfishly, to support her husband. The latter, however, was forced to borrow the money from his wife in exchange for a pledge. This increased Dorothea's power and influence in the kingdom, while Christian's income steadily decreased.

The economic relationship between the couple became particularly clear after 1460. After the death of Adolf VIII of Holstein, the councils of Schleswig and Holstein elected Christian as the new sovereign. However, there were

<sup>105</sup> *Hanserecesse*, Abt. 2: *Hanserecesse von 1431–1476*, Bd. 5, bearb. v. Goswin von der Ropp, Leipzig 1888, no. 805, p. 591: 'De konync is nicht in Selande ofte in Schone; hadde he hiir by der hant ghewesen, de voghede wolden toghen hebben vor syne gnade. De konyngynne is to deme Ellebagen; ik wolde se uns hiir nicht negher queme, ik fruchte, se wil tho Valsterbode wesen.'

<sup>106</sup> See Werner PARAVICINI, *König Christian in Italien (1474)*, [in:] *König, Reich und Fürsten im Mittelalter. Abschlusstagung des Greifswalder „Principes-Projekts“*. *Festschrift für Karl-Heinz Spieß*, hrsg. v. Oliver AUGÉ (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Greifswald, Bd. 12), Stuttgart 2017, pp. 255–368.

<sup>107</sup> Translated according to Carl G. STYFFE, *Bidrag till Skandinaviens historia ur utländska arkiver*, D. 4: *Sverige i Sten Sture den äldres tid, 1470–1503*, Stockholm 1875, no. 55, p. 84: 'Vorder günstige here, ick bidde yuwe herlicheyt dorch Gott, dat ghij desse schriffte willende [o:willen] nemande apenbaren; Mynes heren Gnaden hefft desse Stücke unde verbünd so verborgen [geholden,] dat Myn gnedige Frowe, noch unse junge here nicht [hirvon] gewust, men een in der Kentzelye; Men do myn gnedige here lag in synen latesten, do apenbarede he dat myner gnedigen Frouwen unde dem jungen heren, darume dat he id scholde to wercke stellen, unde scholde dat vorderen, unde ick vermode my, dat he id in to kamenden jaren nicht schal vergheten.'

other contenders for these two territories. Christian was therefore forced to pay off these claimants when he was elected in 1460<sup>108</sup>. The councils of Schleswig and Holstein were only too well aware that Christian did not have this money. They hoped that he would be forced to borrow the money from them, which would enable them to gain influence over the state administration. For this to happen, however, Dorothea had to be excluded as a possible source of finance. In 1460, the councillors forced Christian to include the following passage in his electoral capitulation: 'We and our descendants shall not transfer or pledge any property to our wives in these lands without the advice and consent of our provincial councillors'<sup>109</sup>. It did not help much.

Already after 1465, the queen took over parts of the finances in Schleswig and Holstein<sup>110</sup>. And, after it became clear in 1476 that the couple would have two surviving sons, Dorothea actively and aggressively pushed herself into debt settlement in these lands<sup>111</sup>. Working with Christian, she pressured the nobility into paying off many of the debts. This placed Christian even further in financial dependence on his wife. On 26 December 1477, Christian officially left all his debts in the lands to her<sup>112</sup>. On 14 April 1479, Christian's debt to his wife from Schleswig and Holstein had grown to such an extent that he officially granted her the Duchy of Holstein 'due to her great efforts and work'<sup>113</sup>. This was confirmed by the emperor on 19 July 1480.<sup>114</sup> At the same time, Dorothea received the Duchy of Schleswig as a pledge in November 1480<sup>115</sup>.

<sup>108</sup> Carsten JAHNKE, *Die Anomalie des Normalen. Das „dat se bliuen ewich tosamende vngedelt“ und die Ripener Wahlhandfeste von 1460*, [in:] *Der Vertrag von Ripen 1460 und die Anfänge der politischen Partizipation in Schleswig-Holstein, im Reich und in Nordeuropa*, hrsg. v. Oliver AUGÉ, Burkhardt BÜSING (Kieler Historische Studien, Bd. 43), Ostfildern 2012, pp. 39–72.

<sup>109</sup> *Privilegien der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Ritterschaft von den in der Privilegienlade befindlichen Originalen genau abgeschrieben und mit denselben verglichen*, bearb. v. Friedrich Ch. JENSEN, Dietrich H. HEGEWISCH, Kiel 1797, no. 9, p. 48: 'Wy unde unse nakomelinge scholnen unsen husfrowen nene gudere voregenen edder vorpflichten an dessen landen ane na rade unde vulbord alle unser redere der Land'.

<sup>110</sup> Erik ARUP, *Den finansielle side af erhvervelsen af hertugdømmerne 1460–1487*, Historisk Tidsskrift, Række 7, Bd. 4: 1903, pp. 317–489.

<sup>111</sup> C. JAHNKE, *Dronning Dorothea*, chpt. IX.

<sup>112</sup> E. ARUP, op.cit., p. 426.

<sup>113</sup> A. HUITFELDT, *Danmarks Riges Krønike. Historiske Bescriffuelse om [...] Christiern, den Første*, p. 281.

<sup>114</sup> *Diplomatarium Christierni Primi*, ed. Caspar F. WEGENER, København 1856, no. 233, pp. 359 f.; A. HUITFELDT, *Danmarks Riges Krønike. Historiske Bescriffuelse om [...] Christiern, den Første*, p. 281.

<sup>115</sup> *Diplomatarium Flensborgense. Samling af Aktstykker til Staden Flensborgs Historie indtil aaret 1559*, vol. 1, ed. Hans Ch. P. SEJDELIN, København 1865, no. 170, pp. 629–632; A. HUITFELDT, *Danmarks Riges Krønike. Historiske Bescriffuelse om [...] Christiern, den Første*, p. 280 f.

Dorothea had thus created her own queenly kingdom within four years, in which she was even recognised by the emperor as the reigning ruler. However, she did not want to keep this realm for herself, instead, her strategic goal was probably to create an independent domain for her youngest son Frederick (I), outside the Kalmar Union<sup>116</sup>.

But Dorothea had not only received numerous pledges in Schleswig and Holstein, but her possessions in Denmark had also grown to a large extent by 1481. The distribution of power among the spouses manifested itself not only politically, but also quite tangibly economically.

III. 2. ε. DOROTHEA OF HOHENZOLLERN – MORE *REGINA REGNANS*  
THAN *CONSORNS REGNI*

The brief sketch on Dorothea of Hohenzollern should show that her role within the Kalmar Union was hardly different from Philippa's. Dorothea, like Philippa, was first of all a *consors regni* in her starting point. However, she used the freedoms and opportunities opened up by her widowhood not only to emancipate herself from her family and their political ambitions but above all to create power-political opportunities and room for manoeuvre for herself.

Dorothea's morning gift was the key that made the continuation of the Kalmar Union possible at all. As queen, she not only bound the Jelling dynasty together with the Oldenburg dynasty, the economic consequences of her symbolic morning gift forced the countries to continue the union, especially against the will of parts of the Swedish nobility.

Dorothea's first approach was therefore an economic one. At the same time, the new patterns of argumentation now pushed dynastic arguments to the fore. Christian did not become king because the councils elected him out of conviction and in a convergence of interests, but because economic reality forced them to do so. However, this could not be used as a means of argumentation on his part. Instead, dynastic patterns of argumentation, i.e. questions of law and later also of inheritance law, are now being used more and more. Dorothea promoted this unreservedly. The 'sharp sword of the ban' was not, as she wrote to King John, to provide her with money, but to give him access to the Swedish throne. Access to which he also laid – at least in thought – a hereditary dynastic claim.

Dorothea clearly had, through her morning gift, 'the ability to take part in the events, had means at her disposal to give some chance of success in them'. She used this not only to increase her power but – in collaboration with Christian – for dynastic reasons. She thus acted as the true progenitor of the House of Oldenburg in Denmark.

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<sup>116</sup> C. JAHNKE, *Dronning Dorothea*, chpt. XI.B.

Incidentally, it is an irony of history that precisely these thoughts then became her undoing. After Christian died in 1481, Dorothea was an expendable blot on her son John's dynastic self-image. Although she supported him in his concerns in the Kalmar Union, she was too powerful for him. Her power had to be broken, which he succeeded in doing for the Kalmar Union with the help of the Danish royal councillors in 1482. After (probably dramatic) negotiations, Dorothea had to surrender her pledges to the Council of the Realm in trust: 'with free will we have now delivered to the worthy good lords and good men, the royal councillors of Denmark, all the rights to the castles of the Crown which the highborn prince King Christian, our gracious lord, God rest his soul, had delivered to us [...]'<sup>117</sup>. But the latter, contrary to the agreement, immediately delivered it to John. Dorothea's power in the Kalmar Union was thus broken, even though John also used the question of her morning gift as a means of exerting pressure in his negotiations for the Swedish throne.

And John also took up the fight against his mother and brother Frederick in Schleswig and Holstein. And here as well, he argued dynastically: since there was no longer a lord in the lands, he was the next heir, which is why he could force his mother out of the government. Only after protracted negotiations and numerous intrigues could a compromise be found: Schleswig and Holstein were divided between the brothers – and Dorothea was also expelled from this sphere of power<sup>118</sup>.

Dorothea ultimately submitted to dynastic rulings. Her position and power had been undermined by her own son and ultimately by her own thought patterns. However, she managed to keep the Kalmar Union alive until the end. Even the misogynous Danish chronicler Arild Huitfeldt had to admit that Dorothea had been 'en forstandig Quinde', a clever woman and that even her son had not led any wars as long as she had been alive<sup>119</sup>.

### III. 3. CHRISTINE OF WETTIN

#### III. 3. α. THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Unlike the marriages of Philippa and Dorothea, the marriage between John of Denmark and Christine of Wettin in 1478 was not preceded by a direct political interest. King Christian I had finally lost Sweden in the Battle of Brunkebjerg in 1471. Although he had again been recognised as king at Kal-

<sup>117</sup> *Repertorium diplomaticum regni Danici mediævalis*, Række 2, Bd. 3: 1479–1488, ed. Kristian ERSLEV, København 1931, no. 5020, p. 213: 'meth wor frii willie haue nw antworhet oss elselige werdiheste werdighe fædhrer herrer oc godhe men Danmarcks riges radh all Danmarcks krones slotzlogh, som høyboren første konning Cristiern wor kære nadige herre, hwes siel Gudh nadhe, oss tilforen [...]']

<sup>118</sup> C. JAHNKE, *Dronning Dorothea*, chpt. XI.B.

<sup>119</sup> A. HUITFELDT, *Kong Hansis Krønike*, p. 58.

mar in 1476<sup>120</sup>, the Swedish governor, Sten Sture the Elder, refused to let him back into the country. After 1471, especially during 1474 and 1475, Christian turned to domestic politics in the Holy Roman Empire and became an active part of the Hohenzollern political intrigues<sup>121</sup>. So far, it seems that the marriage between a Saxon princess and a Danish king's son should be seen as an attempt to gain the support of an imperial elector in the struggle against Sweden.

The first ideas about this marriage were already circulating in 1476, without the sources giving any more detailed information about the background. In January 1477, Elector Albrecht Achilles of Brandenburg (Hohenzollern) recommended that Margrave John acts as a marriage broker between Denmark and Saxony, as such an alliance was not contrary to the interests of the Hohenzollerns<sup>122</sup>. By August 1477 Margrave John had successfully campaigned for this marriage in Zerbst, but Christian allowed the negotiations to drag on<sup>123</sup>. It was not until 3 December 1477 that a marriage contract was signed<sup>124</sup>.

The marriage contract stipulated that John was to provide his wife with a tenancy in the form of an annual income of 4,000 Rhenish florins and a morning gift at John's discretion, the tenancy representing a basic value of 40,000 Rhenish florins<sup>125</sup>. The exact location of the castles and fiefs on which the revenue was based was not defined. Christine's tenancy was thus altogether only slightly less than Dorothea's morning gift, and theoretically even greater, considering that Dorothea's areas of provision extended to three realms, while John's prospects for Sweden were only theoretical. It appears, moreover, that John never presented his wife with a morning gift in Denmark<sup>126</sup>. The wedding was scheduled as a state theatre with green as the main colour scheme for

<sup>120</sup> F. H. JAHN, *op.cit.*, p. 324; *Diplomatarium Christierni Primi*, no. 216, pp. 325–330.

<sup>121</sup> Carsten JAHNKE, *Die Romreisen Christians I. von Dänemark 1474 und seiner Gemahlin Dorothea von Brandenburg 1475*, [in:] *Pilgerspuren. Wege in den Himmel. Von Lüneburg bis ans Ende der Welt*, hrsg. v. Hartmut KÜHNE, Petersberg 2020, pp. 205–213; *idem*, *Die Pilgerfahrt Christians I. nach Köln. Eine Pilgerreise ohne Pilger*, [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 305–307; W. PARAVICINI, *König Christian in Italien*, *passim*.

<sup>122</sup> *Politische Correspondenz des Kurfürsten Albrecht Achilles*, Bd. 2, hrsg. v. Felix PRIEBATSCH (Publikationen aus den königlich-preußischen Staatsarchiven, Bd. 67), Leipzig 1897, no. 268, p. 281.

<sup>123</sup> *Codex diplomaticus Brandenburgensis. Sammlung der Urkunden, Chroniken und sonstigen Quellschriften für die Geschichte der Mark Brandenburg und ihrer Regenten*, Tl. 3, Bd. 3, bearb. v. Adolph F. J. RIEDEL, Berlin 1861, no. 91, pp. 110f.; *Politische Correspondenz des Kurfürsten Albrecht Achilles*, Bd. 2, no. 327, pp. 326f.

<sup>124</sup> *Diplomatarium Christierni Primi*, no. 220, pp. 334–338.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> Mikkel L. JESPERSEN, *Dronning Christines politiske rolle*, [in:] *Dronningemagt i middelalderen. Festskrift til Anders Bøgh*, ed. Jeppe B. NETTERSTRØM, Kasper H. ANDERSEN, Aarhus 2018, pp. 376f.

30 August 1478 in Copenhagen<sup>127</sup>, but it was postponed until 6 September<sup>128</sup>. Christine was crowned after John acceded to the throne on 18 May 1482.

### III. 3.β. CHRISTINE'S POLITICAL ROLE – CONSORS REGNI

Thanks to the work of Mikkel Leth Jespersen, Christine's political and economic role in King John's politics is well studied and the following comments build on his work<sup>129</sup>. In the years between 1478 and 1482, John and Christine lived for the most part as a 'crown prince and princess' at Nyborg Castle on Fionia. It was also here, shortly after the death of her father-in-law, that her first son, Christian (II), was born. As Jespersen could convincingly explain, Christine used the time to create a network in the Danish high nobility, especially among the high nobility of Fionia<sup>130</sup>. This was facilitated by the fact that some Fionian nobles had accompanied the princess on her way to Denmark already in 1478.

King John's most important task was to conquer Sweden, to which he laid a (hereditary) claim. He succeeded in 1497<sup>131</sup>, during which time Christine was also crowned and anointed as queen there too<sup>132</sup>. On 20 February 1499, the Swedish Council of the Realm and King John reached an agreement on Christine's morning gift in the country. Christine received the same territories that had already secured her mother-in-law's claim to power<sup>133</sup>. She thus strengthened King John's uncertain claim to power in Sweden.

After King John suffered a crushing defeat at the Battle of Hemmingstedt in Dithmarschen on 17 February 1500, the Swedes rebelled again against the Oldenburg rule. In the summer of 1501, John and Christine stayed in Stockholm. The king left the defence of the city to her and travelled back to Denmark, (allegedly) to organise reinforcements. Meanwhile, Stockholm had been besieged by insurgents since 30 September 1501, and the city fell on 17 October. On 6 May 1502, Christine and her garrison surrendered at the royal castle and went into captivity with the rebels, six days before King John arrived in Stockholm with reinforcements<sup>134</sup>.

<sup>127</sup> *Missiver fra Kongerne Christiern I.s og Hans's Tid*, ed. William CHRISTENSEN, København 1914, no. 86, pp. 62 f.

<sup>128</sup> M. L. JESPERSEN, *Dronning Christines politiske rolle*, p. 374.

<sup>129</sup> M. L. JESPERSEN, *Dronning Christines politiske rolle*, passim; idem, *Dronning Christine og kong Hans. Len, magt og fromhed i dansk senmiddelalder*, Historisk Tidsskrift, Række 18, Bd. 106: 2006, H. 1, pp. 10–32.

<sup>130</sup> See i.a. idem, *Patron-klientforhold i dansk senmiddelalder*, Fortid og Nutid, 2006, H. 1, pp. 107–126.

<sup>131</sup> *Sverges traktater med främmande magter*, D. 3, ed. Olof S. RYDBERG, Stockholm 1895, no. 553, pp. 461 f.; no. 554a, pp. 463 ff.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 569c, p. 516.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 561, pp. 476 ff.; see also the comment on p. 478, and 'Bihang 1499' on pp. 703 f.

<sup>134</sup> M. L. JESPERSEN, *Dronning Christines politiske rolle*, pp. 378 ff.

## III. 3. γ. CHRISTINE – THE ECONOMIC QUEEN

The reason why Mikkel Jespersen and others questioned the king's will to support his imprisoned wife with troops is based partly on a moral and partly on an economic assessment. Morally, eyebrows were raised because the king, on his return to Copenhagen in 1501, made public his relationship with a lady-in-waiting to the queen, Edele Mikkelsdatter (Jernskæg). Since Christian I could only be proven to have had one infidelity<sup>135</sup>, and there was no tradition for royal mistresses, this was a real scandal by Danish standards.

The situation was aggravated by the fact that the king was in debt to his wife. As can be seen from one of Christine's surviving account books<sup>136</sup>, she was just as well versed in economics as her mother-in-law. The king had therefore also, and naturally, paid for the military campaigns to Sweden by borrowing from Christine, who received pledges in Denmark in return, as Mikkel Jespersen was able to show<sup>137</sup>.

The delays in sending troops to Stockholm may still be explicable, for, after all, it was also a matter of preserving the crown for John. However, the king's slow action in freeing his wife from captivity in Stockholm gives rise to the well-founded suspicion that he also wanted to get rid of his debts together with his wife in an elegant way.

III. 3. δ. CHRISTINE OF WETTIN – FROM CONSORS REGNI  
TO ADVERSARIA REGNI

The marriage between Christine and John, and with it their political cooperation, had broken down due to the king's reluctance to help the release of his wife. At the same time, John cast doubt on the fact that his wife had really taken the defence of Stockholm Castle to the extreme<sup>138</sup>.

After a trip abroad in 1504, which can also be understood as a kind of timeout, Christine moved to her estates on Fionia. For the remaining years until King John's death in 1513, her court was a hotbed of resistance and criticism of John. King John had fallen out with the noble families of Fionia, who now gathered at the queen's court. In return, the king left murders of her retinue unpunished and appointed a shoemaker as bishop of Fionia against the will of the Fionian nobility. A war of the roses had broken out in the royal house, which reached highly political dimensions<sup>139</sup>. Thus, Christine *exempli causa* was on very good terms with her brother-in-law Frederick (I), who was considered an

<sup>135</sup> William MOLLERUP, *Om en hidtil ukjend Prindsesse af det danske Kongehus*, Historisk Tidsskrift, Række 5, Bd. 5: 1885, pp. 88–97; C. JAHNKE, *Dronning Dorothea*, chpt. VII.A.

<sup>136</sup> *Dronning Christines Hofholdningsregnskaber*, ed. William CHRISTENSEN, København 1904.

<sup>137</sup> M. L. JESPERSEN, *Dronning Christine og kong Hans*, pp. 12–17.

<sup>138</sup> Idem, *Dronning Christines politiske rolle*, pp. 384 ff.

<sup>139</sup> Idem, *Dronning Christine og kong Hans*, pp. 18–25.

opponent of the king due to the events of 1481 in Schleswig and Holstein<sup>140</sup>. This was, among other things, the starting point for the events that led to the fall of John's son Christian II in 1523, the installation of Frederick I as king and the end of the Kalmar Union.

Through the estrangement between the couple, John had deprived himself of some of the opportunities that his mother's Swedish morning gift had opened up as a means of political pressure to obtain the crown. Although John (actually, together with the bishop of Fionia) also argued in a complaint to the emperor in 1505 that Christine had been deprived of her morning gift<sup>141</sup>, this argument fizzled out without Christine's personal involvement. However, in 1509 at least, an agreement was reached on the parchment to pay Christine 1,000 Stockholm marks annually as compensation until a final agreement was reached<sup>142</sup>. John, however, could not regain the crown of Sweden.

### III. 3. E. CHRISTINE OF WETTIN – *ADVERSARIA REGNI*

Failed marriages today, even in European royal houses, are mostly seen as personal traumas and catastrophes. In the late Middle Ages, the failure of a princely marriage also had very tangible, political consequences. Christine of Saxony was an anointed and crowned queen, as King John never tired of emphasising. She fulfilled the associated duties without complaint until her imprisonment in Stockholm. She acted as administrator and defender of the dynastic interests. The fact that John left the defence of Stockholm to her, and thus also the defence of his ambitions in the Kalmar Union, testifies to how successfully she fulfilled her role until 1501. Economically, too, she fulfilled her role within the 'firm', perhaps too well, as Mikkel Jespersen has pointed out.

The marital discord between John and Christine therefore not only destroyed the fruitful cooperation between the two partners but also revealed the political dissonance in the royal house. Christine was an anointed queen, she was economically successful and politically connected, and this made her a dangerous adversary of John and his politics. Her court was that of a crowned princess. This meant that the political centre of Denmark was no longer concentrated exclusively on the royal court in Copenhagen. The nobility of Fionia, at least, came to her court and not to that of the king. The king thus lacked the building blocks of his network. Christine's actions and her court in Odense show facets of the power of a princess. Through her legal position and her network, she had a limited ability to take part in the events, to have means at her disposal to give some chance of success.

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>141</sup> *Sverges traktater*, no. 569c, p. 519.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., no. 574, pp. 548–551.



However, it should also be noted that Christine, despite all her opposition to John, naturally thought along the dynastic lines and conventions of the time. This becomes particularly clear in the funeral chapel she created after John's death and especially in the reredos created for it<sup>143</sup>. Here both Christine and John appear again together with their children as a dynastic unit. Before God and the world, the memory of the dynasty was preserved as a unity, despite all internal discord.

For the Kalmar Union, Christine possessed – in today's view – two functions. On the one hand, and this is the result of Mikkel Jespersen's recent research, her quarrel with the king and her counter-court in Odense laid the core for the final downfall of the Kalmar Union. The connections with Frederick (I) and the possibility of giving a nucleus to the resistance against John (and later against Christian II) facilitated the revolt that was to overthrow Christian II in 1523.

Secondly, and this is an as yet unaddressed relic of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century propaganda and nineteenth-century nationalism, she is seen as a tragic administrator of Danish occupation in Sweden. Substantial parts of this section are taken from a *diplomatarium* with the significant title *Sverges traktater med främmande magter*, that is, *Sweden's Treaties with Foreign Powers*. In this, Christine only represented a dynastic claim to a crown that was common at the time and which, from this point of view, was perfectly hers. She was the anointed and crowned queen of Sweden. It was Swedish propaganda that countered this claim with pseudo-nationalist arguments<sup>144</sup>. In shaping a collective imaginary 'Sweden' the 'Danes' were the natural others<sup>145</sup>.

In this context, today's assessment of the events of 1471 to 1523 should be detached from notions of a national antagonism between Danish and Swedish. Christine did not represent Danish claims to Sweden, but together with John a dynastic (presumed hereditary) claim, which had been shaped by Dorothea and Christian I. The fact that this was met with resistance from high noble circles in Sweden is well known and can also be explained without nationalism.

#### IV. THE QUEENS OF THE KALMAR UNION

The brief sketches presented above have clarified three essential points. First, it has been shown that all three queens, that is Philippa of Lancaster, Dorothea of Hohenzollern and Christine of Wettin, not only possessed power but also actively exercised it. By virtue of their position as crowned and anointed queens, they exercised reginal rulership. This rulership also included

<sup>143</sup> M. L. JESPERSEN, *Dronning Christines politiske rolle*, pp. 393–400.

<sup>144</sup> M. NORDQUIST, *Envisioning a Political Community*, pp. 97–100; see in general eadem, *A Struggle for the Realm: Late-Medieval Swedish Rhyme Chronicles as Ideological Expressions*, Stockholm 2015.

<sup>145</sup> Eadem, *Envisioning a Political Community*, p. 99.

the political sphere as well as the defence of the realm. These queens defended cities, equipped fleets and maintained or financed soldiers.

Secondly, it could be made clear that the queens of the Kalmar Union represented a significant economic power factor due to their morning gifts. They were not only rich, but they used their wealth to finance royal policy. However, they did not do this altruistically but received pledged fiefdoms for this purpose, which further strengthened their power and wealth. Christian I in particular, but also John, thus became dependent on their wives. The queens created reginal domains within the realm that were no longer at the king's disposal.

Thirdly, it was possible to show that these queens played an important role in the history of the Kalmar Union, which at the same time reflected the changing perceptions of the Union's basis of rule. Queen Philippa still stands as a buffer between the nobility's view of having elected and accepted a ruler for the entire Union and Eric, who saw himself more as a sovereign ruler. Christian I's claim to the Swedish throne was based on the political idea that the realms belonged together, but not on a legal claim. This claim was only created by Queen Dorothea's Swedish possessions, through which constant pressure could be exerted on Swedish politics. The queen's morning gifts ultimately ensured the continued existence of the Kalmar Union. Under Christian I and Dorothea, the idea of a dynastic claim to the crown of the three kingdoms developed, favoured by the fact that Dorothea had removed 'the stain of barrenness from the royal house', as one chronicler remarked<sup>146</sup>. In contrast to Eric, who had been elected and chosen into the realm as Margaret Valdemardatter's adopted child, the birth of male heirs to the throne reinforced the idea of a dynastic claim to the inheritance. In this respect, the fertility of the Dorothea-Christian and Christine-John couples also changed the world of political ideas.

The queens of the Kalmar Union fulfilled the duties that were assigned to them in an exemplary manner, according to the possibilities of their century. None of them spoke a Nordic language, none of them came from the political milieu of Northern Europe, and yet they managed to establish networks of power in a very short time, which they used politically. This was only possible if the parties sought each other out. The queens had to actively shape their networks but the nobility also had to have an interest in being included in these networks. This shows how political, and how important, the role of a queen was in the fabric of the Kalmar Union. The queens of the fifteenth century possessed the ability to take part in the events and to have means at their disposal

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<sup>146</sup> *Chronicon Sclavicum, quod vulgo dicitur parochi Suseleensis*, hrsg. v. Ernst A. Th. LASPEYRES, Lübeck 1865, p. 198.

to give some chance of success, and thus they played a decisive role in shaping the fate of the Union.

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