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THE QUEEN'S WEALTH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

by
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This article takes a look at the income and properties of queens in the Middle Ages. Its aim is to better understand what it meant to be queen; to learn more about the public persons and real presences of queens. Two examples from either end of the extremes demonstrate the connection between the wealth and the power of queens: the marriage contract between Otto II with his wife Theophania on the one hand and the relationship between Maximilian I and Bianca Maria Sforza on the other. The example of Cunigunde, wife of Henry II, disproves the theory that only a queen whose wealth was great and secure could take an active part in politics. Finally, the conditions in England and France serve as an analogy for the conditions of queens in the Holy Roman Empire. Here the article emphasizes the German queen's lack of a personal, regular income.


I. Introduction

Queens played a prominent role in European history. Therefore historical research has always paid attention to their lives. But since the interest in women's and gender studies has been growing in recent years, historians take a new and stronger look at the female royal celebrities, especially in the Middle Ages. A lot of monographs, biographies and essay collections have been published with new and fresh approaches in discussing and interpreting historical sources. This view on the women enjoying a position at the top of the realms is both detailed and complex, and based on a modern way of investigation. That means: we consider a higher degree of biographical facts. But apart from the individual details modern scholarship has focused its attention on the
status of medieval queens, their roles in public life and their participation in power and political affairs.

Actually historians like talking about "queenship". Constructed in the English-speaking academic sphere as "a status complementary to that of the male ruler, not powerless... but not in itself the source of power", this term was adapted and translated in other languages. I also speak about "Königinentum" in my own book on the queens of the medieval German empire.

But there are still problems when this term is used in a general manner. As this term is not found in historical texts, it is just a theoretical model, a concept and not to be taken at all for a historical fact. I am sure that the expression "queenship" could and should transport an idea of the queen, who is not only married to a king and mother of legitimate royal offspring, but who is above all a person holding an office and exercising authority. The most important thing is the last point, the status of royal women as "public" persons, who keep an influential and powerful position at court and in the realm and therefore being part of the royal administration and government. But there are still a lot of questions to answer what queenly power is about. We are still far from having a clear concept, in which monarchies, epochs and under which political circumstances "queenship" developed and which images of queenship existed.

1 This essay is based on a paper presented at the above mentioned Interdisciplinary Conference in Budapest; see the summary by Amalie FÖSSEL. In: Das Mittelalter. Perspektiven medizinscher Forschung 9/1: Medialität im Mittelalter (2004, published 2005) 162–164.


amount of sources and unfortunately there are hardly any German sources at all. Whereas there are many financial accounts and household books in England there are no comparable sources in German. So I must apologize that I can’t give special information about the structure, the staff and the finances of the German royal court and also the daily life there. Our knowledge about German queens’ income remains rudimentary. So in most cases I can only state a lack of source material. From the viewpoint of European history, however, it is necessary to have an idea of the queen’s wealth in the German Middle Ages. I want to undertake this in a comparative manner looking beyond Germany’s borders to the English monarchy.

II. How wealthy were the Roman-German queens?

I would like to start with two women in German history, whose lives show the greatest difference about the queen’s role and wealth that can be imagined.

In the tenth century we can see a famous and tough lady, coming from Byzantium as a girl of perhaps twelve or thirteen years. Her name was...

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Theotonian family hoped for a marriage between Otto II and Anna, the daughter of the Byzantine emperor Nicephorus Phocas. This marriage should finish a long period of conflicts. But the negotiations proceeded extremely difficult for some years. Finally a delegation to Konstantinopel was sent by Otto I in 971 under the leadership of the archbishop Gero of Cologne, accompanied by bishop Liudprand of Cremona properly. They returned with Theophanu, the niece of the new emperor John Tzimisces, cf. Karl LEYSER, Theophanu Divina Gratia Imperatrix Augustae Western and Eastern Emperors in the Later Tenth Century. In: Communications and power in medieval Europe. The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries, ed. by Timothy REUTER, London 1994, 145–164. The experience of his first journey to the Byzantine court in 968 Liudprand described in "Legatio ad imperatorem Constantinopolitam Nicothorum Phocam". In: Liudprandis Opera, MGH SS rer. Ger. 81, ed. by Joseph BECKER, Hannover 1915, 175–212. In the matter of the relationship between the Eastern and Western empire cf. the papers of the conference "Byzanz und das Abendland im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert", ed. by Evangelos KONSTANTINIDIS, Köln/Weimar/Wien 1997.


Theophanu. For the Ottonians she wasn’t the desired princess at first. But nevertheless she was accepted by Otto I as a bride for his son and successor to the throne. The couple married in Rome Easter 972. Theophanu was crowned empress and she was the only person in the whole Middle Ages who had this singular title of a coimperatrix. No other empress ever held such a position.

The marriage treaty handed to her was also unique. It looked very artistic with its golden letters on purple coloured parchment and it may...

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9 To the French queens actually see: Jean-Marc CAZILLAC, Le dauphin de la reine de France à la fin du Moyen Âge. In: Reines et Princesses (note 4) 75–87.

10 An overview of the constitutional and social framework of the German royal courts, especially Frederick III and Maximilian I, was given by Peter MORAW, The Court of the German Kings and of the Emperor at the end of the Middle Ages, 1440–1519. In: Princes, Patronage and the Nobility. The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age c. 1450–1650, ed. by Ronald G. ASCH and Adolf M. BIORKÉ, Oxford 1991, 163–177; as far as the size of Frederick’s court is concerned cf. Paul-Joachim HEINIG, How large was the Court of Emperor Friedrich III?, ibid., 139–136.
It is impossible, however, to quantify the size of the estates and the revenues gained from them. Yet it can be assumed that Theophanu’s property was perhaps the largest a queen ever obtained in the German regnum. Her large fortune is reflected in her political position, because the Empress exercised political authority and for some years acted as regent for her under-age son Otto III. It was only through Theophanu and her mother-in-law Adelheid that “queenship” became distinct in the German Empire of the Middle Ages.

We find a very different situation at the end of the Middle Ages. Let us consider Bianca Maria Sforza, the second wife of Maximilian I, a woman from Milan, who had a special interest in fashion and jewels. The marriage was the result of a political deal between Ludovico il Moro, her uncle, and Maximilian. She was beneath his station. But the successor to the throne saw his political and financial advantages. Much money was involved. The dowry, urgently needed by Maximilian for his military expeditions, amounted to 300,000 Gulden, which is an equivalent of 45,000 pounds Sterling. The precious dowry given of the bride, 21 years old, was worth another 70,000 Gulden.

But the king had no love for his wife. She wasn’t a beauty and not very clever at all. She was married for 16 years with no chance of becoming his consort and partner. She remained childless and without political influence.

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14) The localization of the county Pescara is unclear; W. GEORGII (note 13) 149; note 33.


16) D.O.II. 76 (974 April 29 Mühlhausen): Otto gave his wife some villages and courts nominally the places Eschwege, Friedel, Mühlhausen, Tinzenhau und Schönheide.


influence and never had enough money to cover the costs of her living. The sums paid to her were limited to an annual amount of between 4000 and 9000 Gulden. This is a very low budget. In English sterling this would have been only 600-1 400 pounds. She herself was not able to administrate her finances in a clever way. She got money and spent it quickly and without thinking.24

She often found herself in various cities for several months as a pledge for the debts of the king, who was short of money all the time.25 The poor queen, however, always had to wait that she would be redeemed. When her expenses reached a degree above her financial possibilities she had to stay and to wait a little bit longer.26 During her lifetime Bianca Maria remained a recipient of her husband's orders. As far as he was concerned he didn't like seeing his wife.27 So he told her that she should be absent from the royal court in Innsbruck and also from any other political event.28 In most cases she did as she was told. When in January 1505 she arrived in Innsbruck a few days earlier, Maximilian demanded that she and her ladies should travel to Sterzing and stay


24 H. HOCHRINNER (note 20) 149-153.

25 The steward of her household Niklas von Firmian complained the financial predicament of the queen and her court in a letter to Maximilian in February 1497. Because the king left behind his wife in the city of Worms as a pledge of his debts and didn't take care of her bad situation. If we believe the information of the letter, the queen's court did not have food and money sufficiently and, furthermore, had to accept the debt claims of the king's creditors, who lost their patience more and more. The letter is published in: Quellen zur Geschichte Maximilians I. und seiner Zeit, hrsg. von Ingo WIESPLECKER-FRIEDHUBER with an introduction by Hermann WIESPLECKER, Darmstadt 1996, no. 20, 81 f.

26 A lot of examples are quoted by H. HOCHRINNER (note 20) 57-94.

27 According to Hermann WIESPLECKER, Maximilian I. Die Fundamente des habsburgischen Weltreiches, Münzenberg 1991, 81, Bianca did not correspond to the expectations of the self-confident emperor. She was all the time sickly, nervous, capricious, sweet-toothed and from that shy-poly, like a child and naïvely. She herself became her role as the emperor's wife and a queen not conscious.

28 From 1497 to her death on the 31th of December 1510, the court in Innsbruck was the major residence of the queen and her household, but of course the queen left Innsbruck for travelling; she was often going on a journey for several months, cf. the list of the queen's itinerary in the study of H. HOCHRINNER (note 20) 163-181. Concerning her household see end, 106-148 and the non-printed thesis of Anneliese GATT, Der Innsbrucker Hof zur Zeit Kaiser Maximilians I. 1493-1519, Innsbruck 1943, 38-46.

there until the day, when the French delegation, which was still at the royal court in Innsbruck, had returned to Paris. It was the steward of her household Niklas von Firmian who knew how to stop this plan. The argument he mentioned was pitiable: He replied to the king that the weather was too frosty and therefore nobody could expect the ladies to go on such a journey because they didn't have enough warm clothes.29

In this direct comparison, Theophanu and Bianca Maria Sforza personify two biographies, who are as different they can be. Bianca Maria, whose personality and intelligence was not up to her position as a queen and not comparable to her husband's intelligence, could not develop a profile of her own. She was an example for powerlessness. She couldn't fill her role as queen. Maximilian and the great figures of the German regnum did not accept her as queen. By contrast, Theophanu got responsibilities in government and acted with wide authority. Together with empress Adelheid, her mother-in-law, they show for the first time what queenship meant in the German regnum. But when we consider the extent of estates given to her, we can assume that it was Theophanu, who held the top-position in the Middle Ages.

III. Is there a link between wealth and power?

Recently, Régine Le Jan raised the question whether or not there is a direct link between the endowment of the queen on the one side and the development of queenship on the other. She affirms this and comes to the conclusion: In the Carolingian epoch, it was normal that the queen held a small dower. An increase in prestige and authority was only possible by bearing children. Then in the Ottonian epoch there was a change especially in Germany, where the empresses Adelheid and Theophanu received large estates. According to Le Jan, this evidently shows that the queen's role now had a new rank and standing. From this she concludes that the wealth of the Ottonian empresses and her status as consors regni mark the zenith of power.30

29 See H. HOCHRINNER (note 20) 85 f.

30 Régine LE JAN, Douairies et pouvoir des reines en France et en Germanie (Vie–Xe siècle). In: Dots et douairiers dans le Haut Moyen Âge, ed. by François BOUGARD [a. a.], Ro
Undoubtedly, research into the interdependence of endowment and quisship is both exciting and rewarding. But in my opinion the comparison of only the 9th and the 10th centuries seems to be too narrow a view of this subject, because after Adelheid and Theophany large acquisition of lands by the queens was a thing of the past in the German Empire for the next few decades 31. The following queens, Cunigunda and Gisela, had only a fraction of the possessions of their predecessors 32. It was Cunigunda, who was forced to do without her possession so that the king could put his plan into effect to build up a new diocese in Bamberg 33. Several months passed by until Cunigunda was compensated with the assignment of the royal court of Kassel 34. The place Kai-


31 Concerning the land of Adelheid cf. A. FÖSSEL (note 3) 69 f.


36 As regards the contribution of Adelheid for establishing a powerful quisship in the medieval German realm see actually Amalie FÖSSEL, Frauen an der Spitze Europas. Lebensstrategien und Lebensentwürfe von Königinnen im 10. Jahrhundert. In: Kaiserin Adelheid und ihre Klostergründung in Selz, hrsg. von Franz STAAB (* and Thorsten UNSPERG, Speyer 2005 (under press), with further informations of the appropriate literature.

37 The royal court Fidsche was given to Theophany by Otto II in 978 a short time before their daughter Mathilde was born; cf. A. FÖSSEL (note 3) 67.
The possessions which they had formerly got weren’t royal estates and courts, but rather came from the private property of their husbands’ families.

There can be no doubt that in Ottonian times the Empresses became a political figure. The standing of her person had risen and her participation in politics became widely accepted. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Empresses continued to be politically active within the German Empire and took part in the government. Their political participation, however, and that’s very important to consider, did not have any immediate consequences concerning the extent of their possessions. This fact could be watched at the beginning of the eleventh century, when Cunigunda was queen. She didn’t have so many estates as Theophanu, but it seems that her political power, her influence and authority was in no way at a smaller level. So, in most cases there is no direct link between the size of the queen’s possessions and the extent of her political power in medieval Germany.

IV. Different categories of income of the English and the Roman-German queens

So, what can we say about the queen’s property in the long period between Theophanu and Bianca Maria Storza? How does the German development differ from the English?

In Germany, we don’t find different categories of revenue of the kind we find in England. We don’t have something like the queen-gold, which was an additional levy of 10 per cent paid to the queen on fines paid to the king. The queen-gold seems customary since the twelfth century and we know that Eleanor of Aquitaine got it immediately after her marriage to Henry II in 1137. It was a fluctuating payment, high one year, low the next. But on the whole, there is good reason to state that queen-gold was a significant component of the queen’s total resources in thirteenth and fourteenth century England.

In Germany however, in the time of Frederick Barbarossa we can find payments to the king, to the queen and sometimes to the royal court in singular charters settling a conflict. So the Polish ruler Boleslaw IV had to pay a sum of 20 marks of gold for not travelling to the German court and for not taking the oath of fealty to the empress Beatrice in September 1157. There are different opinions about the significance of these sums. Is the payment an indication, that the queen was involved in the negotiations of the agreement? This may be. Or – and this is my opinion – is it an attempt to levy something like queen-gold? In this case the amount was much less than in England. It was only one per cent. If I’m right we can see here an additional way of establishing the queen’s

41 H. JOHINSTONE (note 40) 262–265.
42 The systematic collection of queen’s gold seems to have begun with Eleanor of Aquitaine; see Henry G. RICHARDSON, The Letters and Charters of Eleanor of Aquitaine. In: English Historical Review 74 (1959) 193–213, esp. 209–211. Recently the opinion that this custom originated in king Henry I’s reign and that his wife, queen Matilda of Scotland, kept it is pointed out by Lois L. HUNEYCUTT, Almbræa Regina Anglorum: Eleanor of Aquitaine and Her Anglo-Norman Predecessors as Queens of England. In: Eleanor of Aquitaine and Her Husband: Power, Influence, Identity. Ed. by Hilary J. WHEELER and John Carmi PARSONS, New York 2002, 113–132, for this question 126 f. Sceptically on the other hand stays Heather J. TANNER, Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc? The Case of Queen Matilda III of England (1135–1152), ibid. 133–158, who states, that after this time there is no information of Matilda of Boulogne, wife of Stephen of Blois, for receiving queen’s gold.
46 A connection between the payments and the queen’s activity to balance the problems was presumed by Knut GÖRICH, Die Ehre Barbarossas, Kommunikation, Konflikt und politisches Handeln im 12. Jahrhundert, Darmstadt 2001, 336 f.
income. But it remains a very short episode. There are not enough charters for drawing a clear conclusion\(^{47}\).

A second category of the queen's income in England were the supplementary grants by the king. They could be grants of specific sums of money or grants of lands in wardship\(^{48}\). Although they were individually different and depending upon the king's generosity, this was a fundamental element in securing the queen's income\(^{49}\).

That was different in the German Middle Ages. Of course kings gave gifts to the queens, such as clothes, jewellery, crowns and money. For example, empress Elizabeth, the fourth wife of Charles IV, made an extensive shopping tour, buying fur in Pisa and 1 200 Guldens worth of pearls in Florence, when her husband marched towards Rome in 1368. He had to pay her bills\(^{50}\). Presents like these contributed to an enlargement of the queen's property and helped to keep her own budget low. But it is only rather by chance and sporadically that we can find information about things like these. They cannot be stated as a regular source of income\(^{51}\). Moreover, in the German Empire there was no institution comparable to that of the English exchequer, who supervised the money transfers and kept records of them\(^{52}\).

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\(^{47}\) More examples of payments to Beatrice are discussed by A. FÖSSEL (note 3) 75 f.

\(^{48}\) It was Eleanor of Provence, who provided with an independent income from a succession of wardships; cf. M. HOWELL (note 43) 385–387.


\(^{51}\) The financial accounts of queen Margaret of Brabant, the wife of emperor Henry VII, are a special source for the German realm. Henry VII demanded for the queen a share of money and gifts, when he took payments from some Lombardian cities. The accounts were written by the queen's clerk Folke on the trip to Rome 1310/11: Apoarch Racional et camere regiae (13th Oct. 1310–5th June 1311). MGH Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regnum 5 (1313–1324), ed. by Jakob SCHWALM, Hannover 1909–1911, no. 1151; cf. Kurt-Ulrich JASCHKE, From Famous Empresses to Unspectacular Queens: The Roman-German Empire to Margaret of Brabant, Countess of Luxemburg and Queen of the Romans (1311) In: J. J. JOHNSTONE (note 2) 75–108, esp. 100 f.

\(^{52}\) Cf. J. J. JOHNSTONE (note 40) 266–297. The close links between queen Eleanor of Provence, wife of the English king Henry III, and the great bastions of government – the chancery, exchequer and judiciary – were stressed by Margaret HOWELL, Eleanor of

So, when we talk about the queen's wealth in the German realm, then we must talk about her endowment. All the information we have got is taken from charters with lists of the estates or sometimes from literary writings. These sources do not allow for more than an outline of their possessions. It is not possible to ascertain exact numbers as to the extent and the return of the queen's endowment. This is a basic problem which we come across in all European kingdoms during the Early and the High Middle Ages\(^{53}\).

As far as we can see, up to the twelfth century land endowments belonged to the property of the Crown. But then, in the time of the Staufen Kings, a complete change set in. The queen was increasingly endowed with property of the respective House of the reigning dynasty. It was probably for the last time that Rudolf of Habsburg was able to enforce that his wife Anna was granted 1 000 marks in gold coming from imperial revenues in 1273. Therefore the king needed the agreement of the electors, prelates and princes, and he also asked for the consent of the pope\(^{54}\). When Louis the Bavarian got married to his second wife Margaret of Hainault in 1324, this was no longer possible. Margaret was only endowed with towns and estates belonging to her husband's Wittelsbach heritage\(^{55}\).

This change, which had been in its full swing since the twelfth century, was directly connected with the changing structures of power in the German Empire, where – unlike in other European monarchies – no hereditary monarchy established itself, but where the Kings were

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\(^{55}\) Cf. A. FÖSSEL (note 3) 77 f.
elected rulers from changing dynasties. Thus the basis for the Kings' power increasingly established itself in their own territories.

This political development had far-reaching consequences for the position of the queen. On the one hand she was no longer materially protected by her rights to the royal property, but since the time of the Stau- fen kings by the rights to the property of the family she married into. On the other hand – unlike in the European hereditary monarchies – there was no specific set of properties reserved to the queen⁵⁶. This can only be seen in a very basic way when Emperor Charles IV allocated the same estates to his third and fourth wife. Both empresses, Anna of Schweinitz-Jaure⁵⁷ and Elizabeth of Pommern⁵⁸, held the cities Hohenmuth and Königrätz. But this is a special case, because these possessions were part of the emperor's inherited Bohemian kingdom.

After the manner of the English monarchy it became customary for the German Empire, too, to establish amounts of money. For example it was laid down in the marriage contract of the 16-year-old Margaret of Hainault, who the 35-year-old Louis the Bavarian took as his second wife in 1342, that her dowry was to amount to 11,000 pounds Heller annually. This is why several castles with various rights and tax revenues were conferred to her. It was stipulated that if this sum could not be achieved by the revenues from the property already conferred to her, she was to get further property until the full sum would have been completed. Additionally she got another 5,000 pounds Heller annually which were not connected to specific places or castles. This meant that Empress Margaret was entitled to an annual income of 16,000 pounds Heller³⁹.

Unlike in England, the German queens were all endowed differently. The amount varied enormously. Whereas Theophanu and also Agnes of Poitou, wife of Henry III, were endowed with large properties, other queens apparently only received a fraction of that. In the late Middle Ages, when amounts of money were negotiated, this becomes even clearer. As already said Empress Margaret was endowed with 16,000 pounds Heller annually. This is the equivalent of about 2,500 pounds Sterling. The wives of Charles IV got much more. His second wife, Anna of Palatinat, was endowed with 9,000 mark Silver annually, which is the equivalent of about 4,300 pounds Sterling⁶⁰. His third wife, Anna of Schweinitz-Jaure, was promised a sum of about 7,400 pounds Sterling⁶¹.

No marriage contract of Barbara of Cilli, Sigmund's second wife, is available to us. But the customs and taxes assigned to her brought her an annual sum of 28,000 Hungarian Gulden, which is the equivalent of about 4,500 pounds Sterling⁶². She was 25 years younger than her husband, considered to be beautiful and eloquent, self-confident, ambitious and a capable business woman⁶³. So in the course of her marriage she succeeded in receiving more and wider areas of land in Hungary, Croatia, Moravia and Bohemia⁶⁴.

³⁵ Only in the tenth and eleventh centuries we can observe the one or other royal court and abbey in the hand of two Roman-German queens. One example is Northeim, which was in the possession of queen Mathilda and empress Theophanu; cf. note 15. Another case was there two royal courts in Italy which held the empresses Adelheid and Agnes, see: A. FÖsSEL, (note 5) 71 f., with further discussion. A list of the lands of empress Agnes, second wife of Henry III and mother of Henry IV, who was also a rich lady, is found in the book of Mechtild BLACK-VELTSTRUP, Kaiserin Agnes (1043–1077). Quellenkritische Studien, Köln/Weimar/Wien 1995, 162–164.


⁴⁰ Archivum Coronae (note 60) no. 243 (8th July 1353); cf. J. GOTTSCHALK (note 57) 30.


⁴² Lately, I presented a new interpretation of the early years of Barbara as an Hungarian queen and powerful political figure in the reign of emperor Sigismund on the international conference "Sigismund de Luxemburg, Rei de Hongrie et Empire", Luxembourg, 2005, 8–10 June; Annale FÖsSEL, Barbara von Cilli: Ihre frühen Jahre als Gemahlin Sigismunds und ungarische Königin, will appear in the proceedings of the conference, ed. by Michel PAULY, Mainz 2006.

⁴³ In total, our knowledge of the queen's possessions and revenues is still on a small base.
Thus at least the Luxemburg queens received endowments which seem to be comparable to those of the English, because for England it had already been established since the late twelfth century that the queen was endowed with an amount between 4,000 marks and 4,500 pounds Sterling. But this is a poor comparison. When talking about the endowment of the German and the English queens in the late Middle Ages, we are obviously talking about totally different things. We have to ask ourselves: Is there evidence that the queen could enjoy the fruits of her dower during the king’s lifetime? Or was it only at the death of the king that the royal widow could hope to profit from the dower lands?

Theoretically it seems to be clear: It was only at the death of her husband that the widow could expect to receive the revenue of her dower assignment. And in practice? This is a difficult matter.

In her 1940 pioneering study Hilda Johnstone stated that the revenues of dower lands were not only an important source of income of the widowed queen, but also of the queen consort. But recent scholarship has worked out that arrangements made at the time of the queen’s marriage in thirteenth and fourteenth century England seemed to be fluid and the possibility of modification always high. Latest studies on Eleanor of Provence and on Eleanor of Castile came to the conclusion that those two queens couldn’t enjoy any of these revenues during their husbands’ lifetime. For these periods in England we are lucky to have financial records with receipts and expenditure of the royal household. During the reign of Henry III and Eleanor of Provence it is evident that the revenue from the queen’s dower lands was paid into the Exchequer to the king, as was the case with the income from the rest of his demesnes. It was only after the death of Henry III that there was the change, when Edward I decided to hand over control of the various dower lands to his mother, the widowed queen.

As far as England of the twelfth century is concerned, it seems to be certain that neither Eleanor of Aquitaine nor her daughters-in-law received revenue from their dower lands before their husbands’ death.

That queen dowagers sometimes had to fight a long battle for their rights is shown by the example of Berengaria of Navarre, the wife of Richard Lionheart. She was only married for a short time and she was an English queen who has never been to England and never held any English lands. Being a widow for more than thirty years she was forced to appeal to Pope Innocent III, but at last she received little of what was using the income to support herself and her household earlier, and the lands remained in her husband’s charge during his lifetime, while he supported her household with the cash equivalent.

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66 See: M. HOWELL (note 43) 382 f.
67 Ibl., 380 f., 383, 390; M. HOWELL (note 52) 280; J. C. PARSONS (note 44) 75.
68 M. HOWELL (note 43) 383 f.
69 It exists a long bibliography of Eleanor, who was certainly the most interesting queen in Europe of the 12th century. Besides the mentioned literature in note 41 of Jane MARTINDALE, Eleanor of Aquitaine. In: Richard Coeur de Lion in History and Myth, ed. by Janet L. NELSON, London 1992, 17-50, Marie HIVERGNEAUX, Alénoir, Duchesse d’Aquitaine et deux fois Reine: Rôle et pouvoir d’une femme au XIIe siècle. In: Reines et Princesse (note 4) 43-62.
due to her. Only until the middle of the twelfth century in the time of the Anglo-Norman queens there was a very different situation. These queens were wealthy women, who controlled substantial demesnes not only during their widowhood but also during their husbands’ lifetime. They exercised dominion over their lands and could alienate them.

And what can we say about the rights of using the dowry lands by the German queens? According to documents dating from the High Middle Ages, the queens possessed far-reaching rights to the properties conferred to them: They had free disposal of them, they could own them, bequeath them, exchange them, confer them to somebody else or do with them whatever they pleased. In a document this was called liberam [...] poestatam [...] obtinendi tradendi communandi precarium vel quicquid sibi placuerit inde faceret.

Yet the legal stipulation had little in common with the actual situation. In practice the queen could not make much use of her right of ownership. Conferment and endowment was only possible for commemorative or dynastic purposes and only in agreement with the court. Conflicts were pre-programmed if queens showed too much monetary extravagance. It is not certain that the German queens could receive revenues from their dowry lands during the lifetime of their husbands. We have no information about their income as queen-consort and the financing of their households. From the tenth century, all queens were provided with their servants, but we don’t know anything about their remuneration.

In the late Middle Ages, documents were formulated more precisely and more closely to reality. The queen was clearly prohibited from alienating property of any kind. The only right to her endowed property was the right to cash in revenues. But unlike in England, where it was only possible for the queen to make use of her endowments after her husband’s death, the queens in the German Empire could profit from their endowments immediately after marriage. This becomes obvious when we have a look at the few marriage contracts which have been handed down to us since the fourteenth century.

Thus we can assume that the household of the German queens was financed with the revenues from their endowments which – from the thirteenth century onward – were promised in the marriage negotiations. In Germany there has never been such a complex network of different sources of income like in England. Since an administrative structure and a fiscal institution like the English exchequer did not exist, this was not possible in the first place. In the German Empire nobody knew what amounts to expect, especially since the imperial property became smaller and smaller. Since the twelfth century a very important source of income used to be the revenue, which came from the lands the queens had inherited. So, empress Beatrice herself controlled her Burgundian county, her hereditary territory. There is an indication that she had her own curia, which administered the duties and fines.

But taxes and duties were levied directly and no records of them were kept. This is even more deplorable, because we cannot know for sure if the amounts mentioned in the endowment documents really made their way to the German Queen. In case they did, it is well possible that the Queen had larger financial resources at her disposal than the English queen. But we do not know anything about the amount of the payments she received. We cannot assess either how large the expenses of her household were.

Finally we have no concrete idea whether her officials levied and administered her revenues. On this we can only speculate. It can be, how-

79 D.H.II III. 116 and 117 (note 34).
81 For the German queens’ own courts and households see the summary by A. FÜSSEL, (note 3) 81–92.
82 A. FÜSSEL, (note 3) 356–358.
ever, assumed that queens managed their finances themselves together with their officials, because there was no central fiscal institution. This may have given the queen some financial independence. This is supported by the evidence that Barbara of Cilli made profits from the estates and the mines conferred to her and had to forward the surplus to the king. She was a clever businesswoman and in the course of her marriage knew how to acquire lucrative sources of income. So she was soon in the fortunate position to help the king out of his financial straits and to give him loans. I believe that this is strong evidence for the fact that she had free disposal of her finances and that she was capable of making use of them in a profitable way.

V. Conclusions

In the German Empire we can observe that queens received widely varying amounts of revenue. Not every empress who exercised power controlled big estates. Different factors made it possible for the queen to become a wealthy woman. Very important elements seem to be her reputation and descent, the political profit of the marriage, whether it was a reigning king who married, and after all the personality of the queen, her interest in business and her will to accumulate her worldly goods.

In the later Middle Ages, the dowry of the future queen played an increasing role. It is no surprise that the wives of Charles IV received bigger incomes than other queens in the fourteenth century. The marriage with Anna of Palatinate in 1349 opened him a way to strengthen his young kingdom. Through his third and fourth marriages with rich heiresses he gained territories which enlarged his own Bohemian kingdom.

The development of the queens' income in English monarchy was based on a very different structure. The situation was much more con-

stant, because roughly since the mid twelfth century the queens were given specific estates returning about 4,000 or 4,500 pounds Sterling annually. As far as the annual income of the queen-consort is concerned, the queen-gold and different grants of the kings, which secured the queens' finances. But also we have to state that this combination of privilege and resources was never formally laid down.

But there can be no doubt that in England as well as in Germany, the degree of the queen's wealth depended on the kings' generosity and the cleverness and ambition of the queens and their descent-families. What really mattered were the personal confidence between husband and wife and the personal interest in business and management of the queens which determined whether they became rich women and exercised "queenship".